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Find Us in The Vines: An Ethnographic Account of the Role of
BIPOC/Diasporas in the Okanagan, Napa, and Sonoma Wine Tourism
Industries

Diversity, Inclusion and Culture in the North American Wine Industries

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Abstract: This report explores the role and influence of BIPOC/diasporas in the Okanagan Valley, Canada and Napa and Sonoma wine regions in the United States using a comparison study. It focuses on how culture can enhance marketing and uncover the influences of BIPOC/diasporic cultures of these wine regions. The following insights reflect upon 1) the need for re-examining diversity and inclusion practices in the wine regions and 2) the ways marketing and identity can be enhanced to create accessible spaces valuing and bringing in more diversity in these regions. By utilizing ethnographic research methods, this research addresses a gap in understanding the role of diversity and inclusion in the wine industry by putting the voices of the BIPOC/diasporic community at its center.

1. Introduction

Travel to North American wine regions like Napa Valley, California or the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia, steadily grows in popularity as tourists seek the rural idyll perceived to be present in the wine communities and landscapes. Wine is not just a commodity but one that embodies culture, class, identity, and power (Gmelch and Gmelch 2011; Gonzalez Turmo 2001). Wine regions in Canada and the United States exemplify how the forces of globalization reinforce and influence the culture, societal beliefs, values, and the consumption of food and wine. Both countries share a history of colonization and are heavily influenced by the diverse immigration and migration patterns that continue to shift the identity of place through culinary cultures (Hashimoto and Tefler, 2006; Inglis and Almila, 2019). The comparison study comes from learning how these factors have diverged to create a unique identity and presence for these North American wine regions as they draw upon

Napa Valley as an ideal case of success. The image of authentic Canadian and American cuisine is a politically powerful tool that reflects globalized culture and makes claims about ownership, belonging, and nationhood (Burkay and Dean, 2020). The cultural identities of minorities are used to create economically beneficial culinary destination narratives in Canada and the United States to attract tourists (Burkay and Dean, 2020). The gaze of tourists is captured through multi-media and culinary experiences that serve Western European ideals of food culture. This appropriates and erases the histories of Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC)/diaspora cultures due to a history of settler colonialism, globalization, and capitalism (Feagin and Elias, 2013; Slocum, 2011; Germann Molz, 2007). Given the scope of this project, People of Colour and diasporas are the primary populations of focus. The project examines this population while exploring the different cultural representations within Napa, Sonoma, and Okanagan.

Overall, the on-going dissertation research project aims to critically address the gap in research that explores the role and influence of BIPOC/diaspora on wine tourism in a comparative case study of the Napa and Okanagan Valleys. In this research project, I will ask the following questions: (1) What are the roles and influences of BIPOC communities/diaspora (i.e., South Asian, Black, and Chinese-owned wineries) in the wine industry? (2) How have the Okanagan and Napa Valleys used these influences to create and shape culinary tourism destination images? (3) What similarities and differences exist in the political, social, and cultural influences that shape the roles of BIPOC/diaspora communities within these spaces? (4) What are the implications of consumed culinary cultures on the identity of self and place? How does intersectionality influence these

identities? How is the portrayal of these identities understood by diaspora/BIPOC? (5) How is cultural knowledge shared, claimed, and displayed within the wine industries?

This report focuses on the cultural influence of the Okanagan, Napa, and Sonoma wine regions. While conducting research in Napa, many of the BIPOC/diasporic groups were located across the border into Sonoma, which provided valuable insight into the history and research questions. The report answers how culture can enhance marketing and uncover the influences of BIPOC/diasporic cultures of these wine regions. The following insights reflect upon 1) the need for reexamining diversity and inclusion in the wine regions and 2) the ways marketing and identity can be enhanced to create accessible spaces valuing and bringing in more diversity in these regions. Further, it elaborates on how cultural understanding can be used as a tool to resonate with consumers and producers/hosts to build initiatives capturing the interest of both parties to create a progressive and culturally aware future for the region, visitors, and the industry.

2. Literature Review

American and Canadian culinary cultures are dependent on bodies crossing borders. Their cuisines are dependent on global flows of food/beverages and cultural knowledge (Garcia, DuPuis, and Mitchell, 2017). Migrants, immigrants, and refugees are catalysts for change in foodways (Mintz and Du Bois, 2002). Migrant groups in Canada and the United States have been using cuisine as a tool to represent inclusivity and cultural identity. This approach is considered safer and less political to develop a national narrative displaying “colonial-settler adaptation” but also appropriate and erase “histories of cultural genocide” (Burkay and Dean, 2020). Canada has shifted from singular Canadian

culture to multiculturalism, focusing on differences and immigrant cultures (Hashimoto and Telfer, 2006). The United States follows a similar ideology, rooted in assimilation, which can lead to the loss of cultural identity (Lalami 2017; Patel 2012; Bhugra and Becker 2005). The diasporic community's identity is repurposed, losing its ethnic roots to become "Canadian," "American," or "owned by white people." The differences are found in the various forces that influence social and structural inequalities, such as racism, colonialism, power, ideology, and white hegemony in relation to tourism (Arai and Kivel 2009). Both regions share similarities in settler colonialism, migration patterns, indigenous histories, and differences in how BIPOC/diaspora politically fit within these spaces and shape destination identities.

