

**New Wine Geographies on the United States-Mexico Border.  
A Study About the Sense of Place**

**Nuevas geografías vitivinícolas en la frontera México-Estados Unidos.  
Un estudio sobre el sentido del lugar**

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the cases of Sonoita-Elgin, Arizona, and Cananea, Sonora, as new wine geographies. To characterize these regions and show their potential, problems, and challenges, this article privileges the socio-anthropological study, the ethnographic method, and the analysis of the sense of place. The initial findings show first that the *sense of place* is not given by geography but by a set of specific interactions that conform the particular character of each region; and second, that the border context offers an opportunity for binational collaboration yet to be explored, which can be translated into competitive advantages and into alternative and innovative constructions of the sense of place. Due to the interpretative extent of this analysis and its focus on emerging production areas, it is expected to contribute to new discussions on the wine industry globally and, specifically, on the region of Sonora-Arizona in the U.S.-Mexico border region.

*Keywords:* 1. viticulture, 2. new geographies, 3. sense of place, 4. Cananea, 5. Sonoita.

RESUMEN

Este artículo aborda los casos de Sonoita-Elgin, Arizona, y Cananea, Sonora, como nuevas geografías vitivinícolas. Con el propósito de caracterizar dichas regiones y evidenciar sus potencialidades, sus problemáticas y sus retos, se privilegia el estudio socioantropológico, el método etnográfico y el análisis del sentido del lugar. Siguiendo esta línea, los hallazgos iniciales muestran primero que el *sentido del lugar* no viene dado por una geografía, sino por un conjunto de interacciones específicas, de donde se deriva el carácter particular de cada región; y segundo, que el contexto fronterizo ofrece una oportunidad de colaboración binacional aun por explorar, que puede traducirse en ventajas competitivas y en construcciones alternativas e innovadoras sobre el sentido del lugar. Por su alcance interpretativo, y por estar enfocado en zonas de producción emergentes, se espera contribuir a nuevos debates sobre la industria vitivinícola a nivel global y, en específico, en la región Sonora-Arizona, en la frontera México-E.E. U.U.

*Palabras clave:* 1. vitivinicultura, 2. nuevas geografías, 3. sentido del lugar, 4. Cananea, 5. Sonoita.

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## INTRODUCTION<sup>3</sup>

Wine industry entered a new stage of production and consumption in the XXI century; one of the characteristic phenomena is the expansion and diversification of viticulture toward regions and localities considered “non-traditional”. This has produced widely diverse local responses, to the extent that ideas such as terroir, know-hows, authenticity, or denominations of origin, among other aspects, are contested or reinterpreted. In this way, not only has the expansion of wine industry produced new relations and interpretations on the products’ quality and place of origin, but also has underscored the dilemmas of globalization, economic-political development and the evolution of practices and cultural meanings associated to the value and production of activities such as viticulture (Demossier, 2013, 2018; Harvey, 2002).

The wine production projects that started in the eighties in Sonoita, Arizona, US, and by the end of the 2000’s in Cananea, Sonora, Mexico, are two representative instances of these productive dynamics of change, linked to the creation of the so called “new wine geographies”, and “emerging or developing viticultural areas” (Banks & Overton, 2010). The new wine geographies (NWG) at the Mexico-US border inaugurate totally different activities from the rest of those carried out at their corresponding regions. They are a mix of creative experimental, adaptive and innovative influences from traditional and conservative ideas, with varying economic, cultural and social-impact potentialities. However, they also bring about complex problems that might inhibit their success expectations and local development impact. As pointed out by a number of authors, some of these are related to the role of the territory (Moran, 1993), understood in an anthropological sense as the “environment of life, action and thinking of a community, associated to identity construction processes” (Tizon, 1995, cited in Flores, 2007, p. 36); and also as to the role of local population and regional identity. Such problems may be addressed from what is called “the production of the place” (Appadurai, 1986, 1996; Escobar, 2001; Friedman, 1994; Ingold, 1993; Urry, 1995), the making of the place (Demossier, 2018; Ferguson, 1998; Rainer, 2016), valorization (Giménez, 1997, 1999), sense of place (Demossier, 2018; Massey, 1991; Paxson, 2010; Trubek & Bowen, 2008), or *embeddedness* (Bowen, 2010; Murdoch, Marsden & Banks, 2000; Winter, 2003).

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The reasoning behind these conjectures applied to the study of wine production is that since it is a non-standardized commodity (Appadurai, 1986), it depends on certain conditions that provide it with unique characteristics as product and activity. Its commercial management and connection to the place of origin give it a material and symbolical value difficult to find in other commodities. Thus, even though it is a product and economic activity that reproduces and expands at global level, its regional or local specificities imply marked differences.

With a view to producing novel information, we favored the analysis of the sense of place as one of the processes and strategies that take part of the construction of the production, distribution and consumption models, and also to examine the relationship with the local population and with the development of the industry and region. Following this analytical line and resorting to the ethnographic method, we compare the trajectories of the new viticulture settlements in Sonoita-Elgin, in Arizona, US, and Cananea, in Sonora, Mexico, in order to examine them as experiences with a positive impact on the regions, from which it is possible to explain and contrast the advance and challenges that appear at the time of introducing winemaking as a productive alternative, as a driver for development and as an initiative for the interaction of these border spaces. Since they are recently started endeavors, scarcely studied, this work is a first approach to such winemaking border area from the anthropological standpoint of the production of the place.

