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TERRITORY AND TERROIR

CASES OF SMALL-SCALE WINE PRODUCTION IN THE CENTRAL SOUTH PART OF CHILE¹

TERROIR Y TERRITORIO
CASOS DE LA PEQUEÑA VITIVINICULTURA EN EL CENTRO SUR DE CHILE

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La vitivinicultura es parte del paisaje chileno: en tres valles perviven formas socioecológicas tradicionales de vitivinicultura, cuyas prácticas representan formas hacer y saber que cuestionan y negocian con los procesos de la gran industria. En el presente artículo se expone el trabajo realizado con cinco organizaciones en los valles de Marga-Marga, Lontué e Itata, a través de entrevistas y cartografía social, con el fin de relevar los conflictos socioterritoriales, las prácticas productivas y económicas de los pequeños productores y sus estrategias de inserción de mercado. En definitiva, la sostenibilidad de estas experiencias se juega en recuperar el gusto por un vino local, de sabores diversos, arraigados en las condiciones de los territorios.

Palabras clave: vitivinicultura campesina, Chile, paisaje, *terroir*, socioecología.

Wine production is part of the Chilean landscape. In three valleys, traditional socioecological forms of wine production still prevail, practices that represent ways of doing and knowing that question and negotiate with large industry's processes. Work was made with five organizations in the Marga-Marga, Lontué and Itata valleys, through interviews and social cartography, revealing the socio-territorial conflicts, productive and economic practices of small-scale producers and their market insertion strategies. The sustainability of these experiences looks to recover the taste for local wine, different flavors, ingrained in the conditions of the territories.

Keywords: peasant wine production, Chile, landscape, *terroir*, socioecology.

I. INTRODUCTION

Wine production is part of the landscape of central and central southern Chile. Despite the hegemony of agrobusiness, we have found in three valleys, traditional forms of wine production that continue to survive, ones that are substantially different to industrial production. We approached them with the question of how they have survived in an increasingly agroindustrial landscape, and whether their practices can represent answers to contemporary socioenvironmental problems. Our hypothesis is that peasant wines, and their local construction of the “terroir”, constitute forms of doing and knowing that question, but also dialog with the processes hegemonized by the large wine production industry, representing local exercises of socioecological sustainability. The document, as a whole, dialogs specifically with the local literature on wine production, which has been focused on its historicity and current economic-political processes, describing the industry's processes of standardization, concentration and the foreign market focus (especially the work of Lacoste et al., 2015 and 2016 and other authors that we review in the following chapter). However, this literature does not go into depth on the matter of survival and condition of peasant wine production in contexts where agroindustry predominates. Broadly speaking, the text dialogs with the literature regarding the relationship between peasant agriculture and agroindustry (Goodman & Watts, 1997; Van der Ploeg, 2010, among others), and also with the literature on transition processes towards more comprehensive means of production (Goodman, DuPuis and Goodman, 2011; Escobar, 2016).

The text is supported by the FONDECYT REGULAR N°1190020 project “Communalization and Economic Heterogeneities: space for dialog about cases in central-southern Chile” that works with five organizations: The Marga-Marga Winemakers Cooperative in the Valley of the same name: the Caupolican Cooperative, in the Lontué Valley, and the organizations COPABIO, Viñateras Bravas del Itata and Ecoparra, in the Itata Valley. The text, starting from the conceptual tools of political ecology and rural sociology, observes three cases of wine production, describing the socioterritorial problems they face, as well as their socioecological targets and economic strategies that have allowed them to survive in an adverse context, and that we believe represent possible goals for sustainable wine growing. Overall, the text contributes to problematize a traditional activity that has been made invisible behind the large wine industry, and also, starting from the documentation of their practices, contributes to the discussion about more agroecologically sustainable means of production.