The locality and culture of food and wine have evolved immensely in the age of globalization, shifting food cultures and shaping them innovatively as diasporic communities make these new places home. Food and wine play an essential role in building a nation's identity, through which people can celebrate a sense of belonging (Burkay and Dean, 2020). Culinary tourism includes visiting a destination to experience its culinary culture, and it plays a significant role in the wine industry, allowing individuals to escape the mundane to an idyllic wine country (Getz and Brown, 2006; Hashimoto and Telfer, 2006; Ellis et al., 2018). It is a product of three main factors- consumers, wineries, and the region- that help foster the growth of the wine community (Getz and Brown 2006; Lee Cartier 2014).

Taste is socially constructed and provides insights about social standing and what products are valued amongst a group (Bourdieu, 1984). Tourism marketing can reproduce stereotypes and influence the conceptions of identity where ethnic food

can be constructed to reinforce power relations and systemic inequality (Flowers and Swan, 2017). The impacts of transnationalism and globalization on culinary tourism construct distinct identities for BIPOC/diaspora and culinary destinations influenced by colonial discourses (Salazar and Graburn, 2014; Ochoa, 2012; Inglis and Almila, 2019). Culinary tourism depicts food as geographical or cultural symbols to experience “otherness” through taste (Germann Molz, 2007). These destinations commercialize “otherness” to add “flavour” to their dominant “multicultural” and “diverse” cultural identities (Abu-Laban and Gabriel, 2008; Hooks in Germann Molz, 2007). The representations of race “discursively create identities through cooking and eating,” and the “social process of race shapes landscapes and knowledge systems” (Slocum, 2011). Whiteness is associated with the dominant groups and has instilled in places beliefs about exclusion and social connections (McAlister in Lipsitz, 2007). Understanding race requires the tools for fully understanding the deep layers, complexities, and systemic structures of racism (Feagin and Elias, 2013).

The culinary destination image needs to catch the attention of tourists but needs to be politically positioned to build a business and become allies with other countries (Telfer and Hashimoto, 2006; Mintz and DuBois, 2004). This can erase the histories of colonialism and racism as BIPOC/diaspora is portrayed as a representation of the country (Flowers and Swan, 2017). Despite accepting BIPOC/diaspora within culinary spaces, they have negotiated their belonging to fit into its culinary destination identity as it favours the political landscape (Burkay and Dean, 2020). However, little is known about the role and influence of BIPOC/diaspora in creating culinary destination identities.

Therefore, bringing awareness to the representation of culinary cultures in wine country will create decolonized, diverse, and inclusive spaces.

3. Methods

Initial recruitment was done through email, social media contact (contacting wineries and wine representative groups/associations), participating/visiting local wineries, and further employing the use of snowballing. This technique involved participants referring others who would be interested in taking part in the research study. Before this study, the primary researcher conducted research within the Okanagan Valley wine industry. This provided the tools and experience to work efficiently with the Valley and helped to build connections with wineries, industry members and organizations focusing on supporting the involvement of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) in Canada. Canadian wineries were easier to navigate as a researcher and as a tourist due to the structure of the tasting rooms being more accessible in many cases. These spaces pre- and post-COVID-19 remain accessible and interactive even while building new connections throughout the Valley. Canadian wineries were open to responding via email. They accommodated many walk-ins, making it easier to have conversations and connect with a diverse group of individuals working and visiting the Valley.

The connections and recommendations in Napa Valley were made with the help of California State University connections and organizations like GWC, Napa Vintners, and Uncorked and Uncultured. However, along with Napa Valley, the research extended across the border into Sonoma. Sonoma is home to many diverse wineries from BIPOC/diasporic communities, and it was easier to engage with people wanting to speak on the research topic. Going around