Wide aware that the complexity of such phenomenon needs even deeper relational and integral analyses, below we present four sections in which, firstly, the theoretical implications of the sense of place are exposed, while some experiences related to that process are presented; then, the NWG characteristics as a general analysis unit are explained and fieldwork design is exposed; later, particularities and preliminary findings entailed by the cases of Sonoita-Elgin and Cananea are analyzed; finally, the main conclusions are presented.

#### THE VOICE OF WINEMAKING POTENTIAL THROUGH THE SENSE OF PLACE AND PRODUCTIVE IDENTITY

The sense of place is an old concept, which in geography is used for understanding the time-space relation and to analyze how from this changing relationship the specificity and/or identity is configured within the context of each society (Massey, 1991). This way, the sense of place may be analyzed as a version of the identity(ies) that come(s) from its “locative function” (Giménez, 1997, p. 23).

According to Massey (1991), such concept has been often erroneously interpreted as an identity linked to the past, fixed: “a response to desire for fixity and for security of identity in the middle of all the movement and change” (p. 26); as a resource to face the apparent loss of control, of deterritorialization from globalization. However, as stated by the author, the interpretation above is inadequate because of the following reasons: in the first place, it

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does not fit the globalized present (Haesbaert, 2011) we live in. That is to say, the meaning of the place is not built looking backwardly and inwardly only, but also outwardly and toward the future, and where the global and local simultaneously combine configuring a “new process” (Haesbaert, 2011, p. 287). Secondly, there is not a unique and static identity for each space, but they are multiple and changeable. And in the third place, because, once again incorrectly, it is thought that the sense of place involves community, homogeneity and absence of conflict. On the contrary, it is noticed that the construction of place implies limits, borders, the confrontation between us and them, and also a power game between individuals and groups with various positions in society. By paying attention to these aspects, the interaction network that will characterize the production of the place grows in complexity, thereby, they depart from this romantic imaginary of the sense of place as a homogeneous space with no conflicts.

The ideas above are fundamental to analyze NWG as they underscore that the specificity of the place, upon which depends the (qualitative and quantitative) value of a winemaking region, will be conditioned not only on a geographically defined region (Moran, 1993), but also on the construction of sociocultural relationships at various scales:

[...] what gives a place its specificity is not some long interiorized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus. [...] And this in turn allows a sense of place which is extroverted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way the global and the local (Massey, 1991, p. 28).

Winemaking and the valorization and differentiation strategy on the basis of the sense of place configure in a complex manner and disclose that in order to develop an alternative out of these characteristics, identifying the potential is just the first step. As exposed by Appadurai (1996, pp. 180-181), the place, its potentiality and specificity are volatile, “locality is ephemeral unless hard and regular work is undertaken to produce and maintain its materiality” (Appadurai, 1996, pp. 180-181).

The above suggest that it is necessary to build a support, a structure that allows communicating, “to give voice to” (Raftery, 2017, p. 358) this potentiality; i.e., in the sense of materializing, representing and communicating the singularity of a certain viticultural region. Conventionally, this process has translated and materialized into a system of geographic indications and/or different versions of a productive identity that may be more instrumentally configured such as place marketing, or more symbolically such as the terroir discourse (Barham, 2003; Demossier, 2013); strategies which on their own hybridize and complement one another at different levels for each case:

[...] terroir is a kind of place marketing [...] but one that does not simply create a surface association with a place through a product in order to build sales. Instead, it reflects a concerted effort to literally create the social and economic basis for

claims of uniqueness and place reputation for quality or high value-added products” (Barham, 2007, p. 279, as cited in Paxson, 2010, p. 452).

In this work, productive identity is understood, for the case of winemaking and/or gastronomic industries, as the result of a valorization strategy supported on a collective representation effort to identify, codify and communicate the relationships between a certain industry or product and the specific attributes provided by the place where these are produced (Contreras and Gracia, 2005; Demossier, 2018; Prats, 1997).

According to Prats (1997), complex and collective versions of an identity almost always involve public power. Such power is represented by means of an institutional apparatus (national and/or state or regional) in charge of making the rules and keeping control of a regulatory system for such activity, as it is the case of denominations of origin. By and large, the local population on its own does not have the power to activate this sort of processes. For its part, economic power on its own is sometimes not what it seeks since the business is often satisfied "with much simpler symbolic constructions" (Prats, 1997, pp. 33-34).

Therefore, the sense of place is the result of the intersection of various sorts of relations between (natural, social and economic) capitals and from the interaction of local and global forces and the various actions carried out by actors involved in each case (Escobar, 2001). From this constellation of relationships may come various strategies and so, various results. In like manner, choosing one or another composition is also conditioned by the system of hegemonic values (Bourdieu, 1998; Herzfeld, 2004; Jung, 2014) that prevail at the time. That is, by the set of values and beliefs as regards the production and consumption of wine: from the classification of varieties in function of market reputation, or the conventional vinification practices, to the way various types of wines are consumed.

All in all, the sense of place is not the geographic characteristics of any given space nor are they a potential to discover or a story to tell. It is the result of hard work, as pointed out by Appadurai (1996), which sets into motion a production of the space and culture in which the transformation of nature and society expresses and intertwines (Swyngedouw, 1999). It is by means of this project that “the cultural exceptionality” (Prats, 1997, p. 23) of each project is configured, and allows us to interpret why very different results may come from a similar geography.