Background of Wine Production in Chile: francization, concentration and globalization

Chilean wine production goes back to colonial times (Townsend & Tiefenbacher, 2011) when early on, territorialized products stood out, like the asoleados of Cauquenes and Concepción (currently the Itata Valley) and the pajaretes of Huasco and Elqui (Muñoz, 2012). Both wines, fine, spirituous and sweet, with lower volume and higher prices, adjusted to the needs of small producers which, due to the poor roads, had difficulties taking their wines to urban centers (Lacoste et al., 2016). Until 1880, these wines were highly valued; however, after the Pacific War, their position amid elite consumption was displaced by imported products, Jerez and Port, favored because of lower tariffs and due to the ostentatious consumption of the post-war period (Lacoste et al., 2016). The case of pipeño, bulk wine, from the pais grape variety, ground by foot, fermented in open winepresses and conserved in small wooden barrels, and chicha, with less fermentation time was different. These are consolidated as products accessible to the working classes and the production space of the small vineyards (Lacoste et al., 2015).

The traditional wines were subject to the intervention by the National Agricultural Society that promoted the French enological paradigm. Pipeño was played down, describing it as “*a brutish wine*” (Lacoste 2015: 90). The large vineyards introduced varieties, oak vats, French technology and brought in enologists, like René F. Le Feuvre, professor of the Quinta Normal de Agricultura, whose slogan was “*making Chile the France of South America*”. Their efforts standardized production, displacing the traditional wines in the national market (Briones, 2006). The import substitution industrialization policies after the second world war, promoted that these great vineyards covered domestic demand. After the Coup d'état in 1973, in the framework of the liberalizing reforms, the industry did an about turn to exports: by 1999 Chile exported 80% of its production and by 2004 was the fifth largest producer in the world. This led to a new modernizing and strongly concentrated wave that would encourage the connection of peasant wine production and the larger industry as grape providers (Crowley, 2000). In 1995, the regulations would accept wine production of table grapes (Ministry of Agriculture, 1995); with this the grapes of non-wine production enter the market, even fruit waste, bringing down the prices paid to suppliers (Letelier & Bustos, 2005). By 2014, the total surface area of wine production vines was 137,593 hectares. Exports for 2017 reached US\$1,520.2 million, concentrated in three companies (Lima, 2015). This contrasts with that 64% of vine production takes place on sites under 5 hectares, mainly located in the Maule and

Itata Valleys. That is to say, the concentration of exports is based on a small-scale wine production linked to the large industry through intermediaries that stores grapes and wine from small producers.

Thus, the major trends of domestic wine production can be summarized into: (1) a long background that harks back to colonial times; (2) a trend towards the francization of varieties and wine production styles, led by the large vineyards and government programs, and dynamized by a Europeanizing consumption; (3) segmentation between the small peasant production, that privileges the pais grape and follows traditional methods; and the industrial large scale industrial wine production, concentrator and homogenizer, both segments linked, unequally, through intermediaries; and a (4) growing integration with the international market.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Relational worlds, terroir and peasant economies

We see the territory starting from some conceptual tools of political ecology and rural sociology, in particular the categories of socio-natural co-construction and the analysis of peasant economies. Wine, like few products, reflects the socio-material pairing beneath it. Soil and climate, knowledge, practices and material culture are expressed in the aroma, texture and taste: the terroir. In recent years, some authors (Escobar, 1996, 2010; Latour, 1991) have modeled the interdependence, co-construction and coevolution between the social and the natural, understanding that natural, technological and human entities are linked in complex interrelations. A priori, these interrelations are symmetric and constitute the world we live in (Callon & Law, 1997; Murdoch, 2001; Latour, 2004). In this way, nature and culture do not appear as binary opposites, nor is the existence of a single nature assumed. On the contrary, the diversity of human discourses and practices are expressed in diverse socio-natures, even diverse ontologies, they connect players and processes in distributed and relational agencies (Escobar, 2016). From this vision, the things and the beings *are* their relations.

The landscape and its organoleptic expression, the terroir, are examples of this coordinated enaction. The landscape is the relationship between natural, historic and cultural aspects, reflecting the identity of the group that collectively builds it (Duhart, 2011), and the terroir synthesizes flavor and place. This, a combination of environmental (soil, climate, altitude, sun exposure, drainage, slopes, etc.) and cultural characteristics (tradition, knowledge, techniques, tools and procedures) which produce flavor and quality:

the product represents and sells the place (Kaldjian, 2009). As such it can be a constructivist ensemble or be trapped in a fundamentalist prison. To overcome essentialism, Kaldjian (2009) states that, '*terroir*' is there, but it is not there' (p. 250), it exists only as a construction or collective agency for the experimentation, design and circulation of socio-natural commons.

