

Article

Little but Sustainable: Wine, Drinking Culture, and Negotiation of Value in Taiwan

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Abstract: This study examines how foreign-imported wine culture has transformed and maintained social sustainability from diverse dimensions in Taiwan. Wine culture has become popular around the world, yet it has various developments in different areas. As a country without a wine tradition and small wine consumption, the development of wine culture in Taiwan is significant in the study of the globalization of wine. This paper is based on qualitative fieldwork from 2017 to 2021 in Taiwan, including in-depth interviews with several focus groups and individuals, as well as participatory observations. This research has two major results, focusing on wine symbolism and the transformation of social meanings of drinking. Wine symbolism relates to the emphasis of “elegance” and the reframed concepts that connect wine with traditional food systems. The second finding elaborates the transformation of social meanings: wine has become an accessible luxury; wine helps to reduce the pressure of alcohol consumption; wine helps women to recreate a safer drinking social space. Taiwanese wine culture provides good examples to rethink the complexity and dynamics in socio-cultural matters, as well as the sustainability of food culture and the food system.

Keywords: culture learning; small-scale consumption; wine culture; value shift; Taiwan



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1. Introduction: Globalization of Wine in ‘Big’ and ‘Small’ Scale

Wine and wine culture has gained increasing popularity in the global world, yet it has various developments in different areas [1]. Wine production and wine consumption are sometimes considered to be symbols of development and improvement of the economy and lifestyle [2]. Recent studies in social sciences related to the globalization of wine emphasized production and consumption in areas mostly in Europe, America, Australia, and New Zealand [3–5]. These areas are basically more stable in social-economic conditions and suffer less from social changes. Previous research on wine has relatively few discussions on challenges, tensions, and conflicts caused by social transformation or environmental challenges. Some scholars in wine studies start to call for attention to critical issues including extreme climate changes, competition between different alcoholic beverages, overdrinking, and disputes on international trade [6–9]. Besides the critical issues mentioned above, some researchers also emphasize the need to pay more attention to societal changes that have impacts on lifestyles, the morality of consumption, and the sustainable way of production of wine [10]. It is thus in this reflexive context that we should look at the diffusion of wine culture in unconventional countries in new ways by observing the negotiation and balance, the tension, the controversy, and the transition between globalization and locality [11].

According to recent statistics of the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV), wine production and consumption is progressing significantly in Asia [12]. Some Asian countries have already become major wine production and consumption countries, such as China and Japan [13,14]. Some countries are developing their wine culture with great potential, including India, South Korea, Uzbekistan, Thailand, Taiwan, and Vietnam. In the era of the globalization of wine, while ‘big’ or ‘famous’ producers or consumers

are regularly highlighted by researchers, only few studies focus on ‘small’ or ‘emerging’ producers and consumers [15], not to mention the interactions between big and small scales of wine cultures [16]. Compared to China or Japan, these countries are barely known in the atlas of the globalization of wine. Therefore, emerging wine cultures in these areas are good examples for us to rethink the complexity and dynamics in socio-cultural matters related to studies of wine culture [17].

Wine culture in this paper refers to the ways people conceive, imagine, and consume wine, as well as the roles wine plays and influences wine makes in the social settings. This paper would like to take Taiwan as a case study to examine how foreign-imported wine culture has helped to transform and maintain social sustainability from various dimensions in a small wine growing and consuming country such as Taiwan. Taiwan is at the margin of the world atlas of wines and often neglected. According to OIV, Taiwan is the 65th consumer and 45th importer in the world. More than 90% of the wines consumed come from abroad (Figure 1). According to the statistical data of OIV, Taiwanese people consumed only 0.9 L of wine per capita in 2020, compared to 47.3 L in France in the same year [12]. As a country without a wine tradition and wine culture, why does Taiwanese wine culture matter? Why do Taiwanese insist on making wine and learning to drink wine? How does wine help to transform the drinking culture in a sustainable way? This paper would like to exemplify these questions and also respond to the calls regarding the emerging critical issues related to social sustainability.