#### EXPERIENCES RELATED TO THE CONDITION OF THE PLACE. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PRODUCT, COMMUNITY AND DEVELOPMENT

A good deal of the experiences about wine business at global level has been gained under the premise that *the place* is a defining factor, critical at once, in strategies of profitability, valorization and acceptance of certain wine brands and winemaking regions.

In the academic sphere, the idea that the most successful models of wine business and gastronomy are those capable of effectively communicating and convincing about the actual existence of a link between product, place and community (Hillel, Belhassen &

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Shani, 2013). Hence, the importance of fostering winemaking in an comprehensive manner and transmitting its specificity and its *sense of place* (Paxson, 2010; Trubek & Bowen, 2008; Zhao, 2005). Should this not be fulfilled, the risk of creating a superficial product is pointed out, which poses a barrier for viticulture development and diversification. A number of international experiences evince that “the place”, from the physical standpoint, is just one of the elements in such development; other key factors are social capital, territory and community.

Research works such as Hira and Swartz's (2014) in California; De Marchi and Grandinetti's (2016) in Italy; Rainer's (2016) in Argentina, and Fernández, Vaillant, Lafuente and Moreno (2017) for Spain, concur that the aspects that provide the best competitive advantages are related to territorial specificity, social capital and the entrepreneurship of certain stakeholders. Whereas for countries less well-known in the winemaking sector, works such as those by Hillel et al., (2013) in Israel; Banks, Klinsrisuk, Dilokwanich, and Stupples (2013) in Thailand; Schmidt, Macchione and Fowler de Ávila (2014) for the winemaking region *Vale Dos Vinhedos* in Brazil; and, Bowen (2010) for the case of tequila industry in Mexico, also underline other important factors for the production of the place, namely: sense of community, territorial belonging, society involvement, and the interaction and synergy with the local population.

From the experiences above it is deduced that the connection between product, place and community implies “set jointly into motion three sorts of actions: open the region to the world, cultivate its historic and cultural specificity, and finally, stimulate the inhabitants' participation” (Giménez, 1999, p. 52). To sum up, linking these productive and economic projects with integral collective developmental strategies

In this sense, winemaking industry is considered to have a great potential for the communities' economic development; indeed, positive impacts and improvements in certain development indicators for some cases cannot be denied. In Mexico, instances are Ensenada and Valle de Guadalupe. These places have attained fast positioning at national and international levels due to collective, creative and innovative initiatives such as the gastronomic movement *BajaMed* or UNESCO's Creative Cities of Gastronomy, which the city of Ensenada belongs to as of 2015.<sup>4</sup>

In Baja California, gastronomy, wine and craft beer industry account for such harnessing of the local resources, collective learning, dissemination of know-hows, diversification of activities on the basis of tourism, viticulture and gastronomy, and ultimately, the reinvention capacity of a region on the basis of incorporating new productive activities. However, due to the multidimensional nature of this phenomenon, there are no sufficient data to clearly ascertain the actual effect of actions linked to the winemaking sector on the local development and wellbeing neither for Ensenada nor the viticulture industry at large (Alderete, 2014).

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<sup>4</sup> Tucson has been part of the network of Creative Cities of Gastronomy since 2015.

To sum up, different experiences allow noticing, on the one side, that each context produces a specific response; and on the other, that one of the greatest challenges is the intersection of the place, entrepreneurial action and reaction and involvement of the local population. As analyzed in the following sections, the cases of Sonoita-Elgin and Cananea enable us to study and interpret these relations.

#### NEW WINE GEOGRAPHIES AS PROTAGONISTS OF A NEW EXPANSION PHASE OF WINE INDUSTRY

The new expansion phase of wine industry comes with the appearance of production spaces where winemaking activity is recent or emerging (under experimentation, expansion and development) and where the link and connection to the place of production is not only based on tradition, history, past or autochthony of the vine growing culture, but on the mixture of various sorts of influences (Banks & Overton, 2010; Paxson, 2010). Some of these come from the adaptation of the productive characteristics proper to the place, on one side, to the recent changes in wine markets and the specific demand at various levels (local, domestic and international); while on the other, as a consequence of adapting and reinterpreting hegemonic ideas as regards production and consumption that come from the old and new world of wine. All of these characteristics make us identify, justify and state what we call, together with other authors, “new wine geographies” or “emergent viticultural areas” (Banks *et al.*, 2013; Banks & Overton, 2010).

In the present paper, the idea of new wine geographies follows the same logic put forward by regional studies with the category “new geographic regions” (Paasi, 2002). A flexible category is proposed with a view to reinterpreting “the place” (and the identities associated to it) from a critical standpoint within a context; that is to say, the place not as something that is given but as a process defined “in relation to (localized) human (intersubjective) experience” (Tuan, 1975, cited in Paasi, 2002, p. 806). The contextualized conception of the *place* in this category proposition matches therefore with the theoretical stance that supports the analysis of the sense of place.

Countries such as China, India, Thailand, Brazil, Peru and Mexico, among others, are considered NWG; but also new regions or microregions which in spite of being in countries with consolidated wine industries have been recently developed.