Sonoma brought to attention overlapping issues and the role borders play in creating accessibility, value, and identity. Recruitment and navigating Napa and Sonoma wineries was done mainly through personal visitations and participant observations. This, in turn, began through an in-depth internet search to see whether there were any diverse or cultural influences of the wineries highlighted on tourism pages or readily available to visitors. In some instances, it was a bit easier to find directories created about Black-owned or other Minority-owned businesses highlighted since the COVID-19 pandemic due to the awareness reading issues of racism were brought to attention. However, since then, more rigorous work has been required to find wineries that were BIPOC/minority owned in all three regions. Recruitment was done to explore all ranges of diversity, open to understanding all different perspectives that involved wineries that were not minority-owned to get a holistic understanding of what was perceived to be the culture of Napa and Sonoma while exploring the diversity of wine tours/tastings. This recruitment period came with difficulty, as it was more difficult to access spaces and have conversations in Napa or often get the contact information to speak with someone open to discussing the topic. It was a bit easier to navigate BIPOC-owned wineries, whether in Napa or Sonoma, as they were curious about my dissertation and how it can contribute to helping businesses. Over time, connections with individuals in Sonoma and Napa contributed to learning more about their unique perspectives and history.

As a trained cultural anthropologist, the researcher relied on participant observation, interviews (formal and informal) and visual analysis to conduct this study. Participant observation includes visiting wineries to participate in tours,

events, and tasting sessions to observe what is happening in these spaces and how it contributes to the cuisine culture (Gmelch and Gmelch, 2011). There was a lot of time building connections and having informal interviews with winery owners, winemakers, and chefs, who are responsible for creating the taste of wines. Servers, tourists, wine tourism management, tour managers and operators who share knowledge of taste and culture will also be interviewed. These informal conversations with interlocutors were used to understand the key interests of this project, and interlocutors will be asked if they would want to continue this conversation at a formal interview. Participants were invited to meet again at the tasting room to be interviewed or to meet via Zoom. Several in-depth interviews were conducted with a diverse group regarding age, generation, cultural background and the BIPOC/diasporic community in both regions. Lastly, a visual analysis was undertaken to explore the significance of media advertisements, wine menus, maps, and brochures to investigate the presence or absence of BIPOC/diaspora within the region. These methods helped to gain a holistic understanding of the research questions. Qualitative data is collected for the research study to get an in-depth holistic knowledge of experiences and perceptions regarding the topic by putting the voices of the BIPOC/diasporic communities at the center.

Sample Size

The sample size of this project includes 24 in-depth interviews from the Okanagan, Napa, and Sonoma Valleys. Further, it includes many informal conversations throughout the Valley during tours, tastings, events, and dining. This research was conducted at approximately 21 different wineries across these regions. This sample size is used in anthropological research to explore the area of inquiry in depth,

following the perspectives of a purposive sample size. This allows for rich data collection focusing on context to support an in-depth analysis versus having broad generalizations. Participants were of the legal drinking age in British Columbia (19 years old) and California (21 years old). There was a diverse range (i.e., ethnicity, age, and gender) of participants to explore the research questions. They were winery owners, winemakers, chefs, servers, tourists, wine tourism management, tour managers and operators. When language was an issue for communication in some ethnic communities, translators/interpreters from the local community were recruited.

Positionality

The primary researcher is a trained anthropologist. Positionality highlights how the researcher's identity impacted or can be related to the work being conducted. The primary researcher identified a woman, a person of colour, and a university-educated person, which affected how the researcher navigated the field. This allowed the researcher to see nuances in behaviours, have open conversations or see the uncomfortableness when they were the only person of colour in the tour that day, leading them to be othered in an otherwise diverse space. However, the researcher built connections with the community by spending several hours daily in these spaces as an insider and outsider of the industry and community. The researcher's positionality helped to build better relationships with BIPOC/diasporic communities because they were able to have conversations where participants felt safe for their voices to be heard. These conversations led to uncovering issues, cultural understandings and histories while building strong connections with a supportive community striving for progressive change in this industry.

4. Results

The Okanagan, Sonoma, and Napa wine regions provide unique insight into tourism and diversity within these spaces. The results depicted some cases of concern and do have similarities across the borders. I will break this section down into regions and ending thoughts.

Okanagan Valley

The Okanagan Valley is a premier grape-growing region in British Columbia, Canada, stretching over 250 kilometres. Each area in the Valley is surrounded by picturesque scenery of lush trees, mountains, animals, and the beautiful lakes running in the Valley. A visit to numerous wineries in any of the subregions will invite you to experience the supernatural nature and picturesque beauty of the Valley. The Valley is made up of 11 sub-regions: Golden Mile Bench, Golden Mile Slopes, Naramata Bench, Okanagan Falls Skaha Bench, East Kelowna Slopes, Lake Country, South Kelowna Slopes, Summerland Bench, Summerland Lakefront and Summerland Valleys. In particular, the city of Kelowna is home to hundreds of wineries nestled in the mountains. These wineries represent a unique history and presence in the Valley culture.



Image 1: View of Okanagan Vineyards.

