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**Product Patriotism:  
How Consumption Practices Make and Maintain National Identity**

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**Abstract**

In today's society, globalization and global flows are ubiquitous and undeniable. Consequently, it is possible to question the role and importance of national identity in consumption choices. This research inductively develops a theory for product patriotism, defined as how consumers construe their identity through nationally-iconic product consumption. A typology is proposed, outlining four possible virtual national identity positions consumers may occupy relative to their stocks of cultural capital, relational orientation towards the nation and situational contingencies. Product patriotism as a framework is distinct from past research that a) narrowly focuses on spectacular or positive forms of nationalistic consumption, b) segments consumers based on nationalistic or patriotic traits, and c) focuses mostly on brands. The novel framework of product patriotism provides new insight into the social patterning of consumers' reflexive, negotiated decoding of national identities, the dynamism of national identity, and the enduring significance of consumption when enacting national identities.

Keywords: national identity, product attachment, patriotism, place attachment, consumption practices

## 1. Introduction

Marketing imperatives and opportunities associated with national identity are the subjects of much academic work and typically rely upon one of two empirical foci. First, past analyses disclose how iconic national brands like Jack Daniel's (Holt, 2006) and Tim Hortons (Cormack, 2008) assimilate national identity. Such research highlights the material practices by which brands are encoded with national associations, regardless of their global success. Second, research makes prominent the national identity of consumers vis-à-vis their product preferences. For example, consumers maintain home country national identity partly through the consumption of home country brands (Kumar & Steenkamp, 2013) and/or the rejection of non-national products (e.g. Shimp & Sharma, 1987). Overall, research demonstrates that identities—local, regional, national, transnational, global—are facilitated, commodified, circulated and displayed by consuming particular brands (Cayla & Eckhardt, 2008; Craig & Douglas, 2006). National affiliations also pattern the experiential consumption of goods like international sport (e.g. Sherry et al., 2001) and cuisine (e.g. Cwiertka, 2006).

Generally, research tends to treat national identity as a static concept: a fixed sentiment of belonging to a national social group. As such, the 'in-group' and 'nation' are often perceived as synonymous (Andreouli, 2010). Consumers adhere to a national identity (e.g., being American) and this identity guides their behaviors in a consistent fashion. However, a focus on a consumer's 'virtual' identity, how they experience a normative or 'nominal' identity (Jenkins, 2008), is generally lacking in marketing. This is surprising as a virtual identity may influence the consumption of nationally-branded products and related rituals or vice versa. For example, while most Americans understand the importance of Thanksgiving Day and its rituals in sustaining American traditions (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991), they do not all identically consume the experience, value it in the same way, or practice the same rituals related to this very-American holiday.

The lack of research examining the variability of the experience of national identity suggests the need to extend consumer segmentation beyond in- and out- groups or high and low levels of patriotism or nationalism. As well, while most research focuses on explicitly nationally-branded goods, brand nationality and origin (e.g., Sichtmann & Diamantopoulos, 2013) and overt forms of patriotic consumption (i.e. supporting teams, as per Decrop & Derbaix, 2010) it often ignores the subtle, more everyday experience of national identity. Importantly, most research omits the perspective that identity can be flexible, dynamic and influenced by memory, emotions, and/or perceived threats (c.f., Reed & Forehand, 2016). As such, this paper addresses the following issues using an inductive data approach: 1) how do consumers express their national identity and pride via nationally-iconic product consumption; 2) what is the nature of the relationship between a consumer's attachments to a nation and to a nationally-iconic product; and 3) how can patriotism through product consumption be an everyday, implicit activity versus an exceptional reaction to national identity triggers or perceived threats?

This study makes theoretical and empirical contributions. First, the results suggest that attention to national identity variation corrects consumer research that fails to account for the dynamism of national identifications (cf. Hester & Housley, 2002; Skey, 2009) and that the framework for product patriotism fills this gap. Second, while most past work regards individual-level factors and bottom-up processes (e.g., psychological and dispositional factors such as personality and patriotism) or macro level factors and top-down processes (e.g., national

markets, country-of-origin (COO) effect, economic position of the nation, institutional socialization) in mutual isolation, these are examined together through the product patriotism framework to explore how in combination they influence the consumption of nationally-iconic products. Third, much of the research on COO effects is myopic toward the affective components, including pride related to consumer evaluations of COO products. Examining patriotism through product consumption emphasizes agency, negotiation, and dynamism when identifying the ways in which consumers inhabit national identity subject positions. Identities are context-specific and dependent (Oyserman & Schwarz, 2017) but are nonetheless bound by culture and adapted to group living (Oyserman, 2017). Consequently, by examining how product consumption influences national identity creation and expression, the conceptual framework of product patriotism presented here highlights the recurrent, collective components of a shared, nominal identity; the dimensions that vary in lived national identity practices; and the opportunities that exist for reflexive and transitional national identity practices. The framework outlines that national identity is not stable or unidimensional but rather variable and adapted by individuals within a nation, depending on their felt level of attachment to the nation and to the product that represents the nation.

## **2. Consuming National Identity**

### *2.1 Defining National Identity*

Numerous researchers in the fields of cultural psychology, anthropology, and sociology have built upon the notion that individuals from different nations will have different values, behaviors, and identities (Thelen & Honeycutt, 2004). Consequently, national identity is defined as a political and psychological concept related to borders, on the basis that a national identity can only emerge within those borders, not outside (as per Hall 1996). Nonetheless, national identity is often confused with culture (Bryant, 1997). With the advent of globalization, cultures typically attached to specific nations have become deterritorialized, contaminated by other cultures, and difficult to study (Craig & Douglas, 2006). Consequently, the most common cultural values are universal and able to transcend national borders (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990). Also, and not to be confused with national identity, is ethnicity. While ethnicities, like cultures, can be specific to nations, they are not bound to them. National identity entails social positioning between citizens from the same nation, and in opposition to those from other nations. It mainly concerns dualisms of national identity in-groups and out-groups, with the in-group often treated as coterminous with the nation (Andreouli, 2010). How some individuals 'do' national identity (as per Bechhofer & McCrone, 2009) and how they make sense of national identity (Jenkins, 1996) strongly depend on their relationships with others.