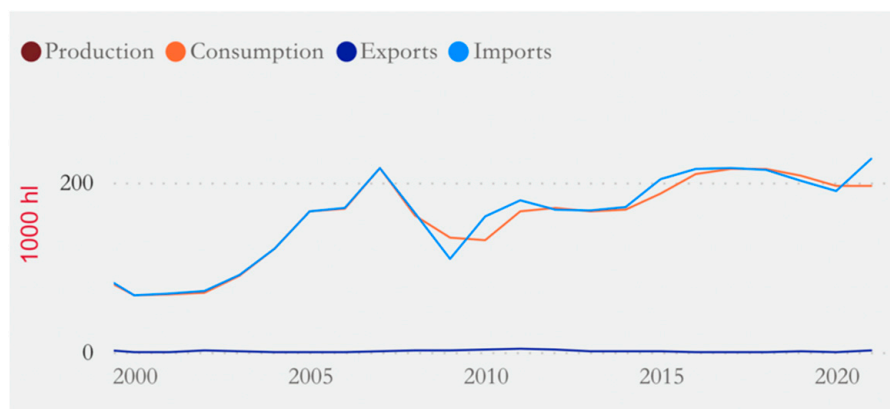


Figure 1. Statistics of wine in Taiwan.

2. The History of Wine Consumption in Taiwan

The history of wine consumption in Taiwan is relatively marginalized in the world of wine. Its development is highly related to the political and economic contexts, especially in connection with the public monopoly system and WTO.

In 1953, the Taiwan Tobacco and Wine Monopoly Bureau started to produce local wine from two specific grape varieties—Golden Muscat for white wine and Black Queen for red wine—developed earlier during Japanese occupation (1895–1945). The Taiwan Tobacco and Wine Monopoly Bureau was part of the Ministry of Finance and was in charge of monopoly sales of tobacco and liquor. This monopoly system was established in 2002. The term “wine” used in the “Taiwan Tobacco and Wine Monopoly Bureau” was a mistranslation; it was not limited to referring to wine but also to all kinds of alcoholic beverages. Wine was not a major product sold by the bureau during the 1950s. The Bureau intended to expand its product range and sales by making new wine products. This was the first time that wine was locally produced in Taiwan, yet the amount of production and consumption was really small and insignificant [18].

Taiwanese wine history took an important turn in the 1980s. The United States imposed the end of state monopoly and the opening of the market, but it was France who managed to take advantage of it. Taiwan joined the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1987, later a WTO agreement, and allowed the importation of foreign wine, majorly

from France and the United States [19]. As far as France is concerned, its SOPEXA, an international communications agency, opened an office in Taipei in 1993 to promote French agricultural products, with wine and cheese being the flagship products “Made in France”. As a powerful lobbyist, SOPEXA has annually organized competitions for Taiwan’s best sommelier of French wine since 2010, the same year it helped and pushed to create the Taiwan Sommelier Association (TSA). TSA is the first institution that brought together professionals connected with the wine sector, including traders, producers, merchants, and sommeliers. These agents have participated actively with the image-building process of wine. They highlight the framings of wine as “elegance” and “knowledge” with the help from SOPEXA in various events, including Taiwan’s best sommelier of French wine (Concours du Meilleurs Sommelier en Vins Français) and other related events.

Sales of foreign-imported wine surpassed local products in 1997, one year after the approval of public alcohol advertisements in the media in 1996. The French Paradox was often used in the promotion of wine. It refers to the claims disseminated in the early 1990s by American media, in particular the journal *In Health* and the television program *Sixty Minutes* [19,20]. Both favored the consumption of French red wine to help reduce the risk of cardiac diseases. This position was taken up all over the world and generated considerable sales of French wine. People think that drinking wine implies a certain quality of life as well as good health. In 2002, the monopoly policy ended, and anyone can undertake wine marketing and making. The Tobacco and Wine Monopoly Bureau reorganized and became the state-owned Taiwan Tobacco & Liquor Corporation (TTLIC), and still produces and sells local wines, as well as operates as a trader in foreign bulk wines.

