Revista Internacional de Educación y Análisis Social Crítico
Mañé, Ferrer & Swartz.
ISSN: 2990-0476
Vol. 3 Núm. 1 (2025)

Resistance to the Colonization of Taste, Knowledge, and Practice in the Viticulture of Chile's Marga Marga Valley: Agroecology Confronts Globalization

Resistencia a la Colonización del Gusto, el Saber y el Hacer en la Vitivinicultura del Valle de Marga Marga en Chile: la Agroecología enfrenta a la Globalización

Resistência à Colonização do Gosto, do Saber e do Fazer na Vitivinicultura do Vale de Marga Marga no Chile: a Agroecologia enfrenta a Globalização

Carolina Alvarado-Aspillaga
Facultad Ciencias Sociales, Universidad de Playa Ancha. Chile.
https://orcid.org/0009-0003-3969-9373
mariaalvarado@alumnos.upla.cl

Juan Carlos Molina
Facultad Ciencias Sociales, Universidad de Playa Ancha. Chile.
https://orcid.org/0009-0008-7470-5042
juan.molina@alumnos.upla.cl

Abstract

The article explores the colonization of taste, knowledge, and practices in peasant communities of Latin America, focusing on its impact on cultural and productive practices, particularly in viticulture. This process has involved the imposition of a local-global model that reshapes local preferences in taste and knowledge, as well as production methods connected to communities and their territories. As a result, standardization and homogenization arise in wine production and consumption processes, leading to a loss of cultural identity and biodiversity. The study focuses on the winemakers of the Marga Marga Valley in the Valparaíso Region of Chile, who resist these pressures through agroecological practices and the preservation of local knowledge. Using an action research and socio-praxis methodological design, qualitative knowledge-building techniques were implemented, including a workshop called “Field Days,” semi-structured interviews, and hermeneutic analysis. The study investigates the strategies adopted by the wine cooperative to sustain this type of production and contribute to the cultural and ecological sustainability of their territories within the region. Agroecological practices emerge as forms of resistance against the colonization of taste, knowledge, and practices, as well as against the power dynamics imposed by the wine agroindustry, such as Concha y Toro. By strengthening their identities and collective memory, the winemakers not only preserve their cultural heritage but also advocate against inequality and exclusion in a market that favors large-scale production.

Keywords: cultural resistance, agroecology, winemaker, artisanal production, colonization, community, globalization.

Resumen

El artículo explora la colonización del gusto, del saber y del hacer en las comunidades campesinas de América Latina, enfocándose en su impacto en las prácticas culturales y productivas, especialmente en la vitivinicultura. Este proceso ha implicado la imposición de un modelo local-global que reconfigura las preferencias en los gustos y saberes locales, así como las formas de producción vinculadas a las comunidades y sus territorios. Como resultado, se genera una estandarización y homogenización en los procesos de producción y consumo de vino, lo que conlleva una pérdida de identidad cultural y biodiversidad. El estudio se centra en los viñateros del Valle de Marga Marga, en la Región de Valparaíso, Chile, quienes resisten estas presiones mediante prácticas agroecológicas y la preservación de saberes locales. Utilizando un diseño metodológico de investigación acción y socio-praxis, se implementaron técnicas de construcción de conocimiento cualitativo que incluyó un taller denominado días de campo, entrevistas semiestructuradas y análisis hermenéutico. Se investigan las estrategias adoptadas por la cooperativa vitivinícola para sostener este tipo de producción y contribuir a la sostenibilidad cultural y ecológica de sus territorios en el marco de la región. Las prácticas agroecológicas emergen como formas de resistencias frente a la colonización del gusto, del saber y del hacer, así como ante las dinámicas de poder impuestas por la agroindustria del vino, como Concha y Toro. Al fortalecer sus identidades y memorias, los viñateros preservan su patrimonio cultural y abogan contra la desigualdad y la exclusión en un mercado que favorece la gran producción.
Palabras clave: resistencia cultural, agroecología, vitivinicultor, producción artesanal, colonización, comunidad, globalización.

