



**Re-imagining the country-of-origin effect**  
—  
**A promulgation approach**

Journal:	<i>Journal of Product &amp; Brand Management</i>
Manuscript ID	JPBM-11-2017-1666.R4
Manuscript Type:	Regular Paper
Keywords:	Country of origin effect, Country image, Product origin, Branding, Place mythology, Product geography

SCHOLARONE™  
Manuscripts

# Re-imagining the country-of-origin effect

—

## A promulgation approach

### Structured Abstract

**Purpose:** The country-of-origin effect (COO) has, as a research domain, suffered from several theoretical and methodological problems and tendencies including an incomplete conceptualization of its constituent components. The objectives of this conceptual study are to first problematize the concept in extant literature and to consequently propose a reconceptualization of the concept.

**Design/methodology/approach:** As part of lateral promulgation, we employ theoretical and methodological ideas from other disciplines such as psychology, ethnography and geography to problematize the present conceptualization of COO in extant literature to reveal research possibilities relevant to, but underrepresented or absent in, COO research.

**Findings:** This paper identifies several central theoretical and methodological problems and reveals that (1) COO is not necessarily linear and alternative modes of engagement with consumption need to be considered; (2) many of these problems can be addressed by alternative methodologies; and (3) COO operates at the level of symbolic orders that require a further engagement with the role of place in human experience.

**Research implications:** The findings suggest that in future research (1) field experiments be considered to resolve some of the methodological artefacts that have hampered past research; (2) qualitative methods be applied to uncover unexpected uses of place association beyond being mere quality proxies; and (3) alternative areas of relevance, such as macro-level trade and exports from emerging economies, be entertained.

**Originality/value:** The paper's approach to problematizing and refining extant knowledge enable it to promulgate new knowledge and research directions for a research area that has historically suffered from a tendency to be self-referential.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

**Keywords**

Country of origin effect, Country image, Product origin, Branding, Place mythology, Promulgation, Product geography

Journal of Product & Brand Management

## Introduction

It has been more than 50 years since scholars like Ernst Dichter and Robert Schooler first delved into the issue now widely known as the “country-of-origin effect” (COO). This milestone coincides with the 30-year anniversary of Levitt's (1983) highly influential article in the Harvard Business Review that popularized the concept of “globalization.” Despite numerous claims since then that globalization has reduced the importance of national boundaries, COO, which finds its *raison d'être* in the existence of those boundaries, albeit in their more abstract form, is not waning as a field of study. The recent nationalistic economic measures put forth by U.S. President Trump and the potential trade wars they augur (Ewing, 2018, NYT March 9) provide further support to the continuing significance of the concept.

Interestingly, the number of transnational legal devices and agreements such as NAFTA and GATT, which among other effects help to protect and promote origin labelling, has surged in recent decades. In 1987, Tan and Farley had already reported that COO was one of the most studied topics in international marketing. About ten years ago, Heslop et al., (2008) observed there were more than 800 scholarly publications dedicated to reporting studies in this area. A review today would probably find more than a thousand journal articles dealing in some way with COO. In spite of the impressive volume of publications on the topic and the seemingly consistent finding that origin matters (Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999), COO research as a whole is frequently said to be suffering from a variety of problems, including methodological shortcomings (Samiee et al., 2005), a lack of conceptual clarity (Bloemer et al, 2009) and a tendency to be atheoretical (Samiee, 2011). Another problem relates to what constitutes the basis of the call for paper for this present issue, namely the need “to get away from the narrow conceptualization of ‘COO’ in general and from the notion of ‘origin’ specifically, and to consider instead the bigger picture of place-brand associations and the role that place image plays in consumer behaviour and brand strategy.” To that end, and against the backdrop of the aforementioned issues, this paper proposes two interlinked objectives.

### *Re-conceptualizing the construct*

1  
2  
3 The first main objective, which swims against the field's narrow methodological trend, is to  
4 effectively problematize the present conceptualization of COO in extant literature. This is  
5 accomplished through a novel approach that first clarifies some of the conceptual bases of the  
6 effect and then dissects its different components with the help of a "problematizing" lens. We  
7 thus contextualize the historical inception of the term "COO," to then critically scrutinize concept  
8 across the disciplines of marketing, psychology and geography. Effectively, we take a critical  
9 approach primarily through the practice of promulgation (see Kozinets, 2012), which not only  
10 identifies but also subsequently adopts and contextualizes knowledge from disciplines outside of  
11 the subject area, with the ultimate goals of expanding knowledge and providing novel practice to  
12 the field.  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21

22 In line with the question raised for this special issue about the extent to which buyers relate  
23 images of places to the brands they encounter in the marketplace, we postulate the premise of our  
24 study as follows:  
25  
26  
27  
28

29 *The phenomenon of "country-of-origin effect" pertains to a situation in which the perceived*  
30 *characteristics of a given commodity are influenced by the perception of the commodity in*  
31 *relation to a place.*  
32  
33  
34  
35

36 Here, we use carefully chosen terminology to define the relevant field of study. For example, we  
37 employ the umbrella term "commodity" to encompass product/service/brand, just as we consider  
38 consumption a process of consumer engagement with the commodity. This perspective is  
39 important because it sets the tone for the first half of the study, which deals with the approach and  
40 definition of the objects, processes and interactions involved as the effect emerges. In this paper,  
41 we explore and discuss these constituent factors with which any study of COO invariably must  
42 engage, even if only implicitly.  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49

50 Our detailed critical scrutiny of COO discusses some of its core mis-conceptualizations and long-  
51 standing issues since its inception. More specifically, there has been a methodological over-  
52 emphasis on 'origin' which, in some cases, is problematically defined - since it is derived from  
53 spatial configurations of value chains as opposed to perceived commodity-place association - as a  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 proxy for quality to the detriment of a broader agenda. Such an agenda would encompass the  
4 nature and understanding of associations and the problem of circumscribing the outcome of the  
5 effect of association on consumers through consumer behaviour studies.  
6  
7  
8  
9

10 Various studies have criticised the field and pointed out its various shortcomings (see Magnusson  
11 et al. 2011; Bloemer et al; 2009; Samiee et al., 2005; Bilkey and Nes, 1982). These findings are  
12 problematic because they explain the impasse in which the field finds itself. We argue that many  
13 of these issues pointed out by prominent scholars have not yet been effectively addressed, but  
14 also that they do not constitute insurmountable obstacles: they can be tackled by re-imagining the  
15 concept. Here, we contribute to this process through the use of a promulgation approach to go  
16 beyond a mere epistemologically coherent system. The goal is to arrive at a point at which an  
17 array of heterodox trajectories materialize as venues for cross fertilization, thus shedding light on  
18 new understandings of COO in a research space that needs fresh air to avoid theoretical and  
19 methodological asphyxia. Subsequently, in this paper, we re-imagine the COO concept and  
20 expand knowledge on its application by justifying the need for alternative approaches that enable  
21 finding why and how consumers are affected by commodity-place associations.  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31

### 32 ***Unpacking COO***

34 This conceptual re-imagining and its related intrinsic components bring us to the second objective  
35 of this paper, which is to call for the re-conceptualization of COO within the contemporary  
36 discursive field. It is important to first establish workable limits for the objects and entities that  
37 are relevant to the understanding of COO, primarily in their capacity as recipients of the altered  
38 perception implied in the effect. A critical examination of COO thus requires that we unpack its  
39 components: the place, the origin (association), and the “effect” itself. We then examine the  
40 nature of origin and the association it entails, a complex issue that is central to brands and global  
41 trade, with its corollary blurring of boundaries and complex geographically dispersed value-  
42 chains. We subsequently critically discuss the particularity of places to explore how they have  
43 come to constitute such potent symbolic entities and how a better understanding of place further  
44 clarifies COO. Finally, we present a synthesis of the identified lateral theoretical contributions in  
45 the form of a number of core explanations to support a new conceptual framework, which in its  
46 entirety emphasizes the formative role of the conceptually re-imagined effect in geographical  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 knowledge as related to commodities, or a “product geography” (L’Espoir Decosta & Andéhn,  
4 2018).  
5  
6  
7

8 Figure 1 summarizes the different components of COO that emerged on the backbone of extant  
9 problematics resulting from several decades of its conceptualization and intensified by  
10 methodological needs to investigate its core components aimed at isolating them from each other.  
11 In that sense, we stress a critical view that guides this article: at issue is not so much what the  
12 COO effect is in general, but how research and practice actually understand, study and use its key  
13 constructs and associated relationships. To that effect Figure 1 and Table 1 distinguish between  
14 the two approaches. Figure 1 summarizes the main components and relationships that emerge  
15 from several decades of COO research and serves as a general conceptual guide for the sections  
16 that follow. The letters corresponding to each part of the figure are then linked to Table 1, which  
17 appears later in the conclusions section. The table crisply summarizes key points of the granular  
18 critical approach we take to better understand COO and leads to a detailed discussion of the  
19 arguments and highlights the major implications for future research.  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30

---

## 31 32 **FIGURE 1 HERE**

---

33  
34  
35  
36  
37 We begin by examining the aspect of the phenomenon that ultimately forms consumers’ attitudes  
38 and is particularly relevant in marketing literature: the consumption of the commodity, itself the  
39 object affected by COO.  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44