Terroir is expressed in the different *denominations of origin* as exercises of the attribution of socially built quality (Zhao, 2005). This exercise can be made problematic by its silence regarding work matters, and laws (McIntyre, 2017) and due to the hiding of less visible social relations: a same territory may house diverse socioenvironmental ensembles, more and less fair and sustainable, that remain hidden under the territorial appeal. In Chile, the wines of peasant agriculture are appealing more and more to differentiated territorial identities to make their valleys and varieties visible, while the large-scale wine industry has identified in the denominations of origin, a new market niche.

Therefore, terroir makes a difference. For Escobar (2016), facing modern homogenization, we can see alternative spaces like the peasant economies, with their own rationalities and practices, that represent exercises of ontological and economic difference. Chayanov (1975) described them at the dawn of the 20th century, as spaces organized by the needs of the family cycle, and able to efficiently use the available socioecological resources. For the modernizing approaches, said practices are "*relegated to remote places in history*" (Van der Ploeg, 2010, p. 39); however, in these practices there is an increasing recognition as keys for the survival and adaptation of country folk. Van der Ploeg (2010) defines the *peasant condition*, in old and new peasants, focused on two concepts: autonomy – flexibility, mobility and independence – and coproduction between being human nature – continuous interaction and mutual transformation-. Their production process is, in this way, a whole that recreates and improves the natural and social resources, expanding the natural, genetic and cultural heritage, based on the socioecological knowledge of the territory, the intensive use of the resources, and strategies of pluri-activity, reciprocity, flexibility and risk control. The cases analyzed, mix of traditional families and children of country folk who return from urban experiences, and new rural inhabitants, constitute the new peasants described by Van der Ploeg who build autonomy in a mutual transformation process with their territory from a space of economic difference (Gibson-Graham, 2006).

III. METHODOLOGY

The research approach was qualitative, applying two techniques: an individual interview and participative social mapping. The interview is an open and flexible conversational

