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# Introduction to the Sociology of WineThe Sociological Decanter: Pouring Sociology into Wine, and Vice Versa

David Inglis, Anna-Mari Almila

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# Abstract

Wine from grapes is both ancient and highly modern, increasingly widespread across vast swathes of the planet, and made, marketed and distributed by a huge industry that directly and indirectly employs millions of people and generates huge profits, at least for some. Yet despite wines social and cultural importance, sociology and sociologists have remained remarkably quiet about wine, unlike those in other academic disciplines. There is today no such thing as a scholarly field called the sociology of wine. This introductory paper to the special issue on wine and sociology considers this state of affairs, and what might be done about overcoming the relative silence of sociology on wine matters. It offers an extensive literature review covering what international sociological work there is on the wine/sociology interface, considering this relatively modest body of literature in relation to the more voluminous amounts of wine-related analysis offered by anthropologists, geographers, economists, and others. These scholarly domains are represented in the paper by reference to classic works and indicative readings. The paper poses a series of questions as to what a sociological field of wine analysis could look like, and what it would take to build such a thing. It also illustrates how the papers published in the special issue contribute to posing and answering some of these questions.



Keywords: wine, wine industry, wine culture, interdisciplinary research



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