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3 **Perception of oyster-based products by French consumers: the effect of processing and**  
4 **role of social representations**

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15

16 **Abstract**

17

18 The search for new markets in the seafood sector, associated with the question of the  
19 continuity of raw oyster consumption over generations can be an opportunity for processors to  
20 extend their ranges with oyster-based products. The twofold aim of this study was to evaluate  
21 the impact of processing and social representation on perception of oyster-based products by  
22 French consumers and to identify the best means of development in order to avoid possible  
23 failure in the market. Five products with different degrees of processing (cooked oysters in a  
24 half-shell, hot preparation for toast, potted oyster, oyster butter and oyster-based soup) were  
25 presented within focus groups and consumer tests, at home and in canteens with the staff of

26 several companies in order to reach consumers with different ages and professional activities.  
27 The results showed that social representation had a strong impact and that behaviours were  
28 contrasted according to the initial profile of the consumer (traditional raw oyster consumers or  
29 non-consumers) and their age distribution (younger and older people). The degree of  
30 processing has to be adapted to each segment. It is suggested to develop early exposure to  
31 influence the food choices and preferences of the youngest consumers on a long-term basis.

32

33 Keywords: oyster, processing, consumer perception, disgust, social representation

34

### 35 **Introduction**

36 Of the European countries that produce oysters, France is the leader with around 113,000 tons  
37 (FranceAgrimer, 2010) and ranks fourth at the world level after China, Japan and Korea.

38 France has the characteristic to sell nearly all its production on the national market. Oysters  
39 (*Crassostrea gigas*) are a traditional product mainly consumed in their live form, and in spite

40 of the producers' efforts to extend the period of consumption, they still remain a seasonal  
41 product for the French market, with a peak of consumption between Christmas and New

42 Year's Day (Girard & Mariojouis, 2003). Therefore, in French food culture, oysters belong to

43 the category of rare and luxury foods. A recent survey on household consumption (Panel

44 Kantar Worldpanel) conducted in 2009 for France Agrimer (2010) showed that only 21% of

45 households bought oysters at least once a year even though two thirds of the French

46 population consume the product. This study also confirms a certain stability in consumption,

47 as well as the importance of "cultural", "economic" and "demographic" factors in consumers'

48 behaviour, as already observed by Girard & Mariojouis (2003). The consumer profile for

49 fresh oysters is essentially a person over the age of 50, in an upper income bracket, living in

50 the West of France and generally in a household of 2 people. On the contrary, non-consumers

51 of oysters, generally among the youngest, consider that this product is too costly and difficult  
52 to open, and the specific characteristics of oysters (live, raw and viscous) play a part in  
53 developing a certain aversion to this product. This difference in behaviour between young and  
54 senior purchasers may lead to a deficit in the recruitment of “new” consumers, and perhaps  
55 ultimately leading to critical questions regarding the future of oyster consumption. How can  
56 the continuity of oyster consumption be guaranteed down through the generations? This  
57 question highlights the importance of promoting the product with young people, but perhaps  
58 also of diversifying the range of oyster-based products. This search for new markets could  
59 also be an opportunity for processors to extend their range of seafood products.

60 However, to find the best ways to develop and to avoid possible failure in the market, it is  
61 necessary to take into account as early as possible the psychological barriers related to oyster  
62 consumption and to analyse the potential for processed oyster-based products through  
63 consumer perception. Understanding consumer reactions to new products is especially  
64 interesting in the case of oysters as they are known to cause extremely marked reactions.

65 Many non-consumers are disgusted by oysters because of their appearance and the  
66 consumers’ unwillingness to consume something alive and viscous. In the literature, “disgust”  
67 deals specifically with animal substances *versus* plant substances because of the moral  
68 dimension linked with their ingestion by eaters, as shown by Rozin and Fallon (1987). In  
69 other respects, Kolnai (1998) has identified these two physical characteristics, alive and  
70 viscous, as the most common and strongest sources of disgust. French consumers naturally  
71 ingest raw, live oysters thanks to French culture which allows them to “appropriate” these  
72 particular sensory qualities by classifying them in the category of rare, luxury and healthy  
73 food. The feelings of disgust are strongly reduced by the fact that when ingesting oysters a lot  
74 of other, generally positive, symbols are ingested at the same time. Fischler (1990) showed  
75 that food ingestion is not an ordinary action but one that always has a symbolic dimension.

76 Thus, when eating raw, live oysters, French consumers in general, and those traditionally seen  
77 as “oyster eaters” in particular, consider that they are "drinking the sea", conjuring up iodine  
78 and all the images of naturality, purity, lightness and freshness associated with this shellfish.  
79 In short, the social representations associated with oysters by consumers identify a healthy  
80 and refined food (Debucquet and Merdji, 2004). On the contrary, part of the population  
81 retains a very strong aversion towards oysters and their physical properties, all the more so if  
82 they did not eat raw oysters often and at a young age in their food education.

83 Processed oysters could thus be a way of removing these fears. In that case, however, it is  
84 necessary to analyse expectations and the associated overall perception. Many studies have  
85 indeed shown how information or the visual appearance of food influences flavour  
86 recognition or overall liking and generates expectations (Mojet and Koster, 2005; Kole, 2009;  
87 Delwiche, 2004); a contrast between expected and actual sensory qualities can induce a strong  
88 negative affective response focusing on the unexpected sensory qualities (Yeomans *et al.*,  
89 2008). In the case of oyster, the context of the first tasting or first “experience” (Faurion,  
90 1996) contribute strongly to previous social representations associated with this kind of food  
91 and could influence the expected sensory qualities.

92 In this context, could processing overcome the impact of representations and sensory barriers  
93 associated with oyster in non-consumers? Or would deep-seated reasons still prevent  
94 consumption for non-consumers? On the other hand, would a traditional consumer of fresh  
95 oysters be ready to accept a processed product with the risk of losing certain attributes, such  
96 as “natural” and “authenticity”? From a theoretical perspective, this problematic leads to  
97 analysis of the phenomenon of anchoring as described by Moscovici (1961), that is, how the  
98 perception of new products and their sensory qualities are determined by previous  
99 representations and the social value associated with this food, which is called by Jodelet

100 (1994), the “already in mind”. As this topic has received little attention in the literature on  
101 sensory and hedonic evaluation, this article will try to fill the gap.

