

The territorial redefinition of the Vineyard Landscape in the sherry wine region (Spain)

Abstract

The wine sector is a sector that lives and breathes its history and identity; and where developmental alternatives are sought in order to be able to compete in the market. Vineyard areas are sold as rural paradises, where leisure, gastronomy, the landscape, and open-air activities all provide quality tourist experiences. The case of the Sherry Wine Region (Spain) illustrates local restructuring processes, changes in local-global planning, and the socioeconomic impacts of the globalization of food. The symbiosis between the specific, the global, and the historical discourses gives rise to reflections on this region's territorial redefinition; and highlights its architectural heritage, its landscape, and the gastronomic experiences on offer. Diversification is regenerating the local economy, and wine, and wine tourism, are both the focus of a new territorial policy strategy designed to face the challenges of globalization, and common bonds for partnerships between the public and the private sectors.

Keywords

Landscape • heritage • wine tourism • Sherry Wine Region

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Introduction

Nature and what is natural, and culture and what is cultural, are conceived of as social constructs and not as isolated concepts (MacCormack & Strathern 1980). As a result, there is a certain relevance in addressing nature's social reconstruction patterns that link ecological processes and socioeconomic structures. This convergence has been developed as an ethnographic (Braun 2004; Demeritt 2002) and ethnoecological source (Johnson & Hunn 2010), which has led to an understanding of how certain landscapes arrived at their current situation, their historical processes, and how public planning and management models have attempted to combine the protection of nature and the promotion of local heritage for use in tourism.

"An Archaeology of Landscapes" (Anschuetz et al. 2001) provides an adequate method for modulating the relationships between local populations and their natural surroundings. Sauer (1956) alleged that cultural landscapes facilitate an analysis of their historical processes; and in this, Sauer's analysis adopts a *de la longue durée* temporal perspective (Beneš & Zvelebil 1999). In this line, it is worth mentioning the valuable contributions of a number of researchers who draw on the principles that originated in the School of Annales (Burke 2013), and highlighting the work of Braudel (1972) as the most important reference (1972).

The wine sector is a strategic sector of the economy for many European countries, including Spain, which is one of the great wine producers of the world. According to data from the International Organization of Vine and Wine (IOV 2017), Spain is in first position for the amount of planted area (975,000 hectares), this area being divided into 85 Protected Designation of Origin areas. The prestige that wine culture has acquired has turned it into a social symbol and a fashion reference.

The functional vineyard landscape is associated with both viticultural practices and the natural environment in which it is developed. The vineyard landscape has a historical value, due to it being a result of transformations and cultural practices that have taken place over centuries, and that find their ultimate expression in the industrial heritage of the winery. There exists an idealized vineyard landscape, expressed in words through literature and poetry, and captured in works of pictorial art. The vineyard landscape also has social connotations as the fruit of human labor; this generating the local identity and the know-how of the inhabitants.

Rural areas have experienced an intense social and economic restructuring that has been brought on by globalization (Marsden 1995). Territorial innovation and development trends have arisen that capitalize on natural, landscape, and cultural values (Rosenberg & Walsh 1997) in order to shape differentiation strategies (eds Torre & Traversac 2011; Woods & McDonagh 2011).

The influence of agricultural post-productivism has generated changes in the following areas and ways: 1) in extensive agricultural production (López-Guzmán et al. 2011), where the decline in internal demand leaves exportation as the only option; 2) while during the Fordist period the Protected Designation of Origin led the consumer to quality; for the current period, brand image is the determining factor of the reflection of wine's culturalization (Barco 2013); 3) modern-day environmental and heritage appraisal (Buller & Hoggart 2017); 4) the need for diversification towards new experiences is currently being expressed through wine tourism (Bosangit et al. 2015); and 5) the productive delocalization and disarticulation (Coe & Yeung 2015) of this industry should also be included.

