

# Free Hierarchical Sorting procedure: towards a better understanding of assessor's perception?

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## Introduction

### CONTEXT

Categorization is a cognitive process used in everyday life to understand and to interact with perceptions from our environment, helping us to organize our knowledge. It has been shown that expertise modify categorization process. Do experts and consumers understand categories in the same way? To find answers, wine is an ideal model as wines are organized into *a priori* categories and taxonomies.

### AIM

Beaujolais wines are distributed on an appellation-based wine taxonomy:  
➤ Do experts and consumers use this taxonomy to categorize Beaujolais wines?

How these wines are represented by experts and consumers?

What are the strategies used to categorize these wines?

Do expertise and familiarity lead to different categorization processes?

## Materials & Methods

### PANELS

3 different panels

Experts (professionals)

N=30

From Beaujolais area

Consumers (familiar)

N=30

From Lille area

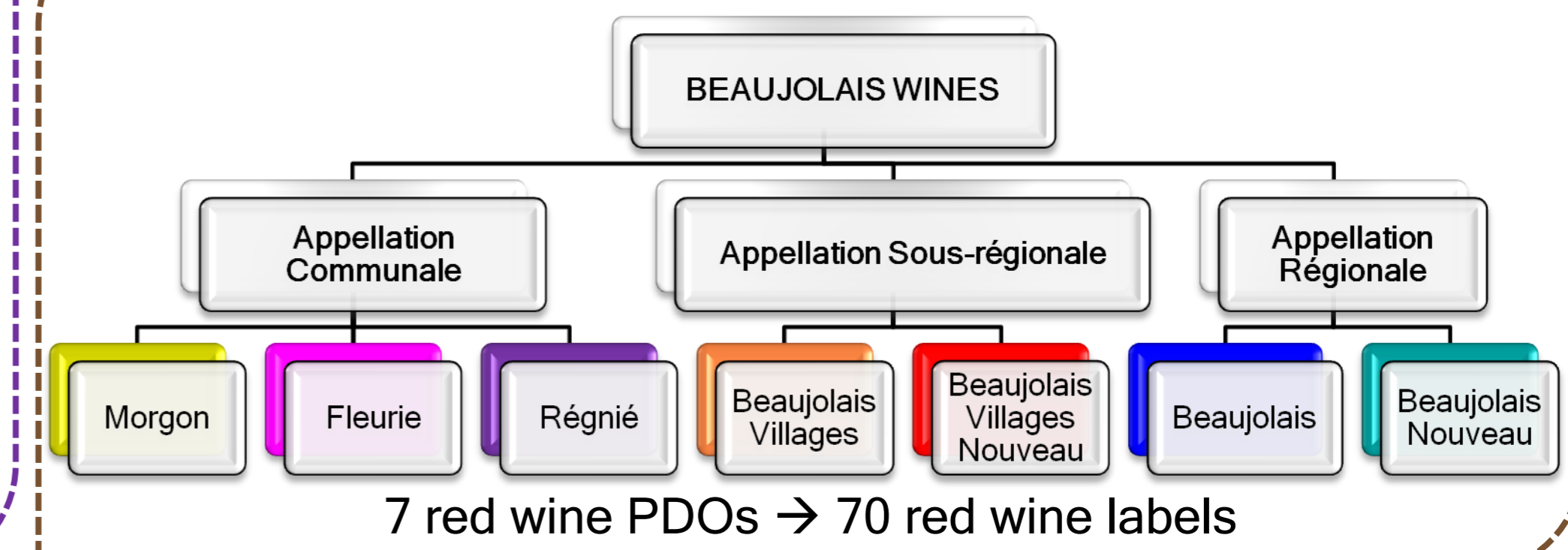
Consumers (unfamiliar)

