Foundations for a Comparative Research Programme Between Wine Markets in the Twentieth Century

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Introduction: Comparing Wine Markets in the Twentieth Century

Wine has served as a useful object to highlight the process of construction and organization of the markets in France, in particular from the perspective of the role of collective and economic strategies at stake. Indeed, a number of works approach the issue of the methods and repertoires of collective action developed by unions among public authorities with the aim of defining or modifying the sectoral standards they depend

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on, and to asserting legally their economic model on their competitors (Tilly 1984; Offerlé 2008; Garcia-Parpet 2009, p. 20; Fligstein 1990, p. 10). Public policies are far from being neutral for them, since they frame, allow and constrain their activities. To make it short, unions and authorities maintain a structural relationship giving rise to stable market standards. Thus for example in France, the first half of the twentieth century has constituted a privileged period to study their role and means of action in the institutionalization of two different visions, paving the way to two distinct markets: one based on a restricted and elitist economic strategy (the Controlled Designation of Origin—*Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée*—AOC), facing another one emerging from an abundant, productivist economic strategy (giving thereafter way to the category of the wines known as "common wines" or "table wines") (Garcia-Parpet 2009, p. 69; Jacquet 2009; Jacquet and Laferté 2006; Laferté 2006). This sectoral division was soon confirmed by the creation in 1947 of the National Institute for Designations of Origin (*Institut National des Appellations d'Origine Contrôlée*—INAO), and in 1953 of the Institute for Common Wines (*Institut des Vins de Consommation Courante*—IVCC).

By doing so, the State consecrated union's views in "two modes of organization, which institutionalize[d] the dualism of the wine sector" (Bartoli and Boulet 1989, p. 227): "[O]n the one hand, an organization by the State of the wine mass market, prone to structural imbalances, subject to scrutiny of its growth, and constraining organization resting on supply control, with the obligation of storage and distillation [...]; on the other hand, the creation of the AOC, which benefitted from revenues attached to the designation of origin in renowned vineyards, a form of corporatism in which the professionals manage[d] to control the access conditions to the label, without the State intervening directly in the market organisation" (Garcia-Parpet 2009, pp. 68–69). The analysis of the role of the trade unions in the partitioning, and framing of the French wine sector is central, but yet, however, not addressed through a unique analytical framework.

With one noticeable exception up to now, there has been no attempt to embrace the role of collective and economic action under one, unified grid of analysis. Indeed, Pierre Bartoli and Daniel Boulet's have conducted their research on the conditions of the French wine sectorization, providing—the necessary tools for a comparison—despite they did not clearly intend at carrying one out. The same theoretical framework allows to distinguish two different movements, yet similar from a structural perspective, giving birth to the peculiar, dual organization of the French wine sector endorsed by the State.[1] The demonstration brings light on the common logics, leading to delineate the national sectoral public policies. Since then, the framing of the sector has constituted an "indispensable unthought" allowing, but also restricting researchers' attention.[2] Monographic studies on each segment of the sector have led to look away, and to give academic backup to its institutional partitioning: by dealing with noble vineyards, later producing AOC wines, on the one hand, and with other excluded from this denomination, on the other, research has contributed to reproduce and accredit—in the academic field—institutionalized segmentation proceeding from historical conflicts.

However separate, research has shaded light on the collective and economic strategies attached to the construction of renowned—and unrenowned—regions and wines till the sectoral dualization. Such as in Burgundy, on one side and for instance, by studying the genesis of wine producers' standards (Jacquet 2009; Laferté 2006; Laferté and Jacquet 2005). Their institutionalization through the French Parliament, and their international diffusion (Jacquet and Laferté 2006; Jacquet 2004). Reversely, on the other hand, regard has been paid to regions of lesser renowned wines, especially Languedoc-Roussillon, where collective and economic strategies were translated via elected representatives in the Parliament (Dedieu 2003; Nicolas 2007; Bagnol 2010).

The sectoral and analytical division was then reinforced in the advent of the European Community legislation. During negotiations, two Common Market Organizations (CMO) were created, inspired by

[1] They have underlined how the French wine sector has gradually combined two sets of economic regulations and institutions, which have been delineated by professional conflicts, and the determining contribution of the State. In line with the "Regulation school", they adhere to its concepts, and the idea according to which the national institutional regulations (set by public policies) arise from the local confrontations between unions. See Bartoli and Boulet (1989, 1990).