The SOPEXA promoted French wine actively in various events, such as gala feasts, promotions in supermarkets, wine tasting events, college courses, and training lecturers in wine. In 2007, after years of efforts, the per capita consumption of wine finally rose to just over 1 L but remained at a similar amount till now. It should be noted that even if local viti-viniculture is not entirely absent, more than 90% of the wines consumed come from abroad. The countries occupying the wine market in Taiwan are France (32%), Spain (17%), Chile (15%), Australia (10%), Italy (8%), and then the United States (6%). Even though the wine people drink in Taiwan is mostly from foreign countries, these foreign wines are reshaped and reframed with different kinds of symbolism from local Taiwanese culture and also trigger various controversies and tensions from local contexts.

3. Theoretical Framework about Value Shift of Drinking Culture and Research Methods

Most studies on wine drinking or wine tasting focus on social life and social networks. There are four major themes which are emphasized frequently: first, ritual is important for people involved in wine tasting [21], for example, appreciating the color of wine or telling the story of the winery, etc.; second, to initiate social interactions, such as hosting wine parties or wine events [22]; third, to build up senses of belongingness or to be part of a specific community [23,24]; and finally, to reshape individual lifestyles through learning to taste wine, for example, improving the quality of meals to pair with wine [25].

In Taiwan, a country with an emerging culture of wine, the issue is directly linked to the tension and also value shift between distinction and democratization. Josée Johnston and Shyon Baumann use a binary concept, distinction vs. democracy, to analyze foodscape in contemporary society [26]. They have described how food operates as a source of status and distinction for economic and cultural elites, so as to maintain and reproduce an unequal social structure [27]. This pair of concepts is used to analyze Taiwanese wine culture in this paper. On the one hand, the ability to access wine represents one’s social status. Drinking wine means having certain cultural and social capital to learn a new practice, manner, and lifestyle. Wine has become more valued than other alcoholic beverages in many social places. Being able to produce wine also means distinction in the agricultural sector [28]. In other words, production and consumption of wine symbolizes distinction and taste if using Pierre Bourdieu’s idea. On the other hand, regarding democratization, the wine

market requires more customers. Therefore, it needs to make wine easier to access for people regardless of social and economic status. Yet this paper would like to raise more fundamental questions by adopting the theory of the omnivore's paradox: why would people learn to accept new tastes [29]? How do people accept the new tastes based on their old experiences? In the case of Taiwanese wine culture, many people learn wine tasting even when they dislike its taste. This research distinguishes and examines two different groups of people related to wine: the beginners and professionals, including people who make, serve, and sell wine.

By following theoretical frameworks on distinction and democratization of wine drinking culture and related social behavior, this study finds three transitional patterns regarding value shift of wine drinking. The first pattern is the shift between "informalisation" and "reformalisation" of values, conventions, and identities about drinking, observed by Julie McIntyre and John Germov, when wine becomes accessible in everyday life [9]. When wine became popular as table wine in Australia, people changed their drinking behavior from mass beer consumption to relatively small amounts of wine. The second pattern is the transitional risk when "alcoholisation" (which means the tendency to mix alcohol drinks) possibly becomes "alcoholisme" (alcoholism) noted by Jean-Pierre Poulain [30]. The third pattern notified by Hanna Schösler and Joop de Boe is the shift from normal consumer to "sustainable gourmet" whose food philosophies emphasize open-mindedness, less consumption, and quality [10]. The call for sustainable consumption has gained more weight along with the development of wine culture.

Materials of this study were collected during field work from 2017 to 2021. Following the theoretical framework and questions mentioned above, this study was conducted based on qualitative research methods including focus groups, in-depth interviews, and participatory observations. The fieldworks were conducted mostly in Taipei. People from different groups were interviewed: the beginner group studied consists mainly of college students ($n = 112$) whom I taught in my courses regarding wine management and wine tasting. Their ages are between 18 to 39. About 60% of them are females. These students are beginners for wine learning. I observed how they accessed this new field of wine with interests, anxiety, and curiosity, as well as how they finally found their own way to drink wine. They were separated into focus groups ($n = 9$) in order to understand how they applied and practiced their everyday life experiences of wine.