N=30

### PROCEDURE

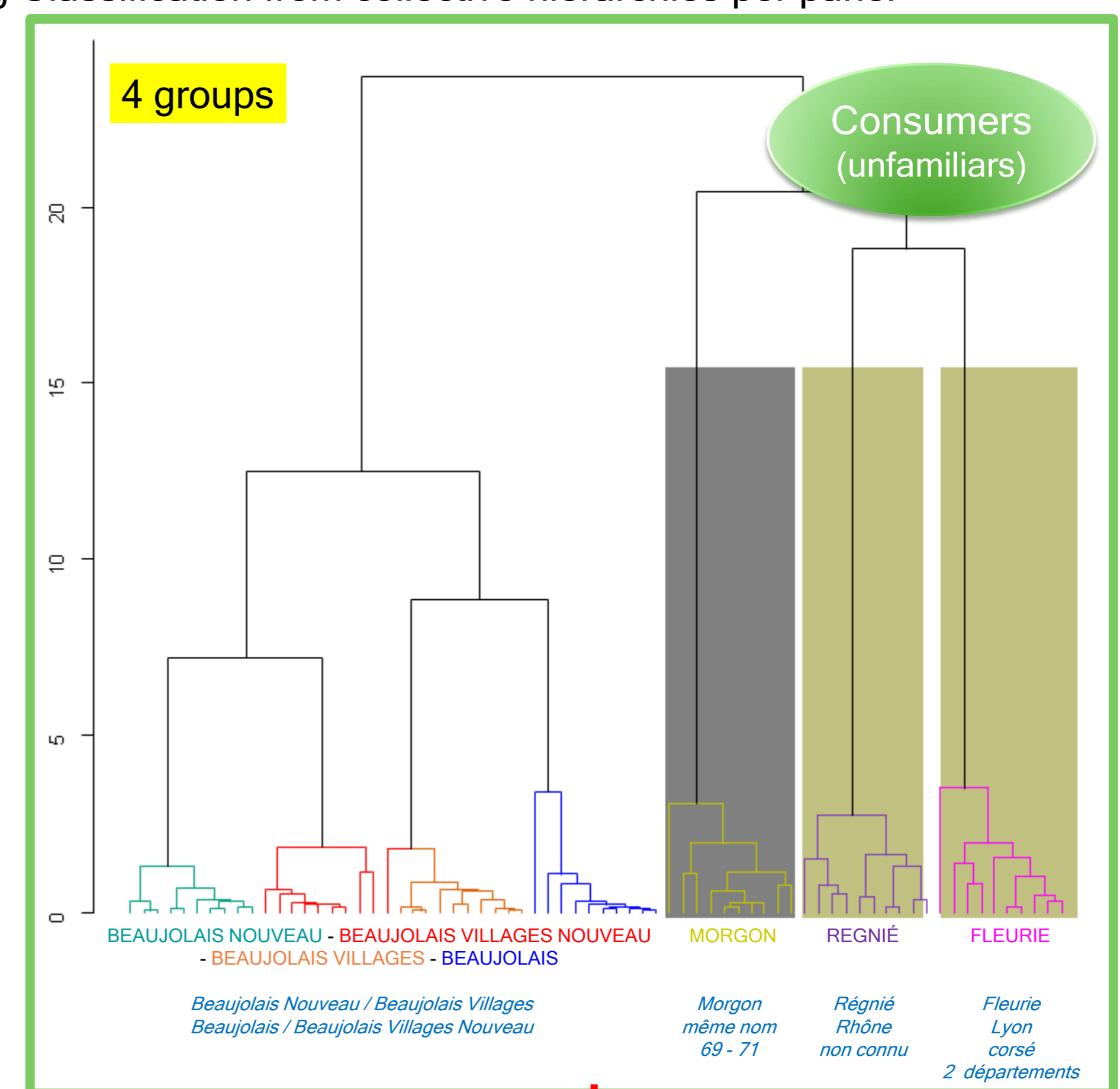
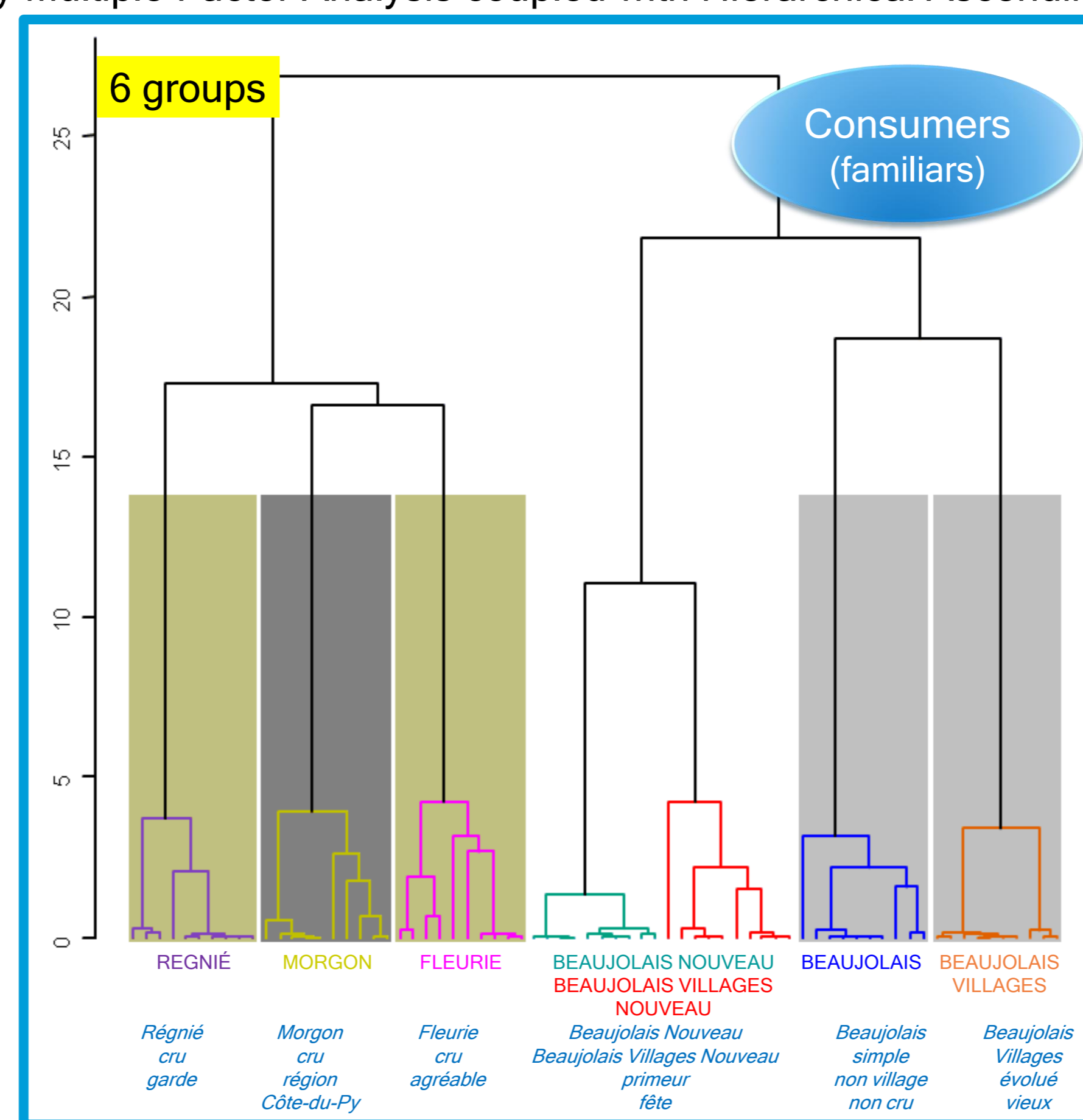
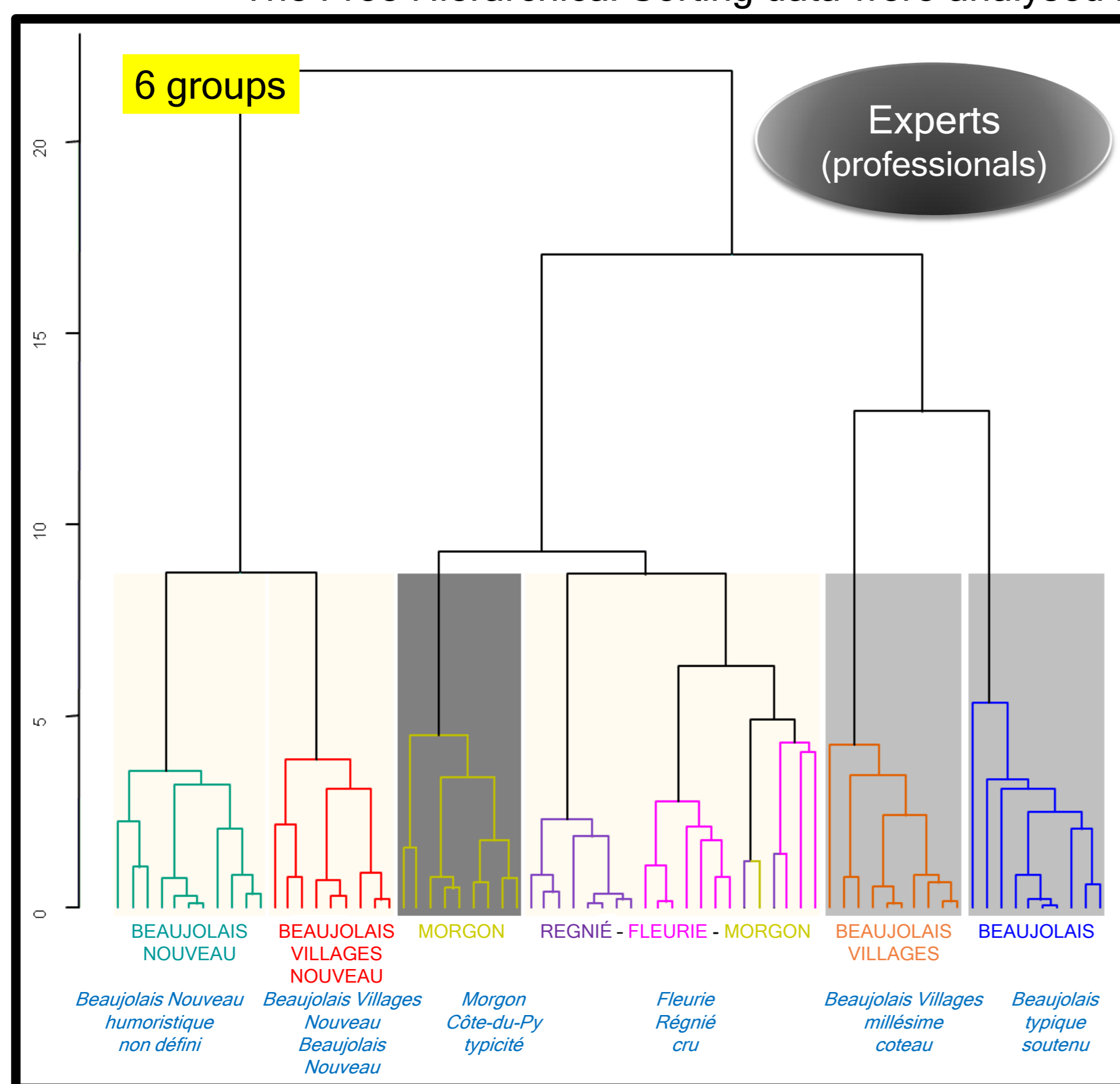
- Free Hierarchical Sorting task on labels - Bidirectional (ascending/descending)
- Verbalization
- Semi-directed interview

