The development of wine environmental quality: towards the convergence of practices and their recognition

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Aims of the communication

• Try to outline paths of a normalization process for environmentally friendly wines
  – taking into account the environmental practices of wine industry actors and
  – the way they consider a potential valorization of their environmental practices

Theoretical framework

• Stemming from research having highlighted two complementary dimensions of the normalization (Loukil, 2005):
  – Norms = an informational device mitigating market failures (coordination)
  – Norms = a collective device strengthening market coordination

• Normalization = an *ex ante* appraisal of quality
  – shaped by the knowledge and skills of industry actors
  – supporting creation of new knowledge

• Shaping the industry with "social technologies" (Nelson et al. 2001):
  – social construction of markets
  – adoption of new rules of governance.
Empirical data

- Twenty in-depth interviews (2006 - 2007):
  - enterprises having a national and/or international market
  - involved in environmental practices
  - actors interviewed:
    - either in charge of environmental implementation,
    - either in charge of communication and/or marketing

A qualitative diagnosis
- diversity of their environmental practices,
- main obstacles / or competitive advantages achieved,
- perception of market opportunities

- Their main claims in terms of normalization:
  - clarification of environmental quality
  - structure and governance of wine industry

1. An environmentally friendly wine: a multifaceted concept needing clarification

1.1. The diversity of environmental practices

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<th>Actors interviewed</th>
<th>Commitment and expectations</th>
<th>Instruments used</th>
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<td>Personal motives (ecological)</td>
<td>Terra Vitis, Norm 15031-14-000</td>
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<td>Good image of wine industry</td>
<td>Integrated production</td>
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<td>Getting competitive advantages</td>
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<td>Competitive advantage</td>
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<td>Co-operative producers</td>
<td>Desire of progress, especially in process and product quality</td>
<td>Involved in specific private rules</td>
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<td>Ecological motives</td>
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<td>Commitment via voluntary approaches</td>
<td>Involved in specific private rules</td>
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1.2. Weak readability of wine quality

- Great uncertainty vis-à-vis environmental quality of wines for consumers
- Consumers react in descending order of importance to:
  - price, colour, grape variety, geographical indications of origin (AOCs, etc.), trade marks (private or public)
- Wine market segmentation is mostly ruled by criteria which do not include environmental protection,
  - find new incitative tracks
1.3. Normalization, information and knowledge

• Communication paradox:
  – « clean » wines / « dirty » wines ?
• Reasoned Agriculture: an ambiguous concept, often confused with traceability
• From definition to certification of environmental quality: a collective cognitive process
  – Defining environmental quality
  – Certifying environmental quality
  – Signalling environmental quality:
    • brand or specific logo?

2. Normalization of environmental quality: a vehicle for structuring and governance of wine industry

2.1. A tool giving consistency: open, dynamic and multi-level

• reduction of uncertainties concerning the definition of products and their attributes (interoperability of the products on markets)
• an informational and collective cognitive device
• a conventional device (Salais, 2007): collective practices which provide access to resources, stabilize expectations and resolve conflicts
  – underlines the convergences, while allowing the diversity of behaviour on unspecified questions
  – requires the formalization of knowledge and experiences favourable to internalization of knowledge and practices

2.2. Starting from 3 existing wine environmentally friendly markets (social constructions)

• "Bio"
  – an exaltation of environmental performance at the expense of organoleptic performance
  – despite label "Bio" refers to a "domestic quality " convention
• "Reasoned Agriculture"
  – based on an "industrial quality convention" (Steiner, 2006)
  – does not, at this time, satisfy the expectations
  – less requirement specifications than private approaches (Terra Vitis)
• « Quality wines »
  – related to land and the highly integrated AOC
  – marketing a « creative wine» (Teïl et al., 2007) claiming high quality
  – an attempt to integrate environmental and product quality performance
2.3. Towards a more centralized governance preserving essential differentiations

- Organize, coordinate, prioritize at national level all devices of environmental quality (Aggeri, 1999), and carry on and enlarge «Reasoned Agriculture» previous consultation principles:
  - obtain synergy gains between the various levels of governance (private / public)
  - bring gains of specialization and / or complementarity
- Provide a framework to ensure achievement to expectations and support competitiveness
- Take into account the integration of French wine industry within global competition:
  - embed the national definition and management norms in the architecture of international recognized standards