The interviewees with professional backgrounds are mainly from three different groups. The first group of interviewees are eight members of the Taiwan Sommelier Association (TSA) [31]. The Taiwan Sommelier Association began in 2010 and is the major organization for professional sommelier training. I interviewed one former director of TSA as well as members who have rich experiences in the restaurants, merchants, wedding banquets, and hotels. In-depth interviews were conducted to understand the formation and expansion of wine culture in Taiwan and its evolution since the 1990s, when wine was allowed to be imported from abroad till the present day.

The second professional group consists of three employees of SOPEXA, including one manager and two staff. SOPEXA has organized a competition each year for Taiwan's best sommelier of French wine since 2010. I was invited from 2017 to 2019 as an expert observer. During these events, I collected and analyzed systematically the wine tasting know-how promoted in Taiwan by SOPEXA and its major sponsors, including Bourgogne Wine Board (Bureau Interprofessionnel des Vins de Bourgogne, BIVB) and Bordeaux Wine Bureau (Conseil Interprofessionnel du Vin de Bordeaux, CIVB) [32].

The third professional group includes five local winery owners collaborating with a major cooperative of local wine production and tourism called Taiwan Cellar in Erlin Township, Changhua County, the main wine region in Taiwan [33]. Interviews with local winery owners focus on the history of the development of local wine production and on the interaction and differences in their conceptions between local wine and foreign wine.

From these groups with different levels of wine knowledge and wine professions, this research would like to examine how wine, as a newly imported food culture, has been

included into the food system in Taiwan and become the symbol of social and cultural capital, and how wine culture has contributed to improving the sustainable developments in different dimensions.

4. Wine Symbolism

Without a long tradition, wine culture in Taiwan has been constructed and framed with images and imagination connected to symbols, rituals, knowledge, and implications of good health. Wine drinking in Taiwan focuses on bodily sensations related to gestures, colors of wine, and transformation of its meanings.

4.1. *Elegant Gesture as New Identity and Distinction*

The first wine symbol in the Taiwanese context is elegance and distinction. Georges Vigarello points out that in the past, the beauty of the body tended to focus on the size and ratio of body parts such as the head, body, and feet [34]. Esthetic conceptions changed from these “body ratios” to “non-body ratios”, using gestures that make people feel smooth, beautiful, and charming. Vigarello mentions the relationship between body gesture and social value; learning how to express one’s appearance gracefully is of great importance in work, social interaction, and personal self-confidence [35]. Many Taiwanese professionals in the wine sector call it “elegant gesture”. For example, the gesture to hold the wine glass base instead of the bowl is considered to be more elegant.

To be “elegant” is most of the time the first lesson emphasized when learning to drink wine in Taiwan. This aspect is sometimes ignored when studying the globalization of wine and its related branding process. Unlike the other popular local alcoholic beverages such as beer and sorghum liquor, drinking wine requires specific behaviors and manners. People prefer “tasting” instead of “drinking” wine; it requires a little more ceremony by using smell, vision, and taste to appreciate wine. I would call this a “ritual of elegance”. The emphasis of this ritual of elegance attracts people who want to be “elegant” to come together. Wine tasting events have initiated a new community with a new identity. This trend is strengthened by courses and lectures of SOPEXA and professional sommeliers from TSA.

Elegance represents one’s ability to live a better life than others, and it is also a representation of oneself in a better social position. Elegance means to eat slowly, master the rhythm, show the ability and power to taste wine slowly. In other words, “elegance” is a symbol of taste and status. Therefore, wine drinkers and wine learners are learning the appropriate gestures and manners in order to increase their cultural capital as well as social capital.

4.2. *Wine Color as Belief and Preference*

Taiwanese anthropologist Li Yih-yuan mentions that Chinese and Taiwanese people drink alcoholic beverages not only for entertainment but also for its other nutritious and nourishing benefits. He highlights a fundamental conception of local food culture, namely, that “medicine and foods are the same origin” [36,37]. When experiencing a new food culture, people tend to negotiate and reinterpret it from their old traditions in order to include the new one into old social orders. Wine is one of the new food cultures which shows this process of reframing and reinterpretation.