102 The general objective of the paper was to analyse and understand the key drivers in oyster or  
103 based-oyster products consumption with a twofold research objective: evaluating the impact  
104 of processing and social representation on hedonic perception. To achieve these objectives, a  
105 complementary approach was applied. A qualitative approach through individual interviews  
106 and focus groups was carried out to catch the conscious and unconscious elements in the  
107 consumer perception. Then consumer tests were performed on five oyster-based products in  
108 two situations of consumption in order to reach a large range of population in term of ages  
109 and professional activities (students and active workers in canteens and families with children  
110 and teenagers at home). Products were collected from three seafood companies, partners in  
111 the project. The range of products making it possible to illustrate the influence of the degree  
112 of processing was composed of a frozen, cooked oyster in a half-shell (C) and four sterilized  
113 products presented either in cans for soup (S) hot preparations for toast (T) or in glass jar for  
114 oyster butter (B) and potted oyster (P). Oyster was entire in the case of C product, mixed in T,  
115 B and P products and some pieces of oyster were present in S product. Table 1 gives the main  
116 ingredients and characteristics of each product. A preliminary study with a trained panel  
117 showed a wide range of sensory characteristics (Cardinal & Debucquet, 2010) : in appearance,  
118 from smooth, light and homogeneous (P, B) to a more complex product with small pieces and  
119 dark colour (T and S); in texture, from a liquid (S) to a paste with different degrees of fat  
120 perception (B, P, C); in odour with specific marine notes such as seaweed (T) to vegetable (S)  
121 or garlic (B, P) or onion and wine for C; in flavour, from marine notes such as seaweed (T, S)  
122 to butter and garlic, especially for B and P. The final objective was to identify if in the range  
123 of processed products presented, some of them were mainly adapted to a specific target of  
124 consumers.

125

126 **Study 1: Qualitative study - Individual interviews and focus-groups -**

127

128 Method

129 After a first, exploratory stage with in-depth and individual interviews (10 people), four  
130 focus-groups of 8 people each (in total 32 people) were made up. During focus-groups, the  
131 five products were presented and tasted by the subjects but several projective exercises and  
132 open questions were introduced in order to induce spontaneous evocations and collect  
133 references to the unconscious, as suggested by Moliner (2001) as a means of accessing social  
134 representations. Each focus-group lasted on average 2 h 30. This qualitative stage aimed (1) at  
135 identifying the main factors involved in the consumption or non-consumption of oyster-based  
136 products, especially those related to previous social representations associated with oysters  
137 and to the recipe itself (the perceived compatibility of the ingredients with oysters, the impact  
138 of the degree of oyster processing on acceptability) and (2) to set up hypotheses to be tested in  
139 the questionnaire (study 2). Subjects were recruited in the Pays de Loire area and the sample  
140 was an equal distribution of age classes, gender, educational level and oyster consumers (C)  
141 *versus* non-consumers (NC). For the recruitment, consumers were informed that the session  
142 was a discussion on seafood products with a taste session (no information was delivered on  
143 the kind of the products) and therefore they were invited to tell what products they generally  
144 consumed and what products they never consumed. They did not know that the session  
145 focused on oyster.

146 In addition, a comparative test on taste perception was implemented during the focus-groups,  
147 inspired by the psychophysical experiment by Morrot *et al.* (2001) on odour perception.

148 These authors investigated the interaction between the vision of colours and odour perception  
149 through lexical analysis of experts' wine tasting comments. A white wine artificially coloured

150 red with an odourless dye was described as a red wine in olfactory terms. Analysis showed  
151 that the odours of a wine are, for the most part, represented by objects that have the colour of  
152 the wine. In our experiment, subjects were offered two samples of the five oyster-based  
153 products. The first was a blind test (subjects were told that it was seafood products); for the  
154 second, the same five products were offered but they were presented as novel products  
155 prepared with oysters. This comparative test was not strictly a sensory test but a projective  
156 exercise (Donoghue, 2000) to stimulate verbalization. The aim of this part of the focus-group  
157 was in fact to evaluate the influence of previous representations associated with oysters on  
158 product perception, especially taste descriptors, and, at the same time, to compare perceptions  
159 and assessment of oyster consumers in comparison with non-consumers.

160

#### 161 Data analysis

162 An analysis of themes, sub-themes and lexical universes was carried out with data collected  
163 during the focus-groups and individual interviews, and, more particularly, the comments of  
164 subjects at both stages of the comparative test.

165

#### 166 Results : Impact of oyster representations on hedonic perception of processed products

167 The lexical analysis of the comments collected during the comparative test showed huge  
168 discrepancies both between the first test (blind test) and the second test (the subjects were  
169 informed that the products were oyster-based products) and between oyster consumers and  
170 non-consumers. The results showed that taste perception is not only dependent on the first  
171 sensory experience but also on the pre-existing representations associated with oysters. Taste  
172 perception and, more particularly, taste descriptors effectively changed considerably between  
173 the first and second tests:

174 • we observed that taste initially perceived as "*insipid*"(10)<sup>1</sup>, mainly among the non-  
175 oyster consumers (NC) and mostly recruited from young subjects **became** in the second test  
176 "*strong*"(7), "*too strong*"(5), "*bitter*"(3), "*acid*"(3), that what was called "*an indefinable*  
177 *taste*"(9) **became** "*strange*"(7), "*doubtful taste*"(4), "*a bad aftertaste*"(4), and lastly that a  
178 texture initially perceived as "*soft*"(3), "*thick*"(8) or "*heavy*"(7) **became** "*jelly-like*"(9), and  
179 "*viscous*"(11). All in all, the lexical registers used after being told of the presence of oysters  
180 in the recipes showed that simply mentioning oyster revived the main sources of disgust  
181 produced by the consumption of raw oyster, that is: viscosity, stickiness and alive;

182 • on the other hand, the change in lexical register for taste, perceived first as "*good*" (9)  
183 or "*pleasant*"(11) and becoming "*not fine or exquisite enough*"(5), "*not high-class*  
184 *enough*"(6) is mainly observed among the consumers (C). Moreover "*Taste of the sea*"(11)  
185 **became** for them "*good taste but not strong enough because we don't recognize the taste of*  
186 *oyster enough*"(8) or sometimes "*not natural enough*"(7), "*chemical*"(3), and lastly a  
187 "*delicious and creamy texture*"(8) **became** "*like boiled and over-cooked oysters*"(6). All in  
188 all, these quotations highlight that all the dimensions confer oysters, in the mind of French  
189 oyster eaters, with the status of a refined, exceptional and natural dish.

190

191 Beyond these differences, the products were less appreciated during the second test by both  
192 oyster consumers and non-consumers as proved by highly negative comments and bigger  
193 amount of leftovers. The subjects were expecting to find oyster-based products "*less fatty*",  
194 "*less pasty*" and, in some opinions, "*the fatty texture suggests that it was fatty oysters or*  
195 *oysters with soft roe*". These last quotations confirm that oysters are perceived by most  
196 people as a diet and healthy food. In others words, in their mind, fat is not compatible with the  
197 representations associated with oyster, that is, hints of the sea, coast, iodine, and mineral salts.

