

## Ithaca 2018 Abstract Submission

### Title

Wine and its evocation: what wine evoke? An exploratory qualitative study of the sense of wine consumption.

### I want to submit an abstract for:

Conference Presentation

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### Keywords

Territory of origin; regional products; wine; design

### Research Question

How customers perceive a wine's terroir of origin?

### Methods

This research is based on an innovative projective qualitative methodology, the album online method.

### Results

This research highlights the dimensions of wine terroir of origin perception, particularly, an enchantment dimension. In addition, it also confirms and precise the structure of wine terroir of origin image.

### Abstract

WINE AND ITS EVOCATION: WHAT WINE EVOKE? AN EXPLORATORY QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE SENSE OF WINE CONSUMPTION

Introduction

A product country of origin (CoO) could have a significant impact on its evaluation by consumer (Usunier, 2006). Therefore, more than 400 research articles have been published to investigate this impact (Usunier 2006).

Nowadays, the internationalization of production processes is lessening the pertinence of CoO. If consumers loss their confidence in country of production, some authors suggest to use a subdivision of country, the terroir (Suri & Thakor 2013, Elaydi & McLaughlin 2012 or Iversen & Hem 2008). Indeed, the terroir is constituted by a set of unique characteristics, an authenticity which constitutes a strong differentiation asset, nearly impossible to copy for the competitors (Iversen & Hem, 2006). Currently, terroir of origin (ToO) is fashionable, and represents a wonderful opportunity to market products.

However, branding a ToO product represents a challenge for practitioners. Their success appears to rely on the authenticity they convey to the product (Iversen & Hem 2006). This authenticity could be heavily altered by an inappropriate marketing strategy (Fort & Fort, 2006). If the marketing plan is to innovative or to pregnant, the

authenticity link to the ToO will be decreased by cognitive dissonance mechanism. The crucial point is to stay close to the image the customer has of the ToO.

Wine is rooted in its terroir, protected by its bottle, so the only indicators of quality displayed in store are the design of the bottle and the information related to wine origins. Consequently customer choice depends upon on the image of the place of origin and on bottle design. Thus studying wine represents a good proxy to study the image of the territory of origin

Through an innovative qualitative method (A.O.L.) (Vernette 2007) this study investigates how the customer perceives ToO related to wine. This brand new method allows researcher to investigate representations associated with consumption experience.

Understanding the ToO image will represent a strong managerial interest. Currently, the place of production image is still unclear; especially the affective dimension (Roth & Diamantopoulos 2009). Finally, this study affines our knowledge of ToO image, especially it shows an enchantment dimension, non-described in the literature. Thus it represents a theory advances.

Literature review

The territory of origin:

The definition of terroir used in this paper is drawn from references papers on the topic: authors including Iversen and Hem (2006); Bowen and Zapata (2009); Elaydi and McLaughlin (2012) consider terroir as a unique combination of a limited geographic space, defined by a unicity in its biophysical composition and associated with a particular culture. A terroir is also a symbol of a history, a particular culture associated with the people who live there and what they craft. Through inference mechanism customer uses ToO as a quality clue (Roth & Diamantopoulos 2009). ToO image is bi-dimensional:

- A cognitive one, rooted in the geographical location of the production. It represents the expertise of inhabitants, how climates fit with the production, etc. (Van Ittersum et al. 2003; Iversen & Hem, 2006). It's possible to segment this dimension into two sub-dimension. One represents how many inhabitants are expert in the crafting of the product, another one how much the geographical biophysical property fits with the raw material required for the product.

- An affective one, symbolic, referring to the culture, tradition or the link between the person and the considered terroir (Belk, 1988; McCracken, 1986; Iversen & Hem, 2007). All this association could be the results of direct experience (personal signification) or an indirect one (symbolic signification) (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009). Thus, ToO has the ability to carry symbolic meaning, crafting abilities, part of history, etc. that infer on the intrinsic quality of the product. Thus, understanding the ToO image is primordial to market product strongly rooted in ToO, especially for wine.

Wine

To associate a product with its ToO, customer needs clues. It could be explicit ones (e.g. a made in mention) or implicit ones (e.g. colors) (Charters & Spielmann, 2014). Wine represents a good proxy for studying ToO. Indeed, in Europe particularly, wine is traditionally named by his ToO. Moreover, according to Bérard and Marchenay (2002), to be identified as issue from ToO, a product must respond to 3 criteria: 1) its raw material must come from the ToO. 2) Its recipe must be anchored in the ToO, historically or culturally. 3) The producer must be linked to the ToO historically. Generally, wine responds to these entire criterions perfectly. As a result, wine is an archetype of ToO product.

Bottle and label design

Studying design is important when investigating wine and it's ToO. According to Celhay et al. 2017: "The design of the packaging is the main media which wine brands had to communicate their positioning and differentiate" p.50. So the choices made by practitioners could have a substantial impact on the customer perception of the wine and it's ToO. Design definition used here is taken from Homburg et al. (2015, p.43) « Product design refers to a set of constitutive elements of a product that consumers perceive and organize as a multidimensional construct encompassing the three dimensions of aesthetics, functionality, and symbolism. Because these constitutive elements can be both visual and nonvisual, this definition of product design applies to both visual and nonvisual examination of products »

According to these authors, design is constituted of three dimensions: Esthetic functionality and symbolism. The last dimension, symbolism, could potentially have a substantial impact on customer. As ToO image is partly constituted of symbols, choices about design could condition evocation created by wine.

