

# Place attachment and Involvement with Rural Wine Tourism

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**Abstract** | Tourism is motivated by the desire to experience distinct places, which are typically associated to distinct images, emotions and meanings. The physical, natural and social and cultural elements of a place are important differentiating factors to attract, involve and attach people to them, both as visitors and residents.

Place attachment and involvement have received increasing interest amongst tourism scholars, due to their obvious potential contribution to tourist loyalty and sustainable destination development. Still, despite the growing research on place-attachment and involvement in tourism, there is a lack of studies linking these constructs and specifically within wine regions.

Within this context, the present conceptual work aims to present the concepts and dimensions of place-attachment and involvement in wine tourism based on an extensive literature review, from the scientific database Scopus, including the most relevant international scientific contributions in the field of tourism, with the keywords 'place attachment' and 'involvement' and 'wine tourism'.

**Keywords** | Wine tourism, place-attachment, involvement, wine terroir, rural development

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## 1. Introduction

The physical elements of a place are considered an important factor to attract and connect people (Dale, Ling & Newman, 2008). First, because physical characteristics of places differentiate places but specifically because they affect the feelings that people attribute to them. On the other hand, physical features of environments/places reinforce the symbolic meaning that people hold about them and those meanings involve and attach people to places (Colley & Craig, 2019).

In fact, people create, develop and maintain strong relationships with places (i.e. Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006; Williams & Vaske, 2003). And within the tourism literature there are several concepts describing that relationship between people and places: sense of place (Farnum, Hall & Kruger, 2005; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001, 2006), place attachment (Altman & Low, 1992; Giuliani & Feldman, 1993; Giuliani, 2003; Williams & Vaske, 2003), community-attachment (Kang & Choi, 2002; Perkins & Long, 2002), neighbourhood-attachment (Brown, Perkins & Brown, 2003; Lewicka, 2010), being place attachment the most popular concept/construct in tourism (Ramkissoon, Smith & Weiler, 2013), mostly because it may be applied both to residents and visitors (Park, Lee & Lee, 2017).

Wine territories, also called 'wine terroir' (Guedes & Joukes, 2015; Holland, Smit & Jones, 2017), are visually appealing human-shaped, rural and cultural landscapes, imbued with strong symbolic meanings (Carneiro, Lima & Silva, 2015; Lopes, Seabra, Silva & Abrantes, 2019), to which people tend to create personal links, eventually connecting the place to one's identity. As a matter of fact, wine tourism must be recognized as intrinsically place-based, as tourists enjoy diverse and complex experiences within territory-specific experience escapes, marked by unique environmental, cultural and societal features (Holland et al, 2017; Carvalho, Kastenholtz & Carneiro, 2021). These

place experiences differ from those provided by other tourist destinations as well as from those possible in the visitors' home environments, making them special, highly valued and symbolically charged (Kastenholtz, 2018). Consequently, wine tourists may develop emotional and symbolic links to the visited places, making them prefer a specific wine area for its wines, its regional particularities, people and typical facilities, thereby reinforcing the 'dependence' dimension of place attachment, while also enhancing its 'identity' dimension.

Although there is a longitudinal interdependence between the tourist experience and destination attachment (Marques, 2018), attachment is often conceptualized as a result from the experience (Kastenholtz, Marques, & Carneiro, 2020), depending particularly on the level of tourists' involvement with the destination experience (Prayag & Ryan, 2012). In the marketing literature, involvement with a product category reflects its relevance to the personal needs and values of the consumer (Zaichkowsky, 1985). This same idea of personal relevance is prominent in the literature on the involvement construct in recreational and touristic contexts (e.g. Dimanche, Havitz & Howard, 1991). On the other hand, involvement is linked with cultural systems, which is interesting when analyzing involvement with wine tourism destinations within the greater context of rural land tenure, local mythologies of rurality, and the regional wine culture complex (Lourenço-Gomes, Pinto & Rebelo, 2015; Nella & Christou, 2014).

However, despite the growing research on place attachment and involvement in tourism, there is a lack of studies linking these constructs and, in particular, within wine regions. In this sense, the present work intends to present the concepts and dimensions of place-attachment and involvement with wine tourism based on an extensive literature review. In order to do that, studies were searched and retrieved from the scientific database Scopus, including the most relevant international scientific contributions in the field of tourism, using

the keywords 'place attachment' and 'involvement' and 'wine tourism' in the search field 'article title, abstract, keywords'. The search was undertaken in 2020.