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<sup>1</sup> For the two groups (NC and C) constituted of 16 persons (2 focus-groups of 8 persons each), the number in bracket represents the number of citations of each term.

198 A second part of the focus-groups was dedicated to identifying the boundaries of acceptability  
199 as regards recipes and ingredients. As presented in the methodology part, a creativity exercise  
200 was implemented during the focus-groups in order to understand what kind of recipes would  
201 be accepted or rejected by consumers, according to the nature of the ingredients (meat, fish,  
202 fruits, vegetables, dairy products, etc.) and the level of processing of oysters.

203 • Concerning ingredients, the results demonstrated that the association between oysters  
204 and meat was rejected by almost everybody. This is an illustration of the impact of cultural  
205 habits on acceptability and more particularly of French habits. As oysters are commonly eaten  
206 in a raw, live form, the association with meat appears definitively dissonant because of the  
207 mixture of “substances”, especially “land substances” and lives “sea substances”: *“They are*  
208 *two different species, from land and sea. So, no! [...]. And moreover, meat is a living*  
209 *substance, as are oysters... That is definitely incompatible!”*. The case of red meat provoked  
210 the greatest disgust, because of the blood: *“Red meat is not fully dead, it is still a little bit*  
211 *alive. Look at the blood!”*<sup>2</sup>. The risk arising from this quotation is clearly a symbolic risk and,  
212 very logically, white meat (such as pork or chicken) or “reified” meat like ham were better  
213 accepted in the recipe with oyster-based products. Lastly, vegetables, as more neutral  
214 ingredients, or fish, as ingredients from the same universe, did not raise any problems.

215 • Concerning the level of processing of oysters and therefore the texture of oyster-based  
216 products, the participants in the focus-groups stressed the need to clearly identify each  
217 ingredient with regard to the issues of mixing “substances”. Consumers and non oyster  
218 consumers turned down products that were overly processed, of the paste- or blended-type, as  
219 they played a part in excessively denaturing the oysters and were perceived as industrial and  
220 suspicious products. While the ideal recipe for the oyster consumers was the cooked oyster in

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<sup>2</sup> Historians have analysed the importance of the beliefs associated with red meat and blood, especially during the pre-scientific period (Darnon, 1999). A recent research project dedicated to the perception of food germs has shown that blood in red meat is still nowadays perceived as risky because of the survival of the belief in “spontaneous generation” among lay persons (Debucquet, Merdji, Fischler, 2007).

221 a half-shell, because it maintained a symbolic proximity to raw oysters (“*Great! They remain*  
222 *in their shell! They look fresh even if they have been frozen!*”), on the contrary, non-  
223 consumers looked for intermediary products, neither too mixed and without big pieces of  
224 oyster to keep a symbolic distance from the sources of disgust.

225 • Regarding sanitary risk, it is interesting to note that during the focus-groups and after  
226 presenting the processed oysters, none of the non-consumers spontaneously tackled this issue.  
227 Surprisingly, the processing of oysters removed all the fears and anxiety about sanitary risk  
228 because the “*oyster is dead*”, that is, in the subjects’ minds, in biological and symbolical  
229 terms. On the contrary, more people among the raw oyster consumers were suspicious of  
230 processed oysters because the process was always perceived as a “denaturation” of the oyster,  
231 necessarily using additives and preservatives.

232 In conclusion, the results of the qualitative study revealed huge differences in the mechanisms  
233 of perception of oyster-based products between consumers and non-consumers. Our data  
234 suggest the importance of previous representations associated with raw oyster on processed  
235 oyster perception in terms of taste, recipe acceptability and risk perception.

236

## 237 **Study 2: Quantitative study - Consumer test in real consumption situations -**

238

### 239 ***In staff canteens***

240

#### 241 **Method**

242 **Consumer panel**

243 The French multinational corporation Sodexo, one of the largest food service companies in  
244 the world was a partner in the project and offered the opportunity to test products in different  
245 staff restaurants. The context of restaurant was particularly interesting because oysters are, in  
246 France, almost always consumed in the setting of a social and shared meal. The companies

247 were chosen according to their location and their field of activity in order to reach consumers  
248 with different profiles. Three cities that differ from one another in terms of distance from the  
249 sea were selected: Nantes, Tours and Lyon. Ifremer, a Marine Research Institute with a  
250 consumer population involved in marine questions and the Ecole des Mines , a school of  
251 Engineering mainly composed of young consumers, were the two companies chosen in  
252 Nantes to test products in their Sodexo restaurants. In Tours, the company selected was  
253 Sanofi, from the pharmaceuticals sector, and finally Areva, a company working in the nuclear  
254 field, in Lyon made it possible to test people in the research department. The four self-service  
255 restaurants were different in terms of their mean numbers of daily customers and finally the  
256 number of participants in the consumer test was respectively for each restaurant, 155, 177, 87  
257 and 62. The whole panel's characteristics included the four canteens are presented in Table 2.  
258 The amount of oyster eater in this population reached 76%.

259

#### 260 Procedure

261 Tests were performed between December 2009 and April 2010. Products were prepared in  
262 each self-service restaurant according to industrial recommendations and were presented at  
263 the entry of the restaurant on a plate prepared for each customer. To lighten the test for  
264 consumers, the five products were presented on two successive days with a presentation of  
265 three products the first day (P, S, T) and two products (B, C), the second day. Products were  
266 presented simultaneously on the same plate and consumers tasted the products according to a  
267 balanced order in the questionnaire. As the tests lasted for two days, all consumers did not  
268 taste necessarily all the products. Each person was informed that the products were oyster-  
269 based products and was invited to test them during their lunch. Customers were free to take  
270 them or not. After acceptance, the same questionnaire was distributed in each restaurant to  
271 collect their opinion. They were invited to give a few negative and/or positive words after  
272 tasting each product and to rate their overall liking with a score from 0 to 10: dislike

273 extremely (0), like extremely (10) and to express their perception of naturalness, not at all (0),  
274 quite natural (10). Personal information such as age, gender, educational level and consumer  
275 (C) or non-consumer (NC) of raw oyster was asked for at the end of the session. In the paper,  
276 NC refers to non-consumers of raw oyster, the traditional way of eating oysters in France.

277

#### 278 Data analysis

279 Consumer data results were expressed as a mean  $\pm$  standard deviation (SD). In consumer test,  
280 estimation of the effect of each variable (social and demographic characteristics, traditional  
281 oyster consumer) on overall liking was performed by analysis of variance on all consumer  
282 scores with products and each of these variables as independent factors. The main effects and  
283 interaction between factors were tested. The analysis of qualitative data (negative and/or  
284 positive words associated to each product after tasting) was only performed on questionnaires  
285 from the home tests where description was more detailed and richer than in restaurants.