Resumo

O artigo explora a colonização do gosto, do saber e do fazer nas comunidades camponesas da América Latina, com foco em seu impacto nas práticas culturais e produtivas, especialmente na vitivinicultura. Esse processo tem implicado a imposição de um modelo local-global que reconfigura as preferências pelos gostos e saberes locais, bem como as formas de produção vinculadas às comunidades e aos seus territórios. Como resultado, gera-se uma padronização e homogeneização nos processos de produção e consumo do vinho, o que acarreta perda de identidade cultural e biodiversidade. O estudo foca nos vitivinicultores do Vale de Marga Marga, na Região de Valparaíso, Chile, que resistem a essas pressões por meio de práticas agroecológicas e da preservação dos saberes locais. Utilizando um desenho metodológico de pesquisa-ação e sócio-praxis, foram implementadas técnicas de construção de conhecimento qualitativo que incluíram uma oficina denominada “Dias de Campo”, entrevistas semiestruturadas e análise hermenêutica. Investigam-se as estratégias adotadas pela cooperativa vitivinícola para sustentar esse tipo de produção e contribuir para a sustentabilidade cultural e ecológica de seus territórios no contexto regional. As práticas agroecológicas emergem como formas de resistência à colonização do gosto, do saber e do fazer, bem como às dinâmicas de poder impostas

pela agroindústria do vinho, como a Concha y Toro. Ao fortalecer suas identidades e memórias, os vitivinicultores preservam seu patrimônio cultural e se posicionam contra a desigualdade e a exclusão em um mercado que favorece a grande produção.
Palavras-chave: resistência cultural, agroecologia, vitivinicultor, produção artesanal, colonização, comunidade, globalização.

Introduction

The Marga Marga Valley, located in the Valparaíso Region of Chile, is renowned for its rich winemaking tradition dating back to the Spanish conquest. However, the rural areas of this region are currently facing multiple challenges, including urban expansion, forest fires, mining, and the climate crisis. Furthermore, globalization and the dominance of large wine industries have driven the standardization of wine products, resulting in a colonization of taste that affects both consumers and the marketing and distribution chains, privileging industrial products over artisanal ones.

This article examines how this local winemaking community has become a model of cultural and ecological resistance in the face of these pressures. Through the adoption of agroecological practices and direct marketing via a cooperative committed to preserving the authenticity of the valley's wines—producing agroecological wines without chemical interventions—this community offers an alternative to the homogenization imposed by the global wine industry. In this context, the study explores how local winemakers confront the colonization of taste, knowledge, and practice, offering a different approach to the dominant industrial models.

The community of winemakers is small, composed of no more than seven local producers, each managing vineyards of up to two hectares. They cultivate ancient Spanish and French grape varieties, including País, Muscat of Alexandria, Pastilla del Belloto, San Francisco, Muscat Amarilla, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir, and Chardonnay. These varieties were introduced to the valley during the Spanish quest for gold in the Marga Marga creek and later influenced by French winemaking traditions. Originally, the wine was brought for religious ceremonies and personal consumption, which led to the establishment of the first vineyards and artisanal processes that continue to this day.

Currently, these vineyards are disappearing, primarily due to the asymmetry with the Chilean wine industry, which, as Lima (2015) notes, is dominated by an oligopsony where three major companies - Concha y Toro, San Pedro, and Santa Rita- control the market. According to Cid-Aguayo et al. (2020), these corporations have standardized both wines and prices, making it difficult for smaller producers to access fair and competitive markets, while simultaneously homogenizing (under an apparent diversity of offerings) wine consumption culture.

This socioeconomic context has created an urgent need for alternative production models that resist the cultural and economic homogenization imposed by globalization. Small-scale producers aim to maintain their traditional practices and knowledge in winemaking—methods and techniques intentionally distanced from standardization—not only as a means of economic survival but also to preserve their traditions and agroecological ways of cultivating grapes and producing wine (Cid-Aguayo et al., 2020).

The colonization of taste, knowledge, and practice is a complex and far-reaching process that has shaped the history of Latin American communities. This phenomenon is manifested in the imposition of a global model that reconfigures the tastes, ways of knowing, and ways of doing of Indigenous and rural communities, excluding them from dominant dynamics of production, consumption, and value systems. This is not merely a matter of imposing aesthetic or culinary standards about what is “good” or “authentic,” but a profound transformation of power relations, knowledge systems, and labor structures within these communities.

In winemaking, this translates into the standardization of wines and the homogenization of production processes, resulting in significant losses of local identity, biodiversity, and ancestral traditions. In Chile, in particular, small-scale wine producers have resisted this colonizing dynamic by recovering traditional winemaking techniques and combining them with agroecological principles to preserve both their cultural and ecological identities. These forms of resistance (Martínez, 2021) can be understood as a struggle to reclaim ancestral (Porto-Gonçalves, 2009) knowledge and local winemaking practices—embodied today in what can be described as wines that reflect the winemakers themselves. This concept refers to wines that not only emerge from the land but also embody a history, a territory, and a community rooted in knowledge and practices that resist absorption into the global industrial model.