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1. Concept and dimensions of place attachment

Place attachment is a concept that emerged from Environmental Psychology and has been conceptualized differently all over the tourism literature. But in the line of place attachment studies, researchers generally agree that place attachment develops when a person assigns a meaning to a place and develops emotional attachment towards it (Shamai, 1991). Due to its nature, place attachment is considered a multidimensional concept (Halpenny, 2010; Scannell & Gifford, 2010a). The most widely accepted approach is the one that describes place attachment as two-dimensional in nature: *place-identity* (emotional attachment) and *place-dependence* (functional attachment) (Bricker & Kersketter, 2000; George & George, 2004; Gross & Brown, 2008; Kyle, Bricker, Graefe & Wickham, 2004; Moore & Scott, 2003; Williams & Vaske, 2003). But several studies extend their scope (Cheng & Kuo, 2015) considering additional dimensions: *place affect* (Halpenny, 2010; Ramkinsoon, Weiler & Smith 2012; Ramkinsoon, Smith & Weiler, B 2013; Tsai, 2012; Yuksel, Yuksel & Bilim, 2010), *place social bonding* (Ramkinsoon et al., 2012), *place memory and place expectations* (Chen & Dwyer, 2018), *place familiarity, place belongingness or place rootedness* (Hammit, Backlund & Bixler, 2004, 2006; Hammit, Kyle & Oh, 2009).

In fact, many studies have in common a distinction between an emotional dimension and a functional dimension (Lin & Lockwood, 2014), na-

mely *place-identity* and *place-dependence*. *Place-identity* is the symbolic, cognitive and affective attachment with a particular place (Gu & Ryan, 2008; Proshansky, Fabian & Kaminoff, 1983). *Place-dependence*, on the other hand, is rather instrumental, referring to how a place can help the individual reach his/ her goals (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). It is described as a functional attachment (Gross & Brow, 2008).

Most of the operationalizations of the dichotomy between identity and dependence do not consider other important facets, such as social, purely emotional, or symbolic components in this relationship (Kyle, Graefe & Manning, 2005). Coping with this limitation, some researchers include *place affect* (Kals, Schumacher & Montada 1999; Ramkinsoon, Weiler & Smith 2012; Silva, Kastenholz & Abrantes, 2018) as the emotional connectedness with a place. In the leisure context, affective connection with natural and rural places creates a sense of psychological well-being for visitors (Kaplan & Talbot, 1983; Korpel, Ylen, Tyrvaainen & Silvennoinen, 2009). Another dimension of place attachment included is *place social bonding*, which is related with socially shared experiences associated with the place. An individual can value a place because it facilitates interpersonal relationships (Scannell & Gifford, 2010a, b) and a sense of "group belonging" (Hammit, Kyle, & Oh, 2009). Additional dimensions include *place memory*, which reflects the attachment through personal experiences (Chen, Dwyer, & Firth 2014; Lewicka 2011), and *place expectations*, considered as how much the future experiences are expected as likely to occur in a place, (Chen, Dwyer & Firth 2014; Milligan, 1998).

Hammit and colleagues (Hammit, Backlund & Bixler, 2004, 2006; Hammit, Kyle & Oh, 2009) describe place attachment through the dimensions of place-identity, place-affect, place-familiarity, place belongingness, and place rootedness. Place-familiarity is associated to past experiences (Bott, Cantrill & Myers Jr., 2003) and thus is defined

as positive memories related to previous visits to a place in which a person experienced recreational and pleasant tours (Stedman, 2003). Place belongingness is the social dimension of place attachment, being the result of social interactions, contacts and friendship that people establish at a particular place (Cardinale, Nguyen & Melewar, 2016). Place rootedness is the strongest link that people can have with a place because and usually involves long and/or deep experiences in a particular place (for example, the birthplace). Therefore, tourists hardly experience this kind of attachment regarding places they visit once or sporadically. Since this scale describes a broader emotional connection between people and places (Cheng & Kuo, 2015), it has been receiving increasing attention by others authors (Jun, Kyle, Absher & Theodori, 2010; Wynveen, Kyle & Theodori, 2009, 2010).