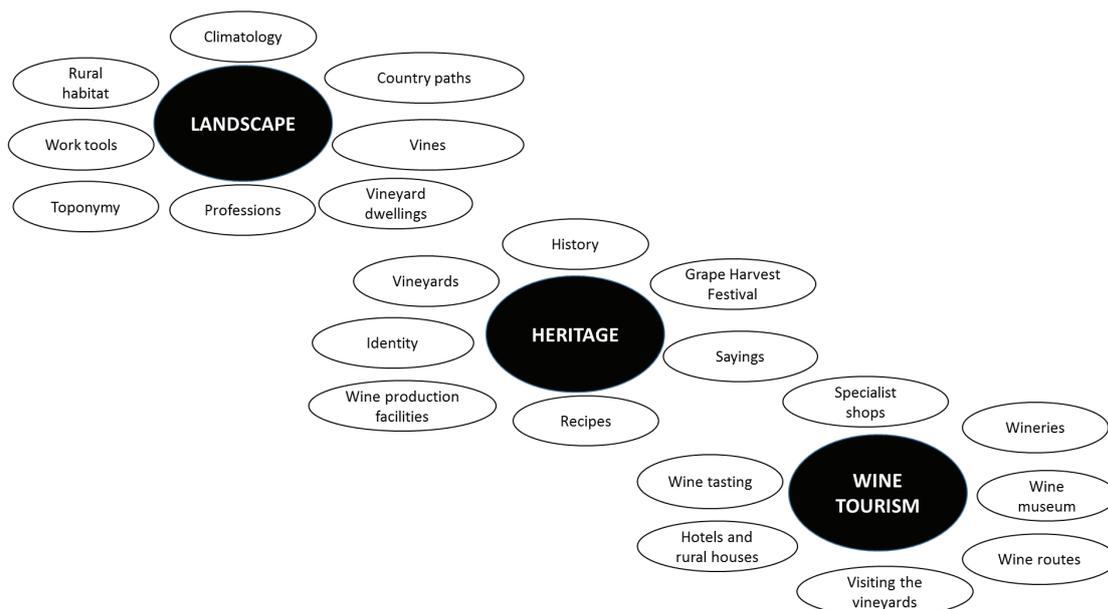


Figure 1. Elements of the landscape, heritage and wine tourism. Source: own elaboration

Objectives and hypotheses

The focus of this research is to analyze the historical evolution of the vineyard landscape in the Sherry Wine Region, the factors that have triggered modifications in the relationship between the local people and their environment, and the causes of the territorial redefinition of the vineyard landscape.

Literature review

The relationship between landscape and heritage goes back to the nineteen-eighties, when it became the subject of scientific debate (Claval 2007; Scazzosi 2004). A territory and its image are not only a physical embodiment, but also evidence of social appropriation (Howard 2003). In addition, there has been a culturalization (Sahlins 1976), or patrimonial appropriation, of nature (Vacarro & Beltran 2010), where its protection is the result of cultural expression.

This is due in part to UNESCO, who have included rural landscapes in spaces declared for their heritage values. In 1992, the category of *cultural landscapes* appeared in discussions on rural landscapes (Aplin 2007; Rössler 2006). According to the definition of this category, priority is given to a landscape as both a process and a material asset (Harris 1999), while at the very end of the twentieth-century what was most highly valued was the individuals who created, recreated and enjoyed the landscape (Antrop 2005; Rössler 2006). More recently, the appreciation of immaterial values made this definition appear archaic (Fernández & Silva 2016); this was especially so on the occasion of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe (2000), which identified the landscape as being any part of a territory as perceived by the local population (Article 1).

Sixteen winegrowing regions around the world have been declared Heritage of Humanity cultural landscapes by UNESCO (Petrillo et al. 2015). Spain, despite being the world's main producer of wine has not been recognized as such, and it was not until 2017 that the *La Rioja and Rioja Alavesa Vine and Wine Cultural Landscape* was entered onto the tentative World Heritage list. According to some authors, the intention of preserving the

vineyard landscapes of Spain does not make much sense while the national Common Agricultural Policy (PAC) continues to subsidize the uprooting of vineyards (Lasanta et al. 2016; Fernández & Silva 2016), or while they are at risk due to property speculation (Elías 2014).

However, respect for vineyard landscapes has led to their protection, with examples in Spain being the Catalan Law for Landscape Protection, Management, and Planning (*Ley de protección, gestión y ordenación del paisaje de Cataluña* - 2005); and the La Rioja Law for Cultural, Historical, and Artistic Heritage (*Ley del Patrimonio Cultural, Histórico y Artístico de La Rioja* - 2004), which expressly states that the vineyard landscape is part of traditional culture and that among real assets, support for the building of wineries is a priority.

The ability to mobilize people to come to vineyard landscapes has made it a tourist resource of high heritage and social value. In Figure 1 is presented the elements that make up each of the concepts.

Methods

The symbiosis between the specific, the global, and the historical discourses, serves as a paradigm for reflecting on landscape, heritage, and wine tourism in the Sherry Wine Region (Figure 2).

The present study is a paradigmatic case study that illustrates local restructuring processes, changes in local-global planning, and the socioeconomic impacts arising from the globalization of food. In May and July 2017, a program of qualitative interviews was implemented that exemplified these phenomena. The interviews and the study area visits served to have different perspectives on how the vineyard landscape of the Sherry Wine Region has changed over the past 20 years, and what the future prospects for it are. Ten interviews were carried out. The interviewees were, 1) farmers, 2) winemakers, 3) tourism entrepreneurs, 4) historians, and 5) public sector technicians.

