EchoGéo

23 | 2013

Entre l'ancien et le nouveau monde. La transcendance
du lieu et de l'espace en géographie vinicole
contemporaine

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Introduction

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Édition électronique

URL : <https://journals.openedition.org/echogeo/13380>

DOI : 10.4000/echogeo.13380

ISSN : 1963-1197

Éditeur

Pôle de recherche pour l'organisation et la diffusion de l'information géographique (CNRS UMR 8586)

Référence électronique

Glenn Banks, « Between Old Worlds and the New? Transcending place and space in the contemporary Geography of Wine.

Introduction », *EchoGéo* [En ligne], 23 | 2013, mis en ligne le 05 juin 2013, consulté le 11 août 2021.

URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/echogeo/13380> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/echogeo.13380>

Ce document a été généré automatiquement le 11 août 2021.

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Between Old Worlds and the New? Transcending place and space in the contemporary Geography of Wine. Introduction

Glenn Banks

- 1 The global wine industry has been dramatically transformed over the past two decades. Systematic overproduction in parts of both the 'Old' and 'New' world industries, the entry of new producers and the extension of viticulture into new regions, climate change, shifting patterns of consumption and trade, and changing regimes of capital and regulation have all fundamentally reshaped the nature and geography of the wine industry. Apparently contradictory trends of large-scale plantings and corporate restructurings sit alongside the rapid proliferation of small-scale producers and an increasingly differentiated range of products. These changing patterns and processes (highlighted in part in table 1 of the Banks *et al* paper in this Special Issue; see also Overton *et al*, 2012) are inherently geographic – they both derive from and shape territories, economies, landscapes and communities. Place remains a central constant in these transformations, around which revolve reconstructions of the old and the new, evolving tradition and shifting modernities that alter the configuration of actors, networks and processes within particular sites in the global wine industry.
- 2 Responses by the industry, and by national governments, to these new realities have varied markedly, and the resulting geography of wine is marked by diversity and distinction, in terms of production arrangements and technologies, cultural meanings and understandings, and the resulting landscapes and communities. Places as far apart as Bordeaux or Burgundy in France, the Riverina in Australia, Mendoza in Argentina and Khao Yai in Thailand have been affected differentially by these processes. A focus on patterns and processes at the global level, then, conceals significant and diversified local and national transformations, resulting in the specific physical characteristics of

places and landscapes becoming embedded in and dependent on increasing differentiated global markets and sets of local preferences (Hayward and Lewis, 2008).

- 3 In key markets, the New World has cut into the traditional share of the Old World, and along with decreasing domestic consumption, has once again placed traditional wine producing areas of France and Italy under increasing stress, with reductions in the areas under vine, and flow on economic and social effects on communities and regions. The 'New World' is not immune from change either, with significant overproduction (driven by widespread planting in the last two decades) in many places driving down prices and affecting the viability of the industry in places New Zealand, Australia and South Africa. And the last decade has also seen the rapid growth of wine production in even 'Newer' emerging wine countries (China, India, Thailand, Brazil, for example etc). The globalisation of wine has hence contributed in a variety of ways to the regular cycles of growth and crisis in the industry, in places (and at times) providing new outlets for overproduction, and at other times attenuating the effects of these cycles. One specific example of these global influences is the contest between grape variety ("cépage") and various forms of protection of the place of origin ("appellation d'origine contrôlée" in France, see Barham, 2003; Kelly, 2007, or the 'New World', see Banks and Sharpe, 2006, Overton and Heitger, 2008), a battle that is often glossed as being a difference between the 'New' and 'Old' worlds of wine, but in fact is occurring within each of these 'worlds' (see Banks and Overton, 2010; Barker, 2004; Lewis *et al*, 2002 and Moran, 1993 for comparative studies across these 'worlds').
- 4 Given Geography's breadth of enquiry, from cultural attachments and influences, economic and social changes, to the dynamics of soils and slopes, along with our unique focus on processes and activities across scales – from local place-based study through regional and national boundaries to global processes and forces – the discipline is uniquely placed to contribute integrative understandings of the wine industry as it evolves and changes (Dougherty, 2012).
- 5 The papers in this special issue engage with a number of these themes, and highlight the geographic diversity of responses to and drivers of many of these social, economic, physical and cultural processes. To open with an account from the 'Old World', and indeed the locus of much of the repute and mystique that traditionally marked out the industry, Célérier discusses the initiation of formal organic wine production in Bordeaux and notes the challenges of introducing new philosophies and techniques of production into a filière or territorial complex where the production model is so strongly evolved and entrenched. While organic and biodynamic models have been developed in other parts of the world (and indeed in other parts of France) as a marker of quality, in Bordeaux there is a long-established tradition of quality production that sees little relevance of enhancing its appeal through attachment to the organic movement: place matters in terms of the differential adoption of specific quality models.
- 6 Quality is a theme that also runs through other papers as well. Prince and Lewis for example, focus their paper on the way in which a discursive field has developed around the notion of quality in the New Zealand wine industry. New Zealand wines command the highest average value of any in the important British market, and while not uncontested within the industry, the notion of 'quality' has come to act as a form of governmentality that works by both feeding off and protecting the collective rents that the industry has been able to generate from its attachment to the quality designation.