## 2.2. Concept and dimensions of involvement

The concept 'involvement' has been developed in consumer behaviour research and is recognized as an important determinant and moderator of consumer choices. The dichotomy between high and low involvement was introduced in Consumer Psychology to model how advertising may change brand behaviour without changing attitudes, that is, in low involvement situations (e. g. Krugman, 1965). Besides advertising, involvement was earlier used to model responses to product categories and to purchase decisions (Zaichkowsky, 1985). On the other hand, the variance of involvement may be attributed to personal characteristics, object characteristics, or situational factors (Zaichkowsky, 1985). For instance, consumers may be more involved with wine because of role expectations in a social or family context (Marques & Guia, 2018) or because they need to buy wine for a special occasion (Barber et al., 2008; Laurent & Kapferer, 1985).

Involvement is now generally accepted as a mo-

tivational and goal-directed emotional state that determines the personal relevance of a purchase decision (Mittal & Lee, 1989). In fact, involvement is considered an important psychographic construct determining tourist choices, because it strongly influences individuals' attitudes and decision-making (Prayag & Ryan, 2012). In wine tourism, involvement can be defined as: "a motivational state of mind of a person with wine or wine related activity. It is said to reflect the extent of personal relevance of the wine related decision to the individual in terms of one's basic values, goals, and self-concept." (Bruwer & Huang, 2012, p. 463).

Involvement is generally considered a multidimensional concept (Dimanche et al., 1991; Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003; Laurent & Kapferer, 1985), despite the absence of a consensual measurement framework. Three different scales are dominant in the literature. Zaichkowsky's (1985) Personal Involvement Inventory is a unidimensional set of semantic differential bipolar items that reflect cognitive and affective relevance to the consumer. In the same line, Mittal (1988) measures involvement with bipolar items reflecting consumer's relevance and concern, but does not consider the affective facet. Finally, Laurent and Kapferer (1985) propose a Consumer Involvement Profile Inventory with five dimensions, which the authors consider types of involvement: (1) the perceived importance of the product or the situation, (2) the perceived sign value, (3) the perceived hedonic value, (4) the perceived risk importance, and (5) the perceived probability of making a wrong decision.

Applying this conceptualization to tourism, Dimanche et al. (1991) identified four dimensions, after combining importance with pleasure. In the same line, Gursoy and Gavcar (2003) considered a dimension mixing pleasure with interest and dropped the symbolic value, resulting in a three-dimensional international tourist involvement scale. It should be noted, however, that Laurent and Kapferer (1985) consider these di-

mensions as antecedent conditions of involvement, rather than the relevance or importance measured by the other two scales.

On the other hand, in leisure studies the concept of involvement (with a leisure activity) tends to be conceptualized as independent from the situation, assuming the particular case of enduring involvement. McIntyre (1989) suggests four dimensions of this construct, encompassing the relevance of the activity and the centrality to the subject's lifestyle, along with the hedonic and the ego-expression values. Gross and Brown (2008) use these dimensions to measure involvement with tourism experiences and relate them with place attachment.

Past research suggests that involvement is linked with satisfaction, loyalty and place-attachment. Activity involvement is a precedent of satisfaction (Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004) and affects loyalty intentions of wine tourists (Lee & Chang, 2012) and on the other hand, personal involvement was found to be an antecedent of place-attachment (Chiu, Lee & Chen, 2014).

### **3. Relation between place-attachment and involvement with wine**

Previous research suggests the distinction between wine tourists according to their involvement level with the wine product (Lockshin & Spawton, 2001). Correspondingly, several studies for the wine market have used involvement for segmentation purposes (see Spawton, 1991; Mitchell, Hall & McIntosh., 2000; Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002; Bruwer, Li & Reid., 2002; Bruwer, 2003; Gatti & Maroni, 2004; Wolf, Carpenter & Qenani-Petrela, 2005; Alebaki & Iakovidou, 2006; Yuan, Morrison, Cai & Linton, 2008; Alebaki & Iakovidou, 2011; Nella & Christou, 2014), considering that wine tourists are mainly divided into three categories: high, medium and low involvement, in

terms of consumers' more or less intense perception of wine as a specific, central part of a given lifestyle (Fesenmaier & Johnson, 1989).

