



Programme

WINE PLACE SPACE

*Global geographies of wine cultivation,
production and consumption*

NOV 04 | 06
2026

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Workshop, 4-6 November 2026, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Wine production and consumption as naturecultural practices are deeply entangled with key ecological and socio-economic challenges of our time. Climate change is strongly affecting long-established wine regions and pushing the frontiers of wine growing. The general decline in alcohol consumption has led to recurring global overproduction crises and financial strain for many wineries. At the same time, growing environmental awareness and rising demand in the organic, biodynamic, and natural wine markets are leading to fundamental changes in the global wine industry, as winegrowers increasingly adopt alternative production methods.

From the perspective of the social sciences, cultural studies, and the humanities, wine has long served as a compelling empirical entry point that provides avenues for discussing issues such as conspicuous consumption and production practices, globalization, class positioning, valuation and qualification (struggles), knowledge circulation, technologies and innovation, labor relations, or digitalization and platforms. Recently, there has been a growing academic interest in post-anthropocentric conceptualizations of human-nature relations as well as alternative understandings of economic processes.

During the workshop, we welcome contributions that discuss a broad range of these developments, drawing on current theoretical approaches in human geography, sociology, philosophy, history, anthropology, cultural studies, and related fields with reference to the spatial configurations of these dynamics, for example, with regard to scales, networks, territories, or places. Moreover, we are particularly interested in contributions that focus on human-nature and more-than-human relations. We invite scholars from the social sciences, humanities, and cultural studies to join the workshop and contribute conceptually rich and empirically grounded research.