- 7 The relationship between the notion of quality in the global wine economy and changing local circumstances is also a strong theme in the paper by Dellier *et al* on the transformations of the South African wine industry in the post-apartheid era. The profound shifts in social and political conditions in South Africa around post-apartheid equity and redistribution have coincided with a global, and increasing domestic, preference for quality wine production, and the expansion of the industry into new viticultural areas.
- 8 Banks *et al* foreground a range of not dissimilar concerns with the nascent Thai wine industry. Here, in the face of hostile environmental conditions and an almost predatory state, a tiny but high profile wine industry is as much a marker of the rise of the Thai middle-class and their changing tastes as it is of the ambitions of a small number of wealthy Thai to produce a recognised and respected global product. The tensions between the global and the local across a range of scales (see Murray and Overton, 2012) within the Thai industry highlight the ways in which this deeply globalised industry becomes expressed in places through specific local social, economic and cultural filters – where else but Thailand would the image of elephants in the vineyard appear appropriate?
- 9 On the other side of the world, Clout's description of the only slightly larger English wine industry has some striking parallels with Thailand: environmental constraints, an initial small number of pioneering producers, the initiation now of some links into larger operations, and a reliance by many producers on other revenue sources – wine tourism is a significant component of the approach of some producers in both environments. And as with the Thai industry, there is a sense of Local parochialism and nationalism attached to English wine that the industry can promote and feed off that does expand the appeal of the product: wine as a global product often requires a specific local resonance and connection to be successful, at least initially.
- 10 The influence of context is also critical in a different sense to Lereboullet, Bardsley and Beltando's account of vulnerability and capacity to adapt to future climate changes in Rousillion in southern France and McLaren Vale in South Australia. While noting that the physical changes in climate over the next decades are likely to be similar in the two locations, the authors explore the ways in which the different socio-economic and environmental contexts provide greater scope for the McLaren Vale producers to adapt more effectively for this. The presence of greater levels of financial capital, access to and sustainable management of water resources, and more flexible regulatory setting are important in shaping viticultural futures in the face of climate change.
- 11 The significance of place in the contemporary production of wine production is increasingly matched by 'place-based' forms of marketing. Tiefenbacher provides an exploration of the place of place in contemporary wine marketing through the lens of 475 distinct advertisements in *Wine Spectator* magazine over a two year period. He shows that the significance placed on markers of geography, place or *terroir* varies significantly by country of origin – France far more so than the USA, Spain and Italy – although the form that this takes is not uniform (see also Banks *et al*, 2006, and Barham, 2003).
- 12 Wine as a product is one that allows, indeed begs for a geographic approach to appreciate the complexity of the industry (see also Unwin, 1991; and Dougherty, 2012). This because, more so than any other agricultural or manufacturing industry, place matters (as one of the advertisements in Tiefenbacher states). Scale, one of geography's

primary discursive frames, is useful to understand the diverse and dynamic ways in which places, regions and nations become linked into global expressions of the wine industry (Hayward and Lewis, 2008; Vaudour, 2002; Overton and Murray 2011). Geography as discipline, then, has much to offer the analysis of the wine industry, but there is also much that those working on wine have contributed to geographical thought, as these papers and the attached bibliography attest.

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- Banks G., Kuir-Ayius D., Kombako D., B. Sagir, 2013. Conceptualising mining impacts, livelihoods and corporate community development in Melanesia. *Community Development Journal*.
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