There was also an analysis and compilation of documentary material, which included, 1) historical documents, such as the



Figure 2. Study area: Sherry Wine Region (Spain). Source: own elaboration

Distribution Book (*Libro del Repartimiento*), which paints a vivid picture of the landscape in medieval times, and allows for a deeper understanding of landscape transformations; 2) a map from the digital library of the Royal Academy of Spanish History (*Real Academia de la Historia Española*); and 3) material from media sources, especially local and regional sources.

Results

The imprint of the vineyard landscape in the Sherry Wine Region

The Sherry Wine Region is situated in the north-east of the province of Cadiz. Its wine and its identity are a result of its geographical location and evolution, the landscape in general, and in this particular case, being an imprint of society on nature, which turns the landscape into a social and territorial conscience. Historians have argued that, from the very beginning, viticulture in the Sherry Wine Region was based on a wine distribution. According to Strabo, grapevines were cultivated in the Phoenician settlement of Xera, and the resulting product was distributed around the Mediterranean area. A map by the geographer, Al Idrisi (1150) gives the Arabic name of Sherish to the settlement once known as Xera (Figure 3).

Subsequently, King Alfonso X, after the conquest of Jerez (1264), and as a reward to the people for their service; drew up the Distribution Book (*Libro del Repartimiento*, 1269) in which the *donadío* (a donation coming directly from the king) was established, which bestowed various lands and properties (houses, six yokes of arable land, and six *aranzadas* - traditional Spanish measures - of vineyard, two allotments of land and

fifteen olive groves) on the people, on condition that they lived in the city (González & González 1980). The Distribution Book also mentions urban transformations, such as the new uses of existing buildings, and how many Moorish buildings were demolished to make way for wineries, stables, and corrals (González & González 1980). The vineyards grew and the city of Jerez de la Frontera enacted the Ordinances of the Raisin and the Grape Harvest (*Ordenanzas de la Pasa y la Vendimia* - 1483), the first commercial activity legislation to regulate raisins, the grape harvest, and the characteristics of the barrels and transactions; and to punish fraud (Figure 4).

At the end of the eighteenth century, traditional viticulture was replaced by the wine agro-industry. This involved replacing an agro-commercial and protectionist system with a liberal agro-industrial one (Aladro 2012). The winery heritage of the Sherry Wine Region is reflected in architectural studies and its representation in urban planning that has changed over the centuries, from a convent city—with the wineries outside the city—to the winery city, and then from the winery city to a city within a winery (Aladro 2012, Martín 2017). The wine production structure subsequently took hold of the city. The urban area placed itself at the service of business needs that appropriated public spaces; and old streets and squares found themselves inside the wineries (Figure 5).

The twentieth century was a century of large-scale agricultural transformations, because, at the end of the nineteenth century, the phylloxera (vine louse) crisis had led to the disappearance of a large proportion of the vineyards. In the Sherry Wine Region,



Figure 3. Šeri in the world map of Al-Idrisi (1150). A map world dating from 1150, designed by the Moorish geographer Al-Idrisi, appears the city of Šeris, the name given to the city of Jerez de la Frontera by the Moors. A curious feature of the map is that the North is at the foot of the page and the South at the top. This document describes „Xerez is a strong city, of medium extension, surrounded by walls, its surroundings are pleasant, because it is surrounded by vineyards, olive groves and fig trees.” Source: The map is available under a Creative Commons Attribution Share Alike License. https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kitab_Ruyar



Figure 4. View of Xeres de la Frontera made between 1563 and 1567 by Franz Hogenberg. The view of Xeres de la Frontera made between 1563 and 1567 is the work of Franz Hogenberg, which is part of Civitates Orbis Terrarum. The drawing presents images of everyday life and the physiognomy of the city in the sixteenth century. Source: The map is available under a Creative Commons Attribution Share Alike License. https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frans_Hogenberg



Figure 5. View of the vineyard landscape and Gonzalez Byass Winery in the Sherry Wine Region. Source: own elaboration

new varieties of grape were introduced that allowed for replanting. Historically, the height of production was reached in 1972, and this would lead to an overextended industry. From the nineteen-eighties onwards, the international crisis meant a reduction in exports, thus enforcing a period of adjustment that has lasted to the present day and resulted in the uprooting of vineyards.

At present, the evaluation of the vineyard landscape's heritage, and the reinterpretations of its cultural legacy, are becoming more clearly defined; and the landscape's heritage, itself, is becoming increasingly necessary as it represents the cultural value of integration, it represents memory, and it contains its own cultural substance (Martínez-de-Pisón 1997).

The metamorphosis of the vineyard landscape

The *Jerez-Xérès-Sherry* Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) is made up of 2,800 registered winemakers, who occupy 6,985.99 hectares (2016) of land. The majority of them own small vineyards, which are grouped into seven cooperatives. A singular and surprising fact is that only 35% of the vineyards in the production area belong to winery owners, whereas 42% belong to cooperatives, and the rest to independent winemakers.