Presently, wine industry has expanded at various levels (regional, national, international). This way, in each country there are viticultural regions and microregions whose development has taken place in very diverse socioeconomic, political, historic and temporal conditions. As a consequence, it is difficult to classify and analyze the various winemaking spaces in each country in one single category such as that of New/Old/Third world of wine; this last category, the third world of wine, has been associated to emergent producing countries with “low levels of economic development” (Buchanan, 1964, as cited in Banks & Overton, 2010, p. 67). The two cases analyzed in this work disclose the inaccuracy of categories as those. Arizona is in the *new world of wine*, though, its

incorporation into the sector is very recent, if we compare it, for example, with California. Similarly, Sonora, in Mexico, experiences the development of wine industry later than regions such as Baja California, Queretaro or Coahuila. Owing to this, in the present analysis a first approach to these spaces is made from the notion of NWG.

Despite lacking production background, low representation, reduced noticeability at national and international level, and the difficult context of competence of the global wine market, NWG have a competitive advantage. i.e., the possibility to grow, innovate and experiment (Banks *et al.*, 2013; Banks & Overton, 2010).

As a set, these new viticultural scenarios partially break with the classic hegemonic paradigm of new / old world of wine. In this way, these spaces make it clear that in wine industry not only the traditionally known protagonist regions participate, but also new actors and production places previously unknown come into play and have started to decentralize and re-signify winemaking.

### ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELDWORK

The (relational, complex and exploratory) theoretical positioning explained in the previous sections need flexible analytical tools that allow studying the phenomenon in the context of emergence, experimentation and development of NWG. It is because of this that for the analysis of the two selected cases, the qualitative/critical paradigm, the interpretational approach and the ethnographic method are applied. An intentional sampling was carried out (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007) by means of which key informants were selected according to their involvement and function (leaders, promoters/disseminators, legitimizers, audiences) in the viticultural sector (Byrkjeflot, Pedersen & Svejenova, 2013); and according to their internal or external participation in such sector (Christensen, Kenney & Patton, 2015).

Two study areas were selected, Sonoita-Elgin, in Arizona, US, and Cananea, in Sonora, Mexico. A comparative study is proposed because of three reasons: one, because of its relevance when discussing the NWG category (as described in the previous section). Second, because of the common elements that both cases share, which will be explained later in the text. Finally, three, because it offers the possibility of making a broader description, a more dynamical study and with a wider scope of the observed phenomena. This is because in Cananea there is only one established winery and two projects under development; while in Sonoita-Elgin, we found 15 wineries and some other projects in the making.

In addition to comparing, for this study, observation and interviews were used as techniques proper to the ethnographic method, and other related such as discourse analysis (printed press and social media). Fieldwork was carried out from April 2018 to March



2020<sup>5</sup> with regular visits to both viticultural spaces. In this period, 32 semi-structured interviews in Spanish and English were held with various key actors<sup>6</sup> involved in production, commercialization and promotion of this activity. We focused on these actors because they define, communicate and foster winemaking in the first place (Boisier, 2009; Byrkjeflot et al., 2013).

In like manner, interviews are contrasted with information from observations (specifically focusing on the interactions between producers and various audiences and/or consumers) in places such as tasting rooms in Sonoita-Elgin; organized wine tastings and pairing-dinners in Hermosillo; celebrations at the harvest festival in Cananea (2018 and 2019); and a number of festivals such as VinoFest (2018, 2019, 2020),<sup>7</sup> in San Carlos, Sonora, Mexico, or Madero 501,<sup>8</sup> held in Hermosillo, Sonora, among other events.

These are some of the main characteristics of the methodological design applied in this work in order to analytically emphasize and approach three aspects. In the first place, the contextualization of the cases because, as theoretically justified, for the analysis of the sense of the place context is essential. Secondly, the interpretation of the way such context conditions the specificity of each winemaking area. And thirdly, the reflection on the differences and the possibilities for interaction between these two trans-border areas.

Although still under development,<sup>9</sup> the methodological strategy hereby presented is expected to be useful for future research works by means of which continue adding cases on the same research line on NWG and the construction of the sense of place.

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<sup>5</sup> Fieldwork was interrupted in March 2020 because of the border closing and mobility restrictions imposed by the COVID19 pandemic.

<sup>6</sup> The information gathered in the interviews with key actors and informants is presented anonymously due to ethical reasons, right to privacy, confidentiality and protection of the data shared in personal communications between the interviewer and informants.

<sup>7</sup> A festival organized as of 2018 by Commission for Tourism Promotion of the state of Sonora; in 2019, it was supported by Committee for Wine Promotion of Baja California. This event gathers national and international winemakers as well as restaurateurs; conferences, expositions and tastings of the wines and local gastronomy are featured.

<sup>8</sup> Festival organized by *Patronato del Parque Madero*, Hermosillo, Sonora, *Cofradía Centenario HMO*, and *Salud Fraternal Hermosillo*. Its first and only edition so far, 2019, featured tastings of wine, mezcal, tequila and craft beer by national and international producers. In this case, Callaghan Vineyards from Sonoita-Elgin, Arizona, and Uvas de Altura winery from Cananea, Sonora.

<sup>9</sup> According to the methodologic strategy, the end results are to be discussed under the categories “specificity, identification, representation and interaction”, which integrate into the dimension of territory and the analytical standpoint of the sense of place. In this line, the present work is a first step to approach and address the results.

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CANANEA, SONORA AND SONOITA-ELGIN, ARIZONA AS NWG:  
THE SPECIFIC AND COMMON AND POSSIBILITIES FOR  
INTERACTION

The regions of Cananea, Sonora, Mexico, and Sonoita-Elgin, Arizona, United States, are respectively located at the northern and southern borders of these countries. In Sonoita, the work of a community and region that ventured the introduction of a totally new production function for the territory in the eighties with a positive impact for the community is now observable. Thirty years later, one hundred miles away and sharing proximity to the border, Cananea lives an experience with similar characteristics.