Consequently, individuals adopt national identity positions that allow them to relate to others and to define their self-concept (Oyserman, 2011). National identity positions can be described in terms of levels and types of attachment to the nation, which do not contain the same levels affect for or interaction with out-groups. One type, nationalism, is referred to as a markedly comparative, negative and isolationist attachment position ('us' versus 'them'). Another type, which is the focus in this research, is patriotism, which is referred to as a positive attachment, a non-competitive pride in the merits and accomplishments of one's nation regardless of other nations (Bar-Tal, 1993; Schatz, Staub & Lavine, 1999). Patriotism is associated with feelings of belonging and self-enhancement and a desire to maintain the in-group, making

the group seem even more attractive (Druckman, 1994). As an identity position, patriotism serves the functions of national group unity, cohesiveness, and mobilization (Bar-Tal, 1993). Yet social groups can be attractive without having strong, intimate interpersonal ties that bind members (Hagstrom & Selvin, 1965). This raises the question of how patriotism might function *within* a nation in terms of stronger and weaker degrees of attachment to others and objects. Patriotism and the expression of it in terms of an individual's virtual identity may include negotiated or even oppositional stances (Hall, 1980) toward nominal identity through types of nationally-iconic product consumption.

## 2.2 National Symbols and Product Patriotism

National symbols are significant to the production of a shared sense of "nation-ness" (Anderson, 1991). Collective symbols "help to create and sustain narratives about who we are and where we have come from" (Weedon, 2004: 24). Similarly, the consumption of iconic food products may be an act of national identity preservation (Caldwell, 2002), a response to global flows (Hiroko, 2008), a mean to communicate status within a national group (Palmer, 1998), or a reminder of the past's role in shaping the current national identity (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991).

The focus of this research is on what is termed here product patriotism: how consuming nationally-iconic products is linked to the national collective identity and explicative of the difference between 'I' and 'we' within a nation. The assumption being that consumers within a nation can nonetheless compare themselves to their compatriots without or in tandem to comparing themselves with those from other nations. Specifically, we propose that product patriotism is the expression of how an individual lives and expresses his national identity via various the consumption of a nationally-iconic product.

Elias (1991) contends that knowledge of and cultural competence in national symbols and practices constitutes an embodied, taken-for-granted 'we-identity,' which will vary between groups but does not provide an examination of variability within the groups. DeSoucey (2010), and her conceptualization of gastrationalism outlines that national boundaries emphasize universality in terms of national symbols (i.e., food), and these symbols become markers of national identity. However, it is proposed here that to adequately grasp product patriotism, one must not just bear in mind universal, recognized and fixed collective symbols (e.g., flags, anthems) but specifically examine the variations in how these are practiced. "Even though identities feel stable, identities and the content of these identities change as a function of context," (Oyserman & Schwarz, 2017, p. 533).

Thus, product patriotism represents the expression of an individual's flexible and dynamic national identity as it is expressed through consumption practices that distinguish the individual from others *within* a nation rather than between nations. Here the distinction "between the *name* and the *experience* of an identity" is made (Jenkins, 2008: 44). Those existing within similar conditions (in the same national culture) are likely to share a nominal identity, creating an "unconscious unity" (Bourdieu, 1984: 77) leading to shared norms related to a nationally-iconic product. Yet, the practices and meanings of nationally-iconic products are not homogeneous; they are instead more complex manifestations of the social variability of habitus, of the consumers' virtual identity, and of their attachment to the nation. For example, consuming maple syrup may be a very Canadian thing to do, something that can almost be expected from a Canadian (i.e., expressing the nominal, Canadian identity). However, how integral maple syrup is

to a Canadian may vary between Canadians (i.e., determine their virtual identity as Canadians). As such, the framework of product patriotism accounts for every day, implicit expressions of national identity that are not necessarily triggered by exceptional events but by lived, sometimes banal, and highly individual experiences that vary between individuals from a single nation. The product patriotism framework, therefore, offers a first empirical examination of the potential variability of national identity.

### **3. Methodology**

#### *3.1 Context: Wine and the French*

In August 2012, while giving a speech in New York, ex-French president Nicolas Sarkozy made a confession: “I’ve never in my life in France, drunk a drop of alcohol. And the French elected me President!” The French media promptly labeled Sarkozy’s lack of identification with and consumption of wine as anti-French. In France, perhaps more than anywhere else in the world, wine consumption helps promote collective memory (ingestion, smell, and taste is fundamental to memory) and a sense of territory (national, local, and communal), two features that are essential to the definition of the French national identity (Demossier, 2010). For the French, “wine is part of the reason of state” (Barthes, 1957, 60). Traditionally, figures like epicures Brillat-Savarin and Grimod de La Reynière have “associated the production and consumption of food and wine with the fate of the [French] nation” (Guy, 2003: 1). The French do not just consume wine, they craft it; France leads the world in the production of high-quality wines, both past and present (International Organization of Wine and the Vine, 2015). This long-time dominance has prompted French winemakers, marketers, politicians, and consumers to adopt wine as a national French symbol of internal success and international acclaim, which has contributed to the integration of wine as a national product (Guy, 2003).

However, the assertion that a nation’s wine is superior does not automatically integrate it into the country’s identity. In France, it was a concerted effort to protect the nation itself that led to the rise of wine’s popularity (Guy, 2003). This movement gave birth to ceremonial rites like *l’apéritif*, which is a uniquely French formulaic pre-dinner drink (Clarisse, 1986). Wine in France has escalated to the status of ‘national treasure’ (Ulin, 1995: 524), to the point that it is perceived to be France’s gift to the rest of the world. For the French, wine’s mythical role allows them to bring order to time and place and thus to their sense of identity (Barthes 1957/2000; Gannon, 1994).

