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The role of storying in the transformation of a regional identity: The story of winepreneurs of Priorat

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Abstract
Regional identity is central to the creation and appropriation of new economic value. However, not all regions possess strong regional identity. In this paper, we explore the mechanisms of transformation of regional identity through use of stories and storying. Building on an in-depth case study of the recent revival of Priorat, a Spanish wine region, we analyse the process of regional identity transformation and the implications for entrepreneurial activity in that area. We propose that stories and storying help entrepreneurs to create conducive conditions for their entrepreneurial action. We show that regional identity is the institutionalisation of individual identities of the people of the region, stories both reflect and possess agency, and that storying influences transformation of regional identity. We discuss how the stories that emerged became elements of a regional identity that influenced the creation and appropriation of value in the region.
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Regional identity is central to the creation and appropriation of new economic value. However, not all regions possess strong regional identity. In this paper, we explore the mechanisms of transformation of regional identity through use of stories and storying. Building on an in-depth case study of the recent revival of Priorat, a Spanish wine region, we analyse the process of regional identity transformation and the implications for entrepreneurial activity in that area. We propose that stories and storying help entrepreneurs to create conducive conditions for their entrepreneurial action. We show that regional identity is the institutionalisation of individual identities of the people of the region, stories both reflect and possess agency, and that storying influences transformation of regional identity. We discuss how the stories that emerged became elements of a regional identity that influenced the creation and appropriation of value in the region.

Keywords: regional identity; story; entrepreneurial action; narratives; case study
Introduction

Regional identity is a collective identity, which represents the self-identification of individuals in the region with institutionalized practices, discourses and symbols (Paasi 2009). Research shows that regions characterized by strong identification with a regional identity, for example, Silicon Valley, attract investments and new people, particularly entrepreneurs, (Florida 2014) while regions lacking a particular identity, but characterized by attractive natural or location resources, for instance, seem to attract only migrant entrepreneurs seeking a new life (Anderson 2000; Raagmaa 2002). In this case, entrepreneurs engage in crafting a regional identity and an environment that is conducive to their entrepreneurial activities, allowing them to translate their ideas into new products and services (Farmer, Yao, and Kung-Mcintyre 2011). Identity construction inherently is linked to stories imbued with meaning (McAdams 2006). Homo fabulans are individuals who create stories to present themselves and their environment in desirable ways (Boje 2001). Telling stories contributes to the crafting of identity. So far, relatively little attention has been paid to the role played by entrepreneurs in the process of identity creation and, especially, the creation and transformation of regional identity (Leitch and Harrison 2016).

A change to the regional identity can be initiated from inside or outside (Croidieu and Monin 2010; Rao, Monin, and Durand 2003; Virkkala 2007). While previous research on regional identity transformation describes it as a process of distinguishing between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (cf. Ybema et al. 2009; Ybema, Vroemisse, and van Marrewijk 2012), this work fails to capture its dynamics. Since regional identity could be a driver of or a barrier to subsequent entrepreneurial action (Semian and Chromý 2014), study of the mechanisms facilitating identity transformation
is central to the creation and appropriation of value, e.g., entrepreneurship (Davidsson 2004) in many contexts. This paper maps the transformation of a regional identity and explores the mechanism and implications of using stories and storying in this process. Specifically, we investigate: 1) how the changing content of stories contributes to the transformation of a regional identity, and 2) how individuals use stories to enable their own entrepreneurial activity and influence the development of the region.

To understand these relationships, we apply an in-depth case study method to explore the transformation in the regional identity of the Priorat wine region in Spain. A wine setting (Simpson 2005; Duguid and da Silva Lopes 1999), which is characterized by strong institutional and industry norms making it particularly suited to our study. Collective identity was recently transformed in the Priorat region and its relatively small size and short revival history make it an appropriate object of observation. We analyse the stories of the involved stakeholders, that is, winepreneurs, policy makers and regional associations, and discuss the role played by identity stories in the revival of the region.