[2] By this expression, Pierre Muller underlines that scientists' thinking is bound to, and bounded by sectoral structuring preceding them. See Muller (2010).

previous nationals regulations (Smith et al. 2007, p. 82). They introduced a distinction "[…] between two categories of wines being the object of political forms of very contrasted regulations: tables wines, on the one hand, 'Quality Wines Produced in Specified Regions' (QWPSR) on the other […], stemming from a general consensus to think of table wines as a European public problem, while the QWPSR remain[ed] primarily national public problems, for which the Member States conserv[ed] a great legislative and regulatory room for maneuver".[3] This "partial europeanisation" of policies, while displacing the scales of regulations affecting economic and collective action, has been partially dealt with academically. On the one side, decade-long transformations of table wines—placed under Brussels' scrutiny—have focused attention on collective, as well as innovative economic action facing the decline in their consumption.[4] On the other, research on renowned regions—independent from Brussels' intervention—have mostly dealt with their successful economic and symbolic strategies, price valuation, though letting unions' activities aside (Réjalot 2007; Garcia-Parpet 2005; Chauvin 2010).

For a few years, both sides of the sector have met. Indeed, a growing part of AOC wines, originally rare and considered higher in the hierarchy, has merged in value and reputation with table and local wines, supposedly lower in the hierarchy (ONIVINS 2003, p. 16). How can we explain that the—national, then European—division between wines that everything seemed to differentiate, has evolved to such a confused situation? This question provides us with an opportunity to turn to the aforementioned comparative approach combining the collective and economic activities of the organization of markets.

[3] At that time, tables wines represented 95% of the Community production (Smith et al. 2007, pp. 80–81).

[4] The special issue of the *Pôle Sud* journal published in 1998, under the direction of William Genieys, includes works conducted by economists, historians and political scientists with expertise in tables wines and European regulations (Genieys 1998). For more recent development, see Garcia-Parpet (2004, 2007).

Elements for a Comparative Research Approach Between Wine Markets

We propose to take steps in this direction. To this end, theoretical and methodological precisions are necessary. Contributions and limits of the literature related to the regulations of economic conduits have to be dealt with. Three dimensions carried by economic sociology, political science and economy are to be taken into account, and combined to analyse the evolution, which hold our attention.

First in sociology of economy, while scholars' research agree on the structuring part played by collective and economic activities in the institutionalization of—wine—markets, they also underline *the role of the State—then of the European union—in the regulation of the economic and collective conduits*. Indeed, the State acts as a coercive third-party, which possess the power to direct economic conduits through public policies. They lay the institutional requirements for articulating actors' divergent interests, who thrive to define the rules which will serve their status and position the best (François 2008, p. 179). Thus, the State is "not only the regulator charged to maintain order and confidence […] it contributes, in a completely decisive way, with the construction of demand and supply" (Bourdieu 2000, p. 251). This State-centred standpoint can be amended by a European dimension. Indeed, European sectoral policies, as well as national, can impact national economic organization, by upsetting traditional and pre-existing economic, as well as professional, configurations.[5] This last point requires tackling, in another step, with collective action.

Second, political science deals more thoroughly on this point, by underlining the *coordination between collective action—through*

[5]This is what Antoine Bernard de Raymond shows regarding the introduction of the Common Market Organization of the fruit and vegetable markets, by pointing out the change in regional offer: the varieties of apple produced in the orchards are homogenized (in particular through the creation of an official catalogue), while the producers' organizations take part into making them more competitive, by channelling their production and marketing, with a disappearance of the traditional circuits and trade unions. See Bernard de Raymond (2013, pp. 203–221).

professional bodies—and—national of European—authorities.[6] Indeed, collective action and public policies are interlocked and mutually constraining: while collective action is only possible within a framework defined by sectoral policies, the definition of the later is closely linked with interest groups acting in order to formulate, to abide and enforce the most favourable to them. Yet constraining, policies allow groups of actors depending on them to exist; therefore, interest groups take part to set, and watch over the regulations most favourable to them (Muller 1982, 1984). Again, this national-centred standpoint can be amended by a European dimension. The transfer to Brussels of the formulation of public policies has displaced the representation of collective interests, by disorganizing it at the national level. As the formulation of policies opens to new partners, and concurrent authorities, the influence of national interest groups diminishes. However, addressing the evolution of wines only in terms of public policy would neglect the economic dimension, and more particularly the orientation of demand, of which profit, or suffer unions.