Still, wine is a product that increasingly divides, as it distinguishes between those with an abundance of cultural capital (e.g. knowledge of appellations and vintages) and those with less (who consume less, have less interest in the product and see a commitment to French wine as anachronistic). Furthermore, there remains a perceived obligation to drink—not doing so is considered strange (Charters, 2006; Demossier, 2010). As such, the role of wine in maintaining French identity is ambiguous in that while it can be a uniting force, it is also a product that divides the French (e.g., those who do or do not live in wine producing areas, those who do or do not drink it, those who are or are not learned about it), rendering France a relevant study context.

#### *3.2 Procedures and Sample*

The empirical focus was on how French individuals’ attitudes about wine practices as a symbol of French culture might be patterned. By examining the product category of wine, versus

specific brands, it is possible to examine the potential market mechanisms that drive the consumption of national culture. Grounded theory, an inductive qualitative research method that focused on people's lived experiences and their perceptions of the world in which they live (Langdrige, 2007) was used. This interpretive research design used ethnographic methods with the main focus on individual semi-structured interviews (averaging 50 minutes). Observing actual practices was not deemed necessary as the interviews were structured to elicit a detailed recounting of the informants' attitudes toward consumption practices (similar to Holt, 1998). In the interviews, informants were asked to detail their consumption history, practices, and behavior, as well as perceptions of wine and then French wine. Prior to the interviews, each informant was asked to gather 15 images representing what wine means to him or her as French citizens. Picture elicitation aids informants in expressing largely unconscious attitudes and in assessing symbols that tend to be taken for granted. Most important, the use of imagery allows for a better understanding of informants' self-categorization, social positioning, and social interactions (Heisley & Levy, 1991). Informants were free to use their own images or those found online or in print media. Within two months of the initial request, informants were required to send their images back to the researchers. As suggested by Collier and Collier (1986), the images were used to stimulate discussion during the semi-structured interviews that followed. Informants provided a total of 235 pictures. The final step in the data collection process involved a short online questionnaire, completed two months after the interviews. The questionnaire was administered in this way to reduce informant fatigue and comprised open-ended questions about patriotic behaviors and attitudes. The CETSCALE was the inspiration and conceptual basis for the open-ended questions included in the questionnaire which allowed us to compare product practices and nation attachment (Schatz et al., 1999; Shimp & Sharma, 1987).

Three data sources (i.e., pictures, interviews, and questionnaires) were used to provide triangulation and construct validity (Siggelkow, 2007), as well as to increase the integrity of the data and overall credibility of the process (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989). The aim of using a mixed-method approach was also to capture a better representation of the multiple facets and experiences of national identity, which remains a difficult subject to approach explicitly in France (Strenski, 2002). Pictures sourced from the respondents allowed us to examine the visual representations of France and wine as well as their interconnection. The interview data allowed us to delve deeper into the relationship between national attachment and nationally-iconic products as well as to study the differences in terms of how consumers experience their nominal and virtual national identity. Finally, the questionnaire data allowed us to see, using another method, how national identity is expressed via national attachment and through national symbols. Overall, data from 15 French nationals were collected over a two-year period. Informants were recruited via snowball sampling (Atkinson & Flint, 2001) starting with a key industry contact. Interviews with informants 13, 14 and 15 did not result in new significant information; data saturation was judged to have occurred (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). All informants' names were changed for confidentiality reasons (see Table 1).

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

A grounded approach was undertaken to analyze the data (Pettigrew, 2000). This involved the researchers individually immersing themselves in the data and meeting to discuss emerging

patterns. Specifically, a thematic analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) of the picture, interview, and questionnaire data was conducted using an iterative process of inductive and deductive coding. Data were first inductively coded: images were spread out and then slowly regrouped without predetermined themes (Suchar, 1997); transcripts and questionnaire responses were read and re-read to identify further themes. The following section details the results, with additional results found in the online appendix (see Online Supplementary Material).

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Nominal Product Patriotism

Nominal identity refers to the common, conventionalized category of national identity (Jenkins, 2008). A necessary condition for national identity is a basic recognition of such symbols; however, “‘intrinsically’ national products do not always engender explicitly national sensibilities” (Fox & Miller-Idriss, 2008: 552). In the case of the informants, all demonstrated fluency in wine as representing French identity in terms of 1) territory—the place where wine is produced, and 2) shared consumption rituals—the social context within which wine is consumed. Wine is a salient symbol of French nominal identity, and represents what it means to ‘be French.’

All informants provided territory-related imagery (vineyards, landscapes, maps of France, relief; see Appendix photos), suggesting that wine has its stock in the soil and territory of France. None of the images were from outside of France. Many informants, including Paul, Martine, René, Georges, Mathis, Alexandre, Charles, and Anton, also used the actual word “terroir” and the concept of terroir was raised through images and interview responses that touched on the unique French combination of landscape and workmanship. Terroir is a French term for the essence of a place that incorporates tradition, geology, geography, workmanship, and mysticism (Charters, 2006; Spielmann & Gélinas-Chebat, 2012).

The second theme, shared consumption, relates to communal wine-related practices and rituals that bring the French together. Informants offered images and mentions of conventions and icons associated with wine rituals, including descriptions or images of implements (e.g. carafes, corkscrews, champagne versus traditional wine glasses). Many informants also spoke of wine rituals that have personal significance (see Anne in the Appendix), using images and recanting anecdotes from social gatherings such as family meals, wine tastings, gift exchanges, and traditional wine events like *l’apéritif*, which was mentioned by Alexandre, René, Michel, and Chloé. Wine socialization and the intergenerational transfer of wine culture, such as stories of tasting watered-down wine as children or learning about wine from grandparents and parents (Paul, Clementine, René, Michel, Mathis, Alexandre, Georges, Noémie, Monique, Martine, Arnaud), confirmed the importance of habitus.