Mapping and analysis of regional identity transformation provides insights into the links between the transformation of regional identity, on the one hand, and its consequences (i.e., subsequent entrepreneurial actions) on the other. In addition, a better understanding of the mechanism of purposeful storying contributes to a more contextualized view of entrepreneurship. Specifically, our analysis shows that entrepreneurs engage in the crafting of a regional identity in order to create an environment that is conducive to their entrepreneurial activity. These conducive elements include building the legitimacy and authenticity of the region, which is achieved via 'storying' or the co-creation of stories, which, initially, increase the identity conscientiousness of the local inhabitants and, later, convince the external world (i.e., potential customers, wine critics
and other stakeholders) of the region's value, legitimacy and authenticity. Further, we show that and explain how the content of the created stories changes over time. More specifically, we show that the initial story focuses on how success can be achieved in the region (terroir), and the later story is about the rejuvenation of and future outlook and market creation possibilities in the region (growth). Our findings provide insights into the process of regional identity transformation and extend the theory on the role of stories and storytelling in entrepreneurial practice.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. First, we review the literature on regional identity, stories and storytelling. In the second section we discuss the research method including research design, data collection and analysis. We then present our findings, followed by discussion of the stories and the storying process, and their role in regional revival. The paper ends by summarizing the main conclusions from our analysis.

**Conceptual framework**

**Regional identity**

Regional identity is a socially constructed, collective identity (Paasi 2003) that is organized around the shared purpose of a group of actors (in our case the region's local inhabitants) (Cornelissen, Haslam, and Balmer 2007). Regional identity can be understood also as a provisional discursive construct, in which ‘both the narrator and the audience formulate, edit, applaud, and refuse various elements of the ever-produced narrative’ (Czarniawska-Joerges 1994, 198).

The collective aspect of regional identity promotes feelings of belonging, of a collective voice and actions in line with local social norms and the informal institutional set up related to
narratives and stories (Soja 1996). Thus, regional identity conveys different meanings about, for example, values, goals and regional norms, and often is represented by multiple identity-relevant narratives (Brewer and Gardner 1996). Brown (2006) argues that identity–relevant narratives are stories about a collective group, crafted by individuals with the objective of understanding and making sense of collective entities created by the group with which the group tries to identify. Regions are defined not just be spatial boundaries, but by the discourses, symbols and institutional practices that conform the regional identity (Paasi 2003).

Regional identity is involved in the question ‘where do I belong?’ and refers to people's self-identification in continuously changing regional cultural-historic and political-economic institutional structures and processes (Paasi 2009). Raagmaa (2001) argues that this identification applies to an area and includes not only the landscape but also the whole set of culture, social, moral and traditional system specific to that area or region. However, Bloom (1990) notes that identification occurs only if the individual is able to experience and interpret the broad context as meaningful. Identification allows the individual to satisfy his or her motivational needs, including formation of a personal identity (McAdams 2001), and to craft a regional brand (Messely, Dessein, and Lauwers 2010) or context conducive to entrepreneurial activity (Raagmaa 2002).

According to Paasi (1986), regional identity is a multidimensional concept that includes the regional consciousness of the region's inhabitants, and the material and symbolic features of the region (i.e., regional image). Regional consciousness is an affective dimension and reflects the person’s feelings about and identification with the region. Regional consciousness is the basis for the emergence of a common shared regional identity and is displayed in social and cultural practices, discourse and actions, e.g., institutionalization of new processes (Paasi 2003). Regional consciousness can also be used instrumentally to achieve specific social, economic and political
goals. Its material and symbolic features represent the nature, history, culture and other characteristics of the region. The cognitively distinguishable elements of the region allow individuals to discriminate between what is and what is not regional and the boundaries to the region. The region's material and symbolic features are the subjective images of those inside and outside the region and serve to demarcate who is and who is not an inhabitant of the region.

Since regions are dynamic environments, regional identity is fluid and changes over time (Messely, Dessein, and Lauwers 2010). Social institutions, for example, local culture, individual agency and power, influence the creation of new structures which enable the creation of new identity stories, and mobilization of collective memory, values, norms and ideologies (Paasi 1986). Changing the regional identity requires effort and appropriate tools to effect changes to the material and symbolic elements of the region and its identity and the feelings of inhabitants towards the region.