286

#### 287 Results : Overall liking and hedonic perception in staff canteens

288 The scores for overall liking and “naturalness” attributed by consumers to each product are  
289 presented in Table 3. The general mean for overall liking scores for all consumers highlights a  
290 significant difference between the products. The cooked oyster in a half-shell obtained the  
291 highest score ( $6.9 \pm 1.9$ ) followed by soup ( $6.2 \pm 2.4$ ), potted oyster ( $6.1 \pm 2.1$ ), hot toast ( $5.9$   
292  $\pm 2.2$ ) and finally oyster butter ( $5.7 \pm 2.0$ ), but no significant difference appeared between the  
293 last three products. Food habits related to raw oyster consumption had a significant effect  
294 ( $p=0.03$ ) on overall liking as traditional raw oyster consumers gave higher scores to products  
295 compared to those of non-consumers. No interaction appears between the variables “usual  
296 oyster eater” and products which means a same general trend in overall liking for C and NC.  
297 Analysis of variance performed over all the consumer data of liking with products and gender

298 as independent factors did not show any significant difference between scores attributed by  
299 women or men ( $p=0.43$ ). Educational level and age did not lead to a significant difference  
300 either, ( $p=0.11$  and  $p=0.79$ , respectively).

301

## 302 *At home*

### 303 Method

#### 304 Consumer panel

305 145 consumers from 68 households on the Tastenet panel took part in the study. The Tastenet  
306 panel was composed of volunteers for consumer tests at home on fish and fish products  
307 selected by the French Research Institute Ifremer through the company's staff (friends,  
308 family, neighbours). The answers of all family members older than 11 years were taken into  
309 account. The majority of these families lived in an urban area (Nantes). The main  
310 characteristics of this at home consumer panel are presented in Table 2.

311

#### 312 Procedure

313 Consumer tests were performed between March and April 2010. Families were provided with  
314 the five oyster-based products (here, in their packaging) and a questionnaire for each product  
315 and each family member. There was a total freedom to choose the order of consumption of  
316 the 5 products as well as the time and the situation of consumption but it was recommended  
317 that the products be tested one by one on different days depending on the choice of the family  
318 and that the product be prepared according to the directions for use on the packaging. The  
319 consumption was organised with the family members previously identified in this home. The  
320 same questionnaire as at the self-service restaurants was presented.

321

322 Data analysis

323 The same kind of analysis was applied on overall liking data obtained in staff canteens and at  
324 home. Qualitative information obtained from the open questions, especially the negative  
325 and/or positive words associated with each product that respondents were asked to provide  
326 after tasting, was analysed using textual analysis software called ALCESTE<sup>3</sup> version 2010.  
327 This software makes it possible to treat corpora of discourses and to separate statements into  
328 classes, using a downwards-hierarchical classification on the basis of co-occurrence of words  
329 (Reinert 2002). The classification of the respondents' terms established by ALCESTE was  
330 based on the idea that the words used by each respondent were chosen according to his or her  
331 particular mental space that constitutes the person's framework of reference (Reinert 1993).  
332 When data comes from a panel of respondents, it helps to analyse social representations, each  
333 class of word used often unconsciously by respondents then resulting from an anchoring  
334 process (Debuquet, 2011), in accordance with the theory of representations developed by the  
335 French school of social psychology (Moscovici 1961; Jodelet 1994; Moliner 2001) which  
336 shows how representations are embedded in a social and cultural context. This analysis was  
337 performed on questionnaires from the home tests where description was more detailed and  
338 richer. Moreover, Chi-square tests were carried out by ALCESTE software to identify  
339 significant associations ( $p < 0.05$ ) of each class of words with oyster-based products,  
340 sociodemographic profiles, and oyster consumers (C) or non-consumers (NC).

341

342 Results : Overall liking and hedonic perception at home

343 Even if our research is not focused on the consumption context effect, previous studies have  
344 shown differences in overall liking between at home test and other situations, it is the reason  
345 why results from at home are presented separately. The results of the consumer tests

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<sup>3</sup> Analyse des Lexèmes Co-occurents dans les Enoncés Simples d'un Texte (Analysis of co-occurrent lexemes in simple wordings of a text)

346 performed at home showed the same order in overall liking as those obtained in staff canteens  
347 but the scores attributed were generally lower, except for cooked oyster (Table 4). The highest  
348 scores were attributed to cooked oyster and soup with a mean score of 6.9 ( $\pm$  2.0) and 5.6 ( $\pm$   
349 2.6) respectively. No significant difference appeared between the other three products. A  
350 higher perception of naturalness was also associated with the preferred products. In this test,  
351 even though oyster consumers, also called “oyster eaters”, had better rated soup and potted  
352 oyster, the difference in overall liking between “oyster eater” and non-oyster consumer was  
353 not significant ( $p=0.29$ ). As observed in the restaurants, gender and educational level did not  
354 affect the overall liking scores. On the other hand, age had a significant effect  $F_{4,4} = 4.5$ ,  
355  $p=0.001$  and the youngest consumers generally attributed lower scores, especially to the soup,  
356 hot toast and cooked oyster compared to the upper age class. It is also interesting to note the  
357 frequency of refusal for each product (Table 4). Cooked oyster, hot toast and soup were the  
358 products with the highest frequencies of non-consumption, respectively, 17.1 %, 14.5% and  
359 13.0% of the whole panel compared to 4.8% and 4.1% respectively for potted oyster and  
360 butter. Generally this refusal came from the youngest fraction of the population tested, in this  
361 case, the children in the families and also from the non consumers of raw oyster (Table 4).  
362 Once the consumption barrier had been removed and the product tested, consumers provided  
363 their hedonic evaluation through a score for overall liking as well as the main descriptors  
364 describing the positive and/or negative characteristics for each product. The results from the  
365 ALCESTE data processing made up of positive and negative words collected through the  
366 open questions in the questionnaire gave some explanations to the perception and overall  
367 liking of each product. From the positive evocations provided by the subjects, 2655 specific  
368 words were analysed and 74% of the statements classified into 3 classes (Table 5). The largest  
369 class (Class 1 – 55.0 % of classified statements) focused on the taste of oyster as socially  
370 perceived in France: a refined and exquisite taste, combined with the image of a festive, rare

371 and luxury food. The second (Class 2 – 37.0%) deals with the texture and appearance of the  
372 products in relation to convenience issues (ease of preparation, easy to spread). The last, and  
373 smallest (Class 3 – 8.0%), expresses the need to compare these unknown products with more  
374 familiar fish products, such as fish soup and potted fish. Table 5 gives the significant  
375 associations ( $p < 0.05$ ) between these classes and variables as products, socio-demographic  
376 profiles and consumer type (C or NC). The butter was associated with class 1, the soup with  
377 class 3 and the cooked oyster in a half-shell with class 2. Moreover, older people, men, “raw  
378 oyster eaters” (C), and those introduced to oysters early (before the age of ten) were  
379 significantly associated with class 1, young people, women, students, and those introduced to  
380 oysters rather late (after the age of 20) with class 2, and lastly, people of intermediary age  
381 introduced late to oysters with class 3. These results highlight the opposition between younger  
382 and older generations regarding food issues (convenience and innovation as regards recipe  
383 and way of consumption (aperitif, short meal with friends) *versus* search for taste and  
384 authenticity) and specifically the influence of oyster consumption (“non-oyster eaters” *versus*  
385 “traditional oyster eaters”).