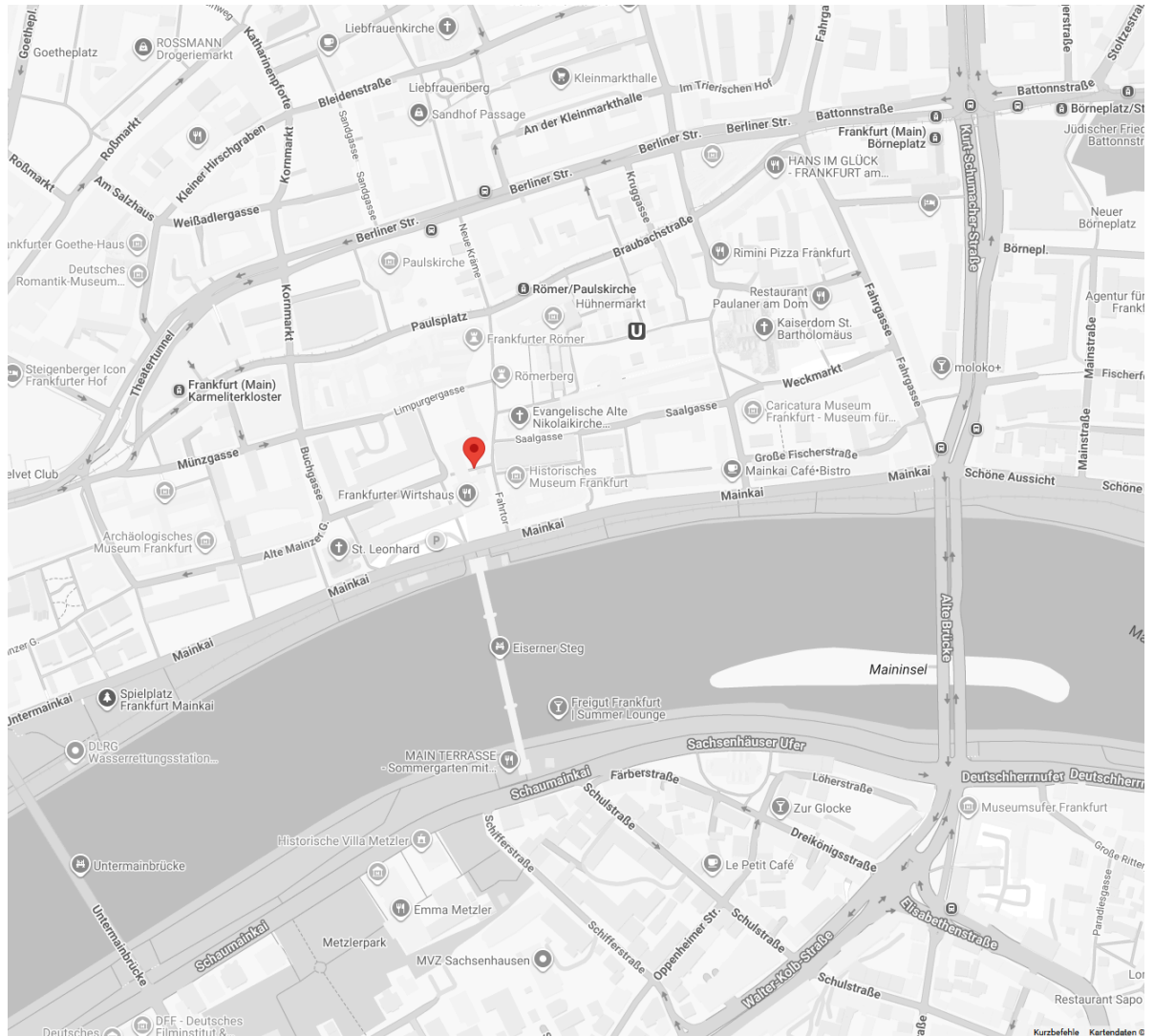
Organising Team

- **Marc Daferner** (Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt/ Goethe University Frankfurt)
- **Robert Pütz** (Goethe University Frankfurt)
- **Gerhard Rainer** (University of Passau)
- **Christian Steiner** (Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt)

Venue

The conference will take place at

Evangelische Akademie, Römerberg 9, 60311 Frankfurt am Main.



Contact

Working Group on Human Geography

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5 November 2026	Session Title	Speaker / Contribution
9:00-10:15	Labour and Migration in Natural Wine Production	Spanger/Andersen — Hipster workers and natural wine: Transnational migration, labour and cosmopolitanism in Copenhagen Lepistö — Harvesting Hands: On Labour in Artisanal Wine Production
10:15-10:45	Coffee Break	
10:45-12:00	Designations of Origin and the Re-ordering of Wine Territories	Esquinas Rychen — Sierra de Gredos: The Impossible DOP Kismarjai — The Evolution and Spatial Organization of Hungarian PDO Districts
12:00-13:00	Lunch Break	
13:00-14:15	Pinot Noir and Place-Identity in the New World	Neill & Shalebriski — Place, Identity, and Governing Knowledge Commons: New Zealand Pinot Noir Siimes — Assembling New World Identities: Pinot Noir Exceptionalism and the Production of Fine Wine Places
14:15-15:30	Sustainable Production Practices: Spatial and Technical Perspectives	Chauvin — TERRAFERM: The Socio-Technical Dynamics of Indigenous Yeast Adoption and the Structural Limits of Artisanal Agency Saracino — Exploring Patterns of Organic and Biodynamic Production in Relation to Sustainable Practices Across Global Wine Regions
15:30-16:00	Coffee Break	
16:00-17:15	Wine Markets, Consumers, and Qualification Strategies	Hill — Terra Incognita? What Do the Wine Lovers of 'Fly-over Country' Want? Wippel — Architecture and Non-architecture: Qualification Strategies for Wine in Arab Countries between Association and Dissociation
6 November 2026	Session Title	Speaker / Contribution
9:00-10:00	Special Session: Book Discussion	Ponte — Value struggles: Looking at capitalism through the wine glass
10:00-10:30	Coffee Break	
10:30-12:15	Terroir: Concepts, Practices, and Politics	Grunicke — Terroir as Practice: The Significance of Sensory Practices in Viticulture in Times of Climate Change Krüger — Artifice and Nature: Italian Terroir and the Self-Naturalisation of Labour Pavoni — Transvaluating Terroir: On the Speculative Pragmatics of Natural Wine

Please note:

- On both days, presentations **should not exceed 20 minutes**, followed by 15 minutes of discussion (except for the book presentation and discussion on day 2).
- On 5 November, we will meet for dinner at 19:00 at a nearby restaurant. The dinner is not included in the conference fee.