The Colonization of Taste: Cultural and Economic Implications

In the realm of winemaking, the standardization of wine is a clear manifestation of the coloniality of power, a concept developed by Quijano (2000), who argued that colonization produced not only political and economic effects, but also deep epistemological impacts. Thus, the coloniality of taste implies that what is considered good or of high quality has been defined by a global hegemonic perspective, displacing indigenous flavors and homogenizing wine production in the name of globalization. This process has had a direct impact on how wine is produced, as international quality standards—promoted by large corporations—have diminished the importance of local particularities that traditionally reflect the deep relationship between vineyard, human labor, and the transformation of grape must in the winery.

However, Cid-Aguayo et al. (2022) invite us to reflect on the diversity of wines shaped by Chile’s varied wine landscapes. In their study of social cartography centered on the Marga Marga Cooperative, they

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highlight the presence of individuals who still use traditional tools such as leather lagares (fermentation vats made of ox hide), *zarandas* made of *coligüe* (a type of bamboo sieve used to destem grape clusters), and ceramic vessels. These tools and techniques constitute an essential part of the territory's local identity, preserving practices that have endured over time and offering producers a vision that transcends the homogenized logic of mass production.

The commercial model of the wine agro-industry has fostered cultural homogenization and delegitimized traditional practices, often framing indigenous products as inferior. Until 1880, wines made from local grape varieties, such as País, were appreciated by both the elites and the popular classes. However, following the War of the Pacific, the consumption of imported products like Sherry and Port began to displace these traditional wines, driven by their prestige among elites and tariff advantages for imports (Lacoste et al., 2016). Meanwhile, *pipeño* and *chicha*, beverages traditionally made from País grapes, remained popular among working-class sectors, characterized by their artisanal production methods (Lacoste et al., 2015).

The introduction of French grape varieties—an initiative supported by the National Agricultural Society—resulted in a new hierarchy within Chilean wines, relegating native products to an inferior status (Briones, 2006). Even before the Spanish arrived in search of gold in the Marga Marga creek, the region's Indigenous peoples possessed advanced knowledge of fermentation techniques using a variety of fruits. These ancestral knowledge facilitated the adaptation of grape cultivation and wine production, turning it into a natural and accessible process. Today, aspects of this knowledge of natural winemaking endure among local viticulturists who, by employing agroecological methods in both vineyard and winery, actively preserve these ancestral practices. This preservation has become a form of resistance against the cultural and productive standardization imposed by global markets and neoliberal policies.

In the specific context of the Marga Marga Valley, prior to Spanish colonization, Indigenous communities already possessed advanced fermentation techniques. These ancestral practices eased the incorporation and adaptation of grape cultivation and winemaking, making the process both natural and accessible. Today, elements of this knowledge survive in the practices of local winemakers, who—through agroecological methods in the field and the cellar—preserve these traditions. This safeguarding represents a form of resistance against the cultural and productive homogenization driven by global market forces. Yet, these practices and knowledge remain largely invisible and marginalized by the dominant industry and current regulatory frameworks.

Hugo Morales (personal communication, August 2022), a baqueano (local expert), artisan lagar maker, and producer of chicha and grape brandy, stated: I used to watch my grandfather making the lagares, and my father learned from him, and he taught us... how to make these ox-hide lagares, how to use the zaranda, and how to drive the animals up the mountain. This socio-natural connection disrupts

conventional binary views of nature and culture, offering alternative ways of relating to and living with the land. In his emotionally charged account, Morales explains that after the grapes are destemmed, they are left to rest for a few days to concentrate the sugars before being distilled. Behind this detailed, orally transmitted process -handed down from generation to generation- there is an underlying concern about the potential disappearance of these practices and knowledge, which are deeply intertwined with ways of life and with how the territory is inhabited —past, present, and future.

The Colonization of Knowledge: Knowledge as a Tool of Power

In the context of colonization, knowledge is intrinsically linked to relations of power. Walter Mignolo (2005) defines the coloniality of knowledge as the imposition of a singular form of knowledge that is presented as universal and scientific, while local knowledge –the one of Indigenous and peasant communities- are dismissed as obsolete, valueless, or even dangerous. This phenomenon has been particularly evident in various valleys of Chile, where traditional grape cultivation and winemaking techniques have been displaced by industrial methods designed to maximize efficiency and reduce costs, with little regard for the unique ecological and cultural characteristics of the local landscape.