386 From the negative evocations provided by subjects, a larger corpus of 3099 specific words  
387 was analysed and 61 % of the statements were classified into 4 classes (Table 6). The largest  
388 class (Class 1 – 37.0% of the statements classified) contains a lexicon highlighting doubt,  
389 fear, and anxiety towards the products as if exposure to oyster-based products would  
390 reactivate all the fears associated with raw oyster consumption. Class 2 (29.0 %) focuses on  
391 the dissonance resulting from the fatty and pasty characteristic of certain products, perceived  
392 as sticky and sickly (“too much cream and butter”). In consumers’ minds, oysters are a light,  
393 healthy product with small quantities of fat. Class 3 (25.0 %) deals with the taste of the oyster  
394 itself, oyster consumers conflicting with non-oyster consumers. The former were deeply  
395 concerned about the tastelessness and weak oyster taste of the products whereas the latter

396 often judged the taste of oyster to be “too strong”. Lastly, the smallest class (Class 4 – 9.0%)  
397 focuses on the disgust induced by the presence of big pieces of oyster in the processed  
398 products. Concerning the significant associations, the soup and hot toast were associated with  
399 class 1, the butter and potted oyster with class 2, the cooked oyster in a half-shell with class 3,  
400 and the potted oyster with class 4. These results are consistent with the sensory  
401 characteristics previously described by a trained panel (data not shown). Moreover, cooked  
402 oyster consumers, born inland and introduced very late to oyster consumption (after the age of  
403 36) were significantly associated with class 1, the “raw oyster eaters” (C) from coastal areas  
404 and older people with class 2, young people and students with class 3 and lastly the non-  
405 oyster consumers (NC), neither raw nor cooked, with class 4. Once again, these results  
406 highlight the impact of previous representations on hedonic evaluation and overall liking,  
407 which translated into two opposite lexicons referring to two segments of population, “oyster  
408 eaters” and non-consumers.

409

## 410 **DISCUSSION**

411 We proposed in this paper to inquire on the key drivers in oyster or based-oyster products  
412 consumption and more specifically to focus on the impact of processing and social  
413 representation on hedonic perception. Theoretical and methodological issues will be discussed  
414 with regards to main results of the different studies.

415

### 416 *Theoretical issues*

417 To review the expected results briefly: it was anticipated that processing oysters would  
418 decrease disgust among non consumer of raw oysters (NC) and that, at the same time, social  
419 representations associated with raw oyster consumption would influence hedonic perception  
420 of oyster-based products both among consumers (C) and non consumer (NC). Analysis of

421 data from opened questions (study 2) revealed major differences between consumer (C) and  
422 non consumer (NC) as expected. Indeed, significant associations ( $p < 0.05$ ) between lexical  
423 classes, products, socio-demographic profiles and consumer type have been found. Consumer  
424 (C), older people and those introduced to oyster early were associated with both a class  
425 (positive associations) focused on refined and exquisite taste of some products and also a  
426 class (negative associations) focused on the tasteless and weak oyster taste of others products.  
427 On the other hand, non consumer (NC), young people and people introduced late to oyster  
428 were associated both with a class (positive associations) focused on convenience issues but  
429 also with a class (negative associations) focused on anxiety, fear and doubt, oyster-based  
430 products consumption reviving unconsciously the main sources of disgust (live, viscous and  
431 sticky properties) associated with raw oyster consumption. The comparative test (blind test vs  
432 test with information) (Study 1) performed during focus-groups confirmed these results when  
433 comparing statements of consumers and of non consumers. Our results match previous  
434 research on how the congruence or not of expected and actual flavour has an influence on  
435 hedonic evaluation (Yeomans *et al.*, 2008). Expanding on what Faurion (1996) wrote,  
436 “flavour is not an intrinsic property of a stimulus but the meeting of a food and an eater”, our  
437 research contributes to better understanding of how previous representations predetermined  
438 hedonic evaluation. This issue of expected *versus* actual flavor seemed to be crucial but  
439 covered different meanings according to the kind of consumers (C) versus (NC), in  
440 accordance with the theory of social representations and especially the anchoring process  
441 (Moscovici, 1961). Finally, our results match and enrich those of Desmet and Schifferstein  
442 (2008), who described the impact of positive and negative emotions on food experience, taste  
443 perception being namely influence by sensory attributes, experienced consequences,  
444 anticipated consequences and personal or cultural meanings; here the impact of social

445 representations associated with oyster consumption, and more broadly speaking, the status of  
446 this kind of food in culture have been highlighted.

447 If we consider now the overall liking of the processed products measured in restaurant and in  
448 home (study 2), results showed the same order in the overall liking ranking, with significant  
449 differences between cooked oyster (C) and soup (S), the two preferred products and potted  
450 oyster (P), hot toast (T) and oyster butter (B), the three less preferred ones. The ranking of  
451 products according to the criteria of “naturalness perceived” is in the same order and identical  
452 in both situations again and is congruent with the opposition observed in previous sensory  
453 characterization. This result highlights the importance of the recipe and the nature of  
454 ingredient on the perception; the more the recipe is natural the more the image of the product  
455 appears congruent with the positive images associated with seafood and sea more widely, as  
456 presented before and confirmed with the creativity exercise during focus-groups (study 1).

457 In accordance with these results, data collected through open questions in the questionnaire  
458 (study 2) arose also the fat issue and mainly the incompatibility of fat with oyster. This result  
459 gave an other illustration of the importance of social representations associated with oyster,  
460 their status in French food culture, their health value, and their source (images of the sea). As  
461 mentioned in introduction, oyster is perceived as a luxury and refined food, partly because of  
462 its healthy properties, real but also assumed because of the positive imaginary associated with  
463 seafood.