Third, giving importance to the evolution of demand and its beneficiaries necessitates to recourse to economy, which brings light on *the constraining role of the commercial economic situation and consumption on the course of actor's economic activity*. Indeed, the application to the wine sector of the regulation theory has stressed its historical codification under power struggles relative to a certain consumption level, that the State contributed to orient in a determining way (Bartoli and Boulet 1989, 1990; Boyer 2004). Therefore, an inversion of consumption can call into question its mere organization, which structurally depends on a given level of demand (Bartoli and Boulet 1990, pp. 30–31).

[6]Indeed, the study of the role of interest groups on public policies has become classical in political science. Three specialized currents have modelled it differently: "pluralists", for whom the definition of public policies results from a free and fair competition between interest groups, the State being reduced to a mere rubber-stamping party; "corporatists", underlining the uneven character of the competition between interest groups, the State recognizing only those in conformity with its interests; "neo-corporatists" (or "sectoral corporatists"), focusing on the formulation and the application of specific, sectoral policies. See Hayward (1996), Jobert and Muller (1987), Hassenteufel (1995), and Berger (1981).

In a nutshell, three general principles can be drawn from these readings in economic sociology, political science and economy, that allow for establishing an analytical grid. First, *public policies play a determining role in the regulation of economic and collective conduits*. They pose the necessary conditions that articulate collective and economic strategies. Second, *groups thrive to defend, and to apply policies they have had participated to define, to their benefit*. For this reason, attempts to reform policies by overriding the group's interests threatens its mere existence, and bring about its upheaval. Third, *the organization of sectors are correlative to historically consumption tendencies, whose reversal upsets economic and collective strategies*. When demand inverts, the economic organization of the sector is confronted with a modification of one of the terms, which had supported its past institutionalization, and regulation.

While bearing in mind these features, we can propose to revive the goal pursued before us to treat of the two wine main markets in a transverse, comparative way, by applying the same key readings to each of them. To this end, two privileged fields of observation will be retained, although dissimilar administratively, yet structurally equivalent: the Gironde department, and the Languedoc-Roussillon region. Both have been historically dominant nationally—therefore structurally homological—in one and other market by the weight of their economic model, wine production, and the role of their unions in the institutionalization of the sectoral public policies in the first half of the twentieth century.[7] As regards the time period, the aftermath of the "partial europeanisation" of the sectoral policy in 1970, while displacing the scales of regulations affecting economic and collective action, has been partially dealt with academically. It then seems relevant to question its effects on collective action and strategies. We will thus be dealing with a sectoral and organizational comparison, which will relate to the variety of the collective and economic strategies in regulatory asymmetrical situations. While generating clearly separated effect on both markets between 1970 and 1985 (A), it created contradictory effect after European regulations underwent a radical change (B).

[7] Respectively, the Languedoc-Roussillon region for table wine, and the Gironde department for AOC wines. See Smith et al. (2007, pp. 64–78).

A French Wine Facing "Partially Europeanized" Sectoral Policies: Disturbed vs. Undisturbed Markets (1970–1985)

Before the creation of the European Community, the dualization of the French wine sector had constituted the matrix of its organization, and of the collective and economic strategies of its members. As of 1970, the European regulations came into effect. Here, the aforementioned grid of analysis comes in handy: *state of consumption* and *public policies*, while differing altogether in their forms, differ in their effects on *collective and economic strategies*. In Languedoc-Roussillon, both the disequilibrium in demand, and the transfer of public policy to Brussels gave way to collective and economic conduits reinforcing market imbalance (A1). In Gironde, the rise in demand, and the way left open by public policy—which remained national—let free reign to the affirmation of collective action, and expansion of the AOC economic strategy and success (A2).

A1 Table Wine in Languedoc-Roussillon: A Market Thrown off Balance by Surpluses, and Europeanised Public Policies

Prior to the European integration, the table wines of Languedoc-Roussillon had to cope with an inversion of the trends in consumption increasing the structural imbalance of the market, and the cessation of imports of Algerian wines, which were used to blend, and make table wines.[8] The post-war period faced a modification of lifestyles, the demographic and economic structures, which upset the demand for table wine, and provoked an upheaval of the sector, which was partly dependent of them (Boulet et al. 1976, pp. 41 and 50; Boyer 2004, p. 11). Their share in the drink consumption felt from 52.7 to 40.9% between 1960 and 1970 (Berger and Maurel 1980, p. 89). The decrease