**Stories as a vehicle for claims to a shared identity**

Stories depict sequences of events which unfold over time (Pentland 1999; Bruner 1991); they also reflect their creators and the community in general. Stories are an elaborated narrative involving motives, emotions and moralities (Watson 2009). Ricoeur (1984, 150) notes that:

> A story describes a sequence of actions or experiences done or undergone by a certain number of people .... These people are presented either in situations that change or as reacting to such change. In turn, these changes reveal hidden aspects of the situation and the people involved, and engender a new predicament, which calls for thought, action, or both.
Thus, stories allow individuals to imbue events with meaning (Gabriel 2004). At the individual level, they can transcend a specific image or reaffirm a desired identity, while at the group level they can be employed to make sense of the collective identity, and to gain access to resources and legitimacy by presenting the collective ‘as a coherent group with a meaningful label and identity’ (Wry, Lounsbury, and Glynn 2011, 450). Although stories typically give accounts of the past, they also create expectations about future events. In other words, stories are constructed to help individuals make sense of where they are heading, of their expectations, visions and goals.

Stories can be reinterpreted and revised (Boje, 1991). The selective adoption and interpretation of past, present and future influence how stories evolve and which values and norms they will transmit (McAdams 2008). For example, Johansson (2004) shows how an individual's stories change over time to reflect changing perceptions of who they are, and where they are heading. Stories play a crucial role in both the construction of reality at the societal level and negotiation of order at the group level, and the shaping of self-identities at the level of the individual person (Watson and Watson 2012). Stories are suited to conveying the mechanisms and motifs of a conscious and intention-driven human agent and are created with that purpose in mind (Ricoeur 1984; Bandura 2001). In particular, stories allow presentations of how individuals: 1) discover and realize their desires, 2) strive for their goals over time, and 3) distil fragmented experiences and information into a coherent picture (Lounsbury and Glynn 2001; Boje 2001). Consequently, stories act as functional tools for individuals, and for entrepreneurs in particular.

A story is authentic and valid if it is coherent internally and familiar to the target audience (Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010). While authenticity is defined as integrity of self and behaviour, within and across situations (Baumeister 1998), validity establishes adequate causality for a story’s events and the continuity among its protagonists (McAdams 1996). The story should be structured so as
to refer to a goal-directed sequence of events, connecting past to present and allowing extrapolation to the future. Stories allow entrepreneurs to articulate provisional identity making within the social reality (Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010) and can be employed to produce entrepreneurial advantage (Anderson and Warren 2011). It is the individual’s agency that connects the different elements of a story and gives meaning to the story’s events.

The constitutive elements of a story

To convey the motivated action of an intentional agent, a story requires four elements: theme, actor, plot and setting (McAdams 2001). A story is constituted by a set of identifiable themes, which weave together to construct the plot line, which is projected onto one or more characters embedded in a particular social and cultural setting (McAdams 2001). A theme is an idea that is central to the narrative and is exemplified by the actions, utterances or thoughts of the focal characters. It represents the goal-directed sequence of actions pursued by the character in the course of his or her story; theme conveys motivation or the character's needs and wants (McAdams 1996). A story can include a number of themes.

Stories also involve intentional actors—at least a protagonist and, often, also an antagonist (Pentland 1999)—but also other types of characters, that is, agents, victims or beneficiaries of the narrated sequence of events (Bruner 1991). These characters need not be individuals; they can be groups or whole organizations (Pentland 1999). Since the characters in a story both cause the events and suffer their consequences, the verbs used in a story refer to what characters did or what happened to them.

The actions performed by the characters contribute to the plot. The plot is the thread that weaves a sequence of events into a pattern of cause-effect relationships and provides the reason for the
story's relation. The plot allows the storyteller to infuse meaning into a seemingly random sequence of events, and allows the audience to understand the significance of these events, that is, to make sense of the story. The plot achieves this through the use of ‘poetic tropes’, which are mechanisms aimed at linking the events of a story and imbuing them with meaning. Examples of such mechanisms are attribution of causal connections, agency, responsibility, motives and/or emotions (Gabriel 2004). These mechanisms are the cement, which anchors the story's building blocks. Without them, the unfolding of a sequence of events over time is merely a chronology. Plots can change or be revised as the story is told because the narrator cannot know how the story will end. The plot may require adjustment in line with the narrator's experience (Johansson 2004).