## 45 46 **The perception of the placed commodity**

### 47 48 49 ***The problem of origin in COO***

50 A workable premise underlying the deconstruction of a phenomenon like COO is based on the  
51 following questions: “What is affected by COO?” and “What is the nature of this effect?”  
52 Answering these questions would help outline matters pertaining to the construct, starting with  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 the object of the effect: the commodity. In Schoolers' (1965) seminal study on made-in labels in  
4 Guatemala, which is generally considered the first instance of systematic inquiry on COO, a  
5 number of garments and juice drinks were evaluated in a controlled experiment in which the  
6 origin labelling was manipulated. The study provided *ceteris paribus* a strong initial case for the  
7 importance of perceived origin in terms of internal test validity. In many ways, this study set a  
8 standard for country of origin research that is still valid and a key lesson learned from it is worth  
9 repeating: whether the origin associated with a product is given as one of its attributes or  
10 assumed, and whether it is correct or not, it becomes part of how consumers perceive, engage  
11 with and come to understand and evaluate it; therefore, insofar as the origin attribute is concerned  
12 consumers' understanding of the object stems from their prior knowledge of places and any  
13 notions stemming from them.  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23

24 Determining consumers' perception of COO is significant because it can lead to the emergence of  
25 relevant information. For instance, the scattering of value-chains across several countries, which  
26 has become commonplace in recent decades, does not reduce the relevance of COO as long as  
27 consumers still perceive commodities to be associated with places. A garment designed in Spain,  
28 made of fabric produced in Bangladesh and sewn in China is still perceived as French by an  
29 overwhelming majority of consumers if it is emblazoned with the right symbols, such as the text  
30 "Louis Vuitton," coupled with the brand's expected colours and patterns. Because the focus is on  
31 perceived effect, it is possible to conclude that such a "French" identification not only transcends  
32 the legal basis for determining origin but also calls into question the viability of an objective  
33 basis for such determination. Instead, in this case, origin is equated to what is implied by the  
34 symbolism of the brand, the origin of which is naturally ephemeral. In fact, it is easier for  
35 consumers to associate a brand with a place (often a country), as brands are symbols rather than  
36 the physical objects with which they are associated and their implacement often strongly implied  
37 by their name and connotations. Here, we draw on Tuan's (1977) definition of place as a discrete  
38 delimitation of a volume of space through the assignment of meaning to this space. The  
39 "implacement" of the object, which refers to the device to describe the property of an object that  
40 not only captures its being "in place" but also the effect it exerts on its host coordinates (Casey,  
41 1993), is consequently tenuous, and not related to spatiality in any absolute sense. As Thakor and  
42 Kohli (1996; 28) put it: "...the actual place that the brand originates from is almost irrelevant,  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60



1  
2  
3 even if it were possible in an era where corporations have dispersed their functions across  
4 national boundaries to identify such a place. Consumers' perceptions may differ from reality  
5 because of ignorance."  
6  
7  
8  
9

10 And yet, a wealth of studies on the fundamentals of origin identification has been published to  
11 date. These studies have explored which facet of origin, or which part of the value chain, acts as  
12 the most precise proxy for origin identification. Examples of this division of value chains include  
13 testing for the country of parts, of assembly, of design, of brand origin, of corporate headquarters  
14 and of manufacture (e.g., see Chao, 1993; Thakor and Kohli, 1996). Reviews and studies appear  
15 to support country-of-brand origin as the most accurate predictor of the origin generally attributed  
16 to a commodity. Thus, in the context of COO, as stressed by Papadopoulos (1993), "COO",  
17 "origin", or "made-in" is "beside the point" (p. 14) and is not, and never was, a question of the  
18 spatial configuration of value chains but is rather a question of which cue the consumer uses for  
19 inference). Origin, in the strict sense of the word, simply applies to COO as a proxy for the  
20 relationship with a place. In effect, the label country-of-association (COA) (see Andéhn and  
21 L'Espoir Decosta, 2016) may more accurately represent COO. Companies often market their  
22 products trying to associate them to a specific place and in so doing run the risk of being  
23 perceived as misleading the consumer if the origin indication is revealed to be less than credible  
24 (Aichner et al., 2017). This does not mean that a suggested origin is not important: in effect, it  
25 points to COO operating first and foremost in a symbolic world. The spatial configuration of  
26 value-chains of a given product is simply "beside the point" unless a place (whether its role is  
27 shown as related to a commodity's design, manufacture, assembly, parts, and so on) is leveraged  
28 as a cue for association by the consumer, a state of affairs that is clearly evident in how place  
29 association is evoked at the level of managerial intervention (Aichner, 2017). Naturally,  
30 consumers can also infer association without any rationale derived from the location of  
31 production facilities or an equivalent "objective" basis for determining origin.  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49

### 50 ***The problem of the objects affected by COO***

51 Another problem related to which aspect(s) prompts COO is the identification of the instances to  
52 which the term applies. In earlier studies, the commodity associated with a place was almost  
53 invariably a product (Schooler, 1965; Bilkey and Nes, 1982; Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999).  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 There are more recent empirical demonstrations that the effect also applies to services (Javalgi et  
4 al., 2001), as well as to other less tangible commodities in the form of brands (Thakor and Kohli,  
5 1996; Keller, 1993). Indeed, as in the earlier Louis Vuitton example, a brand is the case in which  
6 COO can be most readily leveraged. Consumers do not necessarily know where products are  
7 from (Samiee et al, 2005), nor do they seem to care in most situations (Balabanis and  
8 Diamantopoulos, 2008), but they often perceive brands as having strong associations to specific  
9 places (Andéhn and L'Espoir Decosta, 2016), even if those associations sometimes have a limited  
10 basis in reality (Magnusson et al. 2011). Ultimately, consumers are affected by origin cues even  
11 if they are hesitant to admit it (Herz and Diamantopoulos, 2017). In some cases these associations  
12 do not go beyond a linguistic cue, such as the brand name. This could be connected to the  
13 increasing importance of brands as tools for understanding consumption in general. Although a  
14 brand may be the most commercially relevant instance of commodities to evoke origin, virtually  
15 anything that can be “placed,” i.e., associated with a place, may be impacted by it. Anything,  
16 from products to people, legislation, and political ideologies, can be marketed through its  
17 association with a place.  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29

30  
31 There has been further exploration in the more relevant marketing context of the relationship  
32 between the premises of COO and their application to specific categories of commodities. Again,  
33 Schooler's study (1965) demonstrates how general attitudes, “...predilections and biases [...]”  
34 rooted in history or circumstances and directed for or against the whole country” (p. 394)  
35 influence product evaluations. Generally, early studies on COO used this approach to COO as a  
36 unified image of a country. In contrast, more recent studies have considered origin to be  
37 contingent on the category of commodities under evaluation, beyond the plethora of other  
38 potential moderators. Roth and Romeo (1992) were among the first to describe the property  
39 determining the value of the origin of products from a particular country as contingent on the  
40 “fit” between the two. Amine (2008) suggested that certain country images more readily lend  
41 themselves to infer positive connotations to either hedonic or utilitarian consumption, thus  
42 extending fit to a higher level of abstraction. Other studies have compared the relative impact of a  
43 consumer's feelings about a country in general (basic country image), about products from a  
44 specific country (product-country image) (Papadopoulos and Heslop, 1993) and products  
45 belonging to a specific category from a specific country (category-country image) (Andéhn et al.,  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 2016a). Andéhn et al. (2016a) found that attitudes regarding the image that corresponds more  
4 closely to the specific product or brand are the strongest predictor of attitudes toward the  
5 commodity itself. From extant knowledge, it follows that the extent to which COO can be used to  
6 market commodities is largely a matter of matching place to commodity categories.  
7  
8  
9

### 10 11 ***The problem of determining association***

12 The issues of when and how COO exert an effect are discussed in the literature to date mainly as  
13 a matter of moderating factors. This obfuscates, at least in part, the issue of precisely what is  
14 affected by the association to place that COO entails. The dependent variables (DVs) of choice  
15 have generally been perceived quality (see Josiassen et al., 2013), brand equity (Andéhn and  
16 L'Espoir Decosta, 2016) and/or purchase intentions (Josiassen et al., 2013). Again, much like  
17 Schooler's (1965) study, most COO studies compare different origins for products and focus on  
18 how some origins can be used to evoke a positive response from consumers (Bilkey and Nes,  
19 1982). Some studies, however, have examined situations in which the origin of a product is found  
20 to exert a negative effect on the DV. When understood as associated places to a commodity,  
21 countries with a more negative reputation in the Western context, such as Zimbabwe (Dakin and  
22 Carter, 2010) or Russia (Johansson et al., 1994) cause consumers to express a more negative  
23 attitude toward the commodity.  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35

