Characterising innovations and sustainability in wine firms. An exploratory study of French wine industry

Louis-Antoine Saïsset, Iciar Pavez, Thalia Astruc, Leïla Temri

OCTOBER 11-12-13, 2022 MONTPELLIER

MONTPELLIER VINE & WINE SCIENCES INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR

Sharing Knowledge & Designing Research Programs to Address Key Challenges Of the Vine-Wine Sector

MUSE
MONTPELLIER UNIVERSITY OF EXCELLENCE

KEY INITIATIVE
MONTPELLIER VINE & WINE SCIENCES

INRAE
la science pour la vie, l'humain, la terre

L'INSTITUT agro Montpellier

SEMINAR PROCEEDINGS

Table of contents

INTRODUCTION

In cooperation with scientists from USA (University of California Davis, Cornell University), South Africa (Stellenbosch University) and Chile (Universidad de Chile, INIA La Platina), the Key Initiative (KIM) **Montpellier Vine & Wine Sciences**, supported by the University of Montpellier, and its partners INRAE and Institut Agro Montpellier, organized a 3-days scientific seminar on the campus Institut Agro-INRAE of Montpellier in October 2022.

This event, which follows the remote seminar organized in June 2021, brought together involved world-class scientific speakers from local and international institutions with the aim of sharing knowledge to design cooperative research programs tackling some of the current challenges of the wine industry.

One hundred and twenty scientists and staffs from fourteen countries participated in conferences and workshops, organized around four key topics:

- Adaptation and mitigation of climate change issues;
- Reduction of chemical inputs;
- Building wine quality;
- Biodiversity, microbiomes and ecosystems.

Several initiatives were formalized to combine international expertise and construct international research partnerships.

CONFERENCES

Climate Change: adaptation and mitigation

Characterising innovations and sustainability in wine firms. An exploratory study of French wine industry.

Louis-Antoine SAÏSSET, Iciar PAVEZ, Thalia ASTRUC, Leila TEMRI
UMR MOISA, Montpellier, France
louis-antoine.saisset@supagro.fr

Objective

The objective of this study is to understand how the characteristics of the different types of firms, i.e. wine estates, wine cooperatives and wine merchants, and their forms of governance, can influence innovations and sustainability decisions in the wine industry.
This study has been run as part of the action plan of the Chaire Inq'Faaqt (Innovating in Agricultural and Agrifood chains, Quality and Territories), and more particularly the Axis 4 "firms and jobs".

Methods

Our methodology is qualitative and based on semi-structured interviews with the three main types of French wine firms: wine estates, wine cooperatives and wine merchants. A total of 16 businesses, located in Occitanie, Provence and Alsace, were interviewed. These interviews were quasi totally recorded and transcribed. These firms have very different production orientation, size and strategies.
In this poster, as a first exploratory step, we analyzed in deep one of each type of firms. This will allow us to perform a subsequent analysis of the full sample.

Results

We observed that process-related innovations were the most frequent, followed by organizational ones, related to governance. Marketing and logistic innovations were more frequent in the biggest and more decentralized firms (wine co-op and wine merchant). Also, sustainability-related innovations were very contrasted from a firm to another, the wine estate showing a more balanced sustainability strategy on the economic, environmental and social pillars.
Standards seem to be the most spread means to signal sustainability, especially for the wine co-op. The sustainability performance is not easy to measure because of its complexity. Firms preferred to implement more flexible voluntary commitment strategies (partnerships with stakeholders, returnable or recycling bottles systems, among others).

Conclusion

This exploratory study underlined the great diversity of the wine firms in terms of types of innovations and sustainability orientation. It is difficult to design a typology of wine firms, but it is now possible to have a more detailed idea about the main concerns, as water management, pesticides shortening or the relevance of organic wines.