Methodologies

A.O.L method

Album online (A.O.L.) is a projective qualitative methodology first proposed by Vernette (2007). It is based on an

images selection and interpretation by respondents. According to Zaltman (1997) customer could better express themselves through images.

This methodology relies on 4 principles: «thoughts are primarily based on images, most of communications are non-verbal; metaphors are the base of thoughts and metaphors are the key to access to “hidden knowledge » (Vernette, 2007, p.38). It allows studying respondent mind map (Christensen & Olson, 2002).

Globally, this method allows researchers to access to the “hidden sense of consumption experience” Vernette (2007, p. 53). Indeed, it combines the advantage of in-depth semi-directive interview and those linked to social interaction via its focus group.

Our literature review indicates that ToO image and design are composed of an affective and a cognitive dimension. The methodology will be constituted by two conditions: An affective one and a cognitive one.

Composed of three stages (Vernette, 2007), this methodology is carried out as follow: in the first stage, the respondents choose a particular wine for him. Then he is primed according to the condition assigned (affective or cognitive). After, he is asked to remember or to imagine an experience linked to this particular wine. He should resume this experiment in 5 keywords, and then choose images corresponding to these concepts on the web. The second stage consists on the creation of a collective album, constituted by all the images chosen in a single condition. Respondents are offered the opportunity to adjust their image choice by selecting images issued from the collective album, if they justified this change. The third and last step, researchers paired an image with the concept described in verbatim. Respondents are then asked to rate the accuracy of this matching, via a 6 point Likert scale. According to the improvements regarding the third step recently proposed by Kessous et al. (2017), the overall ratings have been analyzed by INDSCAL, in order to get a graphical representation of the associations between the images and the selected verbatim.

#### Sample

A 12 respondents sample choose by convenience have been used (in accordance with Vernette, 2007). Aged between 21 and 55 years old, 5 participants are men, 7 women, all are French citizens. They were directed through one of our condition aleatory: 6 to the affective condition, 6 to the cognitive. Attention has been given to the respondents wine expertise and socio-professional category. Indeed, one of our respondents is a sommelier on a fancy Michelin starred restaurant when another only drinks wine on special occasion.

#### Result and discussion

Results interpretations are displayed in Annexe 1 (for the affective condition) and 2 (for the cognitive one). They have been interpreted in line with the Kessous et al. (2017) methodology. The cognitive analysis explains 87% of variance, the affective one 89%. These show a good analysis quality and legitimate a finer interpretation.

Affective mapping could be structured as follow:

-A vertical axis, which delineates an opposition between association anchored in the ToO and association anchored in self;

-A horizontal axis, which delineates an opposition between symbolic signification and personal ones. This structure is coherent with Iversen and Hem (2007) work.

A finer analysis revealed 5 association clusters. 4 of them are coherent with the literature: symbolic traditions anchored in ToO, wine culture, a social dimension anchored in ToO and memories associated with ToO.

The 5th cluster is not, as far as we know, described in the literature. Leif (2002) evokes it in a conceptual way. It brings together concept as lifestyle, timelessness, disorientation, travel, etc. It seems hard to give a definitive interpretation of this clusters based uniquely on this methodology, but it reminds strongly the enchantment as described by Leif (2002). Rather than described rational concept, it revealed a magic side of wine, a fairy side in wine consumption, an utopic dimension. Enchantment, as described by Moore (1996), led people to consider imagination before information; it brings people to escape from reality. It matches with our cluster.

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Surprisingly, none of the respondents evoke the design of the bottle or the design of the label. Rather than being a

pregnant element in wine consumption experience, design might be more preponderant in the choice of wine; it would explain why none of our respondents described it in this research.

#### Conclusion

Based on an innovative qualitative exploratory method, this study increases our knowledge about wine perception, more particularly about the image of the French wine customer has about ToO. Achieved by the utilization of the A.O.L. methodology, it contributes strongly to show how rich are the associations aroused by this product.

Customer perceived wine ToO in a cognitive and an affective way, these perceptions could be symbolic or more personal. Wine also inspired memories, tradition, and socialization.

This study highlights an enchantment dimension of ToO. Theorized by Leif (2002), it is, in our knowledge, the first time this dimension is shown empirically. This dimension could result from many factors; ToO, wine itself or a symbolic consequences of wine packaging design. Further work is required to investigate it deeper. This study also contributes to a better understanding of the affective dimension of ToO image, as required by Roth and Diamantopoulos (2009). Moreover, this work confirms the structure of ToO image. The results will help practitioners to better understand the perception of their product, and so to design their campaign in a most coherent way.

Only based on a qualitative methodology, these study present limitations. A quantitative study is required to validate and rank these different dimensions. Furthermore, a large part of associations put in evidence in this work is linked to symbols. So, it would be interesting to duplicate this study in a different cultural context.