464 Regarding the relationship between consumer profile and overall liking, results of both tests  
465 (at home and restaurant test) did not show any effect of gender and educational level.  
466 Contrary to raw oyster consumption which can participate, according to the expression of  
467 Bourdieu (1979) in a mechanism of “distinction”, oyster-based products seem to have lost  
468 their prestigious status because of the industrial process in itself and exactly like for triploid  
469 oysters (Debusquet & Merdji, 2004). However some contradicting results have been observed

470 concerning the influence of others variables on overall liking and especially the type of  
471 consumer (C) vs (NC) and age. In restaurant test, food habits related to raw oyster  
472 consumption had a significant effect ( $p=0.03$ ) on overall liking (scores of consumer (C)  
473 higher than scores of non-consumer (NC)) while no significant effect has to be noticed  
474 regarding home test. This difference could be attributed to a smaller panel size in home test  
475 compared to restaurant test. Conversely, age had a significant effect ( $F_{4,4}=4.5$ ,  $p=0.001$ ) on  
476 overall liking (scores of youngest consumers lower than oldest ones) while no significant  
477 effect has been noticed in restaurant test. The higher rate of under 25 years-old consumers,  
478 27.6% at home vs 14.6% in staff restaurants, could explain this difference. Results from  
479 focus-group and opened questions in study 2 are consistent with the study of Girard &  
480 Mariojouis (2003) namely the relation between the type of consumer and age; oyster eaters  
481 being more frequent among people over the age of 50 while non consumer were more often  
482 recruited among the youngest.

483 This question arises more widely the issue of first exposure and first tasting and their impact  
484 on further sensory experiences as analyzed mainly with children (Loewen and Pliner, 1999).  
485 Individuals' memories of flavour from childhood are typically for foods that are remembered  
486 as very palatable or very unpalatable (Barker, 1983). During individual interviews and focus-  
487 groups, most of the non-consumers who felt a strong disgust for raw, live oysters were  
488 exposed rather late (in average, after 18 years old) to this kind of food unlike the consumers  
489 who were used to eating it from a young age, sometimes in the first years of their live even.  
490 Thus, it appears that the earlier the subjects were exposed to raw, live oysters, the less they  
491 considered them unpalatable and the more willing they were to taste these new oyster-based  
492 products.

493 Finally, these results bring up the question of the role of both first tasting and social  
494 representations, especially for non consumers having to face with a previous disgust for the

495 animal itself. Martins and Pliner (2005) have shown in the case of food from animal origin the  
496 impact of beliefs on hedonic perception, as well as the impact of the assumed negative  
497 consequences of eating such foods on acceptance or rejection. The frequency of refusal for  
498 each product in home test (study 2) gave interesting information: cooked oyster (C), hot toast  
499 (T) and soup (S) are products with the highest frequencies of non-consumption, respectively  
500 17.1 %, 14.5% and 13.0% compared to 4.8% and 4.1% for potted oyster and butter.  
501 Moreover, this refusal came from the youngest fraction of the population tested, children in  
502 the families and also from non-consumer (C). These results seem to be relevant: disgust and  
503 refusal is more associated with products close to the original form of animal (cooked oyster in  
504 half-shell) or containing small pieces of oyster (hot toast and soup). These results highlight  
505 here again the impact of processing, as a way to “reify” more or less strongly oyster, on the  
506 acceptability of the oyster-based products.

507

### 508 *Methodological issues*

509 This complementary approach, including a preliminary sensory analysis with a trained panel,  
510 individual interviews and focus groups, and consumer tests made it possible to triangulate the  
511 results. Qualitative results from individual and group interviews matched closely those of  
512 consumer tests, particularly the open questions included in the questionnaire and scores of the  
513 overall liking for the five oyster-based products. On the other hand, the preliminary sensory  
514 approach made it possible to bridge some product characteristics, through descriptors, and  
515 overall consumer liking, with the latter strongly dependent on the consumption or not of raw  
516 oysters. For instance, a strong odour/taste of garlic or seaweed can be valued by non-  
517 consumers and symmetrically rejected by consumers: for the former, it was an original and  
518 new odour/taste that did not recall that of oyster, whilst for the latter, it was a “tasteless”  
519 product because they did not recognize the “genuine taste of oyster”.

520 One last methodological consideration could be the impact of the tests ‘context on the overall  
521 liking. Initially, we choose two contexts for the tests, home test and staff canteens test, to  
522 reach various profiles of consumers in terms of age, gender and professional activities, active  
523 workers, students, teenagers living still in their family, etc. Even though the effect of the  
524 context was not a main objective of our research, we can note that the ranking of the overall  
525 liking of the 5 products was the same in both cases but the scores attributed at home were  
526 generally lower than those given in staff restaurants. Most of the studies where Standardised  
527 Situation Tests (SST) and Home Use test have been compared reported higher liking scores in  
528 SST than in HUT scores (Boutrolle, Arranz, Rogeaux, & Delarue, 2005; Kozłowska et al.,  
529 2003; Murphy, Clark, & Berglund, 1958). However, in a few cases, the reverse has been  
530 observed (Daillant-Spinnler & Issanchou, 1995; Hellemann, Mela, Aaron, & Eleri Evans,  
531 1993). For example for high fat version of a cream cheese, consumers were more severe at  
532 home than in laboratory. Authors argued “that assessors overestimated the products in the  
533 laboratory because during home consumption consumers refer to a broader range of products  
534 (i.e. other brands)” and also “the possibility that assessors like to please the experimenter  
535 when they rate the products in the laboratory”. In our case, the lower scores in home tests  
536 could be explained by the status of the oyster-based products themselves and the strong  
537 involvement attached to raw oyster consumption in France. As mentioned in the introduction,  
538 just as well for consumer and non consumer, raw oyster is a luxury and “high- symbolic  
539 value” food strongly associated to family consumption for specific events. Moreover, as in  
540 home tests the families were given the products with their packaging (for 4 products) they  
541 became probably more aware of the fact that oyster-based products were processed food, all  
542 the more so since the ingredient list was on packaging. Furthermore, it is likely that the  
543 family environment developed higher involvement for its members and may therefore have  
544 led to more critical analysis (Boutrolle, 2007; Stroebele and De Castro, 2004; de Graaf, 2005).

545 Conversely, the social interaction in staff canteens and the limited portion sizes presented to  
546 the consumers may explain a generally better evaluation (King, 2004, Boutrolle, 2007).