Conference Programme

Wednesday, 4 November 2026

Venue:

Cool Climate
Berliner Str. 20
60311 Frankfurt am Main

19:00 Get-together with a wine tasting

Thursday, 5 November 2026

Venue:

Evangelische Akademie
Römerberg 9
60311 Frankfurt am Main

09:00.....Session A — Labour and Migration in Natural Wine Production

Spanger/Andersen

Hipster workers and natural wine:

Transnational migration, labour and cosmopolitanism in Copenhagen

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Lepistö

Harvesting Hands: On Labour in Artisanal Wine Production

10:15 Coffee Break

10:45.....Session B — Designations of Origin and the Reordering of Wine Territories

Esquinas Rychen

Sierra de Gredos: The Impossible DOP

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Kismarjai

The Evolution and Spatial Organization of Hungarian PDO Districts

12:00 Lunch Break

13:00.....Session C — Pinot Noir and Place-Identity in the New World

Neill & Shalekbriski

Place, Identity, and Governing Knowledge Commons: New Zealand Pinot Noir

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Siimes

Assembling New World Identities: Pinot Noir Exceptionalism and the Production of Fine Wine Places

14:15.....Session D — Sustainable Production Practices: Spatial and Technical Perspectives

Chauvin

TERRAFERM: The Socio-Technical Dynamics of Indigenous Yeast Adoption and the Structural Limits of Artisanal Agency

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Saracino

Exploring Patterns of Organic and Biodynamic Production in Relation to Sustainable Practices Across Global Wine Regions

15:30 Coffee Break

16:00.....Session E — Wine Markets, Consumers, and Qualification Strategies

Hill

Terra Incognita? What Do the Wine Lovers of ‚Flyover Country‘ Want?

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Wippel

Architecture and Non-architecture: Qualification Strategies for Wine in Arab Countries between Association and Dissociation

19:00 Dinner at Zur Stalburg, Glauburgstraße 80, 60318 Frankfurt am Main

Friday, 6 November 2026

Venue:

Evangelische Akademie
Römerberg 9
60311 Frankfurt am Main

09:00.....Special Session — Book Discussion

Ponte

„Value struggles: Looking at capitalism through the wine glass”

10:00 **Coffee Break**

10:30.....Session F — Terroir: Concepts, Practices, and Politics

Grunicke

Terroir as Practice: The Significance of Sensory Practices in Viticulture in Times of Climate Change

Krüger

Artifice and Nature: Italian Terroir and the Self-Naturalisation of Labour

Pavoni

Transvaluating Terroir: On the Speculative Pragmatics of Natural Wine

12.30 **Day and Conference Closing Remarks**



Abstracts

WINE PLACE SPACE II

*Global geographies of wine cultivation,
production and consumption*

Hipster workers and natural wine: Transnational migration, labour and cosmopolitanism in Copenhagen

**Marlene Spanger (Aalborg University), Magnus Andersen (Roskilde University),
Don Mitchell (Uppsala University)**

Natural wine, an environmentally sustainable viticulture, is hailed as an important contribution to the green transition of agriculture. Through multi-sited ethnography, the project follows the work behind the journey of a natural wine bottle from harvesting in Sicily, through the networks and logistics of distribution, to its sale in the restaurants in Copenhagen. It is primarily migrants who do the work in agricultural, transport and restaurant industries in Europe. Yet, little is known about the migration and the working conditions in the natural wine supply chain. This newly started four-year research project is overall guided by the research question: How do migration and labor relations and labor processes in the production, distribution, and sale of natural wine from Italy to Denmark support and/or undermine a just green transition? The overall aim is to understand how the relationship between labor and migration governs the natural wine industry and the role it plays in a green transition. Drawing on literature on labor process and transnational migration, and on preliminary empirical findings from interviews with sommeliers and waiters as well as fieldwork in wine bars and restaurants, we analyze how the labor of importing and selling natural wine is established within transnational social fields spanning Italy and Copenhagen.