The Valley has many wine trails that feature several wineries following down the road that showcase various styles of tasting rooms, wines, and stories uniquely representing what it means to be Canadian. The researcher met with individuals from different backgrounds and experience levels who have worked in the wine industry. Along the journey, the lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic altered the experiences of some of these wineries. These experiences were not as uniform by only showcasing the agriculture and wines but were rebelling against traditions through subtle and sometimes overt actions. To clarify, the Okanagan, a new world wine region, is known for having the space to experiment with its winemaking, but experimenting with representing unique cultural narratives was becoming more prominent. In several cases illustrated through the Valley and in interviews, there was newfound comfort in not blending in

but sharing personal cultures through influences in tasting rooms and events. These events highlighted the BIPOC/diasporic diversity, the use of different food cultures, traditions, labels, and the immigrant experience. However, the movement did not come without discrimination, barriers and difficulties faced by members of the BIPOC community from industry members. When the communities decide to do something different or look different, their legitimacy and presence in the Valley are questioned. However, if you were using ethnic influences, appropriating these cultures, not valuing diversity, and were not culturally aware or a part of the BIPOC/diasporic communities, then you would not be receiving the pushback. The interviews, participant observation, and conversations revealed some interesting and important themes.

Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility:

There is a reported lack of inclusion, diversity, and accessibility in the wine industry. This was reported by industry workers who feel that factors such as gender, race, status, etc., impacted their work and presence in the industry. They also noticed a lack of self-awareness by organizations controlling tourism, wineries, and workers that do not seem to think issues relating to diversity, inclusion and accessibility are of significance. This lack of communication and understanding came from undermining and questioning the knowledge of those with different backgrounds, genders and age groups. There are reported instances where individuals had to go out of their way to hide their identity to be taken more seriously in the industry. Further, this seeped into BIPOC/diasporic communities refraining from wanting to take part in wine tourism because of the elitist, pretentious and non-accessible nature. They do not see a need to go to these wineries and spend so much

money because they do not see the value in these experiences or feel seen in these spaces.

The smaller tasting rooms in the Valley expanded to provide pairings, hire food trucks/catering, or open restaurants. This allowed wineries to offer visitors something different by showcasing various ethnic cuisines while respectfully sharing their cultural histories. The element of connecting with BIPOC/diasporic cultures is appropriated in more prominent euro-centric wineries, whereas the smaller ones are now feeling comfortable pushing for a change. This allowed further accessibility to target groups who do not see themselves in wine country due to factors like not drinking or having a cultural disconnect. These wineries have developed culturally relevant events to take place at the winery, provided options to those who do not drink but would be open to learning about other practices and histories associated with the winery, and brought their cultural food or foods not from their culture to teach about culture through consumption. These wineries used food as a tool to create awareness, open learning space and belonging past the typical wine crowd.

Creating Belonging: Many of the BIPOC/diasporic community did not feel a sense of belonging when it came to the overall marketing of the wine region and navigating their businesses. There are several reports that organizations did not provide them with the support they need due to the lack of communication and disconnect. Additionally, many wineries that decided to go against the traditional wine tourism practices and culture were scrutinized. Whether it be people in the industry or wine/amateur professionals, they tend to discredit the wine or efforts made at these wineries because they need to align with the tradition they expect. However, these wineries took matters into their own hands to get involved and created a

community beyond the wine industry. They worked to support each other and have created safe spaces for BIPOC/diasporic communities at these wineries.

Diversity in Marketing: There were many reports of tokenized diversity. Through analyzing media from the past to now, it is evident that a change was made since the awareness of racism as a result of protests since the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the use of BIPOC images amongst mostly white bodies does not at all reflect the consumer market, but rather, it checked off a “trend” for these organizations. To promote diversity in the wineries, it is important to listen and communicate with the audience being represented. This lack of understanding and ignorance initiates a need for embracing culturally informed marketing initiatives that represent the actual BIPOC/diasporas in the Valley while creating safe spaces for consumers to enjoy. Along with this, BIPOC/diasporas who worked or owned these wineries are not invited to sit at the table to voice their concerns or to be seen unless it is beneficial to be used as a token when convenient.

Napa Valley

Napa Valley is a world-renowned wine region located in Northern California. It is home to the rolling mountain range, vineyards, gorgeous tasting rooms and replicas of iconic European architecture. Napa Valley offers a desired luxury experience to all its visitors as they embark on experiences exploring the culture it has to offer in hundreds of wineries spread out in the region. It is home to 18 recognized American Viticulture areas spread over 20 miles long valley. Each of these wineries provides a unique experience that represents the long-standing history of Napa Valley.



Image 2: View of Napa vineyards.