547

## 548 **CONCLUSION**

549

550 In conclusion, this study showed the impact of social representation, strengthened by the  
551 specific initial product characteristics and the positive or negative effects of the first exposure  
552 and tasting of raw oyster on perception and its repercussion on expectations or fears related to  
553 processed oyster-based products. For instance, contrasted behaviours may appear depending  
554 on the initial profile of the consumer, traditional raw oyster consumer or non-consumer. The  
555 results allowed us to identify two different market orientations, the first adapted to traditional  
556 raw oyster consumers, rather old, with a range of products as close as possible to the natural  
557 product, where the oyster taste is clearly recognised; the second aimed at non-consumers of  
558 raw oysters, rather young, and proposing products with adapted characteristics, for example  
559 an attenuated odour or taste of oyster and a texture with few or even no oyster pieces. For  
560 non-raw, live oyster consumers, the more the oyster was processed (such as butter and potted  
561 oyster), the less the sources of disgust identified by Rozin and Fallon (1987) and Kolnai  
562 (1998) were effective. In their minds, the process played a part in reifying the oyster  
563 substance and reducing the aversion. This segmentation also covers expectations of  
564 consumers in terms of age distribution, and confirms the opposition between younger and  
565 older people. Processing could make possible generational transfer in oyster consumption if  
566 these expectations are fulfilled. Nevertheless, the first consumption or the willingness to  
567 consume an oyster or an oyster-based product remains a hurdle in the case of non-consumers.  
568 As suggested before, the positive effect of early and frequent exposure, for instance in  
569 canteens or university cafeterias, should be exploited in order to have a long-term influence

570 on food choice and the preferences of the younger consumers. However, one of the main  
571 limits of our research is the lack of information on real uses and context of consumption. Are  
572 these products still adapted to festive and refined consumption according to the French  
573 traditional habit or doomed to a more ordinary consumption? The question could be answered  
574 through further research.

575

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582

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663 **Footnotes**

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665 <sup>1</sup>Analyse des Lexèmes Co-occurrents dans les Enoncés Simples d'un Texte (Analysis of co-occurrent lexemes in  
666 simple wordings of a text)

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668 <sup>2</sup>For the two groups (NC and C) constituted of 16 persons (2 focus-groups of 8 persons each), the number in  
669 bracket represents the number of citations of each term.

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672 <sup>3</sup>Historians have analysed the importance of the beliefs associated with red meat and blood, especially during  
673 the pre-scientific period (Darnon, 1999). A recent research project dedicated to the perception of food germs has  
674 shown that blood in red meat is still nowadays perceived as risky because of the survival of the belief in  
675 “spontaneous generation” among lay persons (Debucquet, Merdji, Fischler, 2007).

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677 **Table 1.** Oyster- based product characteristics: form, ingredients, presentation and  
678 preparation

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	Oyster based products	Main ingredients and (% of oyster in recipe) when recipe available	Presentation and product preparation
S	Soup	Oyster (15),vegetables, spices	Metallic can; warm in a pan
P	Potted oyster	Oyster (30), cream, onion, white sauce, butter, garlic	Glass jar, cool before spreading
B	Oyster butter	Oyster (43), cream, butter, white sauce, onion, garlic	Glass jar, cool before spreading
T	Hot toast	Oyster (17.5), seaweed, carrot, onion	Metallic can; spread on bread and toast 5 min in an oven
C	Frozen oyster	whole oyster with sauce in a half-shell	Cook 10 min in an oven

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**Table 2.** Characteristics of the staff restaurant consumer panel and at-home consumer panel

	At-home panel	Staff restaurant panel
Gender (%)		
Female / Male	56.2 / 43.8	41.1 / 58.9
Age (years) ( %)		
< 25	27.6	14.6
26-35	9.7	24.0
36-45	21.4	24.1
46-55	26.2	20.1
+55	15.2	17.2
Educational level <sup>1</sup> (%)		
Low	29.7	7.6
Middle	31.9	33.1
High	27.5	59.3
Oyster eater (%)		
Yes / No	74.5 / 25.5	76.0 / 24.0
Respondents (Total)	145	481

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<sup>1</sup>Low educational level: elementary school; middle educational level: secondary school and middle degree professional education; high educational level: secondary school and higher educational level, higher degree of professional education, university or higher

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**Table 3.** Overall liking in staff restaurant test (mean and standard deviation) according to socio-demographic variables and perception of “naturalness”

Factors	F and p values <sup>1</sup>	Factor level <sup>2</sup>	Products					
			P	B	T	S	C	
Consumer Type	F <sub>4,1</sub> =4.66 p=0.03	C <sup>b</sup> NC <sup>a</sup>	6.0 (2.0)	5.7 (2.0)	6.1 (2.1)	6.3 (2.3)	7.0 (1.8)	
Age	F <sub>4,4</sub> =0.42 p=0.79	< 25	6.4 (2.1)	6.6 (2.1)	5.0 (2.4)	5.5 (2.4)	7.7 (1.4)	
		26-35	5.8 (2.0)	6.0 (2.0)	5.8 (2.2)	6.1 (2.2)	7.0 (2.1)	
		36-45	5.9 (2.2)	5.8 (2.1)	6.2 (2.5)	6.5 (2.6)	7.0 (1.9)	
		46-55	6.0 (2.3)	5.0 (1.8)	6.4 (1.9)	6.2 (2.6)	6.6 (1.9)	
		+55	6.1 (2.1)	5.2 (2.2)	6.3 (2.0)	6.6 (2.1)	6.7 (1.6)	
Gender	F <sub>4,1</sub> =0.62 p=0.43	Male	5.9 (2.0)	5.7 (1.9)	5.7 (2.2)	6.3 (2.2)	6.9 (1.8)	
		Female	6.2 (2.3)	5.6 (2.2)	6.2 (2.2)	6.1 (2.4)	7.0 (1.8)	
Educational level	F <sub>4,2</sub> =2.15 p=0.11	Low	6.5 (2.2)	6.1 (2.5)	7.5 (1.7)	6.3 (2.4)	6.9 (2.8)	
		Medium	6.1 (2.2)	5.8 (1.8)	5.8 (2.4)	5.8 (2.2)	7.1 (1.8)	
		High	5.8 (2.1)	5.5 (2.1)	5.8 (2.1)	6.6 (2.3)	6.9 (1.7)	
Overall liking	Product	F <sub>4,1073</sub> =10.7 p=0.000	General mean	6.1 (2.1) <sup>ab</sup>	5.7 (2.0) <sup>a</sup>	5.9 (2.2) <sup>ab</sup>	6.2 (2.4) <sup>b</sup>	6.9 (1.9) <sup>c</sup>
Perception of “naturalness”		F <sub>4,1006</sub> =13.4 p=0.000	General mean	5.6 (2.5) <sup>b</sup>	5.1 (2.3) <sup>a</sup>	5.85 (2.3) <sup>b</sup>	6.4 (2.3) <sup>c</sup>	6.7 (3.8) <sup>c</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>F value for the tested factor and probability associated in the analysis of variance with products and factor used as independent variables

<sup>2</sup>Factor levels with different letters are significantly different at p<0.05

704 **Table 4.** Overall liking and perception of “naturalness” in the at home test (mean and standard  
 705 deviation)