### THE APPELLATION-BASED WINE TAXONOMY



## Results

The Free Hierarchical Sorting data were analysed by Multiple Factor Analysis coupled with Hierarchical Ascending Classification from collective hierarchies per panel



### INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

**TOP-DOWN**

Activation of knowledge  
«... from knowledge I have on these different appellations»  
PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) «I separated [labels] by appellation»  
Feeling (message perceived) «... what the winemaker intended to communicate»  
Inferences «... with an idea of a quality difference in my mind»  
Diversified / Flexible method

**BOTTOM-UP**

Reading of wine labels  
«I have started by reading all the labels»  
Deductions, seeking clues on labels  
«I looked at the post code»  
Attempt to appropriate expert knowledge  
Stereotypical / Fixed method

## Discussion & Conclusion

- Three groups are common to both the consumer panels and only 1 was shared by the expert panel. But, for all panels, the first terms used to describe groups are similars and related to the appellation-based wine taxonomy.
- Interviews results highlight that expert and familiar consumer panels use **top-down strategies** (use of concepts, knowledge) while unfamiliar consumer panel use **bottom-up strategies** (use of perceptions). So, for familiar consumer panel, the **exposure** and the **familiarity** to these wines contributed to the use of similar categorization processes than expert panel.
- Conducting interviews at the end of sorting tasks provides **additional informations on categorization strategies** and thus a **better understanding of assessor's perception**.