The informants demonstrated how their appreciation of wine is linked to the formation of a positive ‘we-image’ (Elias, 1991). This is best exemplified by interview mentions of ‘our country,’ ‘our patrimony,’ ‘our wines,’ ‘our culture.’ Beyond a shared recognition of wine as a normative symbol, there was evidence of patriotism (i.e. non-competitive pride) in wine and the role of wine in affirming and elevating France’s country image. Paul emphasized his product patriotism in an almost self-evident manner when answering online a question about representative products of France: “Undeniably wines, no?! Not necessarily better than others but certainly carriers of a real identity.” Informants evoked a sense of ownership of the product and a reverence for its monumental value in the construction of the ‘we’.



[Wine] is part of our patrimony; it's like a cathedral. It's millennial; it's built on our civilization. In the French patrimony, there are cathedrals, the kings of France, the bread, the cheese, and the wine. These are the products we have always made here. (Michel)

These accounts confirm that French nominal identity is closely linked to wine. However, even at the stage of photo elicitation, it became clear that informants manifested wine patriotism in different ways. Critical distance and practices pertaining to wine differed between respondents (cf. Skey, 2009). For example, while many informants stressed the importance of wine in France, they consumed little or no wine. Arnaud and Noémie are deeply involved in wine (as per their discourses and related practices) yet do not like the taste of it and therefore do not consume it. Informants also adopted different stances towards their shared anchors of collective identity.

#### 4.2 *Virtual Product Patriotism*

Informed by the theoretical framework, modes of attachment to the nationally-iconic product were first examined. National attachments derive from individuals' relational orientations, which may be either more compliant with (e.g. guardian nationalism and blind patriotism), or more critical of national norms and stereotypes (e.g. apolitical ethnicity and critical loyalty) (see Davis 1999; Rothi et al 2005; Schatz et al. 1999). The likelihood of an individual adopting a conformist or critical stance in relation to established norms is based on the individual's psychological disposition and how they construct their identity (Oyserman & Schwarz, 2017), which is conceptualized here as an attachment to wine. Second, reflecting Bourdieu's investigation of habitus via "classifiable practices and works" (1984: 171), wine-related practices were categorized as either limited or elaborate, the results of which are revealed in a two-by-two grid (see figure 1). The resulting typology offers a nuanced examination of national identity by identifying positions within the in-group.

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

*Instrumentalist.* Instrumentalist is a conformist orientation toward wine as a nationally-iconic product, but with limited consumption and simple wine-related practices. For example, Arnaud reproduces the French stereotype in formally remarking that "Foreign wines are industrial," yet his own practices are limited; he does not drink alcohol. His appreciation of wine depends entirely on the field of performance, engaging with it for social purposes (when friends get together, during family meals, for work meetings). Most of his pictures were sourced from grocery store flyers, and depicted wine as a gift or in formats that are meant for sharing (e.g. bag in box wine) about which he wrote: "Long live good wine!" Arnaud brings wine during his travels in order to share it with those he meets and offers it as a gift when he is invited to someone's home. He opens fine wines at home for his own guests though he does not personally imbibe. Perhaps most strikingly, he speaks of wine as if he himself produces it:

When we went to China, I brought three bottles of champagne. [The receptionists at the hotel] told me they had never tasted it, so I went to my room, came back with a bottle and opened it up for them. I mean, they need to taste what it's all about! They were so excited, and they loved it! You know, I love being able to share my wines with others,

showing them how amazing it is, how good French wine is, and why everybody loves it.

A hegemonic alignment between the nominal and virtual identities regarding wine for categorizes the instrumentalist position. A blind form of product patriotism provides a sense of pride by virtue of the nation's traditions and history. Like Arnaud, Jean reproduced the French wine stereotype: "I think we have to continue to play up that image of France and high-end gastronomy and wine." To do so, Jean selected traditional images of wine: barrels, bottles, vines, dishes, and service (see Appendix). This conformist approach to wine in part reflects its practical value to other forms of social exchange. Thus, the instrumentalist position reveals a functional orientation toward wine. Speaking and pride in wine affirms and sustains the French identity and is an anchor for feelings belonging. Yet, actually participating in wine-related practices is relatively limited and situationally restricted rather than part of everyday life (e.g., having a glass of wine every evening). To talk about or to serve wine is the outcome of another stimulus (such as traveling abroad, meeting with friends, etc.).

*Traditionalist.* The second position, traditionalist, also reflects a conformist mode of attachment to wine as a nationally-iconic product, but with a more complex range of consumption practices and heightened patriotism. Wine for traditionalists is a national symbol worthy of celebration and preservation because it is a critical part of French identity. Responses tended to cluster in the traditionalist category for Martine, Anne, Michel, Mathis, Noémie, and Clementine. Michel claimed in his questionnaire that he affirms his French identity by showing others "the way in which one should open or service a bottle of wine or champagne." Clementine provided an anthropomorphized cartoon of a French flag, replete with a beret, wine glass, mustache, and sneakers, under which she stated: "This cartoon makes me laugh because it is so true yet so old-school. But for me, wine is France and France is wine." In his responses, Mathis is aware of the stereotypes and sees them as factual and defining norms of French national identity that are unlikely to be changed:

We are frog eaters, snail eaters, we carry baguettes under our arms; we have stereotypes like everybody else. I don't think ours are erroneous, it's an image that we've carried for many years and before we can change that image, it will be many generations, certainly a century. [...] We can always say we are better than other countries just like we can also say we are worse than other countries.