While navigating this space, the researcher noticed stark differences compared to the Okanagan Valley. Despite Okanagan using Napa as an example to build its industry and being compared to this iconic region, factors of culture, identity, politics, and diversity play a significant role in differentiating these experiences. Napa Valley takes its identity to a different level where systemic order and gatekeeping add to the luxury experience. The experience regarding the relationships between hosts and consumers was more distant and sometimes not informative. Casual settings were not a norm, but following rigorous rules and operations seemed to underlie these experiences. It was also difficult for a researcher to get in touch with wineries and get information to connect with someone open to speaking about the winery. Tasting experiences were luxurious and much more expensive than those experienced in the Okanagan or Sonoma. The tasting rooms are sometimes less diverse depending on where

they were and operated. After speaking to some of the industry members in a diverse range of wineries and BIPOC/diaspora-owned ones, similar themes seemed to guide the cultural experience of Napa. The diverse BIPOC/diaspora-owned wineries were less known of, or if they were known of, they found subtle, small ways to showcase their identity and fit into the Napa brand.

Gatekeeping: This was an interesting topic in interviews and conversations. There was a mixed response regarding the regulations of Napa wineries and feeling restricted in some instances. Many thought they did not want to participate because of the “elitist” or “gatekeeping” culture. Many of the younger or BIPOC/diasporic communities do not want to come to wine country because of this feeling and hesitate to take part. Even if they were curious, it was tough to make reservations, choose experiences, and even have conversations with hosts at wineries was difficult. The wine culture in Napa makes some people feel like they cannot take part or have a space to learn. Also, given the costs and nature of tastings, the spaces were more exclusive and not for everyone to participate. This notion of gatekeeping of who has access to these spaces, deciding what is important and who is seen/heard, echoes in tasting rooms and amongst industry members who are recognized over others. Those who tend to go against the grain or do something different are not as respected as more prominent wineries who continue to keep their rigorous brand image alive. This restricted those outside of the current target audience from wanting to experience or be a part of the wine tourism industry in Napa. There needed to be more of a discussion that includes BIPOC/minority wineries, workers and consumers to help create a safe, accessible space where everyone feels welcomed, as these spaces are to share and learn about the agriculture in Napa.

Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility: As mentioned in the Okanagan, a similar insight towards diversity, inclusion and accessibility is discussed. Further, understanding what diversity and inclusion mean across the board is an issue. There are mixed meanings of diversity and how it is implemented in Napa. Several organizations are working towards supporting BIPOC in building careers in the wine industry. Some organizations work to highlight different wineries that are BIPOC/diasporic-owned. However, neither organization is as accessible or is known as a tool by other industry members or visitors/consumers. Smaller wineries that worked to be more diverse feel unrecognized despite occasionally being asked to hold dinners or events. They feel that diversity and highlighting the different BIPOC/diasporic cultures in the Valley needs to be re-examined. They do not feel as supported as industry members or as consumers due to the lack of diversity, inclusion and accessibility in Napa. These spaces are not as accessible in terms of affordability, open learning spaces, and comfortable environments that people from diverse backgrounds can navigate. It would be better to take insights from these smaller wineries to learn more about respectfully showcasing diversity in the Valley and American identity as a whole.

Diversity in Marketing: Diversity in marketing needed to take on a different approach to keep up with attracting diverse audiences to come to Napa Valley. Some participants have pointed out the need to speak with BIPOC/diasporic wineries and workers to help understand the ideas and needs they must better feel supported and represented in marketing. The current media seems less diverse and targeted towards other communities. The generic pictures act as gatekeeping and make the spaces feel unwelcoming. Taking an approach towards

targeted cultural marketing representing the diversity in America found in the Valley can help drive business, create better-informed narratives and enhance relationships producers have with organizations representing tourism. It is necessary to focus on wineries reforming traditional Napa visions by introducing their unique cultural knowledge to get more people interested in wine. Simple communication and seeing the stories being told through the communities that lack representations can help create an environment where more BIPOC/diasporas would feel welcome to participate.

Sonoma

Sonoma County borders Napa, offering unique and diverse experiences throughout the area, showcasing the histories and cultures of the space. It is a beautiful region nestled amongst the mountain range, surrounded by vineyards and wildlife. Sonoma is home to 60,000 acres of planted vineyards and 19 recognized viticulture regions. As reported by interlocutors, Sonoma continued to live in the shadow of Napa. Sonoma, being home to hundreds of wineries and diverse cultures, must be valued as a player in the wine industry on a larger scale.



Image 3: View of Sonoma vineyards.

The culture of Sonoma differed significantly from Napa despite being separated through geographical borders. The culture in tasting rooms has been more intimate, open learning environment, accessible, and culturally diverse throughout history. Sonoma felt a bit more like the Okanagan, given its accessibility and different approach towards wine tourism. Participants reported Sonoma to be where they wanted to be and took others, but, unfortunately, it is not seen as intriguing as Napa to others. There is a hindrance in the representation, value, and identity of Sonoma that makes it Napa's counterpart that will never be able to catch up.

