Generic communication and cooperation in the French wine industry

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to propose an interpretation of advertising strategies in the French wine sector. Several public reports reveal the weakness of promotional investments by the French wine producers. This situation can be explained by two strategic motivations. First, the structure of the French wine industry is mainly composed of numerous little producers. Stakeholders of small scale cannot afford to develop strong brand names. This contrasts with the industry of Californian or Australian wines, which are supported by important promotional budgets. Secondly, the multitude of collective label (e.g Protected Designations of Origin, AOC in France) raises the risk of free riding and the possibility of externalities (advertising spillover) of individual strategies. So French firms are encouraged to join their investments and to develop collective advertising. These generic promotions are mainly done by collective marketing orders, called "interprofessions" in France. For several authors, the generic aspect makes necessary the cooperation between actors and justifies the mandatory programs. Our study underlines a second effect where the individual investments in advertising allow the development of the sector overall in spite of the presence of externalities. A process of cooperation is not thus an indispensable condition.

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1 Introduction

2 Introduction

The dramatic increase in the market efficiency of the last century could have not occurred without the development of communication. For industrial economics communication is a fundamental element to reduce information asymmetries for consumers and for the creation of value (Verbeke, 2005). Considering the consumer point of view the principal vectors of information are the mass media, mainly advertising (CREDOC, 2007). In the economic literature scholars often focus on brand advertising at the expense of the other form, the generic advertising. Contrary to the brand communication, this last one aims at supporting the consumption of a set of products without highlighting the product of a specific supplier. It applies to a group of products rather than to a specific product inside this group. For a large range of market the similarity of the products and substitution effects weakly incites companies to invest in advertisements because of the presence of spillovers. This phenomenon challenges sectorial disciplines due to phenomena of free-riding (Crespi and Marette, 2002; Depken and al., 2002; Kinnucan and Myrland, 2003; Norman and al., 2008). The resort to generic campaigns partially undercut this risk. The authors define generally this type of strategy as cooperative investment of firms to produce and spread general information (Forker and Ward, 1993). Its primary motive is to stimulate the growth of a market by attracting new consumers, by increasing the quantities acquired by these last ones and their willingness to pay. Unlike a brand communication, the predative aspect, that is the main objective of which is to take part in the competition, is masked by the search for the common interest. In the facts, the generic communication increases the market share of a group of producers to the detriment of direct or indirect competitors. The design of the generic communication integrates intrinsic common attributes, e.g. sanitary virtues, or extrinsic, such a geographical indication. Generic communication objectives are generally wide in the range of product supported, but also in the public targeted. As a consequence it is a complex phenomenon and it is uneasy to measure if these investments reach a minimum of efficiency.

Campaigns of generic communication justify themselves most generally as a tool to compensate cyclical or structural difficulties unfavorable to a sector of production (sanitary crises, changes of preferences, etc.[3]). In certain cases, these

[3]At the end of 2011, the European Commission has approved 14 programmes in 11 Member States to promote fresh fruit and vegetables both on the internal market and in third countries. The total budget for the programmes, running for a period of three years, is 34.1 million of Euro of which the EU contributes 17.0 million of Euro(50%). This was one of a set of measures

objectives can cross with problems of public health: i. the promotion of the consumption of fruits and vegetables to fight against the cardiovascular diseases and the obesity was one of lighthouse measures of the French National Nutrition Program of the 2000s; ii. in a similar way, dairy products were promoted by public authorities or private companies to reduce infantile malnutrition and senior osteoporosis. Then the financial coverage of these operations by public authorities is legitimized with regard to their objective of prevention of social plagues, humanely and financially expensive (Fulponi, 2010).

Generic communication appears as a factor of development of the agricultural sectors mattering in the countries of the OECD. In 2001, subsidies in favor of the food promotion notified by the EU to the WTO represent an amont of 1.299 billion euro. In the United States, it is 1.000 billion US dollars that are spent every year within the framework of mandatory-program (Crespi, 2007; Oof and al., 2011). With regard to the categorization of the public supports in the agriculture sectors, the food generic communication mobilizes two different categories of financial resources. The first one recovers the public aid for food-processing sectors; the second is that of private investment. The generic promotion concerns a major part of the agricultural productions even if it has a variable share according to the sectors and States. The importance of these measures is probably understandable by a turned out efficiency. Very numerous empirical studies on the effects of the mandatory programs of generic promotion led in the United States demonstrate they are investments with a very correct return (Crespi, 2003; Hanagriff and al., 2008). However the equity of the distribution of the profits of these actions raises numerous questionings (Alston and al., 2000; Crespi, 2003).

This article proposes an explanatory analysis of the strategic reasons adduced which motives the companies of the wine industry to set up processes of cooperation around the generic communication. The first section introduces a discussion on the notions of generic advertising into the wine sectors. The following section reviews the questions raised by the literature on the effects of the generic communication on the processes of cooperation. The last section returns on the consequences of the cooperative investments in publicity for the governance of the wine sectors. The last section concluded and opens the discussion on additional research.

proposed by the Commission this summer to address the difficult market situation faced by this sector as a consequence of the E-coli crisis.

3 Generic communication, an instrument of the development of the wine supply-chains

The geographical indications are particularly concerned by the various forms of collective promotion but they are not the only concerned sectors. Substantial budgets are dedicated to the collective promotion of wines or quality cheeses at the same time on the basis of private initiatives and from mandatory programs. The choice of the generic communication for these systems of production is justified by a range of authors because of the atomistic configuration of these sectors (Marette, 2003). The wine spread of the commercial structures does not allow the producers to invest individually on private brand. These ones required operations of communication on markets of significant dimension. Indeed in numerous food sectors, it is not rare to meet several hundreds of marketer endowed each of one or several marks. In the case of the wine, the extreme complexity of the horizontal and vertical differentiation of the offer is revealed by a multitude of attributes, of which the reference to the producer. The promotion is thus crucial to allow the consumer to estimate the meaning of the various quality labels and to make a success of strategies of differentiation (Goodhue and Rausser, 2003). The potential profits of the generic communication are regularly questioned in United States indeed quite never in Europe.

A series of evaluations of the impact of mandatory programs was realized since the beginning of 1990s by North American researchers on varied markets such as fruits, meat, fish, milk or cotton (Erickson, 1999; Hoover and al., 1992; Kinnucan and Miao, 1999; Liu and Forker, 1988). The frequent evaluation of mandatory-programs financed by marketing - board in the USA gives a precise information on the efficiency of these programs in market share gains and value (Forker and Ward, 1993; Wilmot and al., 2007). In the European frame, this type of evaluation is almost absent. For instance, mandatory-programs in North America concerns a good half of the agricultural production. In California, the most important state on the agricultural level in US, there are 61 active local programs to which it is necessary to add 16 federal programs (Kaiser and al., 2005). Because of the importance of these figures, the researches on the generic promotion, and in a wider way on the impact of mandatory-program in Research and Development and measures of quantitative regulation of the offer, covered the quasi-totality of the food-processing sectors (Crespi, 2003). They aim at justifying these programs from costs-profits analyses. The authors refer to asupply and demand model classic in applied economy. The measure of the variations of areas located under the curves reveal the profit resulting of the advertising investments towards a product (Dông, 2007; Alston and al., 2007).These works confine generally to the measure

of the profit for the producers (Balagtas, 2003; Chung, 2000; Kinnucan, 2000). The analyses of the well-being for the consumer are less complete, on one hand, because of difficulties to estimate the demand elasticity in the reference, on the other hand, because of a lesser interest of the sponsors for this question. Dynamic structural models report these effects on a long period. The most interesting recent developments are the ones side effects of the generic promotion between groups of products. As an example, the advertising investments which succeed a phase of crisis on one of the meat market are not without effects on the market share of the other meat products. Main conclusion of this research is that globally these investments have a positive effect for the producers. They are positive return rates investments in most of the example (Chung, 2000 ; Alston, 2000). In Europe as in the United States, the programs of generic advertising are not a subject of public debates (Malorgio and Grazia, 2006). The form of the mandatory focuses the attention.

Public authorities consider that the amounts of the mandatory programs are marginal in the total producer turn-over. In the French case, the public legitimacy of the "interprofessional" agreements is obtained considering the membership of a major part of the supply-chain firms and not on criteria of social benefit. The quasi-absence of evaluation of the impact of the operations of promotion in Europe suggests a weak interest of public authorities for this type of measures. The last EC audit of the community policy of promotion of farm produces dates 2002 (IT, 2002). Beyond the gross efficiency of the programs of generic promotion the question which settles is the one of its role in the dynamics of the wine sectors.

The primary effects of the promotion, the extension of markets, improvement of the willingness to paid, do not have to hide its impact on the design of the supply chain. There are multiple questions on the factors responsible of cooperative strategies. Previously it is essential to distinguish the concepts of generic advertising and cooperative advertising which most of the scholars tend to confuse.

4 Generic advertising vs. cooperative advertising

The economic literature on generic advertising concerning food products presents a sizeable problem of definition. Numerous authors associate the generic advertising with a process of cooperation between agents (Albisu and al., 2005; Alston and al., 2007). Indeed the notions of cooperation and generic advertising recover different economic processes. This confusion between both concepts originates from a seminal paper on generic advertising. Since this the literature drag an ambiguity, an awkward assimilation. According to Friedman (1983), Piga (1998), Martin (2002), Mantovani and Mion (2006), advertising is purely cooperative if

the x firm investment benefits to all the other firms present on this market. They mention the existence of spillover effects in advertising. In accordance with these authors this effect seems to us to be the one of the generic advertising. Nevertheless using a term like cooperative advertising relate to a fundamentally different concept. The cooperative advertising has for objective to increase the global size of the market without favoring exclusively the market shares of the company which invests (Mantovani and Mion, 2006). On the opposite side, the purely predative advertising reduces the market share of the competitors (" the stealing effects " or effect of communicating vessels) by benefiting exclusively the company which finances the advertising campaign (brand advertising). This dichotomy originates from an article of Braithwaite (1928).

The quasi-systematic confusion between generic advertising and cooperative advertising is equally observed in Forker and Ward in a frequently quoted paper (1993). These authors define the generic advertising in the following way "the cooperative effort among producers of a nearly homogeneous product to disseminate information about the underlying attributes of the product to existing and potential consumers for the purpose of strengthening demand for the commodity" (p. 6). This conceptual mistake referred to an a priori: the fact is that a program of generic advertising involves inevitably cost-sharing and cooperation between legally autonomous but economically interdependent agents. Because of their co-presence on the same market they have to share the necessary effort for the development of the demand. The amalgam between cooperative advertising and generic advertising springs from this presupposition. If a generic publicity promotes a category of products without brand attribute, as it is often the case within the framework of advertisements on relatively homogeneous products such certain foodstuffs, it does not underlie necessarily a type of particular arrangement between rival agents. Even when arrangements of various natures are observed, agreement between firms is not systematic. Due to its denomination the cooperative advertising supposes an arrangement between at least two economic agents while a program of advertising having generic effects can be manage and financed by a single agent.

The cooperation underlies a mutual commitment between actors to share investment and profit. The cooperative processes for advertising were abundantly studied. The classic models of co-advertising, which are of use as the analysis of the cooperative advertising, rest mainly on upstream-downstream arrangements (Huang and Li, 2001). They provide analysis on the producer-distributor vertical relations (Jorgensen and al., 2000; Li and al., 2002). The presence of a program of cooperative advertising (Ingene and Parry, 2004; Taboubi and Zaccour, 2005; He and al., on 2007 for a survey) answers in these formal models a wish to improve

the coordination within the vertical relation. This mechanism increases generally the efficiency and the stability of the structure of the distribution channel (dyadic models). While in the case of a generic advertising, the highlighted difficulties of coordination find themselves essentially on a horizontal plan, that is between actors who assume(accept) the same functions(offices) in a sector(network). The problem posed is similar to that relative to the public or quasi-public goods because of the effects of spillover effects, the advertising externalities: the risk of underinvestment by opportunist agents. Certain firms do not wish to support the cost of the investments in generic advertising even when they remove a profit from it. This attitude breeds risks of adverse selection and moral hazard which can lead to a chronic underinvestment. It is the reason for which the authors envisage spontaneously incentive mechanisms to by-pass these difficulties and optimizes the investments in advertising having a generic effect. The most efficient strategy involves cooperation a minima when appear a generic effect.

It is besides possible to identify three situations where the effects of overflowing, of which we postulate to be at the origin of the generic aspects of the advertising, do not drive to a necessary cooperation. The predative risk can explains the cooperative strategy for a group of firms including rival companies all of them removing a residual profit from investments without participating in the investments (Fershtman, 1984; Piga, 1998). As the market shares of the various companies postpone, Fershtman and Nitzan (1991) find that when companies have different marginal costs, their incentives to invest in advertising also differ. The most efficient company will be incited to invest more than its competitors in spite of a possible effect of overflowing. Also the company with the highest market share is incited more strongly to invest to preserve the advantages of a dominant position (Tirole, 1988). A first empirical studies of the generic effects of the advertising during a not cooperative campaign is proposed by Robert and Samuelson (1988) considering the tobacco US-market. The econometric analysis of the advertising expenses of the main brands reveals that the investments of a brand have significant effects on the sales of the totality of the brands. In spite of the absence of formal cooperative agreement between firms, they continue to invest. They aim at first at maximizing the joined profit and count on a relay of the investments of the dominant firms. To note that because of a different specification from the predative effect of the investments in the model of Fershtman and Nitzan (1991), these obtain an inverse result of the dynamics of the investments. The general principle of these dynamic models remains that in the case the advertising has a purely generic effect, the rival companies of N sub-invest it $t+1$ with regard to the investments of N at t.

The expression "cooperative advertising" is thus questionable. A stricter defini-

tion of the generic advertising seems preferable. We shall retain that of Chakravarti and Janiszewski (2004) " Generic advertising is designed to increase primary demand, the "size of the pie" without affecting selective demand, or the share of the pie" (p 487). It seems besides necessary to define the concept of generic effect, as the presence of spillover effects of the advertising investments. Obviously, in numerous cases a cooperation is necessary.

Spontaneously strategic alliances appear, which are translated on a concrete plan by labor unions, cooperatives, franchises, to prevent for under-investments, and find legitimacy there. The expression cooperative advertising in its usual use is subject has pledge. A strict definition of the generic advertising seems preferable and necessary. The distinction of both types of economic, advertising and cooperative processes, allows to distinguish four scenarios: the brand advertising without generic effect, the advertising without agreements of cooperation in the presence of spillover effects, generally hidden but central for the extension of markets and the competitive game (Norman and al., 2008), the generic advertising with agreements of cooperation between the agents, and the advertising with shared investments. A fast examination of the forms of advertising in the food sector reveal a highest frequency of the generic advertising both for the commodities, such as fruits and vegetables, milk, meats, and the products under Geographical Indications. Leading advertising are meets more in the transformed products, such as yoghurts, cereal, biscuits, what confirms the examination on behalf of the expenses of firms in these sectors (CREDOC, 2007).

Recent research has illuminated the way in which generic effects of the advertising ensue not only from agreements of cooperation and for common investments. While campaigns of generic advertising contribute partially to the development of markets, the decoupling investments of firms in the promotion of their own private brands contribute to it in a very significant way. Consequently the cooperation is an option among others. The question at this stage is to understand what makes it necessary.

5 The effects of the generic communication on the supply chains governance

Several scholars emphasize important effects of the generic communication about the food markets organization. These investments are never without consequence on the competition between firms of the same group of products even between various markets (Alston, 2001; Kaiser, 1997; Kinnukan and al., 1996; Carey, 1996). Threshold effects, spillovers and regulations impact directly or indirectly the strategies of implementation of the advertising investments.

5.1 Effects of threshold in an atomistic configuration

Intuitively the cooperation in the implementation of generic programs follows logic of scale economy. Increasing volume of advertising resources allows lowering the average cost of the investments by limiting the losses of the replication of individual advertising campaigns. Nevertheless, in a test of this hypothesis, Robert and Samuelson (1988) obtain an opposite demonstration. Cooperation tends to mobilize superior investments to those obtained outside cooperation. This behavior does not allow firms to reduce the total expenditures. The sum of the individual costs in a cooperative strategy can thus be upper to that of the non-cooperative strategy. The marginal profit of the cooperative investments is more advantageous. The guaranty of the cooperation excludes the sub-optimal investment strategy generated by the risk of free-riders.

Cooperation rather appears to be necessary to assure the critical threshold beyond of which the marginal profit is inefficient. For example in the cases of SME's the access to the national and international media requires a pool of firms due to their limited individual capacities. A collective strategy in generic communication cannot be understood if the marginal return in cooperative generic advertising is upper to that of the investments on private brands.

The atomistic configuration of food sectors is extremely sensitive to the effects of threshold in terms of promotion investments. First strategy of the SME and TPE of the sector is to target local niche markets. However this option has a limited impact on the quantitative side. Most of the food markets concern low value-added products, where the creation of value is possible under the condition to target a large public. Second strategy is to raise a critical level of investments to realize large advertising campaigns. The implementation of this strategy comes true mainly by merger of firms. When the technical constraint or market regulation forbids concentration, it is too costly to promote products without generic advertising. Cooperation between producers becomes de facto a condition of development.

5.2 The eviction of free riding strategies

In the case of non-coordinated private initiatives, the risk of free ridering and moral hazard is important. Opportunist behavior can occur at two distinct levels, either by self-restriction of the individual contribution to the promotion, or by restriction in quality despite the concurrent trend to converge in direction of a standard, object of the advertising. Solution to these market failures implies cooperation with collective rules and enforcement mechanisms. Due to these difficulties most of the food markets are partially regulated by public rules. Public authority is legitimize

to extend the decisions of a producers' organization to all the producer community susceptible to obtain a profit from the advertising investments. This process is qualified as a legal extension of the interprofessional agreements in France, as a mandatory-program in the United States.

Taxes and other additional contributions (e.g. Contributions Volontaires Obligatoires) concretize these choices of private groups for the advertising or the Research/Development investment. Each agent contributes relatively to his market share. The contributory constraint in campaign of generic advertising does not totally switch-off the possibilities of opportunist behavior. The efficiency of the generic advertising depends on the quality of the products put in market. The free-rider can tempt to reduce production costs and nevertheless he benefits from the generic advertising. Market rules are indeed essential to control the behaviors. This explains the frequent connection between mechanisms of public quality certification, the control of the innovations and generic advertising (Valceschini and Mazé, 2000).

To prevent free riding and enforce collective strategies, public authorities can allocate subsidies to the promotion. These generally supplement private investments of producers' organizations (CE, 2009). A part of the CAP budget is dedicated to promotion. Technically, professional organizations manage these operations associating public and private investments. Since 2002 EU extends the principle of co-financing by professional organizations and Member states. The bilateral financing give more responsibility to private interests and therefore limits the losses. Nevertheless during the last crisis, the EU continues to take care of all the costs (CE, 2002). The Commission took in consideration the reduction of private financing.

5.3 Official quality labels and the supply chain cooperation for advertising

The diffusion of information to the consumer by official quality signals turns out to be a winning strategy for a significant number of food products. The geographical indications of food commodities (except wine) are of 856 references today against 597 in 2002 (Sylvander et al., 2007). The producers, associated voluntarily or involuntarily by a geographical proximity, are incited to protect the coherence of the label by the implementation of standards. To ensure a credible signal they have to design specific governance. The improvement of a cooperative strategy requires the implementation of internal and external control procedures, e.g. actions against frauds, claims to the courts, etc. Governance declines mechanically in the field of the communication because of the complementarities of the three

aspects of the GI, elaboration of minimum standard, certification and control, signal promotion. This last one is in direct continuation of the quality strategy and of GI's protection. The cooperative incentives to establish a control are identical for upstream and downstream functions of the supply-chains. The control of the deviant's behavior on the product quality concerns as well the relevance and the efficiency of the signal, and requires the same organizational infrastructures. The organization for the control of the agronomic and industrial process is the same than the one for the control of the contribution to the promotion. The collective management of these functions presents the same features. (Marette and Crespi, 2003; Raynaud et al., 2002). The association of the missions of formal or informal organizations, firm networks, interprofessionnal unions towards the communication reduces transaction costs to the establishment of cooperation on new objects.

5.4 Competition, beggar-thy-neighbour effect and entry barriers

The public supports for agricultural products, GI and non-GI, are criticized as cause of distortions on European and foreign markets. Josling (2008) suspect a risk of unfair competition with two categories of disturbances. The first one recovers from a simple distortion between similar products but from different origins resulting from an asymmetric investment, an "advertising dumping ". For example, the support for fruits and vegetables sector lower the cost of European producers. The amounts of subsidies are not sufficient to change sustainably the competition between firms. Financial support of the food promotion (Measure 133) represents 37 million euros. The second results from the indirect effect of the promotion of a product on substitutable products. The important efforts realized on a product impact more or less the consumption of substitutable products. The promotion of the pork affects the consumption of meat of beef or poultry. These transfers involve that the efforts of the various categories of providers can counterbalance some the others with losses important for the agents of N sectors in competition.

6 Conclusions and looking forward

The aim of this article was to clarify the questions of cooperation and generic effects of the communication. In the literature, there are effectively abstract confusions on behalf. The association between generic advertising and cooperative advertising is not systematic. The externalities of the communication are a strong incentive to cooperate for agents in situation of competition on a market. But it is not compulsory, either on a strategic plan, or on a legal plan. If the regulation of the

prices and the vertical relations between the agricultural producers and the IAA is a central question of the interprofessional organization, we observe frequently that it is about of advertising that the actors succeed in getting organized. The advertising effects on the governance of the food sectors must be thus developed. For example, authors show that in the case of a collective brand in open market, the collective promotion lowers the costs of the firm which uses in this brand. It avoids especially to create, to maintain or to acquire an private brand. The generic advertising can reduce entry barriers to a given sector. It can increase the competition and facilitate the new entrants. (Crespi and Marette, 2009).

The question of welfare global of these interventions on markets is nevertheless difficult. On empirical plan, the measures of support for the food sectors are slandered because they create distortions of competitions. How then to distinguish what requires a public support of what is not it? In what can the investments in communication contribute to reduce the chances of market without creating of entry barriers? Finally, the coexistence of different coordination forms is classic on agricultural markets (Myers and al., 2010).

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