36 This application of a linear holistic property of commodities in COO research risks  
37 oversimplifying the properties that association to a place can affect. Schooler's (1965) DV was a  
38 measure of perceived quality, as this was a central concern in COO research (see Bilkey and Nes,  
39 1982). Indeed, Peterson and Jolibert (1995) found that two-thirds of an impressive selection of  
40 articles centred on COO used quality perceptions as the key DV. Other common DVs include  
41 consumer attitudes, or proxies such as brand equity (Andéhn and L'Espoir Decosta, 2016). As  
42 attitudes are known to be imperfect in their capacity to predict behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), several  
43 studies have also employed the arguably more appropriate measure of purchase intentions (e.g.,  
44 Josiassen et al., 2013). Regardless of the DV(s) employed, the implication is that association to  
45 place exerts an influence on a sense of "goodness" that can be captured as a form of "halo" (Han,  
46 1989), or by what Zeithaml (1988) conceptualized as a multitude of dimensions boiled down to a  
47 single estimate of value.  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3  
4  
5 The fact that a large proportion of COO research uses this type of value is problematic for several  
6 reasons. First, value, or “goodness,” is almost invariably considered a linear property, ignoring  
7 the potential for thresholds in attitude formation and, more importantly, in decision making.  
8 Second, the possibility of a basis for decisions beyond the property of “goodness,” such as  
9 engagement with a culture that is specific to a certain situation and where quality or any general  
10 account of attitude is less important, is completely overlooked. Furthermore, even an estimate of  
11 “goodness” may be derived from several means of sourcing the act to consume. As Brijs et al.  
12 (2011: 1266) put it: “The way in which country-image functions as an antecedent of product  
13 attitude remains problematic, in that existing literature lacks an overarching theory that can  
14 integrate isolated efforts to explain country-image effects. In general, three types of effects or  
15 mechanisms emerge: cognitive, affective, and normative.”  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24

25 However, there are studies that have extended COO beyond a general “goodness” and examined  
26 these affective and normative aspects of the effect. These studies have remained in the realm of  
27 construing the effect as a linear property, simply replacing quality with an alternative DV. The  
28 more intricate situations in which COO comes into play are also often ill-suited for study based  
29 on group-level examination, regardless of refinement through the use of moderators (see Andéhn  
30 and L’Espoir Decosta, 2016; Peterson and Jolibert, 1995). Instead, we could better circumscribe  
31 country-brand association by employing the broader scope of qualitative methods and  
32 interpretivist approaches.  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40

41 There have already been forays in the literature into qualitative interpretations of COO, which  
42 have enhanced our understanding of its “effect”. For instance, in his paper on the mythology of  
43 Swedish fashion, and drawing largely from McCracken (1988), Östberg (2011) observes that the  
44 properties of mythological meaning entice consumers and that through “... advertising it is as if  
45 these properties come to reside in the consumption objects” (p.223). Similarly, Kravets (2012)  
46 explains that the marketing of vodka in a Russian context combines “...social imagination about  
47 power, nationhood, and Russianness” (p. 361). Neither of these observations regarding the  
48 relevance of origin can be adequately captured under a single, linear, self-reported DV in the way  
49 that the overwhelming majority of COO research has been conducted to date. This is not to say  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 that estimates of consumer attitudes through quantitative measures are meaningless. However,  
4 there are more ways in which COO can influence consumption. Thus, a consumer whose attitude  
5 toward Russia is largely negative and who holds an understanding of its vodka as of inferior  
6 quality may nonetheless consume Russian vodka brands as a play on mythologies of the country's  
7 culture. In this case, it is evident that a general assessment of quality may be a far more  
8 problematic predictor of consumer choice than the overwhelming majority of COO research  
9 implicitly assumes.  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15

16  
17 More generally, consumer preference may be guided by factors that would be exceptionally  
18 challenging to capture by any generalized monolithic measurement (see Featherstone, 1987). This  
19 observation highlights the potential contribution from approaches that are considered as part of  
20 Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) (see Arnould and Thompson, 2005) which, to date, have not  
21 been employed to comprehensively explore COO. For instance, according to Brijs et al. (2011),  
22 only four studies have used semiotics to examine COO. This paucity can surely be attributed to  
23 the philosophical divide of the ontological, epistemological and methodological nature among  
24 researchers, with the COO simply landing firmly on only one side of this division. Nevertheless,  
25 the field would benefit from truly new insights if it would be approached using a wider range of  
26 methodologies.  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35

36 In short, this critical conceptual discussion of the more multi-faceted appraisal of the commodity,  
37 which is the first constituent factor affected by COO, suggests that effect is not necessarily linear.  
38 The influence of COO is potentially far more complex than generally portrayed in extant  
39 research. Quality as an independent variable cannot, on its own, fully explain the impact of COO.  
40 Even if the concept of quality is extended to cover all of the variables identified by, for instance,  
41 Zeithaml (1988), there are still alternative modes of engagement with consumption that draw  
42 from other motivations that come into play directly in the context of COO. We therefore propose  
43 that a thorough examination of situations in which "origin" does not have the anticipated effect  
44 should employ both qualitative exploratory methods, non-cross-sectional data generation designs  
45 and nonlinear (for instance, threshold-based) analytical models to provide a more nuanced  
46 understanding of how the construct can function as a driver of consumption. A case in point is  
47 when COO, as the basis of cultural engagement beyond quality or any similar generalizable  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 holistic property, is more of a situational factor with sometimes unexpected results. For instance,  
4 how can we capture how the country images of America and Japan intersect to enable certain  
5 communities to feel strongly about motorcycles branded as inherently related to either place?  
6 Understanding origin in terms of when consumers infer a place association and what it actually  
7 means could be extremely challenging and therefore requires further exploration of its central  
8 premise, namely, the association to place. The following section elucidates to some extent the  
9 process by which consumers relate to and are impacted by place associations by promulgating  
10 findings from research literature in the field of psychology.  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18

## 19 The nature of association in COO

### 22 *The problem of the mechanics of association*

23 The perceived effect of COO is entirely contingent on a perceived association between a  
24 commodity and a place. However, the mechanics of this association have rarely been discussed in  
25 scholarly work in this area. The recent work of Andéhn and L'Espoir Decosta (2016) empirically  
26 demonstrates that the evaluative relevance of the impact of COO is moderated by the strength of  
27 association between a place and a brand. The study extends the concept that brand associations  
28 are variable rather than having binary properties (French and Smith, 2013), and that this  
29 variability influences the extent to which these associations affect evaluation. This construal of  
30 associations as determinants of brand equity is derived from a frequently cited account of Keller  
31 (1993), who, after drawing largely on the theory of memory as spreading activation in cortical  
32 structures (see Andersson, 1983), suggested that consumer-based brand equity should be  
33 considered the summative influence of the associations held to a brand in memory. Keller (1993)  
34 considered COO as one case of such associations. As the issue has not been explored at length in  
35 extant COO literature, there has been little debate nor a plurality of perspectives regarding the  
36 nature of this association.  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49

50 More particularly, the literature has not stayed abreast of recent developments in the psychology  
51 of judgement and decision making. Indeed, the field has been quite selective about which aspects  
52 of novel approaches from other disciplines to adopt and adapt. As such, perspectives generally  
53 put forth either do not address the issue or adhere to the dominant view based in the psychology  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 of memory. In terms of the theoretical development of the role association plays in the context of  
4 COO, it is useful to fully consider this psychological perspective and its implications to allow the  
5 comparison of alternative perspectives. With this in mind, we engage in direct promulgation  
6 (Kozinets, 2012) of knowledge from the field of psychology to COO. Beyond explanations by the  
7 Associative Network Model of the structure of memory (Anderson, 1983) and thus consumers'  
8 brand associations (Keller, 1993), the major lesson learned from that tradition of research is that  
9 it has generally downplayed the importance of conscious deliberation and has referenced  
10 declarative memory, or memories we are consciously aware of in decision making (Fitzsimons et  
11 al., 2002). Simply put, research that has until now exclusively emphasized conscious processes in  
12 the context of decision making, or attitude formation, as related to COO, is akin to "barking up  
13 the wrong tree."  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23

### ***The problem of learning without conscious recognition***

24  
25 Even though the relevance of product or brand origin is often framed in the context of recognition  
26 accuracy (see Samiee et al., 2005) this may be one of the dead ends of the research area.  
27 Interestingly, a growing number of psychologists have highlighted the importance of non-  
28 conscious processes not only in memory formation but also in consumer decision making (see  
29 Fitzsimons et al., 2002 for a review). For instance, in the relevant context of learning, there is  
30 significant evidence suggesting that complex patterns of association can be learned and affect  
31 decision making without the learner ever being conscious of having adopted this knowledge  
32 (Whittlesea and Wright, 1997). The fact that learning occurs primarily without conscious  
33 recognition has direct applications in the context of COO (And hn et al. 2016b). Thus, this lateral  
34 application of the psychology of learning can serve to resolve the issue of explicit brand origin  
35 recognition.  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45

46 Consider the following statement from Samiee et al (2005): "If brand origin plays a salient role in  
47 consumers' everyday judgments and decision-making processes, it would be expected that  
48 consumers would possess reasonably accurate abilities to recognize brands' COs [Countries of  
49 Origin]" (p 392). While this statement appears to be valid, a thorough consideration of the idea  
50 reveals it is misguided given the long-standing and firmly established understanding of attitude  
51 formation and decision making as contingent on unconscious processes. Though very recent  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 contributions still suggest ideas, such as “...even if they know the origin of a product, consumers  
4 are sometimes found to lack the intention to use this information in their product judgements”  
5 (Thøgersen et al., 2017; 550), or overtly focus on conscious recollection of the decision making  
6 process pertaining to COO (Balabanis and Diamantopoulos, 2008), COO research urgently needs  
7 to focus on actual decisions instead of attitudes and self-reports. Efforts in that direction are still  
8 few and far between (see Herz and Diamantopoulos, 2017) but laudable. However, the entire  
9 field would be well served to transcend the cognition-centric orientation to embrace more diverse  
10 methods to tackle the longstanding issues of COO highlighted in this study.  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17

