

Is Biodiversity in Vineyard an Argument for Developing Wine Tourism? The Wine Producers' Perspective.

Extended Abstract

Nindu Barbier

KEDGE Business School, France

nindu.barbier@kedgebs.com

Tatiana Bouzdine-Chameeva

KEDGE Business School, France

tatiana.chameeva@kedgebs.com

Claire Lamoureux

KEDGE Business School, France

claire.lamoureux@kedgebs.com

Key words: Sustainability, wine tourism, biodiversity, wine producers

1. CONTEXT AND RESEARCH PROBLEMS

According to the 2019 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, supporting sustainable development is imperative. Despite the growing interest of the research towards sustainable agricultural practices in wine sector (Christ and Burritt, 2013; Bartocci et al., 2017; Jradi et al., 2018), the extent to which sustainable development can contribute to wine tourism development is rarely being questioned (Baird et al., 2018; Montella, 2017).

Valuable ecosystems – including pollination, soil formation, flood mitigation, carbon capture, biological control – provide favourable factors to the sector. If historically, biodiversity and vines have not been willing partners (Barnes et al., 2010), during the last decade “weeds” have been seen as beneficial for the vineyard, ranging from reducing costs to supporting wine tourism.

The economical stakes of wine tourism are high and developing wine tourism represents a diversification opportunity (Sigala and Robertson, 2018; Andelic et al., 2019). These trends have encouraged winemakers to go beyond simple wine tastings and enrich their offer with experience connected with nature: winescape (Bruwer and Lesschaeve, 2012), cultural (Altschwager et al., 2017; Ponsignon et al., 2017), or historical features of the vineyards (Gravari-Barbas, 2014; Velikova et al., 2016).

The winescape defined by Johnson and Bruwer (2007) as “encapsulating the interplay of: vineyards; wineries and other physical structures; wines; natural landscape and setting; people; and heritage, town(s) and buildings and their architecture and artefacts within, and more” is a

multidimensional concept, connecting the stakeholders of a territory. Gravari- Barbas, (2014) defended the idea that wine tourism development needs the winescape.

Environmental conservation and creation of valuable ecosystems are at the heart of sustainable winery management. These are strong arguments to develop a wine tourism beneficial for tourists and to address the growing cohort of green travellers (Barr and Prillwitz, 2012; Hunting & Conroy, 2011). Biodiversity, affecting the landscape and the vineyard, is a major quality of the winescape for visitors of a wine region (Bruwer and Lesschaeve, 2012).

While the environment plays a predominant role in the destination image (Sigala et Robinson, 2018), it has not been studied yet, whether ecosystem and biodiversity of vineyards can argue for wine tourism development.

The wine producers' perspective has been chosen to analyze the following questions:

- How do you describe your winery eco-system? Are there any measurements in place?
- Do you measure the impact of biodiversity on your company's development?
- If any, what benefits does biodiversity bring to your winery in terms of wine tourism?
- Are there challenges or contradictions between biodiversity and wine tourism?

2. METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a qualitative perspective to evaluate the impact of biodiversity on the wine tourism in France. It employs a grounded-theory approach to provide confirmation of selected constructs and a selection of variables.

Data were collected from fourteen winery owners across Languedoc Roussillon, this region being one of the largest organic vineyards of France. The wineries have been purposely chosen on the following criteria: offering wine tourism on site; being certified by one or many environmental labels; and volunteering to be interviewed.

One of the authors conducted on-site in-depth interviews over a period of one month. All interviews followed a standardized format covering: (1) eco-system description, (2) management practices, (3) biodiversity factor analysis, (4) factors fostering or discouraging wine tourism due to biodiversity. All informants were asked to discuss environmental dimensions of cultural practices, impacts of biodiversity on wine tourism, effects on travellers, and possible benefits and challenges related to biodiversity. All interviews were recorded, then transcribed verbatim, imported and managed using the NVivo software for further analysis.

3. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Our analyses aimed at disclosing patterns and themes and clustering the observations into conceptual groups of constructs identified in the literature. Examining the data revealed several crucial themes:

- (1) Winery owners are aware that the attractiveness of a touristic site is strongly linked with biodiversity protection (e.g. “*it brings richness, authenticity which is highly appreciated by our visitors*”);
- (2) Producers diverge on the constraints of biodiversity conservation (eg. “this is certainly not a constraint”; “this has a cost; I understand why some others might be reluctant...”) This rises the challenges faced by the producers and the question of return on investment;
- (3) Certain wineries are deemed to emphasize biodiversity (e.g. “... *we use special signage, which explains our flore and faune* “);
- (4) Differences appear in visitors’ behaviour and the question of responsibility becomes a real challenge (e.g. “*tourists should preserve environment and be responsible (...)developing tourism could be dangerous for biodiversity - it is necessary to manage the flow, educate visitors ... it is necessary to find a balance!*”)

4. FIRST CONCLUSIONS

The qualitative findings of the study yield valuable insights regarding the relationship between eco-system, biodiversity and wine tourism. Measuring and studying various aspects of biodiversity and wine tourism will be in the focus of the future quantitative study.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Altschwager T, Conduit, J. ,Bouzdine Chameeva, T. Goodman S. (2017). Branded Marketing Events: Engaging Australian and French Wine Consumers, *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*, 27 (2), pp.336 -357

Anđelić, S., Garabinović, D., Šormaz, G. (2019) Review of Wine and Wine Tourism presence in the Scientific Papers in Journals in the field of tourism”, *Economics of Agriculture*, 66 (4), pp.1055-1090

Baird, T., Hall, C. M., & Castka, P. (2018) New Zealand winegrowers attitudes and behaviours towards wine tourism and sustainable winegrowing. *Sustainability*, 10(3), 797.

Barnes, A.M., Wratten, S.D., Sandhu, H.S. (2010) Biodiversity in vineyards: worth the bother? *The Australian & New Zealand Grape grower & Winemaker*, 560, pp.25-33.

Barr, S., & Prillwitz, J. (2012). Green travellers? Exploring the spatial context of sustainable mobility styles. *Applied Geography*, 32(2), pp.798–809.

Bartocci, P., Fantozzi, P. and Fantozzi, F., 2017. Environmental impact of Sagrantino and Grechetto grapes cultivation for wine and vinegar production in central Italy. *J. Clean. Prod.* 140, pp.569–580.

Bruwer, J. & Lesschaeve. (2012). Wine tourists' destination image brand image perception and antecedents: conceptualization of a winescape framework, *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 29(7), pp.611-628

Christ, K.L., Burritt, R.L., 2013. Critical environmental concerns in wine production: an integrative review. *J. Clean. Prod.* 53, pp.232–242.

Gravari-Barbas, M. (2014). Winescapes : Tourisme et artialisation, entre le local et le global. *Cultur* année 8, N 3, Octobre 2014.

Jradi, S., Bouzdine-Chameeva, T., Delhomme, B., Jaegler, A. (2018) Tracking carbon footprint in French vineyards: a DEA performance assessment. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 192, pp.43–54.

Hunting, M., & Conroy, D. M. (2011). Marketing "sustainability": A new vision for promoting sustainable consumer lifestyles. *International Journal of Environmental, Cultural, Economic and Social Sustainability*, 7(4), pp.233–239.

Johnson R., Bruwer. J. (2007). Regional brand image and perceived wine quality: The consumer perspective. *International Journal of Wine Research*, 19 (4), pp.276-297

Montella, M.M. (2017). Wine tourism and sustainability: A review. *Sustainability*, 9(1), 113

Sigala, M., Robertson, R. (2018). Management and Marketing of wine tourism businesses: Theory, practice and cases. Palgrave.

Velikova, N., Charters, S., Cogan-Marie L. (2016). Consumer knowledge and preferences for wine amongst visitors to Burgundy. Proceedings of the AWBR conference, pp.154- 161.