Cultural Symbolism: There was occasional cultural symbolism shown at wineries in subtle ways. This is represented through flags, highlighting history and politics through subtle stances like books, wallpaper, and art, also, if a winery disclosed that it is a BIPOC/diasporic-owned winery, it is mentioned in the winery's online personal marketing. These wineries that are BIPOC/diasporic-owned have found unique

ways to showcase different cultural symbolism and fight traditional cultural symbolism present in the neighbouring region. They used décor, cultural stories, and branding to create a community beyond the tasting room to connect with other BIPOC/diasporas and younger groups to get involved in the American wine culture by making it more accessible. The symbolism used is unapologetic and welcomes a diverse crowd of visitors who want to enjoy wine but also feel comfortable exploring what the culture offers.

Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility:

More diversity was found in the wineries in Sonoma. There were more people who, like in Canada, wanted to showcase their unique cultural backgrounds and do something different from the traditional tasting found in Napa. The tastings themselves were more accessible and affordable, had diverse wine pairings, shared cultural histories of the winery owners, had more intimate conversations with consumers, and wanted to openly embrace their American identity. Sonoma became a place where more BIPOC/diasporic communities felt like it was accessible and wanted to come to visit, whether they drank wine or not, to swing by and show support. Despite their rules and regulations, these wineries challenged traditional notions of wine culture by bringing in their culture through food and wine pairings when possible. These experiences provided an educational experience that allowed consumers to begin building a relationship with wine by associating with their unique cultures. Regarding tourism, these wines feel less represented and sometimes dismissed by wine professionals and marketing. They try to push against the wine norms, which come with continuous challenges that dismiss their cultural knowledge. Another issue expressed is the border between Napa and Sonoma. This border has many stigmas and makes

Sonoma feel like a distant place that will not be as valuable as Napa. The community also felt that it was separate from the conversation regarding being included in representing or providing feedback on tourism practices. They express the need to be heard and seen for what they bring to the wine region and how it can benefit everyone. Sonoma continued to push tradition, and as mentioned by participants, if Napa were more inclusive and understanding of Sonoma, then the business here and interest in tourism would be more significant.

Diversity in Marketing: Some wineries and industry members expressed that they need to be seen and heard by Sonoma's marketing team. Despite being less recognized than Napa, Sonoma has a more diverse space, making it valuable. This diversity should be used as an advantage to highlight the culture, adding to the wine industry, and creating unique American experiences for consumers. These experiences and stories are reported to be not considered authentic wine tasting that fits the Napa standard or is recognized as something American. There needs to be more than generic marketing and occasionally highlighted diverse events. The wineries have established ways to connect with their communities and build a solid base to increase traffic, but in return, they have built a love of wine for a diverse range of people. Wineries have taken the initiative to stand out and showcase their American identity through immigrant stories and building community extending beyond the wine industry. They exemplify what diversity in marketing can do not only for economic benefits but also to value the culture of wine through different lenses. The media used to market Sonoma should also showcase the diverse cultures present in the Valley over the years rather than generic images or using only certain often euro-

centric/Caucasian crowds to portray the experiences in Sonoma.

Summary

The themes in the wine regions illustrated some overlap in how individuals feel about the culture and their representation in these spaces. This comparison aims to see how Napa, a prominent example of success, is used and manipulated to create unique identities for wine regions like Sonoma and the Okanagan. Despite following this example, the regions need to be manipulated according to different cultural, economic, and political factors to situate themselves. The diversity of these regions represented not only agriculture but also emphasized the need for representation of these underrepresented communities, which have helped create something uniquely American or Canadian. The insights urge for reform where the voices of BIPOC/diasporic communities, their histories, and cultures are represented to showcase what wine culture in North America is about and create a space where everyone feels welcomed.

Table 1: Summary of the results in each region.