18  
19 Conscious awareness of being affected by COO is not necessarily even a close proxy to the entire  
20 scope of possibilities that yield a situation in which a consumer has actually been affected. Here,  
21 we encounter a central issue with many of the arguments that have been leveraged against the  
22 relevance of the COO in the past: the failure of consumers to generally be able to accurately  
23 account for the correct origin of commodities (e.g., Samiee et al., 2005). Given that place  
24 associations need not be consciously retrievable for consumers, a test of brand origin recognition  
25 accuracy emerges as an imperfect means of determining whether a COO effect can or has  
26 occurred. For example, consumers would not need to be consciously aware of a specific brand’s  
27 (country of) origin in order to unconsciously infer characteristics from a place when evaluating  
28 the brand (Fitzsimons et al., 2002). Though this may be a case of misclassification, it can still be  
29 said that an effect has occurred (see Magnusson et al., 2011). Non-classification, at the level of  
30 influence on the unconscious learning and its subsequent implicit use during decision making,  
31 can simply not be disproven by a failed origin recognition report. This is because the basis for  
32 decision making is (i) largely unconscious, and (ii) typically leaves us unaware of factors that  
33 went into making the decision itself. The exception to the rule is when we engage conscious  
34 faculties in a situation of cognitive elaboration, i.e. when a commodity is overtly and explicitly  
35 identified as associated to a place and this association is leveraged in subsequent decision  
36 making. However, applying this alternative explanatory model to the understanding of COO does  
37 not unequivocally support the relevance of the effect, as it also reveals several shortcomings in  
38 this research stream. Most significantly, it highlights the need for alternative methodologies, as  
39 the traditional attitude-based inquiry only partially reflects the basis for decisions and are even  
40 less accurate in predicting actual consumer behaviour (see Ajzen, 1991). The need for  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60



1  
2  
3 methodologies that acknowledge COO as an unconscious influence has practical relevance and is  
4 a longstanding issue in COO research.  
5  
6  
7

8 Another highly relevant problem related to the traditional methods applied in the study of COO is  
9 the application of so called “pro-discovery designs” (Samiee, 2011), such as the use of “single  
10 cue” studies that overemphasize origin as a stimulus (Bilkey and Nes, 1982). Simply put, many  
11 COO studies suffer from the problem of presenting “origin” in an experimental setting that does  
12 not correspond to how consumers would encounter it in most consumption situations. In effect,  
13 they over-present origin. There are recent research examples in which respondents were primed  
14 and/or instructed in a manner reflecting the situation in the marketplace. Attempts to avoid co-  
15 presenting place and commodity artificially have been minor in some cases, such as using a  
16 combination of sequencing and distraction tasks (see Andéhn et al., 2016a), and more elaborate  
17 in other cases, like an implicit associations test (Herz and Diamantopoulos, 2013). While it is  
18 encouraging that researchers are cognizant of this problem, the latter study is an elegant and long-  
19 overdue attempt to address a longstanding and fundamental problem of COO, although much  
20 remains to be done.  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31

32 Approaches commonly used to date, at best, account for how the understanding of a place comes  
33 into play during an evaluation of a commodity in a particular situation. This evaluation occurs in  
34 the form of conscious deliberation, which, as we have seen, is not the mode of engagement in  
35 which the majority of decisions are made. Furthermore, these methods do not account for the  
36 propensity of place association cues to be noticed and processed in a relevant consumption  
37 situation. The apparent solution is to employ controlled field studies in which manipulations can  
38 be deployed under realistic conditions. There will likely come a point when the cultural  
39 understanding of provenance (Amine, 2008) will need focused attention, as the question arises: is  
40 provenance simply the same as leveraging association to generate a holistic estimate of quality to  
41 consumers? If not, should provenance be treated as a special case of association? These under-  
42 explored issues lie beneath the surface as an implicit assumption of any study assigning  
43 significance to origin. For instance, it is interesting and yet methodologically challenging to  
44 examine whether consumers can be convinced of accepting a “new” origin in lieu of an old one  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 through managerial intervention (the acquisition of Sweden's Volvo by China's Geely is a  
4 relevant case in point; see Bartikowski and Cleveland, 2017).  
5  
6  
7

8 In short, our critical examination of the nature of origin and the associations it entails has  
9 revealed that any “objective” definition of "origin" is an inferior predictor as compared to  
10 perceived association. As suggested by Roth and Romeo (1992), a country’s reputation for  
11 excellence in the production of a particular commodity becomes a pertinent piece of information  
12 only to the extent that it is a perceived one. This “perception” can take the form of an  
13 unconscious bias that may exert a tremendous influence on consumer decision making without  
14 buyers being explicitly aware of it. As attitude formation and decision making are largely the  
15 result of unconscious processes and, following theories of memory as spreading activation,  
16 “origin” is ultimately a semantically potent prompt of association that guides attitude formation,  
17 it is likely that COO is relevant in influencing consumption in ways for which commonly  
18 employed designs fail to account. This discussion thus implies that COO research should not only  
19 account for variability in association strength but also consider methods that have the potential to  
20 capture the reality of unconscious processes and decision making in most cases. We argue that  
21 consideration of the following scaffolded procedural steps in research design may potentially  
22 enhance research that addresses research design issues:  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35

- 36 • Explore the wider meaning of place association in the context of globalization.
- 37 • Consider methods that have the potential to capture unconscious processes.
- 38 • Examine counter-intuitive means by which place associations are formed.
- 39 • Account for association strength variability.
- 40
- 41
- 42
- 43
- 44

45 So far, we have explored the object of COO, the commodity, and the effect it exerts. We have  
46 also discussed the nature of association that prompts the effect. The last piece of this conceptual  
47 puzzle is the source of the content of these associations: the place, which together with its  
48 properties - a particularly potent source of associations – are critically examined in the next  
49 section.  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

## Refining “Place”

### *The problem of place*

Although the statement that COO deals with an association between place and commodity may appear redundant, it can be argued that research on COO to date has fallen victim to an overspecialization that makes complete abstraction of a central tenet of the effect: that in fact, COO owes its power to a particularity of places and not of countries (see Papadopoulos et al., 2012; Josiassen et al., 2013). This is hardly surprising in the context of significant focus on the pivotal role of places pointed out by philosophers of geography in studies on the role of place in human understanding (Casey, 1993). The primacy of place might be part of the explanation as to why COO seems to bypass mitigation even in the face of attempts to minimize its influence, as highlighted in this observation by Thøgersen et al. (2017: 554): “....these US consumers preferred fresh broccoli imported from Canada, followed by Mexico and last China. Even after adding information about the certification standards for imported organic products, none of the imported alternatives could compete...”

In spite of the apparent validity of assuming that place constitutes the key ingredient of what makes COO exert its influence and the fact that some impactful works have examined COO when it is sourced from a place other than a country, such as a region (Van Ittersum et al., 2003) or a city (Lentz et al., 2006), countries still constitute the overwhelming majority of places used in COO studies (this differs from research in tourism, which often focuses on areas within countries and will be noted below). It is certainly not controversial to state that there are good reasons for this country-centric approach to origin research. Countries and indeed nation-states have historical importance as a category of places that guide our understanding of the world. Although “country” is a construct of Western imagination originating in ancient Latin, it should not be overlooked as a category. Perhaps the problem in circumscribing COO is not in overstating the importance of countries and their images in the context of consumption, but rather the relative dearth of research on other types of places and the particularity of place as a concept. In most COO research to date, the source of COO is generally referred to as a country image (see Lu et al., 2016 for a comprehensive review). Origin also intersects with other implicitly place-contingent properties such as globalness (Winit et al., 2014) or foreignness (Batra, et al., 2000).

1  
2  
3 Finally we should also investigate the basis of the importance of place itself, which, as has been  
4 noted in numerous place studies, exerts a profound effect on our understanding of virtually  
5 anything in the world around us, as well as of ourselves.  
6  
7

### 8 9 10 ***The problem of directionality in COO***

11 Accounts of country image in the literature cover a plethora of potential factors that contribute to  
12 its formation. For instance, they include the so-called “inverse” COO (White, 2012), which  
13 identifies the potential of products to exert an effect back on the place with which they are  
14 associated. Similarly, Krishnan (1996) observed that brand associations are the antecedents of  
15 brand equity and that COO is derived from association to place in a manner that makes it possible  
16 to understand the relative importance of origin amongst the many factors that constitute brand  
17 equity. Several studies have recently been published on the formation of place image and the  
18 interacting roles of COO with, for instance, tourism (Elliot and Papadopoulos, 2016; Ryu et al.,  
19 2016) or the use of food and gastronomy as a device to promote and brand cities (see Berg and  
20 Sevón, 2014), and place branding as an increasingly common practice (Lucarelli and Berg, 2011).  
21 Clearly, place image is now acknowledged in multiple literature streams contingent upon, among  
22 other things, the commodities associated with it.  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33