[8]Indeed, since the end of the twentieth century, an interdependence was established between the two shores of the Mediterranean, for blending wines.

in demand, which is a deeply destabilizing phenomenon within markets (Fligstein 2001, p. 84). There was also the loss of Algerian wines—along the Algerian independence—which were necessary to blend with wines produced in Languedoc-Roussillon.[9]

The challenge posed by the change in demand and supply, and the anticipation of the integration in the European market, led representatives of the cooperation and the government to work at shaping new policies, and economic orientation for table wines. Since 1954, already, the States had been exerting through the IVCC an increased bureaucratic supervision aiming at "a reversal of trend on the level of production", so that it would not require blending anymore.[10] To this end, new representatives of the cooperation co-constructed with authorities an unprecedented agricultural modernization law to provide incentives as of 1960–1962 (Muller 2000, p. 34; Jobert and Muller 1987, p. 88). Its measures, and new local leaders such as Antoine Verdale in the Aude department, or Jean Rémond in Hérault, encouraged cooperatives to consolidate their land, restructure their wineries, improve their techniques and wines—so as to escape from the market of blended wines, and therefore of the merchant's grip—and distribution channels by allowing the emergence of—producer groups such as Val d'Orbieu (1967) or l'Union des Caves Coopératives de l'Ouest Audois et du Razes (UCCOAR) (1971)—"pioneers in sales of selected wines without intermediaries"[11] (Gavignaud-Fontaine 2006, p. 263). As the overall wine quality improved, the State and the representatives of the cooperation created a new category for the best table wines (Local wines) supposedly more able to face the free market.[12] On the dawn of

[9]From 1964 to 1970, however, the "system of supply inherited from the colonial time continues to function": the French and Algerian governments get along on an annual, limited delivery fixed at 8,760,000 hl in 1965 (Berger and Maurel 1980, p. 90).

[10]That is to say, to a certain extent, to even replace the Algerian wines (Bardissa 1976, p. 454; IVCC 1973, p. 33).

[11]The cooperatives, thanks to their qualitative growth and competences (technology innovations, reorganization of their workshops, selection of the harvests) empower vis-à-vis wine merchants' control, and capture added value.

[12]In 1968, the majority of the wines with an alcoholic strength of 9 °5–11 °4, and more than 11 °4, is produced in the South of France (CRPEE 1970, p. 70).

the European integration, cooperation "had never been so powerful".[13] However, the Community legislation was about to contradict, and modify the regional collective and economic strategy.

As of 1970, the transfer of public policy to Brussels led to an unexpected upheaval of the collective and economic strategies, and their increasing dependence to the European Community. Indeed, Community regulations set up sectoral rules noticeably different from those which framed it hitherto nationally. While in France, efforts had been carried out to promote qualitative, unblended wines—Local wines—, the European regulation classified table wines according to their alcoholic strength—the cheapest being both the strongest and weakest, traditionally used for blendings. In the European, frontier-free market, merchants could thus buy for cheap strong alcoholic wines in Italy, weak ones in France, and blend them to obtain wines competing with French Local wines, depriving them of market shares. Additionally, the European regulations displaced the scale of sectoral regulation, the State being no more able to fix guaranteed prices.[14] Thus, the first wine CMO deprived winegrowers from commercial outlets, obviated unions' traditional methods of action, and prevented them from obtaining state support. The corporatist unionism held sway, and blamed the maladjustment of the European regulations. Facing laissez-faire, a period known as "wine war" engaged, during which illegal actions aimed—at least symbolically, but without success—at regulating the market, by suppressing wine imports. As unsold stocks and market imbalance peaked, a deadly riot resulted in a reform of the CMO in 1976, that subordinated even more table wines. As it aimed at resorbing the surpluses, Brussels contributed to aggravate them: it set up various policy instruments being constantly diverted from their initial objective.[15]

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[13]Nationally in 1972, it controlled 54% of production volumes (against 31% in 1954), 60% in Languedoc-Roussillon (Boulet et al. 1976, p. 26). There were, in 1972, 552 cooperative wines caves producting 20 million hl in Languedoc-Roussillon (Gavignaud-Fontaine 2006, p. 201).

[14]From this moment on, they were set by "quotation regional commissions" (Bardissa 1976, pp. 55–56).