Finally, the setting is the environment of and the background to the focal actors (e.g. culture, historical moment in time, geographic location). The setting provides both a backdrop to the character(s) action, and an essential part of the narrative's mood and emotional impact; it captures the contextual dependencies between time, place, situation and participants. Careful portrayal of the setting can convey meaning, values and norms inherent to the socio-cultural context of the focal actors. For example, cultural norms offer a frame of reference regarding accepted behaviours (Suchman 1995).

Consequently, as the content of the story changes, its meaning changes as well. But, has the changing story the power to influence the transformation of an identity?

**Storytelling and the role of individuals in the process**

Storytelling is a way of making sense of experience (McAdams 2001), a process in which individuals play an important part. The ability to tell a convincing and coherent story requires the storyteller to decide which elements to include in and which to exclude from the story (McAdams
2008), and to choose interpretive tools, which either make sense of or connect the story’s elements (Gabriel 2004). For example, an actor can acquire agency by his or her motivation and intentionality; a chronological sequence can be transformed into a causal chain through the attribution of causality to certain actions. In other words, storytelling contributes to the achievement of a certain aim by the storyteller telling the story in the desired way.

Storytelling encourages the relation of stories embedded in cultural and historical contexts (McAdams 2006). The social and historical context has a strong influence on and shapes the crafting and the subsequent evolution of the story (Alvesson and Willmott 2002). The storyteller needs to combine ‘internal strivings’ with ‘external prescriptions’ (Ybema et al. 2009), to ensure that the desired image corresponds to the accepted cultural values and norms. An understanding of the interaction between structure and individual agency explains why stories include some aspects, for example, activities and routines, and exclude others (Fuller and Moran 2001). Anderson (2000) shows how the ability to reformulate and reinterpret the meaning of local values (e.g. traditions), has the power to change local perception of value and contribute to new value creation.

The ability to use stories is a requirement for becoming a successful entrepreneur (Rao 1994). Storytelling allows enterprising individuals to shape the interpretation of the nature and the potential of the required resources in such a way that others are attracted to helping them. Creating and telling a convincing story allows the entrepreneur to present him or herself in the most positive way, to validate the entrepreneur's claims, and differentiate the entrepreneur from others (Goffman 1959; Wry, Lounsbury, and Glynn 2011; LaPointe 2010; McMahon and Watson 2013). Telling stories can also help to transform a non-productive situation into a favourable one, which makes stories and storytelling valuable resources for enterprising individuals. How
entrepreneurs use stories and storytelling to produce entrepreneurial advantage requires further exploration.

**Research Method**

To explore the role of entrepreneurs and their stories in the transformation of regional identity, we use a single embedded case study of Priorat, a Spanish wine region. This approach is appropriate for theory development (Eisenhardt 1989).

**Research setting**

The wine making context is appropriate for this analysis, first because the wine industry is highly institutionalized and traditional. This adds to the salience of our main variable (regional identity). Second, the wine industry historically has undergone large transformations, in terms of its market characteristics, government intervention and the wine production process (Simpson 2005; Archibugi 2007). Finally, wine making is considered to be an art and wine is considered a cultural product. Although some studies focus on the institutional aspects or network structure in wine or cognac sectors (Moodysson and Sack 2016; Beverland 2005), here we focus on the region’s identity as the factor facilitating regional development, for example, better quality wine, new customers, increased migration. The emergence of an internationally recognized wine region that local people identify with presents a unique opportunity to explore these relationships.