34 There is some tangential potential for understanding entire categories of geographies as  
35 contingent on their role in what L’Espoir Decosta and Andéhn (2018) called “product  
36 geography,” where interrelation becomes the basis for the symbolic orders that underscore  
37 commercial relations. For instance, the competitiveness of a vineyard is derived as a function of  
38 its relation to other similar places. In addition, this category-specific emergence of place image  
39 can help further the understanding of peculiar discrepancies of outcome (see Deshpandé, 2010) in  
40 how place mythologies are not only used to market commodities but also in how this practice  
41 reflects back on the place in question (L’Espoir Decosta & Andéhn, 2018). This consideration  
42 has been applied on different levels of place as a general sense-making device, such as in  
43 destination promotional materials (Zhang et al., 2015) that transcend both Western and Asian  
44 markets, or media events in Eastern Europe that remain relevant to audiences at the furthest  
45 reaches of the region (Andéhn and Zenker, 2015). This same multi-level inter-relational approach  
46 to understanding places through media and commercially motivated communication also applies  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 to most commercial functions of places, even though certain contexts may trigger a variety of  
4 specific associations. For instance, understanding Croatia in terms of its political history is vastly  
5 different if one compares it to Norway versus its neighbour and fellow republic under the ex-  
6 Yugoslavia, Serbia. Similarly, evaluating the same place as a tourist destination or as a source for  
7 fashion products renders different outcomes. This leads to the consideration of a unique  
8 characteristic of place itself: the many layers to its meaning. Here we find not only some of the  
9 most commonly employed, and arguably refutable, arguments against COO being relevant, such  
10 as consumers not knowing or caring about the [spatial] origin of a product, but we also catch a  
11 hinting towards the particularity of places as a class of symbols apart from others in central ways.  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19

### 20 *The problem of the symbolic nature of place*

21  
22 In influential phenomenological accounts of geographical understanding, place is often  
23 understood as distinct from space; i.e., the definition of place is space with assigned meaning  
24 through experience (Tuan, 1977). Through human intervention we also find places, not truly  
25 spaces, being robbed of their particular meaning. The result is instead a condition called  
26 “placelessness” (Relph, 1976), such as stretches of highway or uniformly designed airport  
27 lounges. These non-descript places are mere spaces symbolic of attributes and characteristics they  
28 purport to represent; for example, “just lounges”. Conversely, when extrapolating this line of  
29 reasoning, the same commercial symbols, product categories, service traditions, brands or food  
30 specialties can, through their own *implacement* (Casey, 1993), make them viable for enjoying a  
31 COO that exerts a similar effect back on the place. Following Casey’s (1993) application of the  
32 concept of *implacement* as a mutual effect exerted between the “implaced” object and the place  
33 itself, as well as the nature of association-based understanding, we can introduce some practical  
34 aspects of the use of place in marketing.  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45

46 Before we get to how places interact with commodities we need to first account for certain  
47 factors. First, the “place” concept itself is a universal symbolic order to human beings, as it is a  
48 pivotal sense making device (Tuan, 1977). Second, this symbolic ordering of places is anything  
49 but universal, as any given place meaning is invariably socially constructed in processes that  
50 render no two understandings of a particular place fully identical. The latter observation would  
51 hold true for any manner of symbol. Unsurprisingly, this universal symbolic ordering that place  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 provides also produces some interesting corollaries. For instance, there has been significant  
4 inquiry into the issue of place attachment (e.g., Lewicka, 2011), as well as the constituent role of  
5 place meaning in defining the self and the other. This variegated aspect of place can have direct  
6 pertinence in the meaning assigned to consumption (Sherry, 2000), such as in the case of  
7 consumer preference in the context of xenocentric/ethnocentric orientation (Batra et al., 2000).  
8 Furthermore, while place in the context of COO pertains to identity for those who live there, it is  
9 almost invariably abstract due to its scale (i.e. region or country level). Exceptions naturally  
10 apply where the sense of place is more direct (as in the wine region of Bordeaux exuding and  
11 featuring its sense of terroir). However, the result of this abstraction is that place meaning takes  
12 on a mythological nature because the purpose of myths is to address paradoxes of human  
13 ambivalence. For instance, Connor (1994) argues that nations are themselves best understood as  
14 myths per se.  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24

25  
26 The recent nationalistic tendencies in Europe and the United States make the study of COO not  
27 only especially relevant but also move COO further away from any objective properties or,  
28 indeed, any factor that deviates meaningfully from the realm of social construction. As such,  
29 place emerges as a universally meaningful symbol, identifiable by its role in a system, or  
30 geography; a role that provides it with readily available meaning, but meaning that must always  
31 be understood as contingent by comparison to other places. The case of France, with its hedonic  
32 products (wine, perfume) and utilitarian products (automobiles, electronics and industrial  
33 machinery) illustrates the relationships between specific product categories and place, as well as  
34 this principle. France has a strong positive association in an overwhelming majority of cases with  
35 regard to hedonic products (Amine, 2008), but this is not true when it comes to utilitarian  
36 products. We can therefore conclude that the gestalt evoked by the signifier “France” has  
37 different connotations for these two product categories. Conversely, the place “Germany”  
38 emerges as the opposite of France in this utilitarian/hedonic matrix.  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49

### 50 *The problem of mythology of places*

51  
52 Mythology associated with a place is an interesting problem in COO research. Research to date  
53 has almost invariably drawn from mythologies of production. In other words, COO is thought to  
54 draw from mythologies and narratives that treat the place as a productionscape, such as the  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 “terroir” for wine, cheese and meat, or a place where engineering excellence in automobile  
4 production has a long historical tradition. Some research, however, has approached the  
5 commercial relevance of place from a consumptionscape perspective (Karababa and Ger, 2010),  
6 whereby the mythology of a product’s place association is anchored in its consumption. For  
7 example, a traditional Thai massage parlour constitutes a clear engagement with a place  
8 mythology that is exported all over the world but does not overtly draw on the mythology of a  
9 distant productionscape. Indeed, the “product” is a form of medicinal and cultural service that is  
10 recreated as and within a service-consumptionscape in places as disparate as Stockholm and  
11 Montevideo. Again, this involves a greater degree of complexity that primarily reveals fissures in  
12 what was believed to be, up to now, precise COO research. However, doing away with some  
13 orthodox renderings of places as unified constructs based solely on mythologies of production,  
14 can lead to a possible solution. We propose instead that there is fertile ground in (i) extending the  
15 role of place to encompass more aspects of consumption – such as a situationally driven  
16 propensity of wanting to engage with a cultural particularity (for instance having English tea),  
17 and (ii) viewing the meaning of place as contingent upon the context in which it is evoked, such  
18 as the difference between cooking an Italian recipe at home versus going to an authentic Italian  
19 restaurant.  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33

### 34 *The problem of compound images*

35  
36 The above explanation follows the spreading activation theory of memory (Anderson, 1983), i.e.,  
37 that we are in fact encountering sets of associations linked to what can be understood as  
38 compound images, such as “France-wine” or “France-automobiles.” These images can be  
39 fundamentally different from each other, and from the images evoked by “France.” The  
40 implications of this difference would be, first, an explanation of why category-place matches  
41 appear to exert the strongest form of COO (Josiassen et al., 2013; Andéhn et al., 2016a). In  
42 addition, the difference would also lend support to a critical understanding of the value of  
43 studying country images on a general level for the purpose of predicting the potential of COO.  
44 This suggests that efforts relying on a unified account of specific places as a predictor of COO  
45 may have been misguided. At the very least, we have created a situation in which an initial  
46 conceptual insistence has led to suboptimal scopes of variance being explained in extant models.  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 This compound-based route to understanding place-commodity interrelation delves even further  
4 into the realm of abstract symbolism, once the link between spatiality and place is critically  
5 examined. An interesting critical examination of places, particularly in the context of their  
6 commercial use, has identified place with a certain ephemeral or “phantasmal” property (see Gao  
7 et al., 2013). As spatial properties are not contingencies of place, places can therefore be  
8 completely mythological; i.e., lacking a true, or even approximate, territorial correlate and  
9 containing characteristics of both diachronic and synchronic nature (Levi-Strauss, 1978). For  
10 instance, Valhalla, El Dorado, Santa's Workshop or Shangri-La are all mythological places that  
11 have been provided post-hoc spatialities for the purpose of attracting tourists (e.g., Kolås, 2004)  
12 and could be just as readily appropriated to evoke COOs. On a humorous note, one may speculate  
13 that COOs from these places would be as commercially potent as they would be confusing to  
14 international trade legislators. As these examples apply to COO, places need not be, nor are they  
15 necessarily ever, more than mythological objects. A toponym is thus, strangely enough, best  
16 understood as a *signifier for itself* and its nested mythologies, rather than as a precise  
17 denomination or semantic for a specific spatiality. In other words, all places have mythological  
18 properties of semiological significance to which a place image can be anchored.  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31

32 In short, this critical conceptual discussion of the particularity of places, the third constituent  
33 factor affected by COO, reveals that although countries are perhaps the most potent symbolic  
34 forms of place, they are only one potential source of COO. Thus, place mythologies as a  
35 symbolic rendition of place extend beyond their role as sites of production to embrace  
36 consumption in its broadest sense. By viewing the source of COO as the result of a compound  
37 image specific to the evaluation situation rather than from a general place image, we can explain  
38 category-specific effects. Finally, we argue that place association is a particular and perhaps  
39 exceptionally potent form of association and that the scope of COO extends in palpable ways to  
40 place management. If COO research is broadened beyond a country-centric approach, further  
41 integration of place branding, tourism, regional development and COO literature would be made  
42 possible. These specific contexts will thus facilitate investigations into how consumers come to  
43 understand places in relation to the object under evaluation as a precursor to COO.  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60



## Conclusion: Re-imagining the country-of-origin effect

By relying on a thorough critical discussion of the problematics of the three constituent parts of COO in extant literature, this conceptual study has uncovered the following gaps:

- (i) General endogenous constructs do not readily capture meanings engaged in COO. In fact, COO can take forms that are not necessarily meaningful to measure as a linear property across several individuals.
- (ii) The attitude-behaviour divide and the implications of unconscious processing limit the accuracy of commonly employed attitude measurement designs in COO research.
- (iii) Any strict treatment of places as spatialities in COO research fails to recognize their phenomenological nature and to fully account for their symbolic significance.