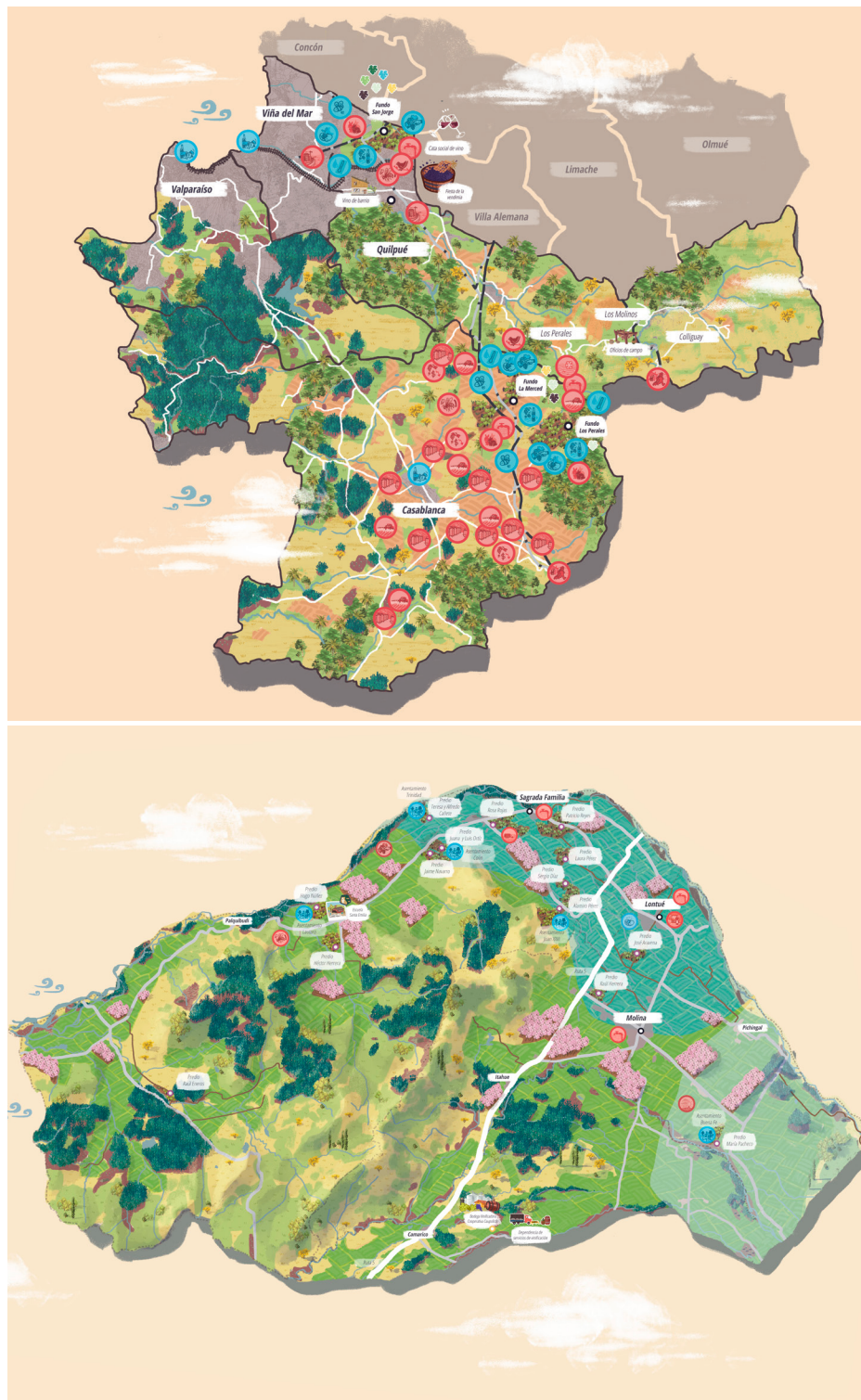


Figure 1. Caupolicán Cooperative Map. Source: An broader and broken down version of this map was published in Cid-Aguayo (2019)
Figure 2. Marga Marga Cooperative Map. Source: An broader and broken down version of this map was published in Cid-Aguayo (2019)



Figure 3. Ecoparras Map. Source: An broader and broken down version of this map was published in Cid-Aguayo (2019)

Figure 4. COPABIO and Viñateras Bravas del Itata Map. Source: An broader and broken down version of this map was published in Cid-Aguayo (2019)

exercise, that collects the discourse of informants, with their emerging points of view. 26 interviews were made with wine producers and leaders in the three valleys. These discussed about the productive, economic and cultural characteristics of the activity, their context and their projections. Alongside this, 4 social maps were developed: two in the Itata Valley, one in Lontué and one in Marga-Marga, which were prepared through a participative work with members from the main wine production organizations. Each one, began by establishing agreements with local leaders to define goals, images, scales and icons of the map. Then, two mapping sessions, the first works with the current territory, lived by its inhabitants. For this, the economic points of reference, the productive potentialities and the socio-spatial conflicts are identified. In the second session, the map is presented and validated, and work is done regarding the imagination of future desired and possible territorialities, using a form of dream map. Subsequent validation sessions allowed taking the information deeper through collective debate and dialog. The maps were reworked as artistic products to underline the subjective and spoken nature of the mapping process and to give back to the communities an attractive and useful graphical product for their own processes (see Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4).⁶ The interviews and discussions of the social mapping processes were recorded, transcribed and subject to content analysis. All the statements of this document, are based on this analysis exercise.

IV. RESULTS

The other Chilean wines: case studies

Chilean wine production is a scenario of dispute between a standardized, greatly concentrated and expanding industry, and trends towards the diversification of production, like the revaluation of heritage products (Lacoste et al., 2015) and fair trade (Malo & Mori, 2003). In this way, there are other ways of making wine that build other landscapes; of which we reveal three experiences here in the Itata, Lontué and Marga Marga Valleys.