Harvesting Hands: On Labour in Artisanal Wine Production

Viivi Lepistö (Aalborg University)

Agricultural industries, including viticulture, have long been intertwined with labour mobility. In recent years, two significant parallel developments have come to shape the European agricultural industry: on the one hand, the green transition of agriculture strives to shift the industry towards more sustainable modes of production. On the other hand, European migration policies seek to restrict transnational migration flows into the EU. Within this context, artisanal wine production, commonly known as ‘natural wine’, continues to grow as an alternative to industrially produced conventional wine. Contributing with a labour migration perspective to the growing field of research on ‘natural wines’, I examine how these traditional, artisanal methods – the manual harvest of grapes, following the rhythms of nature, and refusing chemical intervention – are entangled with the mobility of the workers. To this end, I present findings from my ethnographic fieldwork in Italy, including interviews with artisanal wine producers, seasonal workers and wine professionals. I then go on to explore the conditions and relations of labour and migration in the production of artisanal wine. Specifically, I focus on the workers who perform the manual labour that is crucial to the small-scale production of these wines, and, given their entangled mobility, why and how their labour is structured as it is.

Sierra de Gredos: The impossible DOP

Ana Esquinas Rychen (University of St. Gallen)

Despite the challenges faced by established wine regions, new viticultural regions and microregions continue to emerge and develop in diverse socio-economic, political and historical conditions in each country. It is important to study their potential, as well as the challenges and problems that characterise their development. This case study focuses on an emerging wine-producing area to the east of the Sierra de Gredos mountain range in Spain, that uses this name as an identifying feature on almost all wine labels. However, there is no Denominación de Origen (DO) or Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) with such a name; rather, the vineyards are distributed among three neighbouring DO or PDO areas with different profiles, histories and ages.

Sierra de Gredos offers the opportunity firstly to study the contestation or reinterpretation of Spain's current designation of origin system. This viticultural region's singularity is represented and communicated but has not a traditional translation into the geographical indications system. It is a place that is recognised but not protected and has a denomination but not a designation.

Secondly, the dynamics of this emerging area, the network of human and non-human actors, as well as the active narratives (e.g. vineyard sizes, personal projects, heroic viticulture, native grape varieties, sustainability, the agency of nature and the relationship vine-viñatero/viñador) and conventions (e.g. inspirational and green-sustainable) at work around this place offer an interesting case study for understanding the cultural meanings associated with the value of viticulture in this area, and for the developing of a sense of place.

Adopting a sociocultural approach and qualitative design, this research will explore the strategies employed to create and justify this "impossible" designation. As winemakers there also strongly focus on sustainable performances, the project also aims to contribute to the sustainability transitions framework by learning how companies and individuals address meanings and issues around sustainability in this emerging area.

The Evolution and Spatial Organization of Hungarian PDO Districts

Balázs Kismarjai (Eötvös Loránd University)

Spatiality is an important determining factor in viticulture and winemaking. The historical development of established (and emerging) wine regions or PDO districts cannot be considered without taking territorial aspects into account. The political transition in Hungary and the country's accession to the European Union fundamentally changed the Hungarian wine sector. The new system of protected designation of origin offers ample opportunity for the creation of new PDO districts. This has led to a situation where, instead of the original 22 wine regions, there are now 15 additional PDO and 6 PGI districts in Hungary. The natural, historical, and viticultural factors that play a role in this development also vary from region to region. Examining these factors can help us understand the development of a given region and the viticultural activities that take place there. What natural factors lead to the designation of a wine region or district? Climate? Soil? Special rock formations characteristic of the location? Perhaps social factors are stronger than natural ones, so local cohesion and solidarity create new PDO districts. It is possible that historical traditions and the use of certain grape varieties help a settlement to develop its own district. In the 21st century, we cannot ignore the role of technology. Winemaking—even in the case of organic or natural wines—has now become a technological industry. The method of winemaking is also a way to create new wine regions and districts. All this helps to reinterpret terroir. This is also a key point in the Hungarian system. The extremely fragmented Hungarian wine region system would be an obvious basis for terroir and its scientific use in the designation of PDO districts. However, the application of the concept in Hungary is rather vague, and the framework that would make this possible has not been developed. Yet the two processes are closely related, and if we do not want the system to descend into complete chaos, it will be necessary to regulate this as well.