*Sonoita-Elgin, Arizona*

In Sonoita, winemaking industry reappears in the 1970's under a project of the University of Arizona conducted by Dr. Gordon Dutt, soil scientist specialist. The project intended to find alternative crops with low water consumption and high added value; funded by the government and the university, a study was carried out (Mielke, Dutt, Hughes, Wolfe, Loeffler, Gomez, Bryant, Watson & Schick, 1980) with a view to analyzing its viability in various places in Arizona, and also Colorado, New Mexico and Utah. In 1973, after the first positive results of the study, the first experimental vineyard in Sonoita is established. The plantation is located in Babacomari ranch, owned by Blake Brophy who informed Dr. Dutt about the existence of abandoned vineyards, the heritage of the Jesuit and Franciscan missions, *vitis vinifera* of the variety known as mission grapes (Informant # 1, personal communication, February 18, 2020). In 1974, Dr. Dutt founded the first winery in Sonoita-Elgin Valley, Sonoita Vineyards, where nowadays, Lori Reynolds, his granddaughter, is in charge of production.

In 1984, the Sonoita-Elgin valley was included in AVA (American Viticultural Areas)<sup>10</sup> geographic indication system, ever since it has been gaining discreet national and international recognition and noticeable local development; presently, it has 15 established wineries and some projects in planning stages.

The contribution of Sonoita-Elgin to national and international wine markets is limited, for in the US, 90% of this product is made in California (Rendleman, Hoemmen, Altman, Taylor, Moon and Smith, 2016).

Most of them are small family business (under 10 hectares on average), in which the proprietors are involved in all the tasks, from viticulture and winemaking to promotion and commercialization of the product. One of the geo-climatic elements to underscore about this winemaking area is its altitude, 1500 m.a.s.l., it is among Santa Rita, Huachuca, Whetstone Mountains and Canelo Hills. Latitude, the temperature swing between day and

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<sup>10</sup> Sonoita-Elgin valley was the first to incorporate this activity, which has expanded toward Arizona; at present, these areas are recognized as AVA: Sonoita-Elgin, and Willcox.

night, a consequence of its location, and the presence of monsoons from July to September provide this area with the singular conditions for this cultivation. As regards the types of grapes, they have a wide variety, among which the following can be mentioned: sauvignon blanc, cabernet sauvignon, syrah, malbec, petite sirah, tannat, merlot, pinot noir, sangiovese and mission, among others.

Furthermore, looking at the wine industry in Sonoita-Elgin (AVA) allows noticing a significant impact on the development of the local population and the region as well. As explained in the work by Cubillas, Mars, Torres and Sias (2017), 95 percent of the wine produced in the area is directly sold by the producers; this becomes a positive effect on the local market, economy and the empowerment of these rural communities. The direct relationship with producers conveys a certain feeling of community; as described in Arizona Wine Country, “local business to produce a delicious product for the community” (Arizona Wine Country Sonoita and Elgin, 2018, p. 8).

Likewise, a different production is perceived beforehand, or as they define it “a free spirit production” (The Travel Podcast, 2020). That is to say, in Sonoita winemakers do not focus on (and constrained by) a single style and/or variety, as defined by classic production models, but on many varieties and styles. Expressions such as the following give an account of this region versatility: “wines from grapes representing all regions of the world” (retrieved from local newspaper Arizona Wine Country Sonoita and Elgin, 2018, p. 8). Certain originality and diversity in the products (wine, brandy, liquors, craft beer, cider) and their presentations is noticed as well; in the tasting rooms we can find from the simplicity of the landscape or decorative elements from Mexican culture to products adapted to new consumption scenarios such as the canned sparkling rosé wines from Dos Cabezas WineWorks, marketed on social media with the ingenious hashtag “*I Pink therefore I can*” (Dos Cabezas, 2017).

The foregoing seems to indicate it is a viticultural area where local entrepreneurship and creativity come crucially into play and where production is flexible. That is to say, winemaking is not subject to fixed patterns or production rules as it is the case in other countries (mainly in Europe).

### *Cananea, Sonora*

For their part, the particularities for the case of Sonora, with shorter time and less experience in the market, up to the present have a much more exploratory and experimental nature. The idea of making a contrasting analysis of Cananea and Sonoita regions initially sends us to the 2008 recognition report by *Fundación Sonora para la Innovación* [Sonora Foundation for Innovations], the organization that prepares the evaluation study of the viticultural growing conditions in Cananea. The report states that one of the factors that motivated the reconsideration of winemaking feasibility in Sonora – which in virtue of its desert condition had been classified in previous studies as unfit for vineyards- was the fact that experiences in places with similar geo-climatic characteristics

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such as Arizona, demonstrated otherwise. Moreover, from the beginning of the project various government agents explicitly expressed their interest of including Arizona in the proposal for tourist and cultural development that accompanied the viticultural sector:

The strategic location of Sonora and the alliance with Arizona to consolidate an economic megaregion generates the ideal conditions to establish a route beyond wine and mining (Secretaría de Economía del Gobierno del Estado de Sonora, 2016, par.1).