The traditionalist position is associated with elaborate or highly ritualized wine-related practices. For example, Clementine highlighted the importance of the French heritage of Domaines and Chateaux, the choice of champagne as the wine of festivities, and the importance of a proper wine glass—all of which are related to the art and appropriate practice of wine culture (see Appendix). She practices and describes an elaborate set of practices relative to wine, despite her young age (23). As well, family relations and attachment to wine are deeply interrelated. Martine and Mathis highlighted this with images of family gatherings (see Appendix). Michel reflected on the role of wine in his identity and the relevance of transmission by including a very personal picture of his grandfather on New Year's Eve (see Appendix) sharing an iconic bottle with his family. Furthermore, Michel makes a resolute effort to consume wine, either by reading, learning, tasting or simply perpetuating the wine rituals he learned from his family. Such accounts suggest that a conformist orientation toward wine as a nationally-iconic

product is amplified when wine is central to habitus formation, as with family socialization. Noémie, likewise, was initiated into wine by her wine enthusiast parents and grandparents; exposed to the elaborate settings, rituals, and practices that are associated with wine. She continues to observe them today, including attending wine classes and buying expensive wines as gifts. Noémie is acutely aware of wine's importance in maintaining French identity (conformist orientation) and—despite not drinking wine—remains committed (by way of developing her wine knowledge) to its intricate practices. Inhabiting the category of French national identity thus entails notions of pride and acute respect for France. Consuming wine is an external sign of membership, and the elaborate practices and rituals, reveal a deeply ingrained, somewhat conspicuous patriotism.

*Reactionary.* The third position, reactionary, involves extravagant practices that are similar to the traditionalist, but within a more negotiated orientation to wine as a nationally-iconic product. Informants who cluster in this position (Paul, Georges, René, Alexandre) spend the most on wine (see table 1), drink it every day, have wine cellars and read about wine. They provided the largest number of images representative of their personal experiences with wine (e.g. images of winemakers they have met, labels of bottles they have consumed, personal tasting notes, etc.), as well as historical and cultural images of wine. Georges provides an image of Vosne (a famous wine parcel) and Alexandre a picture of a stained-glass pane from Paris (see Appendix). The practices of those in the reactionary stance are elaborate but also self-centered (all participate in wine tastings). A critical stance relative to national identity (Rothi et al., 2005) is often expressed in terms of how others within the national group consume the nationally-symbolic product. Those in a reactionary position observed that the culture of consuming wine may no longer reflect a distinctly French national identity, and reacted to the consumption habits of other French nationals as a perceived threat to that national identity. For example:

I'm ambivalent if wine is still part of the culture. [...] The heritage of wine, I think we are losing it. The youth of today doesn't approach wine sensually; they are too cold, technocratic. They don't even know if they enjoy drinking wine! If wine isn't a pleasure what is it? [...] I think that the absence of culture cannot be replaced by a technical discourse. (Alexandre)

Reactionary is a negotiated position vis-à-vis the national habitus. Whereas their elaborate wine practices align with nominal identity, the virtual, lived experience of French identity involves a critical distancing from the wider national group based on personal wine cultural capital (a form of critical connoisseurship; Holt, 1998). For example, in their questionnaires, both Paul and Alexandre lamented the non-consumption of products representative of France, labeling this unpatriotic act as “too bad” and “it's a shame not to have roots”; they perceived wine to be poorly appreciated by others, but still viewed it as one of the last remaining icons of French identity. However, informants in this position were less inclined to put French wine on a pedestal and were often critical of the national symbol. For example, Georges, unprompted in his questionnaire, criticized French wine quality though he consumes it every day. Paul remarked that wine drinking is now rarely seen on French television. Georges lamented that policymakers negatively frame wine consumption and Alexandre decried the pseudo-expert approaches modern wine consumers have adopted as obstructing their potential to understand the true meaning of wine. Those in the reactionary position want to restore the

*status quo ante* in the face of France's changing wine lifestyles. For example, Alexandre provided 34 images (more than double the number requested), which included stained glass windows and frescos located in French cathedrals and cities, photographs of winemakers, extremely rare bottles, and particular terroirs such as Châteauneuf du Pape, stills from seminal French movies, covers of wine books, caricatures of wine personas, old ad campaigns for long-gone wine brands, and pictures of wine-loving actors like Gérard Depardieu. He indirectly criticizes the national group for its lack of culture about the nationally iconic product by highlighting via his pictures the vast scope of its influence in French culture. Paul demonstrated this as well by being hyper-conformist by stating that without wine, a French person is considered less French. He also presented images of provocative French wine labels (e.g. those with curse words) next to images of traditional winemaking methods (e.g. manual harvests, plowing with a horse – see Appendix), explaining that the former represents the fun, amusing, convivial dimension of wine, and the latter represents a return to nature and communion with life. Paul juxtaposed the contemporary and customary roles of wine in France—a product that can be modern but also must stay grounded in France, highlighting the ambiguity of wine in the French identity (Demossier, 2010).

*Fatalist.* The fourth position, fatalist, is associated with a negotiated orientation toward wine as nationally-iconic (similar to reactionary), but with limited wine-related practices (even less so than for the instrumentalist). Responses tended to cluster in the fatalist category for Monique and Charles. While their image and interview data produced the same nominal identity themes as others (wine as emblematic of territory and shared consumption rituals), they were the least patriotic in the sense that overt feelings of pride or identification were not elicited in their discourses about wine even if they were attached to the nation. Those in the fatalist position appear to be most conscious of the obligation of identifying through wine, which is largely instinctive in other positions. Yet in the fatalist position, the experience of the nominal identity borders on negative.

Acknowledging wine as a national symbol is the seeming extent of product patriotism for those in a fatalist position. For example, Charles response to the question of whether the French should consume nationally representative products was “No, because the products that best represent us get sold abroad anyway.” Despite having been a winemaker, Monique was not passionate about wine, nor did she feel particularly concerned by her interpreted negative perceptions of France. She was more indifferent than critical, and entirely detached from wine. Wine has a functional value in the definition of her French national identity, though it is not especially salient. She only indulges in the social practices of wine out of obligation (e.g. at weddings) not personal preference: “If it was my choice, I could do without wine.”