| | Okanagan Valley | Napa Valley | Sonoma |
|---|--|---|---|
| Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility | <p>Lack of diversity and inclusion – there is appropriating cultural behavior taking place at other wineries and lack of support from partner organizations</p> <p>BIPOC/diasporas do not feel comfortable wanting to come to the Valley - pretentious and non-accessible</p> <p>Lack of support for BIPOC/diasporic workers and winery owners</p> <p>Wineries showcasing diversity through events, food, and décor but receive pushback from industry members and some visitors</p> <p>More accessible and affordable than Sonoma still transitioning to find a way to be diverse</p> | <p>Lack of diversity and inclusion – there is appropriating cultural behavior taking place at other wineries and lack of support from partner organizations</p> <p>BIPOC/diasporas do not feel comfortable wanting to come to the Valley - pretentious and non-accessible</p> <p>No understanding of what diversity and inclusion means</p> <p>Some wineries showcasing diversity in very subtle ways</p> <p>Organizations working towards diversity and inclusion are not widely known or accessible</p> | <p>Lack of diversity and inclusion – lack of support from partner organizations, community of Napa, appropriation in Napa despite Sonoma having these cultural influences</p> <p>more accessible and affordable than Napa, had diverse wine pairings, shared cultural histories of the winery owners, had more intimate conversations with consumers, and wanted to openly embrace their American identity</p> <p>Napa and Sonoma border has many stigmas and makes Sonoma feel like a distant place that will not be as valuable as Napa</p> |
| Creating Belonging | <p>BIPOC/diaspora owned wineries do not feel accepted</p> | | |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|---|---|
| | <p>BIPOC/diaspora owned winery create a space welcoming other members of the community and show support</p> <p>Going against traditional wine culture leads to speculation and delegitimizing the winery/brand</p> | | |
| Gatekeeping | | <p>Non-belonging space and was referred to as gatekeeping or elitist culture</p> <p>Hesitant to indulge in wine culture or come to wine country by younger and BIPOC/diasporas because of gatekeeping culture</p> | |
| Cultural Symbolism | | | <p>Cultural symbolism is shown at wineries highlighting history and politics through subtle stances like flags and art.</p> <p>Using culture to market brand websites disclosing if the winery is BIPOC/diasporic owned</p> |
| Diversity in Marketing | <p>Tokenized diversity - checking off a trend launched by social movements</p> | <p>Need to promote diversity in the wineries, it is important to listen and communicate with the</p> | <p>More diverse space, making it valuable</p> <p>Need to promote diversity in the wineries, it is</p> |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| | Need to promote diversity in the wineries, it is important to listen and communicate with the audience being represented need for culturally informed marketing | audience being represented need for culturally informed marketing Current media seems less diverse and targeted towards other communities and using the generic pictures act as gatekeeping/excluding | important to listen and communicate with the audience being represented need for culturally informed marketing Wineries collaborate and create marketing promoting culture and community |
|--|---|---|--|

5. Practical Implications

The following section explores practical implications for diversifying marketing using culturally informed knowledge. This will center on diversity, inclusion, and the voices of BIPOC/diasporic communities. It will help create progressive, long-awaited change in Napa, Sonoma, and the Okanagan Valley to enhance the future of these wine industries.

Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

Reforming diversity and inclusion initiatives can help better support the wine industry workers through targeted support. Concerns regarding the lack of understanding of diversity, inclusive spaces and accessibility were shared throughout these regions. The definition of diversity and the significance it holds for these regions needs to be clarified and is often misunderstood regarding providing support and increasing business. In this case, it is important to build relationships with BIPOC/diasporic-owned wineries to help develop plans that showcase diversity through culturally targeted and sensitive marketing. It is also essential to use diversity and inclusion to understand how this can be used to support wineries in building a collaborative practice to succeed in business. In return, implementing community-based learning and creating organizational

relationships helps solidify and improve the brand identity of these wine regions. It is important to understand that the regions are filled with a spectrum of diversity that makes them unique, but if it were not for the diverse people who helped build this industry, it would not exist. These spaces represent Canadian and American cultures through consumption experiences and should include all its diversity, respectfully. Further, change moves towards the direction of social responsibility by supporting diversity through cultural competence in an increasingly globalized world.

Improving communication with smaller wineries would help reform the marketing of wine tourism. Speaking with BIPOC/diasporic-owned wineries to understand how they wish to be represented and heard to represent their cultures in the overall branding of these destinations will help create more culturally aware marketing. These conversations also invite a space to build relationships that can bring forth new ideas for better marketing and cultural events. Further, these winery individuals work closely with consumers, and they can provide insights on what works and how they can use their cultural vantage point to get more BIPOC/diasporas to feel comfortable coming to their wineries.

To understand the issues relating to diversity and inclusion, it is essential to create spaces for people in the industry to have a voice. This would mean hiring more BIPOC in positions of power to represent these regions. Unfortunately, the lack of representation on committee boards representing these regions does lead to spaces that need more interest in these groups. The decisions being made may be helping, but these are surface-level commitments. These communities of BIPOC/diasporas face challenges in creating significance in their knowledge and presence in the regions. Consumers and experts will always question them for their non-traditional ways or through ignorance by experts and those in power to understand their work and commitment to wine. To feel seen and heard, it is important to have a board that values diversity and the education of these communities to invite their unique perspectives. This, in return, will help create a space where everyone is welcomed while creating identity and brand image, better decision-making, and a healthy, inclusive work environment.