The Itata Valley is a traditional peasant wine production area that harks back to the colonial Jesuit production in the Cucha-Cucha Hacienda. Ledesmas (2018, in Henríquez, 2018) points out that in the area, 26 different heritage varieties are grown, like pais, muscatel, cargadora and San Francisco. The Farming Census (2007) registers more than 5,000 producers with less than 5 hectares of property

and 1 hectare of vines. The geographic distance and the small property structure safeguarded a traditional wine production of pipeño and asoleado wines, on the margins of the modernization and francization processes of large-scale properties in the central valley. Currently the production continues to be led by small producers, organized into different associations. In particular, we work with three organizations: CopaBio, EcoParras and Viñateras Bravas del Itata. Only some producers effectively make domestic and collective wine production with differing degrees of technification, and their insertion in the markets is diverse: grape sales to large companies, bulk wine production for its direct sale and premium wine bottling production.

In the Lontué Valley in the Province of Curicó, the Caupolican Cooperative is an associativity experience between peasant producers, inherited from the agrarian reform process, whose purpose is to *mutually protect themselves against the ups and downs of the market* and to obtain fair, sustainable and regular prices⁷. Since 2009, supported by a public-private support network, Caupolican produces collectively, being certified as a Fair-Trade Small Producers Organization, which lets them export to Europe. Today, the Cooperative, comprises 13 male and 5 female members which together work 84.5 hectares.

The Marga-Marga Wine Production Cooperative is an associative wine production on the fringes of the Casablanca Valley, in the region of Valparaíso, that groups 7 families. This cooperative looks to increase the number of members, productively recover the vineyards, overhaul productive practices and traditional trades and reposition natural wine as their own.

Socio-territorial problems in the case studies

All these experiences narrate a set of cross-sectional socio-territorial problems. First, the role of large wine production, a “selfish giant” in the words of some leaders. Small production has maintained an articulation, through intermediaries, with the large-scale wine industry, selling them grapes and must, which has grown as the industry has cornered the cheap wines market (in tetra pack boxes), displacing the sale of bulk wines. The conditions of this relationship have been problematic. In the Itata Valley, for example, in the 90s, the companies paid excellent prices, leading many producers to abandon wine production and specialize in grape sales, which would have led to abandoning the casks, tubs and barrels, damaging them because of this: “they opened up”. Later the grape price

⁶ An broader and broken down version of this map was published in Cid-Aguayo (2019)

⁷ In interview made in 2019.

fell to the point of not covering production costs and without a possibility to return to the old trade. Also, in Marga-Marga, given the proximity to the industrial wine production plantations, the stories report (1) a widespread use of pesticides that affect their ecological production; and (2) the industrial commercial enclosure for the small organic producers. In the Lontué Valley, the large-scale wine production industry competes with small vineyards in the labor and transport service market, increasing the cooperative's costs.

A second element, are the diverse dynamics of territorial expulsion. The forestry industry of introduced species is a large producer of the landscape in the Itata and Marga-Marga Valleys. Not only do they occupy extensive areas of land, but land monopolization practices are also attributed to them, as well as blaming them for the drop in underground water levels and in local biodiversity, affecting the terroir of the wine. According to the producers, the proximity to eucalyptus plantations would imprint a minty flavor on the wine and the emissions of the paper mills would damage their quality. Forestry is also associated to major fires in 2011 and 2016, which report significant losses in the amount and quality of the annual grape production, and permanent losses, with the burning down of wineries and the loss of centennial vines.

In the Marga-Marga Valley, urban expansion increases land prices and exercises pressure on wine production lands. In the Lontué Valley, the expulsion dynamics are provided by competition between vineyards and export crops like cherries for the land, labor and transport services. More recently, the wine production industry would also be exercising territorial pressure, in the context of climate change and the heritage process of varieties. The change in temperature and rainfall patterns could be making the traditionally less appreciated southern valleys more attractive and the revaluation of the pais, cinsault and muscatel varieties, make the centennial peasant vines more appealing.

Apart from the conflicts with players who pressure and displace the peasant wine trade, the weakening and impoverishment of rural communities reduce their wine production capacity. The aging and emigration of the young, deprive productive units of help for certain tasks like weeding and harvesting; and these are related to loss of trades and knowledge associated to barrel-making and horse-drawn ploughing. Particularly relevant is the loss of wine production infrastructure seen in the three valleys.