As María Lugones (2008) also argues, colonization affects not only structures of power but also individual subjectivities and embodied ways of being. In this case, artisanal winemaking techniques and the traditional relationships with the land that have long characterized small-scale viticulturists in the Marga Marga Valley are increasingly regarded as inadequate in the face of global market demands.

Moreover, there is an ongoing risk of both symbolic and material forms of colonization, whereby the industry appropriates denominations of origin and markets products that falsely claim the traditional practices, processes, and knowledge of small-scale viticulture as their own (Cid-Aguayo et al., 2020).

The Colonization of Practice: Artisanal Production versus Industrialization

The colonization of practice refers to the transformation of modes of labor and production, whereby local techniques are stripped of their value in favor of industrial processes designed for efficiency and standardization. In the field of viticulture, this phenomenon has driven a shift from artisanal production toward industrialized methods, where the focus is on maximizing output and homogenizing the product—at the expense of the unique characteristics of traditionally crafted wines. Maintaining ancient winemaking practices fosters connections with traditional crafts. The continued presence of artisans who produce ox-hide *lagares, zarandas* made of *coligüe,* and ceramic vessels constitutes an essential component of local identity and collective memory, preserving practices that have endured over time and offering an understanding of the territory that transcends standardized mass production.

In this vein, Eduardo Leff (2018) highlights how the agro-industrial model has displaced practices rooted in sustainability and biodiversity with a system of mass production that favors homogenization. Just a few miles from Marga Marga lies Casablanca Valley, where viticultural techniques are now largely industrialized. By contrast, agroecology, as an alternative framework, seeks to restore a balance between traditional knowledge and ecological needs, promoting ways of doing that respect both the local ecosystem and the cultural practices of the people and their communities. According to the president of the cooperative, the cooperative's bylaws are founded on agroecological viticulture, which serves as a form of resistance against the colonization of practice, by reviving production processes that are tailored to and appropriate for the local context—processes that honor and uphold ancestral knowledge tied to the land and to manual labor.

However, the agro-industrial sector increasingly employs social marketing—crafting narratives of eco-friendly production that ostensibly honor traditional practices and the land—in order to position their products in alignment with current trends and international market demands. This phenomenon exemplifies what may be described as a simulacrum of social orthopedics: a superficial appropriation of traditional discourses designed to mask the underlying realities of industrialized production.

Resistance: Agroecology and Sustainability in the Viticulture of Marga Marga Valley

The local community of winegrowers has succeeded in resisting the forces of globalization and industrialization; collective tasks such as pruning, harvesting, and winemaking have fostered a distinctive mode of production. As the cooperative's president stated: "We do not know any other way to make wine; we use ancient techniques—ox-hide presses, fermentations without external yeasts in ceramic vessels and *raulí* barrels, a unique and ancient Chilean wood" (A. Herrera Román, personal communication, August 2022). His account emphasizes that the cooperative has preserved its viticultural identity through ancestral winemaking methods and the incorporation of agroecological principles. It is clear that their chosen model of production not only seeks economic viability but also affirms biodiversity, sustainability, and traditional knowledge.

Cid-Aguayo et al. (2020) point out that despite the hegemony of the industrial wine agribusiness, it is still possible to find—across three valleys in Chile—surviving traditional forms of viticulture that are fundamentally distinct from industrial production. One such example, examined in this study, is this cooperative, which promotes a form of viticulture that respects ecological balance, favors the production of natural wines, utilizes agroecological vineyards, and fosters fairer relationships with consumers. Direct marketing, without intermediaries, allows producers to maintain control over pricing, fostering more equitable relationships between producer and consumer while preserving the authenticity (understood as processual authenticity) of the wines.

Within this context, interviews conducted with members of the winegrowing community reveal practices and knowledge that not only aim for economic sustainability, but also emphasize environmental stewardship and the preservation of sociocultural heritage (traditional knowledge). José Varas, one of the local producers, explained that he works in harmony with nature, having learned from his grandparents how to enrich the soil using plant materials from the land, without resorting to chemical inputs (José Varas, personal communication, July 2022). The sustainability of these practices is grounded in the revalorization of local wines—wines with diverse flavors deeply rooted in the specific characteristics of the territory. According to Viña Herrera Alvarado, part of the winegrowing community, the goal is not merely to produce wines that appeal to conventional tastes, but to surprise consumers by offering wines that express the essence of nature through the fermented must.

