

SHAPING A WINE TERRITORY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF THE OKANAGAN, BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Abstract

Purpose: The paper sets out to discuss how a relatively young wine region might be shaped in real time. Drawing on the literatures on recognized wine territories and the notion of 'terroir' and strategies for shaping territorial competitiveness, it provides key insights on the context of the Okanagan wine region.

Design/methodology/approach: Our approach is to consider a case study in real-time, i.e. by reflecting on our on-going experience as part of a group that is responsible for conceiving, leading and carrying out a project intended to support development of the British Columbia wine territory. To some extent, it is an action-research like project, where practical observations and reflections are gathered through regular meetings, workshops, emails, documentation review, etc. with/from industry practitioners and other stakeholders.

Findings: There is a recognized need for a more organized approach in the industry, especially to shape the region's identity along the lines of a territorial/ terroir strategy. Having a structure is important to enable actors develop the capability of collective knowing, trust and cooperation, which are key to shaping a territory in real time.

Practical implications: By better understanding how a process is built (and being part of it) in order to stimulate continuous interactions, shared experiences and knowledge may help actors to coordinate and modify their strategies over time, in the interests of the wine region. These are important first steps for collective strategy-making and actions, for the Okanagan to shape its wine territory.

Key words: wine territory, territorial development, collective strategy, Okanagan