We chose the Priorat region because of its interesting heritage in Catalonia, which is considered the most enterprising region in Spain (Alvarez et al. 2011). The region is presented by various stakeholders (individual actors, PDO authority and local government) as characterized by some unique and very attractive characteristics. Also, despite the relatively small size and difficult
cultivation conditions, Priorat is a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO). The region and its vineyards have seen difficult times. Wine making in Priorat began in the 12th century, but the phylloxera epidemic at the end of 19th century decimated the region's wine production and led to depopulation and the planting of orchards. As a result, knowledge about production of high quality fine wines was lost; the few winegrowers who continued to cultivate grapes sold them to other regions, (e.g., Penedés) or used them to produce ‘rough’ cheap wine.

Currently, the Priorat region is an internationally recognized wine designation comprising seven villages and 20,000 hectares of land, of which 2,000 hectares are planted to grapes (see Appendix 1 for details on the development of the region; see Appendix 2 for key milestones). In Priorat, wine production is more complex than in other regions due to the soil (terroir) and small amount of grapes grown. However, its vineyards produce the best wine in the world according to the wine taster Robert Parker1. This makes the region particularly interesting for an analysis of the process of building a regional identity based on a unique wine making process and entrepreneurial activity.

Data Collection

We collected primary and secondary data. We conducted 19 semi-structured interviews with different actors in the region including the 5 pioneering wine makers, local government representatives and members of faculty of the regional university in Roviri i Virgili (see Table 1). The interviews lasted between 70 and 150 minutes and were recorded and transcribed. To get a better understanding of the region and its development, both of the authors spent time visiting and observing life and developments in the villages of Falset, Porrera, Poboleda and Gratellops, where we talked informally to the local inhabitants. This material combined with our field notes

1 www.erobertparker.com
provided a good overall understanding of the various interactions, critical events and key actors involved in the process. These data were complemented by archival data (e.g. press, wine magazines, YouTube clips, etc.).

Data analysis

Following Kim, Wennberg and Croidieu (2016), we adopt a multi-level model to explain the mechanism involved in the transformation of Priorat’s regional identity and the role of enterprising individuals and stories in the process. We investigate this process, first, by analysing the changing characteristics of the region's identity, second, by analysing the content of regional identity stories and, third, by analysing the role of entrepreneurial actors in this process. This approach allows a focus on and consideration of regional identity, stories and individual actions and provides a bigger picture of the process. It allows both combination and unravelling of the relations between regional identity, stories and enterprising individuals.

We begin our analysis by re-constructing the story of the Priorat region over the previous 37 years, starting in 1979. Following Goffman’s (1959) assertion that individuals engage actively in presenting themselves and their actions as they wish them to be seen, our story of Priorat is comprised initially of 19 independent stories related by our interviewees. The stories were narrated within a temporal and spatial context and describe past events (Carter 1993; Connelly and Clandinin 1990). We compared these stories and adopted a narrative approach to their analysis. Following Lauritzen and Jaeger (1997), we compared how the setting, characters and
actions directed towards goals (plot) were presented in the stories. By selecting incidents and
details, arranging times and sequences, and employing a variety of the codes and conventions
within a culture, the story teller can give meaning to events, actions and objects. This method
also allowed us to see how the narratives were constructed and how the informant creates it
rhetorically to highlight particular points.

The resulting data were coded, using Nvivo 9, by two researchers exploiting both a priori codes
(e.g., theme, actor, plot and setting) and codes that emerged from the data (e.g., storying). The
results were compared and coding differences were discussed. Figure 1 depicts the translation of
first order categories (interview quotes) into second order themes, and includes the theoretical
dimensions.

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**Findings**

The findings are organized around two key aspects illustrating how the regional identity changed
over time. First, we mapped differences in the region's symbolic and material features and the
changing identity consciousness of the local people. Second, we presented the two most
dominant stories, identifying their setting, characters, plot and theme(s). We introduced the
concept of storying as the mechanism enabling regional identity transformation. Figure 2 depicts
the transformation of Priorat’s regional identity, the elements of story and the mechanism of
storying.
Regional identity over time

Here, we describe the process of Priorat’s regional identity transformation. The change was initiated by a group of enterprising winepreneurs who realized that the region’s economic setting was not fit for their winemaking ideas and decided to improve the external conditions by reinstituting Priorat's legitimacy and authenticity.