Aligned with this philosophy, the cooperative organizes an event called Cata Social (Social Tasting), a free and open gathering that invites the broader community and the general public to engage in a process of taste re-education. The event promotes a consciously reflective appreciation of local flavors and territorial production practices—those grounded in agroecological principles that are socially just, environmentally responsible, and economically viable (Lugmaña, 2025).

Education as a Tool of Resistance

Within these dynamics of resistance, education plays a fundamental role. The Marga Marga Cooperative organizes workshops, events, and educational programs aimed at promoting knowledge of traditional and agroecological winemaking techniques. This approach seeks not only to strengthen local identity but also to educate both new generations and consumers on the importance of preserving traditions in the face of global standardization. As Arturo Escobar (2016) suggests, cultural and ecological resistance depends on the creation of new narratives (in the sense of re-connecting and re-signifying) that bind communities to their territories, their knowledge, and their productive practices.

When winegrowers develop agroecological techniques through the exchange of local knowledge, they contribute to enhancing the resilience of their communities against the pressures of neoliberal globalization. As communities come to recognize and (self-) value themselves through these narratives, a powerful sense of belonging to a collective, productive, and community-driven process is activated. This, in turn, strengthens social cohesion and the territorial role they assume through their viticultural practices and all that such production entails—helping to shape a potential territorial we, with all its inherent diversity and complexity.

Methodology

Research Design

Given the characteristics of the phenomenon under study—namely, understanding the agroecological practices and discourses of winegrowers in the Marga Marga Valley as strategies of resistance to preserve local knowledge in the Valparaíso Region (Chile)—this research is situated within the qualitative paradigm. As Álvarez (2003) notes, “we must rely on and understand these different interpretive reference frameworks” (p. 41). Our interest lies in the comprehension or verstehen of the everyday lived world (Lebenswelt) (Weber, 2005) of these agroecological viticultural experiences, as explored throughout this article.

Accordingly, we adopt a critical, relational, and decolonial perspective (Batista, 2024). The epistemological approach is phenomenological (subject–subject) (Ayala, 2017; Merleau-Ponty, 1993), using a qualitative methodology framed within an action research (AR) design (Hernández et al., 2006; Taylor and Bogdan, 2004). In terms of scope and purpose, this is a descriptive study, as it “seeks to specify the properties, characteristics, and profiles of individuals, groups, communities, and processes” (Hernández et al., 2006, p. 102).

As researchers and inhabitants of the Marga Marga territory, we cannot position ourselves outside of these issues; we live in, move through, and appropriate this territory on a daily basis. From this epistemological critical stance, we reject the assumption of value-neutrality (a positivist premise) and instead embrace the construction of situated (Haraway, 1991; Harding, 1996), militant (Rojas, 1999), and sentient-thinking knowledge (Fals, 2015). We pursue a dialogical form of inquiry (Freire, 2022, 2018), which seeks to engage with peasant and community knowledge systems, granting them both validity and legitimacy in practical terms, as well as recognition of their popular mechanisms of verification (Fals, 2001, p. 62).

These elements are crucial to our study, as it is the situated knowledge and experience of the groups that form the Cooperative under study that enable us to access and understand the dynamics of resistance and their relationship to wine production. Through this approach, action research (AR) and socio-praxis provide us with the flexibility to co-construct strategies and analyses in a collaborative manner. In this sense, “the purpose of action research is to address every day and immediate problems […] to improve people’s quality of life” (Álvarez, 2003, p. 159). This implies involving those affected as active agents and central participants in developing potential courses of action, practices, and decisions to address their challenges.

From this emancipatory perspective (Hernández et al., 2006, p. 707), the goal is not only to resolve a specific problem but also to enable participants to initiate and/or generate broader social change through the research process. Moreover, this type of design not only diagnoses and produces knowledge but also fosters critical awareness regarding the issues at stake. Thus, it aims toward real transformative change in a dual sense: both to resolve and to deepen understanding of the situated problems.

Delimitation of the field of study

In proposing an in situ exploration and understanding of the experiences of wine producers working in the Marga Marga Valley (5th Region, Chile), we encountered several challenges. One of the first was deciding which group to select and how to approach them—how to overcome the usual (and often well-founded) distrust, avoid disrupting their work with our presence, and ensure that the research would be meaningful for this type of organization. After some exploration, we chose to work with the Marga Marga Cooperative (through intentional or convenience sampling), engaging with their schedule of activities and participating in their organizational milestones, collective actions, and territorial collaborations from May to December 2022.