It is accepted that involvement may be considered an antecedent having a positive and significant influence on place attachment (Chiu, Lee & Chen, 2014; Hwang, Lee & Chen, 2005; Kyle, Graefe, Manning & Bacon, 2003). The close relationship between involvement and place attachment has been documented mostly in leisure studies. The rationale is that people who are more involved with a leisure activity tend to attribute the positive results from leisure to the place where the activity occurs (Kyle et al., 2003). If the experience is positive, enduring involvement generates place dependence and favours identification and emotional ties with the place.

It is also in leisure studies that the idea of multiple points of attachment (Robinson & Trail, 2005) has developed to model spectator attachment to sports, but it could be extended to other areas, including tourism experiences. In the wine tourism context, Marques (2018) suggests that tourists may feel attached to a variety of points, such as a terroir, a country, a brand, a particular type of wine, a winemaker, a tour operator, etc. In the same vein, there may be multiple references of involvement. For example, Rodríguez Santos, Cervantes Blanco and González Fernández (2006) segment wine consumers according to their involvement with appellations of origin. Santos (2015) considers involvement with the product (Port wine) and with the experience setting (wine cellars) as two independent antecedents of place dependence and identity. Both types of involvement have positive effects on attachment, but involvement with the wine cellars have more impact, particularly through the mediation of positive emotions resulting from the visiting experience.

Place-attachment and involvement are both based on identity and a person's corresponding symbolic relationships with objects and places. Within wine tourism and the wine terroir context,

Kolyesnikova, Dodd and Laverie (2007) argue that a visitor with a high value placed on his/her wine consumer identity should dedicate relatively more time and money to wine related activities, such as winery and vineyard visits or wine festivals. These authors (p. 244) define 'wine tourist identity' as "a behavioural characteristic that represents commitment to a wine tourist role".

#### 4. Conclusions

This systematization is a result of an extensive literature review using the search engine of the scientific database Scopus, including the most relevant international scientific contributions in the field of tourism, with the keywords 'place attachment' and 'tourism' and 'wine tourism'.

Key results include the findings that: a) despite the apparent conceptual relevance of 'place attachment' for wine tourism, due to the role of 'terroir' for both wine production and overall wine territory experiences, place attachment is an under-researched topic, specifically in wine tourism research, which become a theoretical limitation of the present study; b) when studied in the domain of wine tourism, it generally focuses on the visitor's attachment and involvement with wine and wine territories, although the host population's attachment and involvement would be another important area of future research, especially taking into account the identity-resonating quality of local wine production, its history and culture (Lourenço-Gomes et al, 2015); c) the most important dimensions of place attachment identified are 'place identity' and place-dependence" and d) the link between place attachment and involvement with wine is understudied.

Given the frequently identified potential of wine tourism in contributing to sustainable rural development of wine producing regions, the multiple positive economic and social consequences of

this tourism activity (Marques et al., 2021) are partly a result of the development of visitors' attachment to the visited places and terroirs. Simultaneously, one must recognize that diverse visitors' distinct levels of involvement with wine and the wine tourism experience trigger distinct place-attachment consequences. These dynamics are important variables for better understanding the wine tourism market (Cunha et al., 2020) and correspondingly improving its positive, also long-term, impacts on the visited wine terroirs that may be conceived and managed as complex 'wine tourism eco-systems' (Salvado & Kastenholz, 2017). On the other hand, also wine terroir communities play an important role, potentially enhancing the wine tourist experience, reflecting and keeping alive wine-related local culture and interacting with tourists, frequently incorporating local identities, increasing the perception of highly valued 'authenticity' and potentially enhancing visitors' place attachment through welcoming social interaction (Souza, Kastenholz, Barbosa & Carvalho, 2019). Therefore, also the residents' place-attachment and how it relates to that developed by visitors deserves the researchers' attention. It seems that these facets of a wine destination's social reality and symbolic place meanings, together with more product-related behavioural market determinants (visitors' general involvement with wine and wine tourism), are relevant conditioning factors of success of both rural wine destinations and businesses, requiring additional in-depth studies to contribute to effective, sustainability-yielding wine terroir marketing.

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