#### **File Upload (PDF only)**

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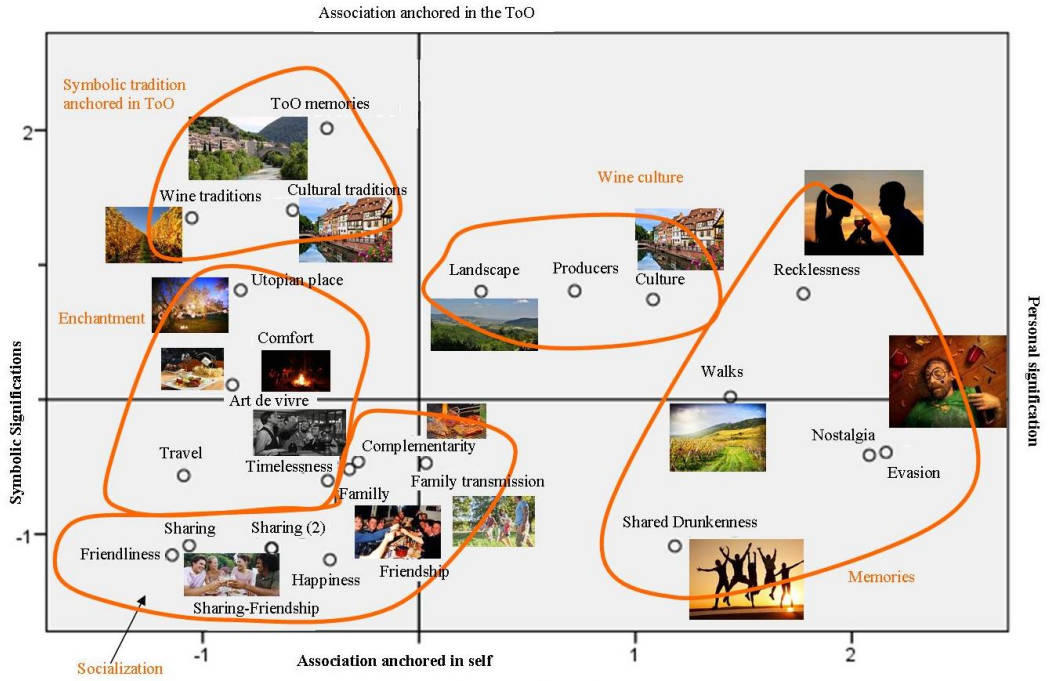
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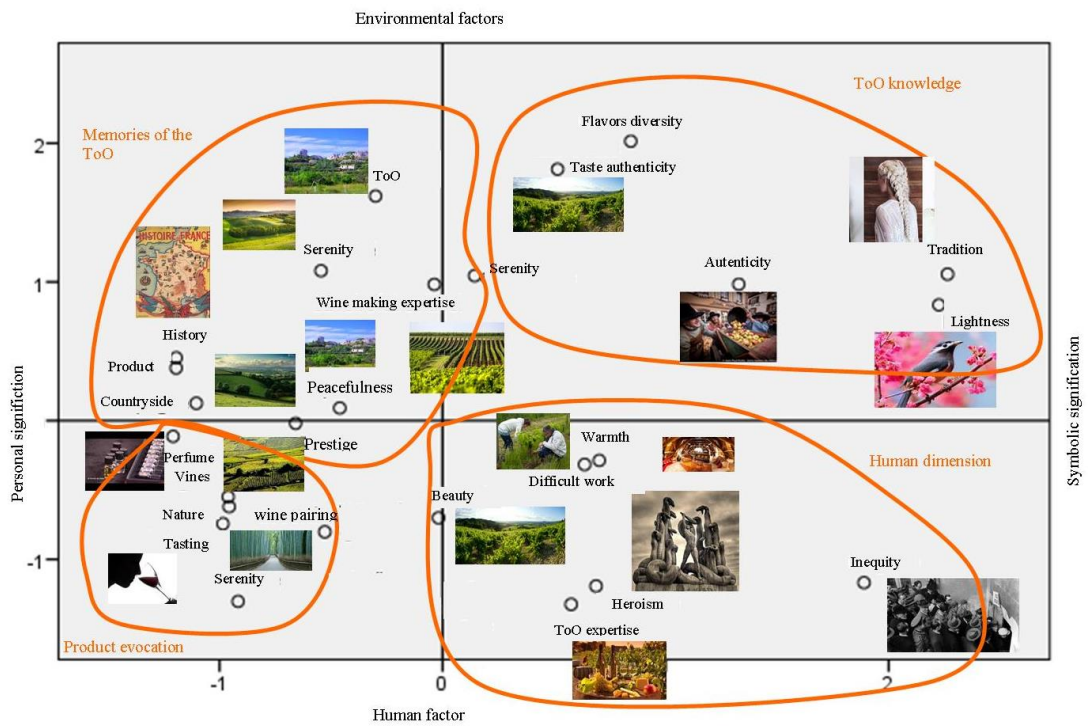


**Annexes**

*Annexe 1 affective condition*



*Annexe 2 cognitive condition*



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