

FROM AGRICULTURE TO ADVERTISING: THE RESEARCH GAZE AND WINERIES AS COMPLEX ORGANIZATIONS

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Introduction

Perhaps more than any other type of business, modern wineries are multi-dimensional organizations. The range of activities in which they must excel is truly diverse: from agriculture to advertising. Wineries farm grapes and craft and produce wines; they provide services like tastings and experiences, as well as educating customers and visitors. They often function as tourist sites and destinations for locals. They market and sell alcohol directly, retail and wholesale, and indirectly through regulated third parties. Market success requires excellence in the practice of all the business functions in addition to this fulsome range of activities. Given all this, it is somewhat paradoxical that wineries tend to be portrayed in the literature as rather unidimensional organizations (Sears, Weatherbee, & MacNeil, 2019).

Literature Review

Organizations are dynamic sites of power (Phillips & Margolis, 1999) and “continuously evolving human action” (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002, p. 567). They are the places where social exchanges are not only influenced by notions of the market and business practice, but wider social and cultural norms (Clegg & Hardy, 1996). Organizations have both explicit and formal as well as hidden and implicit rules; often evolving unique cultures of their own (Hatch, 1993). Over time, they necessarily become a complex *mélange* of friendship and social interactions (Sasovova, Mehra, Borgatti, & Schippers, 2010) and a primary producer of emotion and meaning-making in the lives of their membership (Poole & Grant, 2005). They are not just the places where work happens. They are sites of flirting and romance, sex and assault (Jeanes, Knights, & Yancey Martin, 2011) and the places where people at work live much of their lives.

Wineries suffer from the richness of these complexities just as much; arguably even more, than most other businesses. This has not gone unnoticed in the field of wine business studies. Orth, Lockshin and d’Hauteville (2007) asserted that researchers needed to move beyond a paradigm wherein the product was more important than the producer. Over a decade ago, they called for researchers to study the ‘business’ as much as they studied the ‘wine’ in wine business research.

Research Objective

The goal of this research is to assess whether - and to what extent - research in the field of wine business studies has recognized wineries as complex multi-dimensional organizations.

Research Methodology

A mixed methods approach, quantitative bibliometric and qualitative network visualization methodologies, will be used to conduct a scientometric analysis of the research found in the

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Expected Findings

Constraining our view of wineries has two important consequences: limiting the domain of study by restricting our gaze to research questions related to consumer behaviour and marketing (Sears, Weatherbee, & MacNeil, forthcoming); and preventing us from asking other potentially significant questions. The research outcomes are expected to include: an evaluation of the range and extent of research which focuses on the organizational dimensions of wineries, and the determination of whether this type forms knowledge islands or knowledge communities (Pratt, Hauser, & Sugimoto, 2012).

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