Place, Identity, and Governing Knowledge Commons: New Zealand Pinot Noir

Clinton L. Neill (Virginia Tech), Abby Shalekbriski (Oklahoma State University)

Pinot Noir's identity is intrinsically linked with place. Despite having a discerning identity, no one body or person holds a definitive authority over governing how that identity is shaped, constructed, or protected. We apply the governing knowledge commons framework (GKC) developed by Hess and Ostrom to determine how New Zealand's Pinot Noir region produces and sustains a place-based reputation as a common knowledge resource. This reputation encompasses consumer beliefs about characteristics such as quality, terroir, provenance and subsequently can be thought of as a knowledge commons. A knowledge commons constitutes an information resource that is difficult to exclude actors from accessing but can be vulnerable to degradation through free riding, dilution, or misappropriated claims.

Using the GKC framework, we analyze the stock of reputational information that is embedded within regional terroir within New Zealand as well as national branding of Pinot Noir. By identifying relevant participants in the development of the identity of Pinot Noir such as regional producer networks, New Zealand Winegrowers, merchants, exporters, and public regulators, we can map their overlapping roles with action arenas that operate at the regional, national, and international level. We also examine the rules-in-use by evaluating formal institutions (i.e. the Wine Act, geographical indications, sustainability certification through SWNZ, regional knowledge exchange) and informal institutions (arenas for regional knowledge exchange, peer monitoring, and shared expectations). Ostrom's design principles provide criteria to assess institutional robustness that include boundary clarity, graduated sanctions, and conflict resolution.

This analysis demonstrates that New Zealand's polycentric arrangements enable regional differentiation of Pinot Noir's identity and reputation within an overarching national reputation. This case study extends the GKC framework to demonstrate how institutional diversity and locally constructed identities can create and sustain a knowledge commons where centralized control is neither feasible nor desirable.

Assembling New World Identities: Pinot Noir Exceptionalism and the Production of Fine Wine Places

Nikolai Siimes (University of Auckland), Joanna Fountain (Lincoln University)

Global wine markets are awash with product, so wine producers must be clever in order to access the highly guarded circuits of fine wine. This paper explores how Pinot Noir—as a fragile, thin-skinned grape that is difficult to cultivate but uniquely capable of translating terroir into sensory form—is successfully enrolled in numerous New World wine regions to do exactly that.

Pinot Noir's biological properties shape viticultural practice, guide investment, and anchor narratives of provenance and quality. At the same time, its historical and material connections to Burgundy are selectively established, cultivated, or disassociated in order to construct narratives of excellence and thus generate wine value and create monopolies of place from which to extract monopoly rents. In Central Otago for instance, Pinot Noir has not only defined the regional brand but expanded the very sense of what and where "Central Otago" is.

This paper develops the idea of Pinot Noir exceptionalism to examine how the grape in both material and semiotics terms contributes to the making of wine markets, quality claims, and regional identities in New World contexts. Adopting an approach grounded in the social studies of economisation and marketisation, we trace how Pinot Noir is leveraged as a tool for differentiation and value creation. Through ethnographic fieldwork, interviews with producers and industry authorities, and analysis of winery websites in New Zealand, South Africa, and Canada, we explore the place of pinot noir and the making of pinot noir places.

Our research shows that in New Zealand for instance, producers tend to either mirror the discourses and practices of burgundy without explicit reference to the French regions (e.g. orienting around terroir, single vineyards, artisan production) or construct their own, place-based narratives and techniques that tap into local histories, imaginaries, and traditions. At the same time, and looking across different pinot noir producing regions there seems to be a shared new world discursive register premised on technical know-how, such as clonal specificity, precision viticulture, and science-backed winemaking. By following Pinot Noir through both its semiotic mobilisation and its material affordances, this paper shows how regional wine identities are co-produced through entangled human–grape relations.

