

# The Role of denomination of origins in the competition of the wine sector

By Monica Fait<sup>1</sup> and Antonio Iazzi<sup>2</sup>

International competition and the changing attitudes in wine consumption determine structural changes in the entire offer related to the product; from this the following query emerges: *do the typicality and the relationship with the territory still have a sense in the entire wine sector?*

By adopting Popper's research approach (Popper K. 1972), the present study, drawing on the above query, establishes an element of analysis by means of a consequential test of reliability.

The formulation of the above-mentioned element of analysis is based on the simple consideration whereby the purchase of wine is sometimes (often, in some cases) linked, more than to the producer's knowledge, to the territory of origin and thus to its popularity (for example: Champagne, Montalcino, Chianti, etc.). This means that the territory and the individual enterprises operating within, respond to the basic assumptions outlined in the study on *country brand effect* (Warren J. Bilkey' Erik Nes, 1982) and, more generally in that of brand theory (Aaker 1997).

From such a simple statement derives the importance of the relationship "territory - wine industry" from which physical and chemical characteristics are passed on to the product as well as traditions linked to the production culture. In this paper, besides this simple consideration, the importance of the *cognitive* and *relational* component of the territory is analysed from which quality and identity derive.

Therefore, this study, in adopting and changing the above-mentioned brand theories and territory concept (Camagni 1991 – 1995), reaches the following assumption:

*Wine production anchored in specific geographic areas can be competitive when the territory of origin manages to express the fundamental components regarding **quality** (understood not only as an intrinsic characteristic but also, obviously, as the capacity of guaranteeing and reinforcing a loyalty relationship with the customer) and **identification** (in other words identity, that is typicality and fame).*

Tests on such assumptions were carried out through the benchmark technique where initially, there was the attempt to validate the above-mentioned assumption through the analysis of three famously successful geographic areas in the international wine-grape landscape (Piedmont, Veneto and Tuscany). Added to this comparison there is the one comprising the results taken from the other Italian area, Salento (in the south of Italy) which has always been related to wine making but considered to be underdeveloped with respect to notoriety and thus, with respect to the competitive know-how of its production, all this in order to ensure a way of developing grape-wine production. All this takes place with particular care dedicated to the role that the different "denominations of origin", present and widespread, have adopted towards the development of the value of the wine territory, but obviously, with different means of being picked out and thus of competing. The study has taken place through the creation of appropriate indicators and through the observation of specific elements present in the above-mentioned areas and thus in the enterprises present there.

The study has highlighted consistent differentials amongst the territories characterized for the confrontation. The predisposition towards grape-wine making undoubtedly turns Salento into a gifted territory that however, proves to be insufficient in generating an efficient route towards wine valorisation and, consequently, towards the creation of a territory brand that, visa-versa, appears to be strong in the other areas analyzed. Such a result, which appears to be obvious from the start, seems to be interesting in cases where, in the more famous geographic areas, there is always a

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<sup>1</sup> Researcher of Business Administration, Faculty of Social and Political Science and of the Territory, University of Salento, m.fait@economia.unile.it

<sup>2</sup> Researcher of Business Administration, Faculty of Economics, University of Salento, a.iazzi@economia.unile.it

profitable “territory –wine enterprise” relationship from which a major part of the success of wine production carried out there originates.

Therefore, this paper, although in need of further integration and corrections, aims at ratifying the original theoretical hypothesis, thus highlighting the importance of the “wine territory” especially with regard to its less common features which are at times marginally analysed, especially by policy makers.