The dialectics we have used throughout this study allow us to propose actionable suggestions at theoretical, methodological and managerial levels to each of the critical observations about the three components of COO. Together, the arguments we presented constitute a re-evaluation of COO. Based on the simplified COO model in Figure 1, this paper proposes, through the process of promulgation, a new perspective that captures the different components for a reimagined COO. Table 1 summarizes and extrapolates each of the components of this reimagined COO, and their relationships to each other, with row identifiers corresponding to the letters in the framework as identified earlier in Figure 1. Our hope is that the granulation of these properties in Table 1 would provide sufficient reasons and inspiration to give voice to varied, but up to now underrepresented, perspectives to the field.

---

**TABLE 1 HERE**

---

1  
2  
3 Following calls in many studies to examine the relevance of COO research in practice, we herein  
4 conclude that COO represents an important factor in various facets of understanding  
5 consumption. However, the critical discussions throughout this paper reveal there is a need to  
6 further develop the understanding of the effect at the policy level. In other words, it is time to  
7 include qualitative research questions worthy of our interest, such as: How do consumers infer  
8 association? How do they come to understand places in ways that are relevant in the context of  
9 COO? How do they engage in place mythologies in their consumption practices (see Karababa  
10 and Ger, 2010)? As well, we highlight the need for the field to commit to studies that would  
11 address these questions. The seemingly obvious answers to these questions involve embracing  
12 alternative research approaches, including field experiments, ethnographic inquiry and the case  
13 method that have clear and novel theoretical and/or methodological implications. However, it is  
14 insufficient to merely replicate similar studies in order to demonstrate the existence of a COO for  
15 product X in country Y. We need more practical applications to enhance investigations about  
16 how place associations serve as resources, living political and cultural assemblages or even as  
17 problems in the context of COO. For instance, it could become important to know under what  
18 circumstances the inference of general product quality is dispelled in favour of some cultural  
19 particularity that can be described as ironic consumption. Can export flows be traced back to  
20 market origin? And in view of the recent political events in the Western world, what does  
21 political turbulence do to the reputation of places (in all of their renditions)?  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36

### 37 **Theoretical implications**

38  
39 This study also infers that associations to places have the potential of significantly influencing  
40 consumption in ways that go beyond what can be described as “effects.” This is because places  
41 are multifaceted and complex symbolic entities that depend greatly on the context of their  
42 evocation in their effects on consumption. These “effects” should be defined not only as direct  
43 linear influences, exerting an influence on reported perceived quality, or purchase intentions.  
44 They can also effectively be extended to accounts of how culture impact upon how consumers  
45 engage with commodities. This is not new per se. However, this observation represents highly  
46 relevant but till now underexplored aspects underlying our understanding of COO. This study  
47 initiates the promulgation of knowledge from other relevant disciplines spanning consumer  
48 culture theory in marketing, cognitive psychology and phenomenological geography, all of which  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 have the potential to refine and extend extant COO knowledge and research on the influence of a  
4 place-association.  
5  
6  
7

8 In our view, it is clear that COO exerts a palpable influence on consumption and globalization  
9 has not eroded the relevance of COO as a driver of consumption, but has instead revealed that  
10 some of the implicit assumptions in COO research to date are due for critical reassessment. Thus,  
11 it is important that future research addresses questions related to how “COO may act as an affect-  
12 laden, ‘value-expressive’ or ‘self-image’ attribute” (Sharma, 2011: 349). In fact, though  
13 (anti)globalization engages with the spatial logic of internationalization, it does little to dispel the  
14 mythologies of the commercial place-world from which COO draws. The place-world is a  
15 dynamic and complex set of symbols, and its constitutive properties for COO merit increased  
16 multi- and interdisciplinary attention. In addition, the finer points of association may be better  
17 explored through questions such as: “what is the psychological basis of abstraction of space into  
18 place?” and “how can we draw an account of the particularity of place from this perspective?”  
19 While COO research has occasionally made forays into the technical and psychological aspects  
20 of the effect, it has still not come into its own at the methodological level in a manner that  
21 engages such questions in a convincing way.  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33

### 34 **Methodological implications**

35 To address the direct effects of COO we propose controlled field experiments as a relatively  
36 unexplored methodological option in COO research. For example, it would serve to examine  
37 purchasing behaviour in a food retail environment in which place cues have been manipulated.  
38 Such a design would account for the use of a specific origin cue affecting an actual purchase  
39 decision as opposed to only those that can be consciously retrieved (see also Andéhn et al.,  
40 2016b).  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47

48 Similarly, the analytical level also presents ample opportunity for innovation in the context of  
49 COO research. One example is to see whether threshold effects can be observed where place  
50 association exerts its effect as an alternative to analytical procedures that assume a linear  
51 relationship in how COO exerts its influence. An even more promising avenue is the potential of  
52 ethnographic approaches to outline how the effect manifests itself as a factor in the meaning  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 assigned to places that emerge from unexpected motivations behind the consumption of placed  
4 commodities. In other words, how is place meaning leveraged to enact ritualistic consumption  
5 behaviour of, for instance, Italian wines or American motorcycles? Or, how are these rituals  
6 transformed as they are enacted across contexts?  
7  
8  
9

10  
11 Along similar lines, to identify more appropriate constructs and concepts of meaning relevant to  
12 the consumption of implaced product mythologies, we need to approach COO using  
13 ethnography-inspired modes of inquiry to ensure that these concepts are reflectively emic. For  
14 example, to better understand the consumption of implaced commodities, it is imperative that  
15 consumption is not only targeted by group-based inferential techniques that only draw from self-  
16 report measurement. To this end, we also suggest, beyond field studies and qualitative methods, a  
17 refinement of “lab”-style research with stronger controls and tests such as the Implicit  
18 Association Test (IAT), a widely used method in psychology for assessing implicit bias and  
19 prejudice. Such an approach presents possible solutions of more liberal scope of applications to  
20 the various methodological concerns facing COO research.  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29

30  
31 To capture the broader implications of COO beyond consumer preference formation, we also  
32 propose that the field engage in comparative studies at the levels of country/region/province/state,  
33 etc. to determine, for example, whether the perceptual effect exerted by COO emerges as a  
34 central predictor in contexts such as industrial development and export competitiveness. For  
35 example, can we demonstrate a link between provenance-based branding and capital returning to  
36 the region? Or, what are the conditions required for COO to serve as a viable means to regional  
37 development in struggling rural communities? Finally, to encompass the phenomenological  
38 nature of places in COO studies, we suggest the field extend its research to examine (i) means of  
39 associating commodities to, for instance, mythological places and, (ii) the implications of place  
40 meaning being situated in the toponym itself. For example, how significant is the evocation of  
41 Shangri-La in conveying the promise of a blissful stay in the luxurious Shangri-La hotels? On the  
42 other hand, would products from Tibet, the imagined place of the Shangri-La, convey the  
43 “nirvanic” properties of the evocation of the place? The COO intersects a plethora of such  
44 interesting managerial problems, and as this special issue demonstrates, it is now an appropriate  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 time to broaden the scope of this research stream to include the various overlapping areas of  
4 commercial issues that are pertinent to the understanding of COO.  
5  
6  
7

### 8 **Managerial implications**

9  
10 There is a direct and palpable benefit for the understanding of COO to be gained from further  
11 lateral application of knowledge from various adjoining disciplines beyond marketing. For  
12 instance, from a human geography perspective, destination managers may be made cognizant of  
13 the significance of individual experience as a determinant of place meaning, to complement the  
14 image constructs usually employed in marketing research (Tuan, 1977). Furthering knowledge  
15 about how, when and why consumers are affected by association between a commodity and a  
16 place is at this point the most readily available path to further applicable knowledge on COO writ  
17 large. It should be noted that many of these are questions of an exploratory nature, best suited to  
18 interpretivist approaches, that can reveal the shifting nature and complexities of a dynamic field  
19 that is fortunately aware (consider for instance this special issue) that it risks reaching a dead-end,  
20 if it has indeed not already reached it.  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29

### 30 **Suggestions for further studies**

31  
32 This critical study has revealed that COO research should extend beyond application and consider  
33 the consequences and impacts of marketing as knowledge that is not subordinate to matters of  
34 application by addressing how “...broad topical concerns link different consumer research  
35 traditions and enable consumer researchers to poach and cross-fertilize ideas, methods, and  
36 contexts...” (Arnould and Thompson, 2005: 876). Very little exists in terms of a more critical  
37 engagement with COO, albeit with some exceptions (see O’Shaughnessy and O’Shaughnessy,  
38 2000). Indeed, COO can be compared to an informal de facto tariff or a mechanism by which  
39 more affluent countries – or countries with more successful public diplomacy efforts – gain an  
40 advantage over emerging and less developed economies. The argument that COO also exerts an  
41 effect back on places, with their diverse array of stakeholders, is another overlooked aspect of the  
42 effect. Questions like “How does the effect influence decisions that are political and/or pertain to  
43 macro-level trade?” become highly relevant.  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

## References

Aichner, T., Forza, C., & Trentin, A. (2017). The country-of-origin lie: impact of foreign branding on customers' willingness to buy and willingness to pay when the product's actual origin is disclosed. *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, Vol. 27 No. 1, pp. 43-60.

Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 50 No. 2, pp. 179–211.

Amine, L. S. (2008). Country-of-origin, animosity and consumer response: marketing implications of anti-Americanism and Francophobia. *International Business Review*, Vol. 17 No. 4, pp. 402-422.

Andéhn, M. & L'Espoir Decosta, J. N. P. (2016). The variable nature of country-to-brand association and its impact on the strength of the country-of-origin effect. *International Marketing Review*, Vol. 33 No. 6, pp. 851-866.

Andéhn, M., Nordin, F., & Nilsson, M. E. (2016a). Facets of country image and brand equity: Revisiting the role of product categories in country-of-origin effect research. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 225-238.

Andéhn, M., Gloukhovtsev, A., & Schouten, J. (2016b). The country of origin effect – Key issues and future direction. In *2016 Global Marketing Conference: Hong Kong* (pp. 1746-1754).

Andéhn, M., & Zenker, S. (2015). Place branding in systems of place—On the interrelation of nations and supranational places. In Sebastian Zenker and Björn P. Jacobsen (Eds.). *Inter-Regional Place Branding* (pp. 25-37). Heidelberg: Springer.

Anderson, J. R. (1983). A spreading activation theory of memory. *Journal of verbal learning and verbal behavior*, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp. 261-295.

Arnould, E. J., & Thompson, C. J. (2005). Consumer culture theory (CCT): Twenty years of research. *Journal of consumer research*, Vol. 31 No 4, pp. 868-882.

Balabanis, G., & Diamantopoulos, A. (2008). Brand origin identification by consumers: A classification perspective. *Journal of International Marketing*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 39-71.

1  
2  
3 Bartikowski, B., & Cleveland, M. (2017). "Seeing is being": Consumer culture and the  
4 positioning of premium cars in China. *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 77 (August) pp. 195-  
5 202.

6  
7  
8 Batra, R., Ramaswamy, V., Alden, D. L., Steenkamp, J. B. E., & Ramachander, S. (2000). Effects  
9 of brand local and nonlocal origin on consumer attitudes in developing countries. *Journal of*  
10 *consumer psychology*, Vol. 9 No. 2, pp. 83-95.

11  
12  
13 Berg, P. O., & Sevón, G. (2014). Food-branding places – A sensory perspective. *Place Branding*  
14 *and Public Diplomacy*, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp. 289-304.

15  
16  
17 Bilkey, W. J., & Nes, E. (1982). Country-of-origin effects on product evaluations. *Journal of*  
18 *International Business Studies*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 89-100.

19  
20  
21 Bloemer, J., Brijs, K., & Kasper, H. (2009). The CoO-ELM model: A theoretical framework for  
22 the cognitive processes underlying country of origin-effects. *European Journal of Marketing*,  
23 Vol. 43 No. 1/2, pp. 62-89.

24  
25  
26 Brijs, K., Bloemer, J., & Kasper, H. (2011). Country-image discourse model: Unraveling  
27 meaning, structure, and function of country images. *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 64 No.  
28 12, pp. 1259-1269.

29  
30  
31 Casey, E. S. (1993). *Getting back into place: Toward a renewed understanding of the place-*  
32 *world*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

33  
34  
35 Chao, P. (1993). Partitioning country of origin effects: consumer evaluations of a hybrid product.  
36 *Journal of international Business Studies*, Vol. 24 No. 2, pp. 291-306.

37  
38  
39 Connor, W. (1994). A nation is a nation, is a state is an ethnic group, is a. In J. Hutchinson & A.  
40 Smith (Eds.), *Nationalism* (pp. 36-46). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

41  
42  
43 Dakin, J. A., & Carter, S. (2010). Negative image: developing countries and country of origin—an  
44 example from Zimbabwe. *International Journal of Economics and Business Research*, Vol. 2 No.  
45 3-4, pp. 166-186.

46  
47  
48 Deshpandé, R. (2010). Why you aren't buying Venezuelan chocolate. *Harvard Business Review*,  
49 Vol. 88 No. 12, pp. 25-27.

50  
51  
52 Elliot, S., & Papadopoulos, N. (2016). Of products and tourism destinations: An integrative,  
53 cross-national study of place image. *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 69 No. 3, pp. 1157-1165.

1  
2  
3 Ewing, J. (2018, March 9). U.S. Allies jostle to win exemptions from Trump tariffs. *The New*  
4 *York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>  
5

6  
7 Featherstone, M. (1987). Lifestyle and consumer culture. *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol. 4 No.  
8 1, pp. 55-70.  
9

10  
11 Fitzsimons, G. J., Hutchinson, J. W., Williams, P., Alba, J. W., Chartrand, T. L., Huber, J.,  
12 Kardes, F. R., Menon, G., Raghurir, P., J. Russo, E., Shiv, B. and Tavassoli, N. T. (2002). Non-  
13 conscious influences on consumer choice. *Marketing Letters*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 269-279.  
14

15  
16 French, A., & Smith, G. (2013). Measuring brand association strength: a consumer based brand  
17 equity approach. *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 47 No. 8, pp. 1356-1367.  
18

19  
20 Gao, B. W., Zhang, H., & Decosta, P. L. E. (2012). Phantasmal destination: A post-modernist  
21 perspective. *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 39 No. 1, pp. 197-220.  
22

23  
24 Han, C. M. (1989). Country image: Halo or summary construct', *Journal of Marketing Research*,  
25 Vol. 26 No. 2, pp.222–229.  
26

27  
28 Herz, M., & Diamantopoulos, A. (2017). I Use It but Will Tell You That I Don't: Consumers'  
29 Country-of-Origin Cue Usage Denial. *Journal of International Marketing*, Vol. 25 No. 2, pp. 52-  
30 71.  
31

32  
33 Herz, M. F., & Diamantopoulos, A. (2013). Activation of country stereotypes: automaticity,  
34 consonance, and impact. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 41 No. 4, pp. 400-  
35 417.  
36

37  
38 Javalgi, R. G., Cutler, B. D., & Winans, W. A. (2001). At your service! Does country of origin  
39 research apply to services?. *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 15 No. 7, pp. 565-582.  
40

41  
42 Johansson, J. K., Ronkainen, I. A., & Czinkota, M. R. (1994). Negative country-of-origin effects:  
43 The case of the new Russia. *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 25 No. 10, pp. 157-  
44 176.  
45

46  
47 Josiassen, A., Lukas, B. A., Whitwell, G. J., & Assaf, A. G. (2013). The halo model of origin  
48 images: Conceptualisation and initial empirical test. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, Vol. 12 No.  
49 4, pp. 253-266.  
50

51  
52 Karababa, E., & Ger, G. (2010). Early modern Ottoman coffeehouse culture and the formation of  
53 the consumer subject. *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 37 No. 5, pp. 737-760.  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60



1  
2  
3 Krishnan, H. S. (1996). Characteristics of memory associations: A consumer-based brand equity  
4 perspective. *International Journal of research in Marketing*, Vol. 13 No 4, pp. 389-405.  
5

6  
7 Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity.  
8 *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 57 No. 1, pp. 1-22.  
9

10  
11 Kolås, Å. (2004). Tourism and the making of place in Shangri-La. *Tourism Geographies*, Vol. 6  
12 No. 3, pp. 262-278.  
13

14  
15 Kozinets, R. V. (2012). Marketing netnography: Prom/ot (ulgat) ing a new research method.  
16 *Methodological Innovations Online*, Vol. 7 No. 1, pp. 37-45.  
17

18  
19 Kravets, O. (2012). Russia's "Pure Spirit" vodka branding and its politics. *Journal of*  
20 *Macromarketing*, Vol. 32 No. 4, pp. 361-376.  
21

22  
23 L'Espoir Decosta, J. N. P & Andéhn, M. (2018). Looking for Authenticity in Commercial  
24 Geographies. In J.M. Rickly and E.S. Vidon (Eds.). *Authenticity & Tourism: Materialities,*  
25 *Perceptions, Experiences* (pp. 15-31). Emerald Publishing Limited.  
26

27  
28 Lentz, P., Holzmüller, H. H., & Schirmann, E. (2006). City-of-origin effects in the German beer  
29 market: transferring an international construct to a local context. In *International Marketing*  
30 *Research* (pp. 251-274). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.  
31

32  
33 Levi-Strauss, C. (1978). *Myth and meaning*. London: Routledge.  
34

35  
36 Levitt, T. (1983). The Globalization of Markets. *Harvard Business Review*. Vol. 61 No. 3, pp. 92-  
37 103.  
38

39  
40 Lewicka, M. (2011) Place Attachment: How Far have We Come in the Last 40 Years? *Journal of*  
41 *Environmental Psychology*, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 207-30.  
42

43  
44 Lu, I. R., Heslop, L. A., Thomas, D. R. & Kwan, E. (2016). An examination of the status and  
45 evolution of country image research. *International Marketing Review*, Vol. 33 No. 6, pp. 825-  
46 850.  
47

48  
49 Lucarelli, A., & Berg, P.O. (2011). City branding: a state-of-the-art review of the research  
50 domain. *Journal of Place Management and Development*, Vol. 4 No. 1, pp. 9-27.  
51

52  
53 Magnusson, P., Westjohn, S. A., & Zdravkovic, S. (2011). "What? I thought Samsung was  
54 Japanese": accurate or not, perceived country of origin matters. *International Marketing Review*,  
55 Vol. 28 No. 5, pp. 454-472.  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3  
4 McCracken, G. (1988). *Culture and consumption: New approaches to the symbolic character of*  
5 *consumer goods and activities*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

6  
7  
8 O'Shaughnessy, J., & O'Shaughnessy, N. J. (2000). Treating the nation as a brand: Some  
9 neglected issues. *Journal of Macromarketing*, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 56-64.