[15]The grubbing up premium, for instance, supported the retreat of the vineyard, but the wine growers slowed down its impact by gaining in productivity. The reduction of the production was slower than that of consumption, resulting in an increase in surpluses, and an increased recourse to the mechanisms of storage and distillation (Bartoli and Boulet 1989, p. 314).

While the Community provided outlets to productions, which would not find any other commercially, cooperatives and their unions fed the market at the expense of the Community.[16]

Such an evolution contrasted clearly with that of the Gironde department. There, the high demand for AOC wines, and the corresponding public policy, had let free reign to affirm, and defend the collective and economic strategy developed in the first half of the twentieth century.

A2—AOC Wines in Gironde: An Expanding Market Owing to National Policy

Before the European integration, and contrarily to table wines of Languedoc-Roussillon, AOC wines in Gironde faced a steadily growing demand, and new outlets through retail shops. Indeed, whereas the consumption of table wines decreased as of 1957–1959, it grew by 54% until 1972 for AOC wines (Bousiges 1994, p. 89; Anonymous 1973, p. 38). As quotations rose from between 1959 and 1968, mainly to the benefit of grands crus, the share of AOC wines increased in the total household expenditures (Pijassou 1980, p. 1032). By the middle of the 70s, the AOC wines from Bordeaux met an increasing demand as regards fine wines in large retails stores, where they achieved "remarkable commercial breakthrough" (Réjalot 2007, p. 45). In Gironde, this situation led economic and collective action to develop concomitantly in deprived territories, thanks to the incentives set up by the State.

The opportunity posed by the increase in demand, and agricultural public policy, inclined the departmental expansion of the collective and economic strategy that had made the AOC successful. As profits made from the belonging to the appellation Bordeaux differed greatly, between zones of the most famous Grands Cru, and other "less noble appellations", the later get through unprecedented development. While in the South of France, the professional and economic competition was dependent on the policy instruments for table wines, the situation

[16]Langedoc-Roussillon collected 75% of the European subsidies in France (Bernard 1989, p. 64).

differed significantly in the Bordeaux area. Indeed, the early 60s provided the opportunity of "major changes, imposing new conditions of productions" from zones of "less noble appellations" than the vineyard of the Grand Crus (Hinnewinkel 2000, p. 91; Roudié 2014, p. 412). As of 1956, young winegrowers and their union of less renowned appellations ambitioned, in reaction to their decline, to better their wines and remunerations through new cultivating techniques breaking with the traditional ones (Hinnewinkel 2011, pp. 37–42; Moser 1960, p. 328). This was noticeable in the Entre-deux-Mers area, strongly impacted by the decline in prices in white wines. Owing to the new agricultural modernization law in 1960–1962 and new local leaders in cooperatives, lands get regrouped, techniques improved, the dissemination of oenology progressed.[17] In order to perpetuate the ongoing reorganization, threatened by the inflationary spiral of white wines in AOC, collective action organized.[18] The *Syndicat Régional des AOC Bordeaux et Bordeaux Supérieur* was restructured, under the supervision of new leaders originating from less noble appellations.

As of 1970, France obtained that the AOC wines remained a national concern regulated by professionals, bringing a new warranty to the autonomy of the market of the AOC, in return for what Brussels refused any support to them (Clavel and Baillaud 1985, p. 93). Indeed, Brussels ratified the market organization, consolidating its strong autonomy. Unlike table wines, whose regulation was transferred to Brussels, which generated a substantial modification in their organization and upset the collective and economic strategies at stake, the AOC wine were exempt from such evolution. While letting AOC wines immune to regulatory disruptive effects, the increase in prices induced wine producers to break the hold of wine merchants. Thanks to the resumption of

[17] In 1968, about fifty communes regrouped their lands, approximately 70 in 1970, that is to say 20% of the winegrowing area in Gironde (Roudié 2014, pp. 415–416). The mechanization of the vineyard jointly accompanied the diffusion of "high vines" developped in Cadillac, which covered as soon as 1964 one-third of the vineyard in Gironde (Roudié 2014, pp. 406–407). On the diffusion of oenology, see Anonymous (1965, p. 9).