The color of the wine is very symbolic in the choice of the drinkers. According to Vinexpo statistics, in 2015, Taiwan imported 1,450,000 cases (9 L and 12 bottles per case) of red wine, 180,000 cases of white wine, and 2500 cases of rosé (pink wine). It is obvious that Taiwanese prefer red wine much more than white and rosé. White wine is regarded as “cold”, which hurts the body in the cultural context, and rosé is regarded as not solid and not pure enough. This color symbolism is especially important for females. The red color of food is considered especially beneficial for blood. Red wine is therefore welcome among females in this context. Female drinkers believe red wine keeps blood “full”, gives faces a healthy complexion, and is good for menstrual blood enrichment. The image of

good health of red wine is like “the contagion of ideas” mentioned by anthropologists Dan Sperber [38] and “the cultural mimesis” proposed by Maurice Bloch [39]. This idea initiates and enhances stronger belief regarding the benefits of red wine, thus encouraging the consumption and appreciation of it [40–42].

The connection between wine and health, especially regarding the red color, has been widely expressed and shared. I have heard many times from my female Taiwanese friends that they feel “cold” after drinking white wine, but feel “warm” when drinking red wine. This saying implies that red wine is good for the circulation of blood and body. Many professional sommeliers also encourage female students in their lectures or female customers to share their positive experiences focusing on red wine. Thus, from sharing good testimonies, personal interpretations, and constructing mutual trust between acquaintances or friends, this color preference is spreading widely as a cultural value.

Red wine composes the majority of wine consumption in Taiwan. Even though white wine and rosé continue to be imported, they are in a disadvantaged context. The belief that the color of red wine is good for nourishing blood has a major impact on the wine industry. Some local wine producers, state-owned company Taiwan Tobacco & Liquor Corporation for example, add local-produced monascus or locally grown red onions in their red wine products. Wine becomes multifunctional. It not only provides entertainment or company with meals, but also benefits to nourish the body. These kinds of wine are considered to be more than wine, with the benefits of some kinds of medicine. Thus, it becomes very popular among those who did not usually drink wine before or those who live in the countryside.

In sum, as per the fundamental conception of local food culture “medicine and foods are the same origin” mentioned by Li Yih-yuan, Taiwanese wine drinkers do not drink wine purely, but with side effects in various ways. Some learn to drink wine with elegant gestures to gain more social or cultural capital; some drink to gain the benefits for their body [43,44].

5. Transformation of Meanings: Wine and Its New Social Contexts

The transformed meaning of wine is not limited to its color or related social status only. The meaning of wine is also transformed in different social events or contexts. Jean-Pierre Poulain examines the social space of food. He emphasizes that the social meaning of food is not rigid or fixed, but flexible and diverse [45]. This flexibility and diversity of food are revealed in various social spaces, along with the contexts or ways that we consume food [46,47]. In other words, the relationships between food and people are changing with different social spaces and social occasions [44]. Therefore, we have to examine the social contexts in which we consume wine in order to understand the meaning.

5.1. An Accessible Luxury

Wine in Taiwan belongs to special occasions, not daily life. Alcoholic beverages are sometimes a social lubricant, which makes communication easier among people from different social backgrounds. However, wine is more than a simple social lubricant in Taiwan because of its unusual characteristics. Wine in Taiwan is much more of an accessible luxury than necessity. A common bottle of wine that people can purchase easily from the shops or markets costs about USD 10–15. Yet the basic wage per month is USD 870.

A social event with wine in Taiwan is more like a separate world from everyday life, providing opportunities for social integration and social bonding. Wine provides a “liminal” for drinkers between public and private spheres, between work and home or “time-out” space [48]. Wine helps drinkers to construct their ideal world and reverse the weak parts in their real daily life [49]. The presence of wine (even a single bottle) can transform the meaning of different social spaces [50].

Wine plays an important role in transforming the pattern of consumption and reducing the risk of overdrinking in Taiwan, especially in important social events. Take wedding banquets as an example. It is an important social event and also a social space intended

to bring together as many people as possible from various social groups to congratulate the bride and groom. There used to be liquor and beer at wedding banquets in the past. When the liquor is served, it cannot be enjoyed alone, and it is not encouraged to take it home without finishing it. This could sometimes lead to overdrinking and lead to quarrels or fights eventually, and there is a risk of drunk driving as well.