Within this context, we co-designed an activity called Field Days (*Días de Campo*) to familiarize ourselves with and explore the community's viticultural practices and knowledge (Phase 1). The activity was structured as a popular education workshop (Freire, 2018), with a facilitator guiding the dialogue and framing the methodology (over two days). Each participant engaged in practical tasks related to wine production—tasks specific to their expertise—providing opportunities to observe the internal dynamics of each production unit within the Cooperative.

Following this initial stage, we scheduled semi-structured interviews with four of the five Cooperative members -conducted at different times- to gain deeper insight into the historical development of their productive initiatives and their connections to the territory. Additionally, we conducted a two-month period of participant observation (June-August 2022), attending the Cooperative's weekly meetings (eight meetings in total). This regular presence fostered stronger relationships of trust and comfort, facilitating the interview process (with prior consent). These processes contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the winegrowers' relationship with their territory and their production practices, allowing us to establish rapport with our research participants (Taylor and Bogdan, 2004) (Phases 2 and 3).

Our epistemic, ethical, and political positioning, as well as our methodological design, is grounded in the fact that we are working with groups and leaders actively resisting the processes described earlier in this article. These are often invisible dynamics of socio-territorial segregation (exclusion/expulsion) that negatively impact agroecological production—shaping its practices, trajectories, and the spatial, symbolic, and even mental structures of those involved (Bourdieu, 2010). For this reason, returning the systematized and co-analyzed data to the community for validation and future use is a crucial part of the research process.

The study began with the design and implementation of the Field Day activity. The first day focused on the preparation of bio-preparations, followed by a knowledge-exchange session, as members were

planning tasks for the upcoming spring season. The second day was dedicated to preparing vine cuttings for plant propagation. This participatory approach allowed for the co-construction and documentation of various forms of narrative and verification that were meaningful and relevant to the lived research process.

One of the key challenges for us as researchers was to respect the timing and rhythms of the Marga Marga viticultural community's practices and knowledge —a challenge that was at times complex but ultimately well received by the participants, who highlighted our capacity for listening and dialogue throughout the study.

In this regard, while traditional action research typically involves three main phases -observing, thinking, and acting (Hernández et al., p. 708)- for this study we reconfigured these into five phases. Within the observation stage, we included an Exploratory and Familiarization Phase (1), followed by a Descriptive and Engagement Phase (2). The thinking stage comprised both the Knowledge Construction Phase (3)—through the Field Day workshop and semi-structured interviews—and a subsequent Systematization, Analysis, and Interpretation Phase (4). Finally, the acting phase encompassed Validation, Communication, and Action-Oriented Outcomes (5).

Although each of these dimensions inherently involves continuous and bidirectional cycles of observing, thinking, and acting (reflection-action-reflection), we identified and structured them as the five phases outlined above.

Table 1

Methodological Design: Phases, Levels of Engagement, and Production of Situated Knowledge

Phase 1 Exploratory and Familiarization	Phase 2 Descriptive and Engagement	Phase 3 Knowledge Construction	Phase 4 Systematization, Analysis, and Interpretation	Phase 5 Validation and Dissemination

The type of analysis employed was hermeneutic in nature and was co-validated with members of the Cooperative. Through their own narratives and key territorial milestones, we collaboratively identified both the potentialities and the common challenges that drive them to strengthen collective work. These collective and community-based actions articulate a utopian horizon of resistance —one capable of transcending neoliberal economic rationality and opening up the possibility of a shared we within the diverse landscape of agroecological territorial production.

Results

The community narratives of winemakers in the Marga Marga Valley reveal a deep commitment to preserving both their cultural identity and the authenticity of their products. The interviews conducted

highlight a range of strategies adopted by the community to resist the homogenization imposed by the industrial wine sector. The producers maintain ancestral winemaking techniques and artisanal production methods, including spontaneous fermentation and the use of ox-hide fermentation vats, in stark contrast to the mass-production methods of the industrial sector. These practices help preserve the authenticity of the wines, reflecting the unique characteristics of the local terroir. The preservation of these artisanal techniques represents a form of resistance to the standardized methods that dominate global wine production.

By resisting the colonization of knowledge, the winemaking community actively engages in preserving and transmitting ancestral viticultural knowledge through workshops and educational programs directed at both the local community and consumers. These initiatives aim to prevent the devaluation of local knowledge and ensure its transmission to future generations, countering the imposition of a technical, homogenized knowledge promoted by large industries. The interviews highlight various actions, such as a weekly event known as cata social (social tasting), an open and free space where participants can visit the vineyards, explore their connection with the surrounding forest, and learn about artisanal winemaking processes in the winery. There is also the Natural Wine School, an annual event aimed at agronomy students and residents from neighborhoods with old grape arbors, teaching them how to make wine and care for their vines, enabling them to revive winemaking traditions. Eva Osorio (personal communication, August 2022), from Belloto Norte, remarks: “We participated in the Natural Wine School in 2022. My father used to make wine from a white grape, but that knowledge had been lost. Now we have recovered it, and we have just bottled our first neighborhood wine.”