[18] For years, the production of white wines under the generic name "Bordeaux", in particular, had developed in an overabundant fashion, as it had become "practically a refuge" for wines of lesser quality. Less rewarding, it was also the less organized. See Vincent (1966, p. 5).

quotations since the years 1950s, profitability and investments increased in the vineyards. The wines conditioned and put on sale in bottles benefited from a new vogue. That allowed grand crus, as of 1970, to break free from wine merchants, who traditionally bought wines in bulk, and bottled them to their profit. As the Grand crus collected benefits, increasing with prices, wine merchants rushed to speculate on wines to preserve their margins, at their own expense. The soaring prices laid the ground for frauds: tables wines from Languedoc-Roussillon were bought, and passed off as Bordeaux wines. This symbolically destabilizing event was the first interference of the table wine market with the one of AOC. As of the mid' 70s, wine merchants gradually stopped embottling wines, and started buying and selling bottles in order to cut costs. The use of bottle spread among winegrowers, whose economic situation soared.

In general terms, this first part was the occasion to observe the evolution of distinct markets, under the effect of evolution of demand, which changed owing to AOC, and during the first years of coming into effect of the OCM Wine. The distinction in demand, and institutional supervisions established between them, maintained them apart. After 1985, a change occurred, when Brussels achieved a radical change in the management of table wines.

B—When "Partially Europeanised" Policies and Market Interfere (1985–2000)

By the middle of the 80s, the dependence of tables wine of Languedoc-Roussillon to Brussels, on the one hand, and the strong autonomy of the AOC from it, on the other, have constituted the sectoral framework from which two evolutions have occurred. In 1985, however, the Dublin agreement represented a "turning point" in the European *public policy* (Arnaud 1991, p. 7). While affecting *collective and economic strategies* in Languedoc-Roussillon, along the emergence of a demand for a new kind of—varietal—wines (B1), it had indirect consequences on the AOC wine market. Indeed in Gironde, the change in the European regulations hastened the full conversion of the vineyard to AOC wines, and their plethoric offer (B2).

B1—From Imbalanced to Balanced Table Wine Market, Through Varietal Wines

The decline in demand for table wines led wine merchants "to search outlets through "a new way in France, but already used elsewhere, in particular in the USA", offering economic and symbolic success there: varietal wines (Clavel 1987, p. 37). Indeed, the classification according to the terroir lost ground to the benefit of that according to varietals (Roudié 2001, p. 295). New practices in viticultures benefited from this economic situation, and of a favourable turn in the European public policy.

By the mid 80s, the European Community changed its wine policy, due to the pernicious use of it. Indeed, the expected equilibrium of the table wine market never occurred and, worse, every policy instrument set up since 1976 had been diverted from its primary goals. Expenditure and surpluses were on the rise. Fearing their increase, along the upcoming integration of Spain, and Portugal, European ministers of Agriculture agreed on putting a halt to it, by making the use of distillation financially disadvantageous, and increasing benefits for curbing production potential. Since the winegrowers produced more wine than they did grub up, because of better remuneration for distillation, it was decided to reverse this trend by restricting the access to distillation. This turn "spelt the end" of mass wine (Gavignaud-Fontaine 2006, 387). The Languedoc-Roussillon region was the first concerned region, especially by the grubbing up in zones with strong outputs (Seniuk and Strohl 1996, p. 37; Gavignaud-Fontaine 2006, p. 400). The land and genetic structure of the southernmost vineyard was modified in an unprecedented way. The reduction in the subsidies for distillation, on the one hand, lowered the profitability of the productivist practices, while the aids for qualitative restructuring encouraged and increased more qualitative ones. By accelerating the extinction of the vineyard of mass production, it promoted its substitution by less productive and more qualitative viticulture, paving the way for the development of new economic and collective strategies. New techniques developed for cultivating, pruning and vinify the grapes. This reversal went hand in hand with that of unionism. The devalorization of the former practices, and of their advocates within the cooperation, allowed the valorization of new conduits. Among them was the case of the varietal wines called the "Vins de Pays d'Oc". The increasing international demand for such types of wines led winegrowers and wine merchants to develop them. In this context, they managed to takeover against the cooperative unionism, with the creation of the *Syndicat des Vins de Pays d'Oc*. In the favourable commercial context of the years 1995–1999, the cooperatives, which had invested in the strategy of the varietal wines met with success. This evolution modified the hierarchy between wines. Gradually, a growing part of the southernmost productions, formerly undervalued, reached in price and reputation some AOC wines, which had long been considered superior (ONIVINS 2003, p. 16). Many were then winegrowers "to produce a simple local wine, […] applying better prices than those of AOC" (De Cantenac 2005, p. 65).