TERRAFERM: The Socio-Technical Dynamics of Indigenous Yeast Adoption and the Structural Limits of Artisanal Agency

**Nicolás Depetris-Chauvin (HES-SO/HEG), Benoît Bach (HES-SO),
Antoine Pinède (HES-SO/HEG), Andrea Vargas-Trinidad (HES-SO)**

Modern viticulture exists at a paradoxical intersection: while global markets increasingly demand „authentic“ territorial expression, the technical infrastructure of the cellar often prioritizes industrial predictability. This paper presents the findings of the TERRAFERM project, an interdisciplinary study of 250+ Swiss wineries investigating the transition from commercial yeast starters to indigenous (spontaneous) fermentation.

Our research identifies that the adoption of native yeasts is not merely a technical choice, but a complex negotiation between a winemaker's professional identity and the perceived risk of biological autonomy. While high-level enological training is a common denominator across the sector, it is not a predictor of adoption. Instead, we find that spontaneous fermentation is part of a broader „sustainability bundle,“ strongly correlated with regenerative viticulture and a strategic prioritization of terroir over process standardization.

However, the „Artisanal Logic“ of the winemaker faces a significant structural bottleneck. Our data reveals an „adoption ceiling“ at the 800hl production threshold. Beyond this scale, the economic cost of fermentation failure forces a shift toward a „Logic of Safety,“ regardless of the producer's philosophical orientation. Furthermore, we demonstrate that „learning-by-doing“ is insufficient in this context; years of experience do not statistically reduce the frequency of sluggish fermentations, highlighting the inherent volatility of the microbial environment.

The results suggest that the current low adoption rates in Switzerland are driven by a transversal knowledge gap. Producers across all scales requested practical protocols and characterized strain lists, indicating a desire to move away from trial-and-error toward a more stabilized, yet still territorially distinct, winemaking practice. We argue that for indigenous yeasts to move beyond a high-risk niche, institutional support must bridge the divide between artisanal aspiration and the operational requirements of contemporary cellar management.

Exploring Patterns of Organic and Biodynamic Production in Relation to Sustainable Practices Across Global Wine Regions

Riccardo Saracino, Nicolas Depetris-Chauvin, Jan Erik Meidell, Antoine Pinede (HES-SO)

The wine world is transforming. Wineries reconfigure their strategies to face new challenges under the pressure of market evolution and climate change. While some wineries engage in organic and biodynamic production due to market differentiation, others adopt vineyard sustainable practices under the pressure of climate change. This study focuses on different spatial patterns of organic and biodynamic production related to sustainable vineyard practices. Using a firm-level dataset including more than 5,100 wineries across 23 countries we identify and map two main patterns.

First, the distribution of organic and biodynamic production. Second, adopting an upstream value chain perspective, the spatial distribution of sustainable practices in vineyards. To assess spatial dependence, we compute Global and Local Moran's I at the regional level for both strategies and sustainable vineyard practices. The results allow us to evaluate the presence of spatial clustering and compare the strength of these patterns through standardized z-scores.

Our analysis explores whether spatial dynamics differ across wine contexts, including regions characterized by strong territorial brands (e.g., Champagne or Mosel) and areas associated with different industry structures and business models (e.g., Old World and New World). Preliminary results reveal heterogeneous spatial patterns across wine regions worldwide. In some areas, organic and biodynamic production appear clustered and may function as a strategic differentiation mechanism, while in other regions sustainability practices are widely adopted independently from organic certification. These patterns suggest that the diffusion of sustainable practices may be driven by different regional factors, including climate pressures, regulatory frameworks, and production cost structures.

Terra incognita? What do the wine lovers of 'flyover country' want?

Rory Hill (Oklahoma State University)

Within the continent of North America, the vast majority of grape cultivation and wine production takes place on the west coast (the state of California and the province of British Columbia being the national leaders in the USA and Canada, respectively), whilst the largest urban centres of population are to be found on or near the east coast. Most of the research that has been undertaken on wine consumer behaviour on the North American continent has drawn from the experiences of consumers either in the wine producing regions of the west coast or the major, cosmopolitan cities of the east coast.