Although Sonora has been the main table grape grower in the country for several decades (Sagarpa, 2018), Cananea enters into the winemaking sector very recently, in 2008. The project was devised as part of a strategy with public support<sup>11</sup> which later would consolidate as a firm by means of private investment from a group of entrepreneurs from Sonora. This initiative originally sought projects by means of which to foster regional economic development. After assessing the feasibility to grow grape vines (for vinification) in various areas in the state, *Fundación Sonora* found out that Cananea had geo-climatic characteristics suitable for the cultivation of grape vines and identified that the region had potential as a new viticulture hub (Susarrey and Moreno, 2010).

In this way, the project begins with an experimental plantation of 30 grape varieties on 27 hectares in Zaragoza ejido, in the outskirts of the municipality of Cananea, heading toward the border town of Naco. The varieties with the best adaption were selected: malbec, grenache, carignan, syrah, touriga nacional, petit verdot, carmenere, tempranillo, cabernet sauvignon, mourvedre, chardonnay and verdejo. The firm in charge of cultivation and production of wine took the name *Uvas de Altura*, and its wines are called *Cuatro Sierras*, in reference to the area altitude –as in the case of Sonoita- located at more than 1400 m.a.s.l., and its mountainous location amidst Sierra Vista (Huachuca, Arizona), San José, Los Ajos and La Mariquita.

The first commercial vintage took place in 2015, and despite the incipient incorporation of the firm (*Uvas de Altura*) at regional and national level,<sup>12</sup> it has managed to successfully boost the project. The above is demonstrated by its fast growth in production and sales. The data gathered in the interviews point at a production of 28 000 bottles in 2015, while this figure had increased threefold by 2019. Production is marketed mainly under the Cuatro Sierras label, though a small part is destined for wholesale and national distribution with additional brands produced for renowned supermarket chains. All of this, according to its promoters, it is expected that viticultural continues growing and expanding toward the municipalities of Naco and Santa Cruz, Sonora, which have similar geographical

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<sup>11</sup> In the earliest phases of the project assessment and validation via applicable funds both from *Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología* (CONACYT), and the Secretariat of Economy of the State of Sonora; and later, with state and/or municipal support to host harvest festival celebrations in Cananea and other initiatives such as the construction of *Casa del Vino* [Wine House] (a venue to host events and tastings).

<sup>12</sup> There is also a small vineyard in the municipality of Ures, *Vinos Giottonini*, a project personally started by Francisco Salazar Giottonini.

conditions and greater water availability. In point of fact, water is a limited resource in Cananea, since in this locality is Buena Vista del Cobre mine, one of the largest in the world, with large water requirements.

It is worth mentioning as well the repercussion of the winemaking initiative as regards the communities where it is set up. According to our informants in the production team, the firm Uvas de Altura has produced 20 permanent jobs and up to 160 seasonal posts. In this sense, fostering viticulture implies an alternative to mining industry, the main economic activity in Cananea; an employment source for the ejido rural areas where the vineyard is, and also for other localities nearby.

Among the potentialities and future plans initially presented by the promoters of the Cananea project, there was the idea of creating a binational wine route between Sonora and Arizona. In the following quotations it is verified how in the political discourse of various actors that support the winemaking initiative, the idea of creating a binational route is transmitted; this with the intention of promoting regional development in various spheres:

We project the creation of a winemaking area such as those in Guadalupe or Apple Valley with all the tourist aspects and having an international wine route together with Arizona producers (Dossier Político, 2014a, par. 6).

With this project we begin what in the future will be the Sonora-Arizona Wine Route intending to potentiate this area as a great attraction for wine connoisseurs (Dossier Político, 2014b, par. 9).

The initiative of creating a binational wine route has gained interest in the government sphere and has been added to one of the strategic objectives conceived slightly more than two decades ago by Comisión Sonora-Arizona; this is, building up an economic megaregion between these two countries. As a part of this trans-border alliance, in this sort of proposals the intention of collaborating with cities such as Sierra Vista and Bisbee (both in Arizona) has been put forward. Though, despite the interest expressed by the various political actors of the Sonora region, there are no current data to demonstrate that a clear bi-nationally articulated action is being undertaken. The above is justified if we bear in mind that wine production in Cananea is still at an incipient stage, thereby this sort of proposals seems to be a future project.

Thus, heeding the characteristics exposed in the studied cases, we found that the adjoining border condition of these two NWG has a series of common points and fundamental comparative and competitive advantages such as proximity, the closest wine making region is Sonoita-Elgin, Arizona, which is about 100 miles away; innovation, being pioneers in the introduction of winemaking into regions where mining and cattle raising have fundamentally prevailed; visibility, even if both places are deemed secondary, or peripheral for the global wine industry, at local level they entail a new image and the revitalization of the rural space; development, as long as winemaking seems to be an alternative for the communities' empowering and growth; flexibility, for at least, so far, in Cananea and Sonoita, the production is carried out on the basis of different varieties and

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distinct styles; and last but not least, the possibility of binational collaboration in economic, tourist and sociocultural projects.

These elements may partly characterize and structure some results, which in spite of being incipient seem to be at hand.

#### FROM DISCOURSE TO PRACTICE: DIFFERENCES AND CONDITIONS FOR WINEMAKING IN SONORA-ARIZONA

Projects associated to the sociocultural production of activities that support winemaking are accompanied by a discourse mainly fostered by political actors. The discourse has as a goal to encourage the local and regional population to become part of this cultural and economic endeavor. In this way, discourses, as the one mentioned in relation to the creation of a binational wine route between Arizona and Sonora, are partly supported on the reproduction of an imaginary that has “inventing and projecting possible futures” as a function (Giménez, 2007, p. 250); on occasion, far from the possibilities and practices of the actual context.