These observations lead us to tackle with the indirect effects of the Dublin agreements on the AOC wine the market, an increasing and substantial part of which declined in terms of economic and symbolic value.

B2—From a Restricted to a Restriction of the Market of AOC Wines

The years 1980 saw the rise in consumption of the AOC wines sold through large retail stores (Gille 1991). The decade, indeed, went hand in hand with an increase of its consumers, at the same time the production grew, and the average price of AOC wines dropped: between 1969 and 1992, their share in the national total production went from 15 to 52% (Anonymous 1993).

Facing high demand in wholesale distribution, the development of AOC wines in Gironde went through a buoyant period between 1985 and 1999. Whereas by the half of the 80s, the wine table market was constrained by the Dublin agreements to initiate a qualitative change, the market of AOC wines, and for what concerns us, the Gironde department, was let unrestrained to expand. The anticipation of new outlets, and rising costs nourished the replacement of the vineyard of table wine of Gironde, from now on subjected to reorganization by the European Commission and the Dublin agreements. The years following the turn in the European regulations saw an acceleration of the expansion of the surfaces and volumes of AOC instead table wines, to the detriment of quality, prices and reputations.[19] Indeed the vineyard of table wine in Gironde, even less valued with the decline in subsidies for distillation, was quickly and entirely converted to AOC. This conversion from table wines to AOC, vineyards, producers and productions was conducted under the aegis of the *Syndicat des vins de Bordeaux, Bordeaux Supérieur*, in front of which the Minister of Agriculture himself, François Guillaume, announced the authorization to convert the rights of plantations of wine table into AOC (Anonymous 1986). This opened to conversion a potential of several thousands of hectares, while Brussels hindered the table wine market. As an additional incentive for conversion, the State authorized the entry into production of converted vineyards from four to three years. Volumes of table wine of Gironde declined more quickly than before: while they had halved in 17 years (1970–1987), they lost 4/5th of their volumes the 6 following years (1987–1993) (Aubril 1987; Anonymous 1994). Additionally, rights of plantations could be bought in other regions: Bordeaux was the area purchasing the highest amount of them nationally (ONIVINS 1998, p. 146). Consequently, while the AOC vineyard had grown only by 13.3% between 1979 and 1985, it grew by 25% between 1986 and 1992 (Aubril 1988; ONIVINS 1993, p. 25).

This accelerated conversion was accompanied by a new intensification of cultural methods, outputs, and a devalorization of a growing proportion of the AOC wine from the department. The mechanization, which accompanied the reorganization of viticulture in the South of France in the years 1970s, developed in vineyards of AOC wines in the years 1980s, in particular in the Bordeaux regional appellation (Lacombe 1983, pp. 454–456). Techniques developed in wineries as well. This development of the viticulture of appellation, as the sales

[19] It felt from 30 to 15% of total departmental volumes between 1970 and 1987 (Aubril 1987, p. 47).

increased in large retail stores, was carried out together with an increase in investments and productivity. In particular for the regional appellation of “Bordeaux”, for which the least restrictive and gratified practices inclined the most productivists practices, which gradually demonetized the value of the label and the remunerations withdrawn by its members. As the AOC label did not provide the expected remunerations any more, an increasing number of winegrowers, by an irony of history, gave it up to convert to table wine, a category against which the AOC had been historically made up (Garcia-Parpet 2009, p. 11).

Conclusions

This article started with an interrogation regarding the recent reconsideration of the hierarchy of the French wines. In about fifty years, the AOC label ceased to provide the most favourable economic positions, contrary to certain table wines. How different categories of wines, that the professional and the State contributed to segment in two market in the first half of the twentieth century, could have evolved until calling into question the AOC wine, former institutionalized model of excellence? Gironde and Languedoc-Roussillon constituted two convenient cases to answer. The—undesired—incidence of the European instruments of public action on the sectoral evolution was clear.

By analysing the effects of the installation of Community legislation, we appreciated the way in which the policy change had been accompanied by a significant evolution in the political regulation and the emergence of new wine economic strategies. Then, from a description of the substantial modification of the Community sectoral policy in 1985, we understood how the wine hierarchies instituted in the first half of the twentieth century were destabilized: the public action, by setting up the structural necessary conditions, gave way to the agents and the economic strategies drawn on table wines, which gave them the possibility of improving their economic positions. At the same time, the remaining self-management of AOC wines evolved in the opposite direction, by leaving room to a productivist economic strategy, which devalued symbolically and economically the label.

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