Arturo Herrera, an active participant in the winemaking community, emphasizes that the school promotes the production of “neighborhood wines,” where the community comes together to make wine and then distribute it. This social practice—which has been promoted for several years—not only fosters collective wine production but also encourages the preservation of heritage grape varieties and the agroecological care of local soils (A. Herrera, personal communication, July 2022). According to members of the Marga Marga Cooperative: “We do not allow oenological techniques into our production: the wines are neither filtered nor made with external yeasts or preservatives” (Marga Marga Cooperative, personal communication, July 2022).

In interviews with young members and new generations involved in the cooperative’s activities, they noted: “The pressure from the wine industry at the commercial stage grows stronger every day; their marketing practices and tactics to saturate the market with cheap wines are evident. It is not an easy task; we face this challenge daily” (Youth members of the Marga Marga Cooperative, personal communication, August 2022).

The industrial wine sector has imposed a standardization of flavor and quality, prioritizing products that can be mass-produced. In response to this trend, agroecological wine production promotes a diversity of flavors and aromas that characterize the valley's wines, while also educating consumers about the distinctions and values of local viticulture. According to Adolfo Alvarado, a member of the Marga Marga Cooperative: "We aim to offer an alternative to industrial products by highlighting the cultural and ecological richness of artisanal winemaking." He adds: "We don't make wine simply to please; we make it as food, as knowledge passed down through generations, allowing the grape to express itself and surprise us" (personal communication, July 2022).

Arturo Herrera (personal communication, 2022) points out that among the hundreds of people who attend the cata social, only about one percent have previously tasted a wine that was not from the industrial sector. For most, this is their first encounter with natural and agroecological wines, which are distinct from organic wines. Under Chilean law, organic wines are permitted to use external yeasts and preservatives (sulfites), with allowable levels ranging from 100 to 170 mg/L for red wines and 120 to 170 mg/L for white wines, according to Chile's National Certification Law for agricultural products. In contrast, the Marga Marga community refrains from using any additives, suggesting that the industrial sector is producing not wine, but an alcoholic beverage based on a diversity of permitted chemical additives.

García and Bermúdez (2016) highlight that globalization has fostered a trend toward cultural homogenization, which also extends to food, leading to a loss of identity. According to Contreras and Ribas (2016), food practices embody representations and meanings that establish distinctions between territories, agents, and social groups. Sharing particular eating habits, table manners, preferences, and aversions fosters a sense of belonging and identity, shaping differentiation from others. In this context, the lower level of intervention in agroecological winemaking can result in wines that taste unfamiliar or even strange to consumers accustomed to industrial standards, making it difficult to gain widespread acceptance—a significant challenge for the survival of this type of small-scale production (Lugmaña, 2025).

To address this challenge, the winemakers have adopted various resistance strategies, including ongoing education about wine as nourishment and its connection to the land, as well as fostering direct-to-consumer sales channels that offer fair prices and cultivate greater appreciation for local products. Through events, fairs, and workshops, the cooperative promotes awareness of the importance of preserving traditional and agroecological viticulture. This model not only reinforces local cultural identity but also encourages resistance to homogeneous consumption patterns. However, it is clear that these initiatives alone are not enough. The asymmetry in communication channels compared to the dominant wine industry remains stark, and distribution networks are entirely controlled by the oligopsony —three major wine companies that dominate the Chilean market.

Conclusions

The narratives of winemakers in the Marga Marga Valley clearly demonstrate a strong resistance to the colonization of taste, knowledge, and practice in viticulture, emphasizing the importance of preserving ancestral techniques and the authenticity of their products. The strategies implemented by the community -such as educating consumers about wine as nourishment and promoting direct sales- have helped reinforce cultural identity and foster appreciation for agroecological viticulture, standing in opposition to the homogenization imposed by the industrial wine sector. However, tensions with a highly concentrated market and the growing pressure from the industrial wine sector suggest that, despite these efforts, the survival of these practices faces significant challenges. In addition, there is an evident need to foster greater consumer awareness regarding the differences between industrial wines and those produced through artisanal and agroecological methods.