In this sense, it is observed as indicated by Ingold (1993) that in the face of the process, the interpretation of the final product of a certain activity is privileged; owing to this, the reflection in this paper has insisted on the importance of the analysis of the sense and production of place. With this, a complete comprehension of the time-space of each project is sought so that the particularities of the context that produce it and make it possible may be interpreted and analyzed.

So, when the dependence and conditionings each initiative is subject to within a determinate context are pointed out, we refer to the dependence on natural and socioeconomic resources, on the one side; while on the other, to a series of conditions given by the specific time-space wherein the creators (winemakers and other sector stakeholders) are placed regarding a given epoch, codes, relationship with society, and with consumers and their tastes and demands (Bourdieu, 1998). Therefore, the response and positioning of producers and consumers before this particular situation will condition the results. In this way, if previously the common aspects were pointed out, following some differences and particularities of each case will be analyzed.

On the basis of information gathered in the field, Cananea has the following general characteristics: a project born from the association of a set of entrepreneurs from Sonora; a 25-hectare field and prospective expansion; a production style that initially leaned toward red wines aged in oak barrels, but which nowadays includes young (red and white) wines; a price range between 250 and 550 MXN; local, state and national distribution, gradually growing.

Although still diffuse, this profile seems to make sense if we compare it with the data we retrieved from the study by *Instituto de Comercio Exterior (ICEX)*, Spain, about

exportation and investments,<sup>13</sup> which analyzes the wine market in Mexico. The report points out as a relevant characteristic that it is a sector where national production has rapidly grown in recent years. This quick growth comes from a market opportunity, since domestic wine only covers 30 percent of the demand, and consumption increases. In spite of this increment, wine in Mexico is still scarcely consumed at household and domestic level. Among the most purchased wines, there are red –61.4% (Amo, 2018, p. 8)– with prices around 200 MNX, an intermediate price segment where “mainly imported brands are comprised, with the exception of some Mexican wines such as *Domecq* and *La Cetto (sic)*” (Amo, 2018, p. 28).

These data allow us to deduct that wine made in Mexico, despite its very variable prices, is still inaccessible for a good part of the Mexican population, which restricts its inclusion in domestic consumption. However, this same report states that production and consumption patterns are changing in Mexico because of the incorporation “of a younger, more dynamical population sector [...] and women” (Amo, 2018, p. 6).

At least for the case of Sonora, such information is verified by means of participant observation in various wine events. Even if the growing interest in integrating this “young and dynamical population sector” is noticed, the idea of exclusivity, the presence of more men than women, and more adults than younger consumers still prevail in these events. It is worth mentioning that Mexico has a high young population, with a middle class on the rise; this way, it may be expectable –as concluded in the ICEX study– “the introduction of wines affordable by anyone with an excellent quality-price ratio” (Girón, 2014, p. 28).

This situation will not prevent wineries from having more than one wine line with higher prices, a common practice in the industry. Covarrubias and Thach (2015) suggest that such business opportunity needs actions aimed at drawing Mexican wine and consumers closer and making the most of the “healthy national pride and growing interest in buying local foods and products should also assist the Mexican wine industry” (Covarrubias & Thach, 2015, p. 114). The national campaign launched in 2018 called *Todos unidos por el vino mexicano* [Together in favor of Mexican wine] (Reyes, 2018), with goals such as those pursued by *Consejo Mexicano Vitivinícola* [Viticultural Mexican Council], i.e., by 2028, five out of 10 bottles consumed in the country are Mexican, demonstrates that there is awareness of this limitation, that local consumption is promoted and, at a broader level, that the panorama of winemaking in Mexico is changing.

For its part, Sonoita-Elgin has a local, flexible and creative production, which is the result of mostly familial projects. On average, wineries are small, between 4 and 8 hectares. They have a heterogeneous consumer profile, heterogeneous styles of production, and a local sales business model. This business model, local, small, accessible and family-owned and operated, makes it possible that producers and consumers communicate directly; this relationship turns into a fundamental characteristic of this winemaking region.

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<sup>13</sup> The corresponding data have been verified against 2014 and 2018 reports.

The work by Cubillas *et al.* (2017) analyzes wine industry in Sonoita-Elgin from the concept of value co-creation. The study reveals that such model makes tourists and the general public describe their experiences regarding this area as “down-to-earth”, “approachable”, and “honest” (Cubillas *et al.*, 2017, p. 42). This description of the experience could not agree more with the declarations of one of our key informants, a winemaker in Sonoita-Elgin, when she was asked “what is the secret?” for success and acceptance by the public in this area, she answers the following:

I call it little mom and pop’s shops. That’s honestly all we are...I think is the secret of good wine and a good atmosphere. Nobody here is pretentious, we are all just down to earth kind of people, we are farmers, this is what we produce, like it or leave it, and people like that, they like to come out, they like to talk to the owners, and in most parts, we are the ones behind the bar, I think that’s what people like and what people hang on to. It’s kind of like home, we are inviting you into our house to drink with us (Informant # 1, personal communication, February 18, 2020).

Sharing knowledge and experiences directly helps to demystifying this product “unmasking the sophistication of wine consumption” (Cubillas *et al.*, 2017, p. 48). Moreover, such demystification is also transmitted in the way that wineries and their products are presented.