Factor	F and p values <sup>1</sup>	Factor level <sup>2</sup>	P	B	Products				
					T	S	C		
Consumer Type	F <sub>4,1</sub> =1.1 p=0.29	C	5.0 (2.3)	4.7 (2.5)	5.0 (2.7)	6.8 (2.6)	6.9 (2.1)		
		NC	4.4 (2.2)	5.1 (2.4)	5.1 (2.4)	5.0 (2.5)	6.7 (1.9)		
Age	F <sub>4,4</sub> =4.5 p=0.001	< 25 <sup>a</sup>	4.8 (2.3)	4.8 (2.5)	5.0 (2.5)	4.3 (2.7)	6.1 (2.0)		
		26-35 <sup>b,c</sup>	5.1 (2.4)	4.2 (1.9)	5.2 (2.0)	6.3 (1.8)	7.7 (1.6)		
		36-45 <sup>a,b</sup>	4.7 (2.1)	4.8 (2.3)	4.9 (2.5)	5.8 (2.6)	7.0 (1.8)		
		46-55 <sup>a,b</sup>	4.8 (2.7)	4.5 (2.8)	4.5 (2.8)	5.9 (2.7)	6.6 (2.4)		
Overall liking		+55 <sup>c</sup>	5.1 (1.9)	4.8 (2.6)	6.0 (3.0)	6.5 (2.3)	7.7 (1.5)		
		Gender	F <sub>4,1</sub> =0.4 p=0.52	Male	4.7 (2.3)	5.1 (2.5)	5.3 (2.7)	5.8 (2.7)	6.7 (2.1)
		Female	4.9 (2.3)	4.7 (2.4)	4.8 (2.6)	5.5 (2.6)	7.0 (2.0)		
		Educational level	F <sub>4,2</sub> =1.3 p=0.27	Low	5.2 (2.1)	5.1 (2.4)	4.6 (2.4)	4.8 (2.9)	6.4 (1.7)
		Medium	4.8 (2.4)	5.0 (2.6)	5.2 (2.8)	6.0 (2.4)	7.1 (2.1)		
		High	4.6 (2.4)	4.5 (2.4)	5.1 (2.6)	5.9 (2.5)	7.0 (2.1)		
Products	F <sub>4,643</sub> =16.1 p=0.000	General mean	4.9 (2.3) <sup>a</sup>	4.8 (2.5) <sup>a</sup>	5.0 (2.6) <sup>a</sup>	5.6 (2.6) <sup>b</sup>	6.9 (2.0) <sup>c</sup>		
Perception of “naturalness”	F <sub>4,634</sub> =9.8 p=0.000	General mean	5.1 (2.8) <sup>a</sup>	4.7 (2.7) <sup>a</sup>	5.1 (2.5) <sup>a</sup>	5.9 (2.3) <sup>b</sup>	6.6 (2.4) <sup>c</sup>		
Refusal to taste		Whole panel %	4.8	4.1	14.5	13.0	17.1		
		C %	4.6	0.9	12.0	11.1	13.9		
		NC %	5.4	13.5	21.6	18.9	27.0		

706 <sup>1</sup>F value for the tested factor and probability associated in the analysis of variance with products and factor used  
 707 as independent variables

708 <sup>2</sup>Factor levels with different letters are significantly different at p<0.05

709

710 **Tableau 5.** Positive descriptors: lexical classes and significant associations with oyster-based  
 711 products, socio-demographic profiles, and oyster consumers (C) or non-consumers (NC).

Class description	% of classified statements	Lexical universe	Oyster-based product	Socio demographic profiles
<b>Class 1</b> <i>The taste of oyster and sea: light, choice / exquisite, refined</i>	55.0	Taste (25) of oyster (44), unctuous (21), fresh (17), light (14), sea (12) product (13), choice / exquisite (11), creamy (10), taste with right balance (9), sea product (7), iodine (5)	Oyster butter (15)	More than 55 years old (9) 46-55 years old (7) Man (4) Introduced to oyster consumption before age of 10 (3) Raw oyster eater (C) (3)
<b>Class 2</b> <i>Texture and appearance, convenience issues</i>	37.0	Good (43) texture (32), small (23) pieces (23) of vegetables (28), smell (28) of vegetables (28), pleasant (20) presentation (26), pleasant (20) consistency (15), nice (19) color (18), well (17) seasoned (16), easy (9) to prepare (9), to spread (5)	Cooked oyster in half-shell (19)	Woman (8) 26-35 years old (5) Less than 25 years old (4) Introduced to oyster consumption between ages of 20 and 30 (4) Students (3)
<b>Class 3</b> <i>The analogy with fish-based products</i>	8.0	Like (72), fish (170), soup (189) or potted (60)	Soup (40)	36-45 years old (17) High educational level (5) Introduced to oyster consumption over the age of 30 (3)

712 Ranking of words in lexical classes and socio demographic characteristics in decreasing order of chi-square  
 713 values (chi-square value significant at  $p < 0.05$ )

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 717 **Tableau 6.** Negative descriptors: lexical classes and significant associations with oyster-  
 718 based products, socio-demographic profiles, and oyster consumers (C) or non consumer (NC).

Class description	% of classified statements	Lexical universe	Oyster-based product	Socio demographic profiles
<b>Class 1</b> <i>The bizarre and the suspect</i>	37.0	Unpleasant (27) smell (72), unappetizing (49) appearance (52) and colour (32), unpleasant (19) and strange (9) consistency (12), strong (17), bad (8), not digested (7), too dirty (5), repulsive (5)	Soup (22) Hot toast (11)	Born in land (10) C consumer (6) Introduced to oyster consumption between the ages of 36 and 45
<b>Class 2</b> <i>The incompatibility with fat</i>	29.0	Fatty (73), sickly (31), sticky (28), cream (27), viscous (26), doughy (16), bitter (13)	Oyster butter (31) Potted oyster (7)	Born in seashore (4) NC consumer (3) More than 55 years old (3)
<b>Class 3</b> <i>The taste of oyster: "tasteless or too strong"</i>	25.0	Taste (79) of raw (12) oyster (105), not enough (24) found again (23) or too strong (5), like scallop (21)	Cooked oyster in half-shell (33)	Less than 25 years old (7) Student (7) Low educational level (7)
<b>Class 4</b> <i>The aversion to oyster pieces: disgust towards the animal itself</i>	9.0	Big (30) / too many (4) pieces (145) of oyster (13), unpleasant (50), not liking (42), not eating (12)	Potted oyster (4)	NC consumer (12) neither raw nor cooked Has never been introduced to oyster consumption (6)

719 Ranking of words in lexical classes and socio demographic characteristics in decreasing order of chi-square  
 720 values (chi-square value significant at  $p < 0.05$ )

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