

Wine terroir concept: some preceding in Arrigo Serpieri's agrarian zone

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Abstract

The paper aims at discussing the role played by the theory of business clusters in wine marketing and in particular it aims at discussing the “terroir” definition in wine economics in order to find some preceding roots within the Italian Arrigo Serpieri's thought, often considered a politician rather than a theory maker, but recently reconsidered and revalued (Becattini 2002) as a Master of research methodology. Wine terroir is quite a philosophical concept but it can give competitive advantages in wine marketing as it has the power to explain different prices of wines with similar organoleptic characteristics. After a brief discussion on literature about the concept of economic spatial analysis, the second section investigates the multiseptic shifts of the word “terroir”, focusing on the conspicuous idea that within any “terroir” are connected individuals involved in production, in social organization and in agricultural practices, all being oriented in valorising the area itself. The third section treats of some traditional explanations of spatial patterns of economy arguing that production is intrinsically a local fact and any production-site is an exclusive combination of natural and historical resources as well as cultural resources and social organization. The fourth section attempts to explain the Serpieri's theoretical viewpoint on the specificity of local development within an “agrarian zone” that can be considered as a general preceding of the “terroir” concept. The fifth section presents some theoretical application of special analysis on wine sector as updated wine marketing uses “terroir” as a differentiation tool aiming at dominating high-end and luxury goods market segments, facing competition of branded wines that have less cost and geographical restraints.

JEL classification: B30, Q13, R14.

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