I live in and from the vines, so by default wine is present in our life... Personally, I drink very little; I actually really don't like to drink wine. Even in terms of the taste, I'm not a big wine lover. I can easily go to a celebratory cocktail without drinking any champagne. If there's water, I'll have water but, nonetheless, I won't disparage a good wine.

Those in the fatalist position are the least attracted to the national group (as evidenced in their questionnaire responses). For example, Charles' low national identity salience translated into his negotiated attachment with France and the extent to which it figured into his questionnaire responses regarding his definition of his national identity: “It is difficult for me to see what is inherently French about me.” Wine and wine consumption are directly related to his

job as an estate agent, though Charles does not actively seek more wine knowledge (thus differentiating him from an instrumentalist position). The images he provided are evocative of the expected norm (e.g., wine during meals, see Appendix), but reveal no personal experience of wine and wine culture. In discussing the images, he distanced himself from them: “Subconsciously, I’ve probably put them in an order, or organized them by priority.” His responses were brief and were prefaced by expressions like “I guess” or “I would say.” Charles’s product patriotism is thus restricted to a limited fluency in wine as a collective representation of French identity. Similarly, Monique included images of vine work because these exemplify her life’s work and not because of a passion or involvement with the national symbol.

#### *4.3 Reflexive Product Patriotism*

The four subject positions are not mutually exclusive but rather positions that individuals are more or less likely to adopt depending on situational contingencies. A number of the informants ‘transitioned’ between identity positions in their responses to such influences, demonstrating reflexive stances. Thus, virtual product patriotism—the experience of assuming nominal national identity vis-à-vis wine as a nationally-iconic product—can be a dynamic condition for consumers and it is proposed here that this can occur along two dimensions.

The first dimension is nationalism: the way in which nationally-iconic products entail notions of ‘us’ versus ‘them’, not simply a ‘we-image.’ This dimension is associated with macro- and micro-level scale pressures on national identity, including globalization, which create conditions for a reflexive re-interpretation of local identities: “As consumers are confronted with an increased array of images of others, they will engage in a reflexive articulation of their own (cultural and individual) identities, which are reflected in consumption practices” (Askegaard & Kjeldgaard, 2007, 139). In the case of product patriotism, Alexandre speaks of global market pressures that motivated his transition from a traditionalist to reactionary position. For Paul, his back and forth transition from the traditionalist to the reactionary position is the result of intra-national nationalism. His responses often concurred with a traditionalist position as he is self-proclaimed “very bourgeois” and “very regionally chauvinistic.” He comes from an old Burgundian wine family, which affords him cultural capital (in relation to wine and more generally) and gives him confidence and wine competence. However, his position could also be reactionary, as when he reflected on his internships with wine cooperatives during his legal studies and current travels through France:

What really strikes me is this loss of wine culture, [a culture] I find more and more elitist. It’s become an activity of the educated with money. Today, I get the impression that it’s harder to drink a good wine. Thirty, forty years ago people drank decently, even manual laborers, but now I get the impression that there is this intellectual disconnect. We are becoming less a country of real wine lovers, and I experience that as a loss of identity.

The second dimension of reflexivity concerns situational specificity and individuals’ ‘careers’ (Prus & Sharper, 1977) as French nationals: a micro-level reflexivity. For instance, an informant might adopt a different stance in an effort to maximize his/her chances of success within a particular situation, or over time to acquire wine-related cultural capital, both of which tends to shift practices from a limited to an elaborate form, and build the foundation upon which to adopt a greater distance from hegemonic norms. René, an independent wine retailer, was an

example of this practice. Wine was not part of his childhood socialization, and he had no interest in it until the age of 18 when he pursued wine as a hobby, and at the age of 24, began extensive wine and oenology studies, which led to jobs in the wine industry. In 2004, he established his own store. René's account of his wine biographical 'career' initially suggests a traditionalist stance. Even so, René's interview responses more often resembled the reactionary position. In his interview, René was critical of conventional wine wisdom, rejecting what he regards as the elitist sommelier vision of wine. Through his work, he sells some of the world's most prestigious wines, yet places them in his store alongside smaller, unfamiliar wineries from lesser-known regions because of his desire to change the stereotype that the best French wines come only from the Bordeaux and Burgundy regions. He affirmed his French identity by acknowledging daily wine consumption, but disavowed the conformity of national identity: "I have no particular engagement to my country, I am free."

Transitions between positions do not always result in more elaborate practices or more hegemonic nationally-iconic product attachment. Unlike René (who transitions between fatalist, traditionalist, and reactionary), Monique has continued the same lifelong limited wine practices, yet has adopted both fatalist and instrumentalist positions. She is a retired winemaker who disavows a relationship with wine. Yet while she was an active winemaker, she viewed French wine and its commercial value more positively:

Wine was important for me because I used to live from the production of it, but that's it. [...] France was once loved and respected but now I have the impression that we are considered big babies, a bit like jerks, it's too bad. There is no longer the same admiration for France as there used to be.

No longer economically relying on wine, she has returned to a more critical engagement with it, becoming indifferent to the diminishing positive image of French wine (and French nationals). Via her transitions, Monique did not necessarily acquire more fluency or a stronger sense of attachment to the product.

Interestingly, none of our informants began their consumption careers in the reactionary position, while all began (and in some cases remain) in every other position. Similarly, none of our informants transitioned from the fatalist to the reactionary position. These results suggest that occupying a reactionary stance seems to require a foundational, conformist stage (either instrumentalist or traditionalist). It appears that acquiring objectified cultural capital gives informants the resources (knowledge, competence, confidence) to negotiate the type of attachment to national symbols they want to have and to project to other group members.