The experiences of participants in initiatives such as *catas sociales* (social tastings) and the Natural Wine School reflect a growing interest in rediscovering authentic flavors —although only a small fraction of participants have actually tasted non-industrial wines. This raises the question of how to expand these experiences and educate the public in a context dominated by standardized tastes.

In the winemakers' narratives, the preservation of ancestral techniques and the promotion of a cultural identity that resists homogenization are key concerns. Yet resistance to the colonization of taste faces the challenge of changing consumer perceptions, as agroecological wines are often perceived as "different" or "strange." This situation underscores the need for educational strategies that revalue traditional knowledge and cultivate a deeper appreciation for local wines. The findings highlight the importance of strengthening the cultural identity of small-scale winemakers in the face of homogenizing forces promoted by the industrial wine sector. In this context, agroecological practices emerge as a model of resilience, providing a viable path for small producers to confront the challenges posed by large market actors. By preserving their traditions and knowledge, the winemakers of Marga Marga are not only defending their cultural heritage but also enriching Chile's cultural and viticultural diversity.

Chile's wine industry, characterized by its concentration in the hands of major corporations such as Concha y Toro, San Pedro, and Santa Rita, poses a tangible threat to traditional production practices and ancestral knowledge that have been integral to the identity of communities like Marga Marga. The constant redefinition of power relations and the imposition of hegemonic production models not only deprive winemakers of their autonomy, but also erode the collective memory embedded in these practices.

Natural winemaking practices, passed down through generations, are often rendered invisible by policies and regulations that favor standardized, mass production. The voices, experiences, knowledge,

Revista Internacional de Educación y Análisis Social Crítico
Mañé, Ferrer & Swartz.
ISSN: 2990-0476
Vol. 3 Núm. 1 (2025)

and practices of artisans like Hugo Morales express a deep concern: the risk that these forms of production -also ways of relating to and inhabiting the territory- may disappear. This loss would not only mean the disappearance of techniques and knowledge but would also impact the very identities of these communities, leaving an existential void and eroding socio-cultural memory both in the present and for future generations.

In this sense, resistance to the colonization of taste and knowledge must be understood as an act of reclaiming and defending identity and memory. Agroecological practices and the preservation of ancestral knowledge are forms of resistance that enable winemakers not only to survive but to assert their place in a world where homogenization threatens cultural diversity. The fight to maintain these traditions is thus a fight for identity itself—an effort to prevent history and memory from being erased by a market-driven logic that prioritizes profit over the cultural heritage of communities. The continuity and re-signification of these practices is essential to ensure that the legacy of Indigenous and peasant communities endures —not as something exotic (often folklorized), but as a living and dignified expression of their identity processes. For this reason, these practices must be recognized as part of cultural heritage and as a matter of socio-economic rights.

Finally, it is crucial to implement policies that support these producers and their territorial dynamics, promoting their development and ensuring the continuity of their ancestral practices in an increasingly globalized and homogenized world. This must take the form of “a legitimate political activation of relationality [...] aimed at reconnecting humanity with nature and fostering the self-organization of life, with its constant reproduction of vitality” (Escobar, 2016, p. 29). Such actions would not only benefit winemakers but also contribute to a more sustainable and pluriversal future for viticulture in the region.

Moreover, this opens the door to future research in other wine-growing regions of Chile that are experiencing similar dynamics. Comparing and contrasting these experiences could deepen our understanding of cultural resistance in viticulture and contribute to broader efforts to promote sustainable and diversified practices in wine and agroecological food production across the country.

Agroecology should not only be viewed as a viable alternative but also as a way to recover and revitalize cultural identities and localized memories embedded in production processes rooted in communities. The evidence shows that there is a real risk that these practices and knowledge may disappear under neoliberal policies, a pro-corporate state, territorial dispossession practices, and widespread public disinformation. However, the evidence also highlights the territorial capacities to mobilize, organize, and sustain productive and reproductive practices —even under the precarious and scarce conditions imposed by the neoliberal model.

In the case of viticulture in the Marga Marga region, these practices deserve to be made visible,

discussed, debated, and valued —through engagement with local communities, producers, organizations, research centers, NGOs, universities, political actors, and local authorities, among others.

It is essential to foster a multidisciplinary movement that brings visibility to these communities (as legitimate "others"), nurturing their hopes (embodied in their practices) for recognition of their existence and contributions to local development from a pluriversal and public policy perspective. Only through such an approach can we construct futures (in the here and now) that not only respect cultural and productive diversity but also celebrate the traditions and knowledge that these communities have sustained and seek to continue contributing to, from and for their territories.

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