Phase One – Initial regional identity (1950 to 1979)

Phase one is the situation in Priorat prior to the arrival of a group of winepreneurs interested in the region’s wines and vineyards.

Material and symbolic features. Priorat in the past was considered to be a subsistence region with little entrepreneurial activity. The inhabitants who had continued in the region had no identification with it and were dissatisfied with the current situation. However, the specificity of the terroir attracted some outsiders to the region. Rene Barbier told us that having tasted some great wines from Priorat spurred his interest in and fed his infatuation with the region and its wines. These outsiders were able to see something that was hidden to the locals. Rene Barbier told us that: ‘In 1979, the Priorat offered an old fashioned type of wine that was a caricature of what winemakers should do. Rioja [a nearby wine region] offered a fresh and intelligent wine. Yet, the Priorat was not a poor wine, it simply was an old fashioned wine’. The local cooperatives had never considered the possibility of selling a fine wine at a higher price. The
entrepreneurial incomers to the region recognized that efforts would be needed to create legitimacy and a market.

*Identity consciousness.* The region is characterized by two dominant, but rare local grape varieties, Garnacha and Cariñena, which only flourish in shiny, rocky soils that have a high mineral content and force the vines' roots to dig deep in search of water. However, in 1979, despite a rich centuries-long history as a wine growing region, only 250 hectares of land were devoted to wine production in Priorat. Oenological competences were missing in the region; the local wine cellars possessed neither the practical nor the technical wine production expertise and the commercialization channels required to produce and sell wine internationally did not exist. This situation led to variable quality in the grapes produced resulting in most being sold to cooperatives, which sold bulk raw wine to cellars in nearby regions such as Penedés.

Priorat had become depopulated and the young generations migrated to nearby cities, such as Reus and Barcelona, to find jobs leaving a small population of elderly inhabitants. Many of these were either not interested in wine production or were using traditional, unconventional methods. Resentment was quite widespread and there was virtually no recognition of any opportunities in the region. Industrial production was not possible as Satustia Alvarez, a local inhabitant, noted:

> ‘The local production of hazelnuts, olives and grapes, was more difficult for Priorat than other regions. Since production was inefficient, local communities had fewer resources to invest in maintaining their machinery which resulted in a declined agricultural sector and recognition of the difficulty to survive based on agricultural products’.

So, despite the region's natural resources, it was not seen as attractive by either those inside or those outside the region.
Phase Two – After the arrival of the Closes (1979 to 2000)

During this phase the Closes, as Rene Barbier and his friends were described, arrived in Priorat and eventually saw the region demarcated as a PDO. It can be considered the establishment phase for the new regional identity.

*Material and symbolic features.* During this period, Priorat began to show signs of economic recovery and increased production of high quality wines by the local community. There is also a consensus among locals that without Rene Barbier and his four companions the change in the region would not have happened. The local inhabitants believe that Barbier's success was due to his respect for the local heritage and his understanding of the terroir. Marc Ripoll, a local wine producer maintained that, ‘the moment people realized that these people came because of the soil, that their primary interest was in good wine and not exploiting the locals and the soil; they accepted them’.

Although Priorat became an internationally recognized wine region during this period, not all of its winemakers were successful in producing and selling high quality wines. For example, Carles Pastrana noted that ‘there were some German people who owned four hectares and decided to abandon them since they could not sell the wine at high prices. Some Frenchmen arrived. Toni sold little or nothing then, and Luc Van Ishegem did not sell a single box.’

Internalizing local values and stories was particularly relevant for acceptance as an insider. During this period, there were three different categories of winemakers in the region: 1) those who had integrated the values of the region, that is, terroir, grape variety, collaboration with the

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2 The French word ‘clos’ means ‘vineyard’; here it refers to the ‘owner of the vineyard’.
local region; 2) those who contributed to recognition of the region, but used their own production methods without respecting the region's terroir; and 3) outsiders who engaged in traditional wine production and who did not understand local values. These differences emerged more strongly as the regional identity consolidated and allowed local winemakers to distinguish further among the different groups. For example, Perez, one of the Closes explained:

Scala Dei was an industrial project and Masia Barril for me was a cellar, a cellar with a certified terroir. Scala Dei is a modernized wine where the oenology is better but which lacks vision. Scala Dei offered a product that people understood while Priorat wine had to be understood.