There remains a lacuna in regard to the vast interior of both the USA and Canada, despite the fact that the cities of that region now count among the fastest-growing – places like Calgary, Denver, Albuquerque and Austin. In this paper, initial findings will be shared from a research project that uses survey methods to generate data about the preferences of wine consumers who have heretofore largely avoided the attention of scholars. We will learn whether national or imported wines are favoured, to what extent small local production of wine is known about and supported, whether distinctive patterns of consumption are emerging, and more details about the place and value of wine as perceived by the inhabitants of the Great Plains of the USA and the middle provinces of Canada.

Architecture and Non-architecture: Qualification Strategies for Wine in Arab Countries between Association and Dissociation

Steffen Wippel (Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt/ German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA)/ Center for Near and Middle Eastern Studies (CNMS), Philipps-Universität Marburg)

This paper examines the role of architecture in the wine qualification strategies in three Arab countries: Morocco, Tunisia, and Lebanon. Since the 1990s/2000s, these countries have experienced a certain resurgence of their wine industries, with varying results, and have sought to enhance the quality and reputation of their products.

Architecture, whether materialised or reproduced, is widely recognised as playing a crucial role in attracting consumers' attention, creating positive associations with the product, and conferring quality upon it. However, given religious reservations in Islam and a conservative sociocultural environment, not all winemakers in the region will opt for a strong public presence. Consequently, the utilisation of architecture varies greatly from country to country, depending on legal conditions and the openness of the population.

While French-style châteaux feature prominently in Lebanese wine promotion, historicising manors have been built and cellars in modernist style restored for wine tourism in Morocco. By contrast, in Tunisia, where wineries are often hidden behind high walls, wine producers seem to be dissociating themselves from the surrounding vineyards, making their viticultural activities almost invisible.

To investigate this, the paper draws on conceptual insights into 'economies of qualities' and 'singularities,' as formulated by Michel Callon and Lucien Karpik, and on approaches to 'qualification,' further developed in human geography and applied in wine research. Ideas on 'geographies of dissociation' (Ibert, Kleibert, et al.) will be helpful to understand the ambivalences between architectural visibility and invisibilisation. The paper is based on empirical studies in Morocco, selective experience in Tunisia, and extensive desk research on Lebanon.

Book discussion session on “Value struggles: Looking at capitalism through the wine glass” (Bloomsbury, 2025)

Stefano Ponte (Copenhagen Business School)

There is no better product than wine to unmask some of the contradictions of contemporary capitalism. Wine is one of the most fragmented and diversified industries, and one that is not yet completely dominated by large corporate interests. It is also where all sorts of antagonisms against the power of capital are taking place. The expansion of uniform and branded offerings is counterbalanced by alternative discourses and practices valorising how place, nature and craft can deliver a range of different wines. At the same time, viticulture often comes at the cost of biodiversity and the exploitation of gendered and racialized labour.

Stefano Ponte's new book *Value struggles: Looking at capitalism through the wine glass* shows how these tensions and contradictions play out within three sites of struggle: place, nature and people (class, race and gender). The book examines how different 'worlds of valuation' are leveraged by specific groups of actors to maintain existing power imbalances or to attempt to challenge them. Through a detailed analysis of South African and Italian wine, it shows that predatory accumulation is about extracting value not only from labour, but also from place, nature and people's identities as owners of tangible and intangible assets. *Value struggles* provides a poignant example of how power is exercised in contemporary capitalism and explains the consequences for producers, workers and nature – both in the global South and the global North.

Terroir as Practice | The Significance of Sensory Practices in Viticulture in Times of Climate Change

Malte Grunicke (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)

In this paper, I examine the role of sensory practices in the production of so-called terroir wines and demonstrate the challenges that climate change poses to these very practices.

Terroir does not exist independently of socio-material practice; rather, it is brought into being through viticultural techniques and production processes that are carefully attuned to local environmental conditions. Alongside—and often in contrast to—technological innovations and scientific expertise in viticulture, winemakers rely on a complex assemblage of sensory practices throughout the production process. Their interactions with vines, grapes, and must do not simply reproduce explicitly codified knowledge or routinized techniques. Instead, these practices constitute an embodied mobilization of knowledge that often neither requires nor allows for explicit articulation. Here, the body does not merely function as an instrument of a knowing mind but actively engages with material entities. Precisely because this sensorial interaction between winemakers and their environment is not dependent on explicit verbalization, it enables a detailed and multifaceted translation—or rather, cultivation—of that environment into terroir wines.