In the Itata, this has suffered from aging due to disuse and damage associated to earthquakes; *"two years of not using the casks, they open up and are of no use"*⁸. As a result, only some families produce on a commercial scale, and are forced to sell grapes to the large companies. The Caupolican cooperative outsources wine production services, which is not only troublesome, but also complicates traceability and control of the process. The Marga-Marga Cooperative also leases infrastructure and wine cellars, sacrificing autonomy.

Finally, the State is pointed to as a problematic player in several ways. In regulatory terms, producers consider the tools to regulate the monopsonic position of the large vineyards as grape buyers as insufficient. In terms of incentives, support for infrastructure, cellars and casks, is considered insufficient, and the technical advice, not really pertinent and homogenizing. They see that *"the technical staff make wine from chemicals"*⁹ and disrespect the differential knowledge and practices of the peasants. So, it is perceived that the State favors large industry, facilitating access to raw materials at low costs, through the production chains.

Wine production and socioecological production of the territory: transformative ecopolitics

The three valleys represent a small scale, sustainable peasant wine production proposal in territories traversed by conflicts. In this section, we will focus on their practices to produce a sustainable wine production and a socially, economic and ecologically diverse, balanced and sustainable territory.

In each valley, wine production benefits from favorable ecological conditions that produce their distinct aspects. In Marga-Marga, the presence of sclerophyllous forests and the coastal influence that regulates temperature and humidity for a slow maturation, results in wines with fruity flavors and balanced acidity. In the Lontué Valley, an important thermal amplitude favors the growing of white varieties. In the Itata Valley, the social mapping exercises showed how small variations in topography have produced differentiated wines. Higher, sunnier sectors with greater drainage, provide wines denominated as "reds", "spirituous", with a high alcoholic content, thick, very dry or very sweet; and low valleys, with less sun exposure, more humidity and coastal influence, permit "green", "fresh", "fruity" and "light" wines¹⁰. The knowledge of the territory showed being so intimate that on the maps, specific slopes where certain wines are produced, were identified. The wine-makers in this way acknowledge the territory and terroir relationship, and their production practices aim to recreate and improve this landscape.

⁸ ECOPARRA Leader, in interview in 2019.

⁹ COPABIO Leader, in interview in 2019.

¹⁰ ECOPARRA leader, in interview in 2019.

Their production proposals look to recover traditional varieties that even come from the colonial period, like Pais, Moscatel de Alejandria, Torontel, Italia, San Francisco and Cargadora, Tintorera or Cinsault, Pastilla del Belloto, Rosa de Curtidilla, Rosa Frutilla, Blanca Italia and Cristal, all made invisible by the standardization of large industry. Some of these ecotypes, have co-evolved with their territory, attaining such a rusticity that they are resistant to droughts and plagues, making many agrochemicals superfluous. This is expressed in the elaboration itself of the natural wines, as the grapes capture the environmental microbiota, making the addition of yeast unnecessary, in such a way that the wine reflects the biological diversity of the place.

The sale of grapes and wine allows these small producers to obtain autonomy and economic sustainability to dynamize a complex production system. The recovery of traditional practices that allow reducing the dependence on external, usually expensive supplies, is strategic for this. The search and care of vines with greater resistance and traditional forms of production, relevant for the socioecological reproduction of the territory, is key in this point. For example, the use of pruning as fertilizer allows enriching the soils; weeding using a horse-drawn plough (instead of using glyphosate) looks after the soil, it allows the existence of accompanying flora and fauna, and breaks it up to make better use of the rainwater: *"where there are ploughed vineyards, the aquifers are better"* ¹¹. These traditional practices are resignified from new languages: they speak of agroecology, biodynamic practices, while at the same time, the *"spirit of the wine"* ¹² is understood. These processes, which are not homogeneous, constitute a common horizon. In more general terms, grape production constitutes a frontier to forestry, urban and fruit and vegetable single crop expansion. The profitability that it offers allows small producers to keep their land and maintain their form of production; preventing selling it to forestry companies, for summer houses or for urban development.