Both industrial winemakers whose presence added to the region's reputation and other, smaller, winemakers who respected the traditional methods were accepted by the local people in Priorat. Pere Rovira explained:

I am 45 years old, and the third wine generation in Penedes. After a small little study on Priorat, we saw that the wines were different from many other wines in the world. We thought it would be interesting to come to Priorat and participate in this project where René Barbier, Jose Luis Perez, Alvaro Palacios and Pastrana had been trying out their ideas together with the school that José Luis Perez was running. We bought some land, but had already started looking at things, seeing, watching because we wanted to do things well … selecting, looking that you make your custom wine, with your varieties and your wine barrels that this could have an acceptance to the market.

*Identity consciousness.* The new identity combined the ethos of the Closes and the local people. This is highlighted by Marc Ripoll, local winemaker:
Yes, these people [the Closes] came here and made the Priorat known. Yet, it is important to recognize the people who had been working very hard here to maintain the Priorat. They did this out of love; they were losing money, but the cellar would not exist if there had not been one person working in the Gratallops vineyard.

Other manifestation of the increased prosperity in Priorat was the return of younger people keen to work in the region. A local winemaker described this: ‘More than the price of grapes, what is more important to me is see that young people stay in the Priorat to work and value what the region has for them. For us, this has been good the most important consequence. In the past young people were going to work in Reus, Tarragona’. Several local actors decided to work collaboratively and learn from the Closes about how to make higher quality wine. This helped to establish a new process for selecting grapes and making wine. It was explained by one of the Closes as: ‘the economy is consolidated when the cooperatives regroup to offer the best quality. It was hard for them to recognize that they did not have the vision of this issue. Our vision was to make a wine with terroir but not a modern wine’

Phase Three – Current regional identity (from early 2000)

The region is now one of the fastest growing in Spain. The local inhabitants are proud of the region and identify with its new values and features.

Symbolic and material features. Although the number of wineries has increased to about 80, the percentage owned and managed by historically local people has decreased to around 10 per cent. Many younger people who had emigrated in the search for work are returning to capture the benefits of the regional boom. Rene Barbier noted that ‘we are now entering a time where people are investing, there has been an impressive investment, in the hope of making a good product and
making money’. What characterizes these new incomers/returnees is their respect for local values, their enthusiasm, hope and appreciation of the environment.

As collaboration and competition over wine increased, local people, mostly those who grew up in the region (i.e., the children of winemakers) saw opportunities for their own entrepreneurial activity. As well as taking over or starting their own cellars, some began to offer complementary services for both local businesses and visitors. These include among others, hotels and restaurants. Rene Barbier's son told us that:

> The region needs to offer more than it does now; what we need is a better infrastructure for tourism. We recently opened our restaurant with a unique concept. Now there are four restaurants offering a comparable experience, but only two years ago there was nowhere that visitors could enjoy a meal.

What helped the region to improve its image further, and added to its prestige, was the region's demarcation as a PDO. PDO guarantees the quality of the production from Priorat’s wineries and cooperatives; and acted to protect the region from the activities in other regions (e.g. Penedes which bought grapes from Priorat, but did not produce the wine in Priorat).

**Identity consciousness.** Local entrepreneurs aimed to maintain the connection between terroir and the contribution to regional growth initiated by the Closes. This resulted in many local cellars collaborating with each other and along their production value chains. For example, a winemaker explained to us that: ‘In the Petit cellers of the Priorat, we are a group of different small wineries which got together three years ago to learn a little more, and to share experience and expenses and commercialization strategies’.
This has increased the prestige of the Priorat region and resulted in increased efforts to differentiate and demarcate the region's boundaries. For example, Carles Pastrana stressed how the terroir in the neighbouring locality of Bellmunt differed from Priorat — ‘Bellmunt is flat and there is not so much licorella, the ground is not as good and more abandoned’. He told us that: ‘it gave me a strange feeling, it seemed it was not in Priorat. They [the big investors, the great wineries from outside] will have young vineyards that will be well vinified. But who can quantify terroir and passion?’ This quote shows that the locals identify with the region and reject incomers who not share the local values and or appreciate the resources.