Culturally Aware Storytelling and Marketing

Canada and the United States are countries supported by BIPOC/diasporas who have shaped these spaces to be renowned and desired. It is important to highlight the role these communities have played in history rather than exclude their part. This will call for corporate responsibility across boards that do not tokenize when it is convenient but work towards filling gaps in history and learning from previous mistakes. The conversations with hosts and visitors illustrate a disconnect where wine tasting does not feel like a cultural experience in some wineries. The hosts disconnect with customers because of factors like insufficient support in tasting rooms or not being interested in conversing

with consumers. This takes away from the wine culture and does not create an inviting space for everyone. The cultural significance of wine tasting is the pinnacle of this enterprise. More people are discouraged from coming to these spaces when it turns into a transactional visit. It would be necessary to re-evaluate these relationships in tasting rooms to be more culturally aware of sharing the winery narratives and stories to be more culturally aware and to invite others to embrace the culture of wine. This can be done by simply wanting to discuss more about the winery and tasting notes and redesigning an experience that is more intimate versus one that pours all wines and expects people to taste, buy, and leave. BIPOC/diasporic wineries have developed this model even though they are smaller to build strong communities and connections that have helped them with marketing, identity, and culturally aware storytelling. Culturally diverse marketing begins with putting the voices of those communities at the center to understand how to create targeted strategies to get more interest in wine culture respectfully. This would mean rethinking the circulated media and images representing the valley, speaking about events and situating towards an ethical plan representing the American or Canadian wine-tasting experience.

There is also a need to rethink “traditional” narratives of wine country. By opening minds to new ways to invite hosts who showcase the diverse cultures in wine country. This is done in many ways, such as food and wine pairings, story-telling, and events. These challenges the notion of traditional wine culture and create something that creates an identity for the winery or region and represents being Canadian and American. This changes the narrative for wine country by creating a focus on learning more about present histories that are not often represented.

Further, it brings forth rethinking how different cultural influences in the regions should be represented in a culturally aware and mindful way rather than be exoticized or tokenized. The stories of BIPOC/diasporas being involved and present in the wine industry are often disregarded, whether it be in high positions or working behind the scenes like doing fieldwork. This does cause discrimination as it discredits the presence and knowledge of these communities. Communicating with communities, checking in on how they wish to be represented within the region, and understanding how they have created a model to invite more BIPOC/diasporas to explore wine can help further diversify consumer bases. Through these conversations and developing new relationships with these wineries, we can unearth insights that can bring culturally relevant and targeted marketing to support better these smaller wineries and the regions as a whole.

6. Conclusions

This report explored the role and influences of BIPOC/diasporas on the wine industry and wine tourism culture. It is evident through the ethnographic research that there is a lack of support and representation felt by BIPOC/diasporas working or visiting in these regions. This calls for re-evaluating marketing and bringing forth culturally informed marketing. This would require marketing to take an approach that works towards building relationships with BIPOC/diasporic-owned wineries to create branding that represents this non-traditional representation in the wine world. Further, it calls for acknowledging the presence and knowledge of these communities to rewrite the history of these communities in their roles of helping to create wine regions to be the valuable agricultural spaces they are today. The research pointed out the need for

more communication and representation, from not having relationships to being undermined by organizations and experts in wine for doing something different than tradition.

The tradition of wine culture in these regions needs to be re-evaluated. Despite having some freedom in developing wines and experiences for the consumers, it is evident that those who go against the norm face challenges. These challenges foster pushback and bring barriers and discrimination against cultural knowledge in the regions. New World North American wine regions are here to push our conceptions and challenge traditions to explore how the wine culture in these diverse spaces has been redefined. This is observed through cultural interactions and consumer insights about who traditionally fits the norms, making wine country an exclusive and gatekept space.

Lastly, there needs to be a re-evaluation to define what diversity and inclusion mean to organizations. There needs to be more diversity in organizations representing these regions, leading to a need for more cultural awareness, improvement of diversity and inclusion issues, better support, improved consumer relations, and enhanced brand identity. This calls for building a collaborative relationship that puts BIPOC/diaspora voices to be heard concerning matters about them. It can be helpful to have communication channels that allow diverse voices to be heard about issues communities face and learn from each other in a supportive community. However, to do that, it is important to ensure that these communities have a seat at the table and are heard to make impactful changes to improve the future of these wine regions.

This research illustrates a gap in academic research and the practical work to support and represent BIPOC/diasporic communities in prominent wine regions.

Building relationships with researchers who have developed community-based learning and safe spaces for BIPOC/diasporas to share their insights is valuable to understanding and learning more about the communities present in the regions. If we want to see more diversity in the wine industry, then we need to take the step to ensure that we include and listen to those

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