All in all, it is noticed that, in like manner, this viticultural area breaks with the conservative style and code, occasionally classist (Bourdieu, 2010), that we often find in other areas or environments of wine production and consumption. Though, it is also deduced from observation and interviews that owners and producers are open to the possibility to grow; that each winery has a different personality; and, that not all the producers agree on the same production and business model. That is to say, as mentioned at the beginning of the article, an apparent sense of community between producers and consumers is perceived, therefore, a connection between the product, place and local population; however, it is also evident that in the process of construction and development of this NWG there are differences, disagreements, problems and internal conflicts.

Finally, it is convenient to clarify that for both cases (Sonoita-Elgin and Cananea), in the first place, this is a general characterization part of the earliest research results, which need to be concreted in future works. Second, it only reflects what we presently observed (aware of the difference in time in the inception of these two projects), which does not mean these dynamics will remain immovable; that is to say, the time-space interaction is changeable, particularly if we consider they are NWG in experimentation, growth and development phase.

What is intended with this comparative analysis is to evince that two spaces with similar geo-climatic characteristics (and other things in common previously explained) may give rise to two viticultural regions with different profiles as regards production and consumption. With this, the premises to verify what was pointed out at the beginning of this work are established: 1) the variability of each viticultural region depends on the



production process of the place, wherein, as demonstrated, the various stakeholders' interests and the stance of producers and consumers about a determined epoch are determinant; 2) the intersection between the place, entrepreneurial action and response and involvement of the local population is fundamental in the process of differentiation, diversification and development of this activity; therefore, 3) each context will produce a specific response.

Considering the coincidences and divergences observed, Cananea and Sonoita-Elgin have independently and successfully managed to introduce a new productive function and put an end to the (national and international) skepticism that Sonora and Arizona cannot produce wine and demonstrate its quality. In this sense, one of our key informants, a winemaker in Sonoita-Elgin, pointed out the initial mistrust faced by the forerunner of the viticultural endeavor in the state of Arizona: "A lot of people were looking at him like he was a crazy person because you know is Arizona, people think of cactus, cowboys, rattle snakes" (Informant # 1, personal communication, February 18, 2020). That same skepticism is noticed in the case of Sonora.

The incorporation of winemaking industry in Sonora and Arizona has also unleashed a series of positive effects for the places where they settle. At once, these new wine geographies incorporate new actors into the wine sector at global scale. Therefore, the differences found were not considered negative; on the contrary, they suggest that in order to collaborate, there has to be a transition from the ephemeral, an idea and a discourse, to the material. This means dialogue between producers and knowledge interchange. To do so, in the future, there has to be reflection on the convenience of harnessing the proximity and common points in these two zones and foster (micro)interactions with which to establish the basis for future (macro)projects such as a binational route. In this sense, the greatest potential border regions have is that above things they are relational spaces (Peña, 2017) in which to share dialogue and contrast ideas, values and practices, in this case regarding viticulture and winemaking.

## CONCLUSIONS

As observed in this work, the recent expansion and growth of wine industry at global level has produced the emergence of NWG in which widely diverse local answers are offered. In this way, according to Banks and Overton (2010) and Banks *et al.*, (2013), we cannot analyze the global development of wine industry as a homogeneous activity that solely depends on geographic adaption. Conversely, what is observed is a deeply differenced development, where the context and the interactions in it between producers/activity/local population become some of the aspects that define the configuration of the specificity of each viticultural region.

Cananea, Sonora, and Sonoita-Elgin, Arizona, as study units in the broader NWG category are relevant for they contribute to elaborate alternative interpretations about the

creation of the sense of place. In other words, as pointed out by Massey (1991), they are experiences that suggest not mistaking identity and sense of place are a construction only in the old world with hundreds of years of tradition, but there exists the possibility of putting forward alternative visions and multiple identities proper to heterogeneous spaces as the trans-border one. Certainly, the connection between viticulture, new geographies and the process of creation of the sense of place offers the chance of creating something innovative, reinventing the territory, activating reterritorialization processes (Flores, 2007), (re)locating and to give a region a new image and visibility (Urry, 1995). Albeit, as mentioned at the beginning, the existence of such potentiality is only the first step (Appadurai, 1996). In their inception and development phase, Cananea and Sonoita started to activate that sort of phenomena, though with the data gathered so far we are not able to advance the effects of their materialization nor their actual repercussion on local development.

Besides, these viticultural spaces are located as new wine geographies in an intersection between the local and the global, and between the transnational and the border as well. This scenario speaks not only of sharing the same geography and productive activity, but also indirectly offers a space to examine the possibilities for interaction between these places. Moving forward in that direction will require the design of future lines of analysis that promote communication networks (Lara, 2017), learning, creativity and innovation (Amin, 2008) and also to intelligently harness the asymmetries (Wong, 2005); likewise, cultural studies by means of which to account thoroughly for the different, the antagonistic, the common and the specific (Giménez, 2010) of the winemaking industry in both countries.

Here, we have dealt with the study of wine and viticulture as a commodity and cultural product, remarking the importance of paying attention to the sociocultural and contextual particularities of each locality. Even with limitations, under this approach it is possible to offer explanations maybe better integrated and less partial as regards who we are as region and society, how we difference and valorize one another; questions which on their own are and have been central analysis topics in recent interpretations of social changes.

Translation: Luis Cejudo-Espinoza

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