The largest volume of sales goes mainly to export, with 65% going to the Sherry region's three traditional markets: the United Kingdom (29%), Holland (17%) and Germany (7%); while the national market volume is 35% (*Consejo Regulador de la Denominación de Origen del Jerez* - Regulatory Council of the Denominations of Origin Sherry - 2017).

Sales of sherry have been in decline since the nineteen-eighties due to the slump in the international wine market and competition from other wines. All of the agents in the sector agree that the core problem is that sales are falling continuously, which is an inconvenience that is both circumstantial (in terms of low consumption) and structural (in terms of vineyards being uprooted), and at present there is no foreseeable change in the trend (Table 1).

In the twenty-first century, with the revival of its architectural heritage (wineries), its environment (vineyard landscape), and the gastronomic experience on offer (the Sherry Wine and Brandy Route), there has been a reappraisal of the wine industry

in the Sherry Wine Region. A consequence of this diversification is the rehabilitation of the industry's economy through a new source of income that complements or replaces traditional forms of revenue, and generates spill-over effects for other local production sectors, such as restaurants, bars, small businesses, construction companies, and agricultural and craft production.

Wine and wine tourism have been harnessed for a new territorial policy strategy that is designed to face the challenges of globalization (Anderson 2001), and as common bonds for partnerships between the public and the private sectors (LAG Campiña de Jerez). Following are some of the projects included:

1. The Local Development Strategy (LDS), Campiña de Jerez, 2014–2020, which outlines the development of wine tourism and the refurbishment of vineyard landscapes that have tourism potential.
2. The Sustainable Tourism Initiative of the Andalusian Regional Government (*Junta de Andalucía*), which recovers the agro-food and ethnological heritage linked to vineyards (enogastronomy–food and wine tourism).
3. The Wine Culture Dissemination Program (ENOUCA), designed by the University of Cadiz for its students.
4. The Sherry Wine Region Vineyard Development and Promotion Plan, coordinated by the City Council of Jerez (*Ayuntamiento de Jerez de la Frontera*), which involves rehabilitating, recovering, and reusing vineyard dwellings, wineries, wine presses, farmsteads, and country houses for use in tourism. This activity is complemented by the repair of those public roads that facilitate and improve access.
5. After several failed attempts, the future Wine Technology Centre will be created with the help of funds from the Integrated Territorial Initiative (ITI), within the scope of R&D&I, and with public support for the region's wine-producing potential.

Conclusions

The vineyard landscape is currently undergoing a metamorphosis in the direction of production models that are more diversified, and more differentiated by their quality; with

Table 1. Vineyards, business and wine tourism in the Sherry Wine Region

Year	Surface area (ha)	The number of vineyards	Total production (hl)	Sales (hl)	Exports (hl)	Visitors
2007	10,050.46	3,397	11,437,295	55,166,198	41,370,016	413,158
2008	10,054.28	3,355	88,068,427	50,540,694	37,242,333	434,161
2009	9,624.98	3,125	73,092,614	46,031,663	33,608,324	455,854
2010	8,199.02	2,925	69,649,472	46,740,637	33,741,452	455,854
2011	7,420.07	2,352	64,336,764	42,430,605	30,210,448	431,161
2012	6,571.12	2,479	46,978,935	41,611,336	29,791,525	416,569
2013	6,937.71	2,433	82,069,035	38,464,805	26,853,050	431,472
2014	6,714.58	2,305	66,809,615	36,648,115	25,156,093	444,427
2015	6,866.63	2,390	76,413,662	35,846,952	24,325,211	450,000
2016	6,988.99	2,367	57,012,328	34,386,517	22,363,984	501,783

Table based on data from the Regulatory Council of the Denominations of Origin Sherry–Consejo Regulador de la Denominación de Origen Jerez–(several different years) and ACEVIN 2017. Source: own elaboration

the coordination between public and the private sectors playing a fundamental role.

With this rural restructuring process, the Sherry Wine Region has lost its character as a wine-producing area, and has evolved into a wine-tourism region. This transformation is due to its inability to adapt to globalization; but also, in part, to how the Protected Designations of Origin does not favor local interests and provides no guarantee of the territorialization of agro-food activity.

The Protected Designation of Origin is traditionally based on three pillars: the territory, the grape variety, and the human factor. However, the new wine production companies focus on the grape variety, the enologist, and the brand, as indicators of quality (Viladomiu & Rosell 2006); while the Protected Designation of Origin

does not guarantee local planting since the commercialization and distribution have been taken out of local hands due to processes of delocalization and de-territorialization (Soler 2011).

The new territorial approaches are centered around going out to the countryside and admiring the vineyards. This is the value now given to this heritage, and it is being reinforced by an attempt to consolidate wine tourism in this singular vineyard landscape, with wine culture as the main focus.

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