There is also an effort to recover traditional forms of wine production, in dialog with modern forms. Facing a French influenced enologist from the large-scale industry, who colonizes flavors and involves small producers through technology transfer, these winemakers recover lost practices and trades. Their wine production practices transit from strictly traditional, milling by foot, leather winepresses, maturation in casks, to modern, to create in their words: *"honest wines, pure grape juice, without chemical additives, enological corrections or water"* compared to

the industry enologists that *"transform water to wine"* and produce standardized wines *"that always taste the same"*. It is expected that the wine *"is made in the old-fashioned ways... stepping on it"*, *"a peasant wine"*, that *"tastes of the place and the year it is made"* and that *"evolves in the bottle"*. Thus, away from the intervened and external handling of experts that *"manufacture wine"* following enological methods ¹³, each family that produces, practices and safeguards a wine with identity and authorship.

Finally, it is relevant to note the processes of associativity and cooperation of these experiences. They all have a history of informal cooperation, *"paying back favors"* ¹⁴ in pruning, wine harvests and common problems, and recently experience a cycle of cooperativism that formalizes these practices. Ecoparra constitutes an exercise of collective gathering and wine production to improve bulk wine prices. Copabio, Viñateras Bravas and Marga Marga are also exercises of symmetric associativity among producers. The Caupolican Cooperative, created in 2018, is founded on the experience of two Agrarian Reform settlements, with a history of neighbors and reciprocity, as well as sectors of *"common goods"* in use: corral, church, football pitch, rural hospital and school.

Economic strategies to have a share in the market

Access to markets is critical for these experiences, as the distribution is concentrated by large companies and the local consumption niche is limited. The exercises described show a variety of strategies for this:

1. Strategies to confront the industry on grape prices: The wine-making organizations present political strategies to report and confront the monopsonic practices of the industry with the grape suppliers. In particular, they appeal to the competition regulations of the current regulatory framework; the Wine-makers Federation, have exercised political pressure with street demonstrations, like the destruction and gifting of grapes and wine, and have presented demands to the National Economic Prosecutor about abuse of a dominant position. They also denounce the regulatory context that allows the addition of a percentage of water in the wine and the use of table vines.

2. Strategies of addition and autonomous collection centers: The sale of grapes and bulk wine individually prevents the producers from improving their market position. Ecoparras, Copabio and the Caupolican Cooperative form collection centers to generate a selling power that is capable of

¹¹ ECOPARRA leader, interview in 2019.

¹² Marga-Marga Cooperative leader, interview in 2019.

¹³ Extracts of interview with COPABIO leader, 2019.

¹⁴ Marga-Marga Cooperative leader, interview in 2019.

obtaining better prices with the industry, suppliers and the external market. These strategies require a high degree of trust and internal control systems, as it is vulnerable to intra-organization fraud, like the delivery of grapes or wine of a lower quality or alcoholic content.

3. Development of signature wines: This is the route taken by several producers, individually and collectively, in Itata and Marga Marga, to add value to the agroecological crop and artisanal wine production as a product of terroir. These wines are sold directly and in festivities to minimize intermediaries and build direct relationships. This strategy has, as a limitation, the size of local markets, in the words of a winemaker “*we are flooding the bottle market*”¹⁵; the challenge is to build, in this way, a specific niche of the heritage, and natural. An example of this strategy is the *social winetasting* that the Marga-Marga cooperative organizes to bring the consumer closer to local wine production.

4. Specialized export: the difficulties of the internal market lead some organizations to export in natural wine or fair-trade niche markets. The National Fair-Trade Coordinator, facilitates a trade channel with an English cooperative that buys wine in bulk, bottling and selling them at their destination with their own brand. The export strategy allows the organizations to expand the market and obtain better prices but, at the same time, is perceived by some of their leaders, as going against the challenge of reducing the ecological footprint and densification of local economies.