From a practice-theoretical perspective, this reveals an interplay of visual, tactile, olfactory, and gustatory practices with environments and plant life that possess properties and characteristics that cannot be manipulated at will. If these material counterparts—the appropriate vines, suitable grapes, or familiar must—are no longer available, the complementary bodily techniques also risk losing their efficacy. Although these conditions have never been static and have always been subject to change, climate change represents a profound disruption in the dynamics of this relationship: rarely have natural conditions shifted so rapidly away from the practices that have co-evolved with them.

I take this disruption as an opportunity to analyze sensory practices in viticulture as forms of „social relationships with nature“ and to examine the strategies actors use to respond to these changing conditions. How do wineries relate to the various natural influences that shape viticulture, and how are these reflected in sensory perception and decision-making? In doing so, I also seek to contribute to a broader understanding of the significance, appropriation, and transmission of sensory and tacit knowledge within organizations.

Artifice and nature: Italian terroir and the self-naturalisation of labour

Oscar Krüger (Lund University)

Few notions are as significant for the wine market as is terroir; few, likewise, as controversial. While well-defined in the general sense of a nonfungible link between the sensorial properties of wine and the locality of grape cultivation, actors within the world of wine (as well as scholars who study this world) contend as to its nature. Not infrequently, its very existence will be in question. At the heart of these disputes lies the question of responsibility for quality, and whether one ascribes it to natural conditions or human artifice. The present paper makes a return to these issues. Based on 15 months of ethnographic fieldwork among Italian producers of natural wine, it addresses a context where actors understand terroir as a manifestation of the natural. Rather than to read this as a yet deeper occlusion of labour by place, however, it attends to it as a self-naturalisation of labour, enacted by those engaged in it. More than only a commercial conceit, such naturalisation amounts to an ontological politics over the nature of the creative act. Rather than occluding labour, natural terroir is a way to re-describe its significance. The stakes of so doing, in turn, must be understood in relation to the dynamics of capitalist agriculture, particularly the pressure of effectivization.

Transvaluating Terroir. On the speculative pragmatics of natural wine

Andrea Pavoni (Instituto Universitário de Lisboa)

This paper interrogates terroir through a quadrangular framework articulating soil, land, place, and taste as its constitutive dimensions – the material, normative, cultural, and sensorial axes through which terroir is composed across history and geography. Conventional terroir discourse has progressively demoted each of these dimensions: soil to inert matter, land to a juridical space of exception, place to an anthropocentric cultural fetish, and taste to a paradox of subjective relativism and standardised dogma. This fourfold reduction has rendered terroir a mere vehicle for economic enrichment, identitarian rhetorics, and the reproduction of entrenched hierarchies of land and value. The advent of so-called ‘natural wine’ has constituted a significant rupture in this sense. While natural wine remains a heterogeneous, conflictual field – and a booming global trend – I argue that, nested within its discourses, disputes, protocols, bodies and practices, lies a radical tendency with genuine political-ecological stakes. I propose to read natural wine as a speculative pragmatics, namely an ‘attempt to affirm the many worlds of value before they are leveled out by market operations: to preserve their relational opacities, their incommensurable claims, their distinct modes of mattering’ (Bordeleau, 2025). In this sense, natural wine promises to transvaluate terroir as site for alternative value and imagination, by radically reconfiguring its four dimensions: reanimating soils (restoring biological agency and human-soil interdependency), unarchiving land (opening enclosed territories to alternative modes of relationality and normativity), trans-localising place (creating trans-local spaces of participation and trust that avoid both terroir fundamentalism and industrial rootlessness), and de-phenomenologising taste (opening up taste to the more-than-human life composing wine). At stake, I suggest, is nothing less than a grounded, more-than-human reimagination of terroir – and, with it, of the political-ecological imaginaries through which we might inhabit, cultivate and value a changing world.