10  
11  
12 Ostberg, J. (2011). The mythological aspects of country-of-origin: The case of the Swedishness  
13 of Swedish fashion. *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, Vol. 2 No. 4, pp. 223-234.

14  
15  
16 Papadopoulos, N. (1993). What Product and Country Images Are and Are Not. In N.  
17 Papadopoulos & L.A. Heslop (Eds.) *Product-Country Images: Impact and Role in International*  
18 *Marketing* (pp. 1-38). Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press.

19  
20  
21 Papadopoulos, N, and Heslop, L. A., eds. (1993). *Product-Country Images: Impact and Role in*  
22 *International Marketing*. Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press.

23  
24  
25 Papadopoulos, N., El Banna, A., Murphy, S. A., and Rojas-Méndez, J. I. (2012). Place brands and  
26 brand-place associations: the role of 'place' in international marketing". In S Jain & D.A. Griffith  
27 (Eds.), *Handbook of Research in International Marketing*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (88-113). Northampton, MA:  
28 Edward Elgar.

29  
30  
31 Peterson, R. A., & Jolibert, A. J. (1995). A meta-analysis of country-of-origin effects. *Journal of*  
32 *International Business Studies*, Vol. 26 No. 4, pp. 883-900.

33  
34  
35 Relph, E. (1976). *Place and placelessness*. London: Pion.

36  
37  
38 Rudner, R. (1966). *Philosophy of social science*. Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall.

39  
40  
41 Ryu, J. S., L'Espoir Decosta, J.N.P., & Andéhn, M. (2016). From branded exports to traveller  
42 imports: Building destination image on the factory floor in South Korea. *Tourism Management*,  
43 Vol. 52 No. 1, pp. 298-309.

44  
45  
46 Samiee, S. (2011) Resolving the impasse regarding research on the origins of products and  
47 brands, *International Marketing Review*, Vol. 28 No. 5, pp. 473-485.

48  
49  
50 Samiee, S., Shimp, T. A., & Sharma, S. (2005). Brand origin recognition accuracy: its  
51 antecedents and consumers' cognitive limitations. *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol.  
52 36 No. 4, pp. 379-397.

1  
2  
3 Schooler, R. D. (1965). Product bias in the Central American common market. *Journal of*  
4 *Marketing Research*, Vol. 2 No. 4, pp. 394-397.

6  
7 Sharma, P. (2011). Demystifying cultural differences in country-of-origin effects: exploring the  
8 moderating roles of product type, consumption context, and involvement. *Journal of*  
9 *International Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 23 No. 5, pp. 344-364.

11  
12 Sherry Jr, J. F. (2000). Place, technology, and representation. *Journal of Consumer Research*,  
13 Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 273-278.

15  
16 Tan, C.T. & Farley, J.U. (1987), "The Impact of Cultural Patterns on Cognition and Intention in  
17 Singapore." *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13 (March), pp. 540-544.

19  
20 Thakor, M.V. and Kohli, C.S. (1996), "Brand origin: conceptualization and review", *Journal of*  
21 *Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 27-42.

23  
24 Thøgersen, J., Pedersen, S., Paternoga, M., Schwendel, E., & Aschemann-Witzel, J. (2017). How  
25 important is country-of-origin for organic food consumers? A review of the literature and  
26 suggestions for future research. *British Food Journal*, Vol. 119 No. 3, pp. 542-557.

28  
29 Tuan, Y. F. (1977). *Space and place: The perspective of experience*. Minneapolis: University of  
30 Minnesota Press.

32  
33 Van Ittersum, K., Candel, M. J., & Meulenberg, M. T. (2003). The influence of the image of a  
34 product's region of origin on product evaluation. *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 56 No. 3,  
35 pp. 215-226.

37  
38 Verlegh, P. W., & Steenkamp, J. B. E. (1999). A review and meta-analysis of country-of-origin  
39 research. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, Vol. 20 No. 5, pp. 521-546.

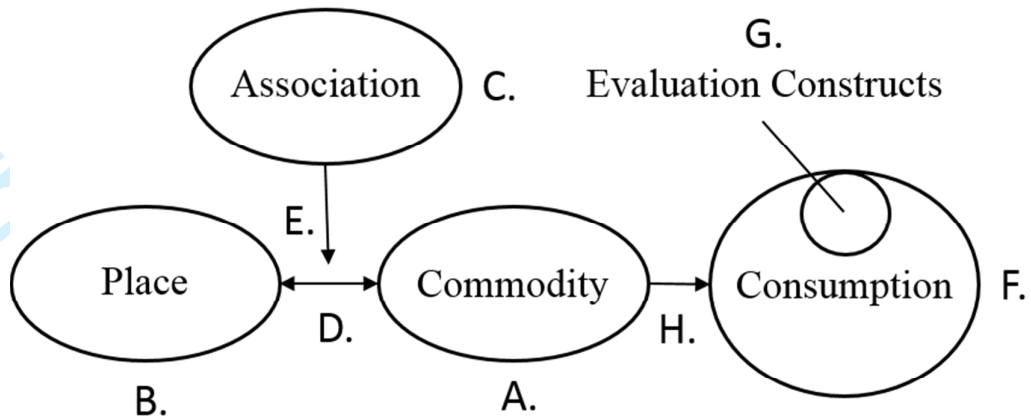
41  
42 Winit, W., Gregory, G., Cleveland, M. & Verlegh, P. (2014) "Global vs local brands: how home  
43 country bias and price differences impact brand evaluations", *International Marketing Review*,  
44 Vol. 31 No. 2, pp. 102-128.

46  
47 Whittlesea, B. W., & Wright, R. L. (1997). Implicit (and explicit) learning: Acting adaptively  
48 without knowing the consequences. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory,*  
49 *and Cognition*, Vol. 23 No. 1, pp. 181-200.

51  
52 White, C. L. (2012). Brands and national image: An exploration of inverse country-of-origin  
53 effect. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, Vol. 8 No. 2, pp. 110-118.

1  
2  
3 Zeithaml, V. A. (1988). Consumer perceptions of price, quality, and value: a means-end model  
4 and synthesis of evidence. *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 52 No. 3, pp. 2-22.  
5  
6

7 Zhang, C. X., Decosta, P. L. E., & McKercher, B. (2015). Politics and tourism promotion: Hong  
8 Kong's myth making. *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 54 No. 3, pp. 156-171.  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60



**Figure 1.** Baseline model of the country-of-origin effect, the relationship between place, commodity, association and consumption and their outcome as it pertains to consumption. The letters next to the constructs and the relationships between them are explained in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary table, explication of all interrelations, proposed in figure 1 above.

<b>The Country-of-Origin Effect</b>	
<b>Components (see Figure 1)</b>	<b>Component properties</b>
<b>A. Commodity</b>	Can be any consumable objects [e.g. Products, (Bilkey & Nes, 1982)], including ones that are intangible [e.g. Services, (Javalgi et al., 2001)] strictly symbolic [e.g. Brands, (Thakor and Kohli, 1996)] and beyond.
<b>B. Place</b>	Places are symbols (McCracken, 1988), understood through meaning assignment via experience (Tuan, 1977) and subject to relative ordering into geographies. In turn, this ordering can derive from other symbols like commodities cf. wine or coffee and expressed in a product geography (L'Espoir Decosta and Andéhn, 2018).
<b>C. Perceived Associations</b>	Association, the basis of brand equity (Keller, 1993), variable by degree (Andéhn and L'Espoir Decosta, 2016), strengthened by co-occurrence, weakened by occurrence by either of the two without the other (see Hebb, 1949; also Hayek 1952).
<b>D. Commodity-Place</b>	Provenance as a particular form of association is particularly potent for inferring meaning. Provenance is completely decoupled from any spatial criterion in determining origin (Magnusson et al., 2011). Attitudes about the place can affect evaluation even without the consumer being explicitly aware of the attitude (Herz and Diamantopoulos, 2013).
<b>E. Association Moderator</b>	Association should be treated as a moderator. It represents a necessary but insufficient condition for the COE to occur. Association predicts the degree by which a perception of a place affects the perception of a commodity (Andéhn and L'Espoir Decosta, 2016).
<b>F. Consumption</b>	Should be considered as encompassing far more than that its mere typical meaning. Consumption that may be influenced by COO includes engagement with commodities in the broadest sense (see for instance Ostberg, 2011; also Kravetz, 2012).
<b>G. Evaluation Constructs</b>	Some established evaluation construct include but are not limited to quality perceptions (Bilkey and Nes, 1982), purchase intentions (Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999) and/or brand equity (Keller, 1993).
<b>H. Commodity-to-Consumption</b>	A multifaceted influence that can prompt consumption in many different ways. Should be thought of as initiating a complex engagement between symbols instead of simply driving purchases or attitude formation.