Each one of these strategies involves an exercise of associativity and of political organization of the markets to allow the entry of fewer producers. However, this variety of strategies reflects different political positions. The first, appeals to political organization and market principles, demanding justice from its own rules. The collection centers have a less political nature, they do not oppose the industry, but rather appeal to economic addition, aspiring to building negotiation capacity and cost leadership by horizontal coordination between producers to face the oligopsony of grape purchasing powers. The closest space to the building of autonomy is providing specific niches that value the terroir, as the Marga Marga cooperative and some winegrowers of the Itata Valley have done.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Summarizing, wine production is a scenario hegemonized by agroindustry, but also one in dispute. The “other Chilean wines” represent spaces of territorial economic and socioecological sustainability that survive in a scenario of

tension. Urban, forestry and fruit and vegetable expansion and the large wine industry and its commercial dynamics build a problematic setting. Small wine production faces the unilateral management of grape prices, a productivity-based model and diverse forms of territorial and economic pressure. They respond to this with productive proposals based on the heritage recovery of traditional practices and ecotypes and with a sustainable relationship with their territory based on the coevolution between the human community, the place, the variety and even the local microbiota. In this way, efforts are made to recover peasant trades, maintaining a production system with few external supplies and a means of understanding production that prioritizes building territory. These experiences face a wine consumption that has endured major colonization processes, that marginalize more rustic or working-class wines, appealing towards recovering the taste for a local wine, with diverse flavors and the result of the interaction of the natural conditions and the territories. Despite that not all these experiences are formal cooperatives, the formal and informal associativity is key. Their participation in the markets, essential for their survival, involves an exercise of associativity that seeks to influence the social organization of the markets. This is done through strategies that express different political positions, appealing to social mobilization, economic additions and building autonomy through the construction of niches.

These experiences call to reflect about the coevolution between an eco-territory, peasant practices of grape growing and wine production, the traditional varieties, especially the pais, and a bacterial complex, that lives in the varieties, in the place and in the hands and feet of its producers, that leads to the characteristic fermentation, making the addition of yeast unnecessary. Here we actually have the synthesis of a terroir based on favorable ecological conditions and productive practices that care for and rebuild said landscape (like the care of the land with manual ploughing and natural fertilizing practices, and the care of forests), and in reproducing the traditional varieties that have coevolved in the place. This ensemble of practices, variety, territory and bacteria, allows the construction of strategies that reduce the multiple dependencies of the peasant economies, to debt, to the State, to the supplies, to the price of grapes, etc., and dreaming with autonomy strategies. This ensemble also allows the existence of a territory of difference, where grape production and wine preparation constitute a frontier to the homogenizing expansion of the forestry companies in the Itata and the urban one in Valparaíso.

We close this document by revisiting our hypothesis that these initiatives contribute to ecological diversity, equality and sustainability. The stories presented are multiple

¹⁵ ECOPARRA leader, interview in 2019.

exercises of diversity; of varieties, of techniques, of flavors and even microbiological. They represent the possibility of safeguarding other forms of living and producing the territories, facing the homogenization of the industries that fight for them. They represent stories of sustainability in the use of territorial resources, adapted to situations of water shortage, and dedicated to land conservation. Finally, they contribute to maintaining the old and new family peasant agriculture, densifying local economies and vindicating the fair price for the producer.

Their wines are from a unique terroir, that contain their flavor and texture, traces of a socio-natural process that synthesizes a respectful and co-productive relationship with the environment and a cultural tradition that learns, adapt and coevolves with its territory. In this way, they dialog with the growing trend of accessing more natural products, of ethical production and territorial identity, where what was previously considered backward, is now considered valuable. This represents an opportunity for these producers, but also a possible space of conflict with industrial wine production. This because, as the path of other niche products has shown, starting from a minimalist or entirely simulated imitation of traditional practices, industrial wine production can occupy these demand niches, without directly benefitting the producers. Thus, there is a renewed risk of symbolic and material colonization, through which the industry makes use of denominations of origin, and generates products under this label where the traditional practices, processes and knowledge of small wine production are attributed. It is relevant here to strategically and ethically address the matter of effectively and systematically linking local producers and sensitive consumers to these processes. In this regard, there have been experimentation exercises of direct visits of organized consumers to the vineyards, social winetasting, and the so-called clandestine winetasting held in houses of strategic consumers.

VI. REFERENCIAS BIBLIOGRÁFICAS

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