## **5. Discussion & Theoretical Implications**

Prior research has examined the dynamic nature of national identity in the context of globalization, migration, and acculturation and how individuals 'hold on' to their national identities in the face of identity threat, such as in comparative situations (e.g., e.g., Peñaloza, 1994). This research examines, through the novel framework of product patriotism, the ways in which national identity can be dynamic and the expression of it distinct from nationalistic or patriotic consumer traits. Specifically, this research shows how individuals articulate their national identity through the every day medium of product consumption and how by doing so, they promote their national identity, manage it, and even make sense of it. Product patriotism

offers a framework that accounts for the possible variability that consumers experience when it comes to establishing and living their national identity. Beyond nominal and virtual national identity, this research proposes a form of patriotism that is expressed through product consumption: product patriotism, operating on two levels: 1) for the group and 2) through the product.

### *5.1 Positions of Product Patriotism*

Consistent with past research, the findings show how individuals choose to consume products that are relevant to their self-identities and reflect their self-perceptions (Forehand & Deshpandé, 2001). Yet, these findings also reveal the variability of national identity specifically and as it is expressed through product consumption. This research uncovers four potential positions consumers can adopt when expressing product patriotism. The results underscore Billig's (1995) contention that national identity is inhabited everyday, yet as posited here, national identity can also be inhabited through consumption. Specifically, nationally-iconic product consumption can be an expression a sense of duty to protect the nation via acknowledgment and respect for a product that is representative of the nation. The findings further suggest that non-consumption does not place into question a consumer's sense of belonging to the nation in the same way as non-patriotic attitudes might (Druckman, 1994). Rather, non-consumption can be a form of product patriotism. Refraining from drinking wine does not make a French person less patriotic, however not acknowledging the product as symbolic of France might. Thus, the product patriotism framework accounts for the preservation of the national identity through the valuation and consumption of a nationally-symbolic product, both physical and/or cultural. Product patriotism also accounts for the means by which consumers take on their nominal national identity while simultaneously reconciling their virtual national identity. Overall, the product patriotism framework demonstrates the multidimensional nature of and the complexity of inhabiting national identity through consumption practices.

Specifically, the product patriotism typology captures differences with respect to nationally-iconic product practices. More elaborate practices and rituals (the necessity or obligation of which are taken for granted) rest on greater cultural capital, while more limited, often perfunctory practices reflect a lack of cultural competence (though instrumentalists appreciate the value of this limited competence), and/or a lack of identification (as in the case of fatalists). Thus, the typology provides insight into the variability of decoding nominal identity and the enactment of virtual identity. The typology also presents a subtler examination of how consumers reconcile their expression of national identity through the physical and symbolic consumption of national symbols. National habitus allows consumers to comprehend the nominal importance of a national symbol, but a critical virtual national identity (as inhabited through one's relationship to national symbols) rests on other forms of cultural capital and relatively elaborate consumption practices. Furthermore, transitions between product patriotism positions demonstrate that there is variation in consumers' negotiations of national identity in accordance with pressures to reconcile personal and collective positions within national, social and macroeconomic contexts. Transitioning between positions is important to how they express their membership in the national group.

Thus, the results of this research and the proposed product patriotism framework add a nuance to recent research on products as necessities (Braun, Zolfagharian & Belk, 2016) and

propose that life experiences within the national habitus can lead to a need to engage with (but not necessarily consume) nationally-iconic products as a means to identify with the nation.

### *5.2 Patriotism Through Products*

The findings provided here broaden the concept of patriotism as it applies to consumption situations. Past research argued that patriotism encourages nation group members to maintain the group ideal (Druckman, 1994). Further, while past research has focused on positive expressions of patriotism (Kemmelmeyer & Winter, 2008) and national attachment (Davis, 1999), minimal research (see Varman & Belk, 2009) has been conducted on negative or oppositional expressions of these concepts. In this research, however, it is apparent that national normative expectations can lead to distancing from the national group, particularly for consumers who do not consume or appreciate a product with high national identification. Thus, critical questioning, skepticism, and negotiated or oppositional forms of product patriotism also exist.

## **6. Conclusion**

### *6.1 Managerial Implications*

Our research begins to shed light on the ways that national identities produce consumption behaviors, and consumption behaviors produce or enact national identities. For example, the consumption of foreign brands is integral to the creation of a new, cosmopolitan national identity for a China that is connected to the world (Tian & Dong, 2011). To the Chinese, consuming French wine is not unpatriotic, but rather enacts a new mode of Chinese identity that participates in a global taste regime. Alternatively, the results of our research demonstrate that in France, consuming wine (French or not) is an enactment and a practice of preserving an established national identity. As such, our research suggests using a differentiated framework for the marketing of nationally symbolic products, particularly for domestic firms selling products with high symbolic value. When creating their marketing campaigns, these firms should: a) inform themselves about how the national identity is defined by those living in the nation, b) consider the level of attachment consumers may or may not have toward the nation, and c) measure their attachment to product's that are instrumental in the definition of the national identity. Doing so should provide more efficient segmentation bases for the marketing of nationally-iconic or related products.

Alternatively, the results of our research are also relevant for governments, firms operating in multinational settings, and non-profit organizations who depend on national identity to market their products and services. The use of national identity should not be seen as an overarching marketing strategy especially when using jingoistic appeals. Rather companies and events using national identity should use the nationalized product as an icon of the identity, meant to distinguish between national groups. Importantly, firms should not expect all nationals to react similarly to such appeals.

Finally, our results relate to the notion of conceptual consumption (Ariely & Norton, 2009). Managers should consider that to make a national identity salient to consumers, it must seem fluent to these consumers. While products can be acknowledged as nationally-iconic, not all consumers will know how to consume them. The importance of these expectations will depend on how attached consumers are to the product and to the nation itself. Likewise, a consumer



may conceptually consume a nationally-iconic product even if they do not physically consume it. As such, managers should not hesitate to tend to loyal non-consumers, especially for national products in their domestic markets.

## *6.2 Future Research*

Returning to Anderson's (1991) comment that "communities are to be distinguished...by the style in which they are imagined," we suggest that different modes of product patriotism entail socially-patterned conceptions of national identity. In this study, wine is significant in negotiating what it means to be French in the contemporary world, and feelings of whether the nation is succeeding or failing, static or evolving. However, the same analysis might be applied to countries with cultures in which wine is not nationally-iconic, or is a negative symbol (e.g. some Islamic nations). In those environments, the traditionalist/reactionary viewpoint might equate to strict non-consumption, and the instrumentalist/fatalist stance might result in less antagonism. Our framework might also shed light on other nationally-iconic products, such as musical traditions (Portuguese Fado), lifestyle activities (yoga in India), and a range of sporting events with specific national links (Highland Games). Our research could likewise be extended to expatriates' and global nomads' consumption of national symbols (as per Bardhi, Eckhardt & Arnould, 2012). While expatriates and travelers exhibit detached relationships to certain goods, nationally-symbolic products represent anchors to their national identities (Kumar & Steenkamp, 2013; Peñaloza, 1994). Finally, it would be relevant to extend this research empirically and develop a scale measure for product patriotism, by considering all the aforementioned segments (e.g., non-consumers, expatriates, etc.).

## APPENDIX

### theme 1 / territory



**GEORGES**  
The grands crus of Vosne, in Burgundy



**NOEMIE**  
"Vines represent the wealth of French wine, the French landscape"



**PAUL**  
Domaine Jacques Prieur (in Burgundy), represents the traditions of French winemaking



**JEAN**  
Typical and traditional wine scenery



**ALEXANDRE**  
A pane of the Grande Rosace of Notre-Dame de Paris representing the pruning of the vines. Represents how wine and French culture and history are intertwined

### theme 2 / shared consumption



**MARTINE**  
Wine represents "conviviality with friends or with family"



**MATHIS**  
"Family is central to the discovery of wine and I want to show that every family member has their own wine preference and when we discover wine within the family, those are warm and festive moments."



**MICHEL**  
His grandfather holding a very special bottle of Château Yquem for New Year's Eve



**CLEMENTINE**  
"Wine is related to high-end restaurants. It's also in a restaurant that one has their first experiences with wine. Gastronomy and wine are inseparable."



**CHARLES**  
Wine is essential in social and especially in work-related contexts



**ANNE**  
(ad copy - Drink wine, be happy)  
"I find this poster funny, it's obviously an old ad. It's a bit of a caricature of what many French people think; after a few glasses of wine, we are often more relaxed and it helps us put into perspective our daily hassles."

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**Table 1: Sample Information (Names Are Pseudonyms)**

| <b>Name</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Education</b>    | <b>Occupation</b>         | <b>Consumption</b>   |
|-------------|------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Alexandre   | 62         | Man           | PhD                 | Retired political analyst | 7 bottles/week<br>Extensive cellar (1000+ bottles)<br>200€/month<br>SA: Expert |
| Anne        | 32         | Woman         | Undergraduate       | Head waitress             | 1 bottle/week<br>60€/month<br>SA: Novice/Intermediate                          |
| Anton       | 36         | Man           | Undergraduate       | Maître d'hôtel            | 1 bottle/week<br>40€-60€/month<br>SA: Intermediate/Expert                      |
| Arnaud      | 47         | Man           | No high school      | Janitor                   | None – does not drink<br>SA: Novice  |
| Charles     | 26         | Man           | Undergraduate       | Real estate agent         | <1 bottle/week<br>10€-25€/month<br>SA: Novice/Intermediate                     |
| Clementine  | 23         | Woman         | Completing graduate | Student                   | 1 bottle/week<br>0€/month<br>SA: Intermediate                                  |
| Georges     | 63         | Man           | PhD                 | Doctor                    | 5 bottles/week<br>1250€/month<br>SA: Expert                                    |
| Jean        | 28         | Man           | Graduate            | Analyst                   | 2 bottles/week<br>30€/month<br>SA: Intermediate                                |
| Martine     | 48         | Woman         | Undergraduate       | Retired manager           | < 1 bottle/week<br>40€/month<br>SA: Intermediate                               |
| Mathis      | 52         | Man           | Undergraduate       | Civil servant             | < 1 bottle/week<br>0-25€/month<br>SA: Novice                                   |
| Michel      | 23         | Man           | Completing graduate | Student                   | < 1 bottle/week<br>20€/month<br>SA: Novice                                     |
| Monique     | 75         | Woman         | No high school      | Retired winemaker         | None – does not drink wine<br>SA: Novice                                       |
| Noémie      | 26         | Woman         | Completing graduate | Student                   | None – does not drink wine<br>SA: Novice                                       |
| Paul        | 45         | Man           | PhD                 | Judge                     | 2 bottle/week<br>500€/month<br>SA: Expert                                      |
| René        | 39         | Man           | Undergraduate       | Wine store                | 5 bottles/week   |

|  |  |  |  |       |  |
|--|--|--|--|-------|--|
|  |  |  |  | owner | Extensive cellar (2800+ bottles)<br>SA: Expert |
|--|--|--|--|-------|--|

SA: self assessment of wine expertise (novice, intermediate, expert)



**Figure 1: Positions Within Product Patriotism**

|   |            | Practices with nationally iconic products   |  |
|---|------------|---|--|
|   |            | Limited   | Elaborate  |
| Type of attachment with nationally iconic product | Conformist | <p><u>Instrumentalist:</u></p> <p><i>'I'm interested in wine because it's related to my status and/or my evolution'</i></p> <p><i>'Wine is about sharing. It's not a social, family gathering without wine'</i></p> | <p><u>Traditionalist:</u></p> <p><i>'With my cultural baggage, wine cannot be but French'</i></p> <p><i>'I affirm my French identity when I show other people the proper way of opening a bottle of wine or champagne'</i></p> |
|   | Negotiated | <p><u>Fatalist:</u></p> <p><i>'I can easily go without wine'</i></p> <p><i>'If it was my choice, I certainly wouldn't choose wine'</i></p>  | <p><u>Reactionary:</u></p> <p><i>'The heritage of wine, I think we are losing it'</i></p> <p><i>'Those who don't consume wine have no roots'</i></p>   |