Gradually, wine, with an emphasis of elegance, is put on the menu under such circumstances and replaces beer and liquors. Red wine is considered wine with an appropriate color, as red signifies good luck in Taiwanese culture, while white wine is relatively not-so-welcome in these events. Red wine is provided in the wedding dinner to make this occasion elegant and healthy, even though most of the time the bottle of red wine would not be opened and sometimes be brought home by the guests. It is given as a gift from the bride and groom. In a normal wedding banquet in Taiwan, a 750 mL bottle of red wine is provided to a table for 10 people. Therefore, it is closer to a symbol than a functional feast food. It is also similar to a year-end dinner for the workplace. Wine has replaced beer and liquor to make these events more under control and prevent drunkenness and chaos.

5.2. *Toast and Games*

Wine is often used as a mediator in social events to maintain a joyful atmosphere while preventing possible conflicts and chaos caused by drunkenness [51]. The negative image of alcohol is very clear: alcoholism is a symbol of low self-control; drinking behavior is considered lacking in etiquette; in the media, the negative images related to alcohol include ones that depict it as bad for health, as well as images of reckless behavior, drunk driving, violence, etc. [52,53]. In my interviews, as far as drinking is concerned, the interviewees have shown a lot of worries. They are not only worried about the discomfort after drinking, but also about the negative images related to alcohol. One of the major reasons to cause overdrinking and drunkenness is the culture and custom of compulsive toasting in Taiwan. Toasting is usually proposed by seniors to juniors. When people are toasted, first of all, they cannot refuse. In addition, people must pay attention to the posture of the body, facial expression, and manners when toasting, so as to show respect to elders. In the process of toasting, people will usually play games to spice up the party. Most important of all, toasting is usually an endless circle till most people get drunk or at least tipsy.

When wine replaces beer or liquor in social events, it changes the drinking pattern and transforms the drinking game into less compulsive ways to avoid overdrinking. First, wine does not fit into the traditional toasting ritual because of its image related to elegance. It is not so often to see people compulsively toast with wine in any social events. To a certain degree, this has reduced the amount of alcohol consumption. Second, the drinking games change accordingly and become less compulsive.

5.3. *Recontextualization of Female Drinking*

Perception about drinking in Taiwan is highly gendered. Sociologists Marie-Laure Déroff and Thierry Fillaut said, "Observers can know the difference between women and men in social life, especially the relationship between drinking and gender, such as where or when drinking can be done, whether it must be restrained or excessive can be tolerated, etc" [54]. Regarding drinking alcohol, the females whom I interviewed have contradictory feelings toward wine: love and fear at the same time. They believe that they must behave appropriately in female roles through restraint in their drinking behavior, otherwise there will be considerable risks. This social pressure and anxiety to control drinking cannot suppress their feelings and desires to drink. On the other hand, traditional ways of drinking, which include varieties of alcoholic beverages and social occasions, are not friendly for females who wish to drink freely. In this context, wine seems for women a safer choice. It provides a new social space so that women can discover or invent new drinking rules to release their stress.

There are some major obstacles that hinder women from drinking. Drinking is basically a social action that is not encouraged to be conducted alone. However, in public places in

Taiwan, it is more common to see men drinking than women. For example, in a stir-fry shop, which is the major place to drink at night, most consumers are men, and it is rare to see women. There are several possible reasons for this.

First of all, it has something to do with Taiwanese culture of “men dominate outside and women dominate inside”, which divides the social spaces for men and women. Women have traditionally been discouraged from going out at night, let alone in venues that are considered “fun-seeking”. Women are expected to stay at home as much as possible, especially after nightfall. People threaten that women will encounter some risks or dangers when going out at night, so they have to stay at home to be protected. In addition, if women go out too often at night, especially if they go out to drink for “fun”, they are more likely to be regarded as unfeminine or dissolute. In addition, the difference in economic ability between men and women is also a possible cause of this phenomenon. Generally speaking, men have more economic resources than women, which also makes women less likely to go out to enjoy social life, especially on occasions that involve drinking, which require more economic power.