**Stories and storying as mechanisms for identity imprinting**

This section describes how the stories of a group of entrepreneurial winemakers promoted the changes to Priorat’s regional identity, which materialized in the storying about Priorat. This section discusses two stories and the links to storying.

**Story 1: Achieving a dream**

**Setting.** The history of most wine regions is based on the superiority of the terroir and the types of grapes; Priorat's story started with the entrepreneurial actions of a small group. Rene Barbier is considered to have been the driver of Priorat’s revival. From the outset, he understood the value of the natural resources in the Priorat region—licorella-rich soil and a microclimate which produce small grapes which were also few in number, but had an intense taste. He recognised that small-scale wine production was feasible, but that the challenge would be to convince the local people to focus on high-quality production. The local inhabitants initially were sceptical and did not see the potential in the vineyards which Barbier saw. Salustia Alvarez confirmed that:
When Rene, Alvaro, Jose Luis and Daphne arrived, the locals did not understand and were disoriented. Why do these strangers engage with a product that has not been working in 100 years, and without really knowing where it will take them? That is not the way things are done.

Barbier was convinced that to achieve success he needed some like minded partners—‘being few is better than being alone’—and approached some close friends to join his exploration of the potential of the wine and the region. The setting of the story emphasizes the role of wine and the enthusiasm for hard work. For example, Carles Pastrana's story began with:

This started simply because here a good wine could be made, the raw material was good and the land was cheap. The problem here was that you either had to invest a lot of money to construct the vineyards or invest your life and youth. We did the latter. One of the most important values in life is youth because physically and mentally you have more strength. We started with tremendous enthusiasm, but without any type of knowledge.

Similarly, Daphne Glorian's story began: ‘We started in really difficult conditions. We started with an old tractor, which was held together essentially with paper clips and shoelaces! Alvaro sold his motorbike. I sold my car’.

**Characters.** Carles Pastrana explained that: ‘It all started with me and Rene, Rene told me to join him otherwise he felt he would be unable to do anything substantial. Then, a group was formed with Alvaro Palacios who had many customers from Rioja’. Rene Barbier emphasized personal drive:
I wanted to push my dreams of making a great Spanish wine … To start in Priorat you need character. We were a group of crazy romantics, because making wines in Priorat is difficult, it is not for profit. … We formed our image. We considered Priorat much more important than our individual capacity to make great wine!

For this group of entrepreneurs, it was important also to contribute to the development of the Priorat region. Carles Pastrana, explained:

My wife is from Barcelona and I am from Tarragona which influenced our decision to come here. My wife and I were always aware that if we succeeded, we could help the region to revive. We involved ourselves before anyone else. Also, in 1979, Perez brought his family to Falset and started teaching viniculture.

**Plot.** The story of the Priorat begun when Rene’s father-in-law bought a vineyard in Priorat for Rene and his wife. In 1979, the group of the Closes, including Rene Barbier, Carles Pastrana, Daphne Glorian and Alvaro Palacios, came together; they later invited Jose Luis Perez to join them based on his winemaking expertise. In 1985, the Closes began buying vineyards and 1989 produced their first vintage. Their commercialization strategy was to produce one type of same wine, but sell it in different regions and under different labels. This allowed them to claim that they had their own cellars.

In this period, international recognition became important to compete with other Spanish wines, for example, Rioja, Penedes, and French wine regions. Barbier decided to embark on direct sales to Paris, to distributors who were attracted to the wine and who then decided to visit the Priorat. Barbier described it thus: ‘They said, I want to visit the region where this wine is created. After three weeks, he visited us and tasted the wine and wrote an article about wine and the region. He
said it was the best wine of Spain. He wrote the first article with an international reach. So, we received the first plaudits. Then, ‘El Bulli’ was the first restaurant in Spain to use the Priorat wine’. This newspaper article attracted the interest of an internationally acclaimed wine critic – Robert Parker – who visited Priorat in 1991. