



A RESEARCH AGENDA FOR TERROIR: AN EMPIRICAL, INTERNATIONAL EXPERT STUDY

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Abstract

Aim: Terroir is a French concept relating the qualities and quality of agricultural products to their physical and socio-cultural place of origin. It is increasingly used by business and policymakers as a marketing technique to provide economic benefits (e.g. Lenglet, 2014; Wine Australia, 2015), and to potentially preserve cultural heritage (e.g. Bauer, 2009) and the environment (e.g. Bowen, 2010). The rising interest in this interdisciplinary and sometimes controversial concept (e.g. Bosker, 2017; Matthews, 2016) presents an opportune time to consider important future directions for research and collaboration. The aim of this expert study was to develop a research agenda for future terroir studies, informed by academic, industry and government experts, which is interdisciplinary and international in scope.

Methods and Results: This project employed a Delphi approach, an iterative framework for eliciting expert views and building consensus (Dalkey and Helmer, 1963; Hasson *et al.*, 2000; Rowe and Wright, 1999). The first round of the project consisted of 40 interviews with academic, business and policy experts to identify important research priorities for terroir. Experts were selected on the basis of publication counts and seniority for academics, and global influence/recognition for industry members and policymakers, as well as ensuring a balance of geographic regions and genders. A confirmatory survey asked experts to rank priorities identified by two or more experts in interviews, to identify the most promising areas for future terroir studies.

Conclusions: The final list of identified research priorities will be presented at the conference. Preliminary priorities identified from the interviews are:

- 1) terroir's economic and marketing advantages for business and regions;
- 2) consumer views of terroir;
- 3) taste, flavour and terroir;
- 4) terroir's meaning and use in different products, cultures and places;
- 5) social issues and terroir (e.g. succession planning, gender inequity);
- 6) the plant–place biophysical relationship;
- 7) climate change effects and adaptation, for agriculture and more broadly;
- 8) terroir as a dynamic concept, changing through time; and
- 9) terroir's connection to environmental sustainability.

Significance and Impact of the Study: The research areas and agenda identified provide a basis for future work on terroir, to ensure its relevance and significance for researchers, industry and policy, as well as cohesions as an area of research. The research agenda may also provide valuable ideas for new project development, including for research students.

Keywords: Terroir, research agenda, research priorities, expert study