Along with the improvement of women’s rights and economic status, there are more social spaces for women to drink. According to the Taiwan Ministry of Health and Welfare, more than 30% of Taiwanese women have drinking experiences (the question asked is regarding if someone has ever drunk in the year of the survey) [55]. Compared with beer and spirits, women are more likely to accept wine. There are more and more female customers dining in bistros and drinking wine at night. Many wine instructors find that their tasting classes are filled up by disproportionately female attendees. Females are no longer clueless when they look at the wine list, and they also increase their willingness to consume in restaurants and pubs. Wine drinking is no longer dominated by rich elder males; young women drinkers have increased sharply.

For many women, wine is the first and safer choice to avoid being stigmatized when drinking alcoholic beverages. First, wine is a newly imported food culture which enables women to have social spaces to drink. Additionally, they sometimes use the framing that wine is beneficial, especially for women’s bodies, to legitimize their wine drinking behaviors (see Table 1).

Table 1. Taiwan Alcohol Consumption Population.

Year	Women	Men	Average
2002	23.4%	53.3%	38.6%
2005	20.2%	52%	36.3%
2009	31.8%	60.1%	46.2%
2013	33.6%	58%	45.7%
2017	33%	53.4%	43%

From analyzing drinking activities, we can see wine as the norms and ideology, gender structure, and symbols of a society, as mentioned by Roland Barthes [56]. This study aims to show how wine has been integrated into new and different social contexts, and how the acquisition of wine knowledge plays a role in the transition of drinking culture, which is not insignificant in terms of sociality in reflection of sustainability. My work highlights various aspects related to wine drinking: elegance as a symbol to gain social and cultural capital, and local drinking culture reframed with a new reinterpretation regarding aesthetics, health, rites, gender, and destigmatization [57].

6. Conclusions: Wine as a Mechanism for Social Sustainability

The major result of this research showed that wine gradually transformed a drinking culture in quantity to a drinking culture in quality. This process of transition between quantity and quality is similar to the observation of J. McIntyre and J. Gernove in Australia

when wine became accessible in everyday life. What characterizes the case of Taiwan is the dynamic of acculturating wine in various social spaces. Along the lines of Norbert Elias' process of civilization, it requires certain conditions to initiate and stimulate the development of a new culture [58]. Wine culture in Taiwan is a new intervention. It is not a break but a new flexible element which, in different social circumstances, makes people imagine, and even invent, new manners of social interactions, new norms, and new social spaces in a constantly changing society.

According to OIV, the increase in wine consumption in Taiwan is the least but the most sustainable among the Asian countries with similar amounts of wine consumption. The increasing consumption of wine does not initiate more social problems, but on the contrary, reduces the tensions and pressures caused by overdrinking which are more commonly seen in the cases of other kinds of alcoholic drinks. What this article highlights are the new mechanisms by newly transformed symbols, imaginations, meanings, ceremonies, and content brought about by wine. The Taiwanese case may seem little, but it provides an example for social sustainability. The WHO re-emphasizes over and over the risk of alcoholism by promoting moderate drinking behavior, increasing the tax on alcoholic beverages, and controlling alcoholic advertisements. The significance of wine and Taiwanese society provides a socio-cultural perspective that responds to this call.

Although classified as a symbol of social distinction, wine is no longer inaccessible in everyday life. This exotic drink has made it possible to "refine" the technique of the body linked to elegance, an aspect rarely studied before. This consensus of learning to be elegant has enabled women to find ways to feel comfortable about drinking, and for drinkers to deliberate from the anxiety of being drunk. Even though it is consumed relatively little compared with other kinds of liquors in terms of volume, wine has huge effects and impacts in local traditions. Wine also contributed to redefining the status of alcohol in rituals and important social events such as weddings. The process of redefining the status of alcohol can be seen as a process of modernization of everyday life when Taiwanese society faces complex, long, and barely predictable globalization highlighted by Arjun Appadurai [59]. As Mary Douglas evoked, understanding the question of drinking is an inescapable way of making society more sustainable in terms of the continuity and discontinuity of traditions and culture. It pushes us to think further about the values of society where we live [60].

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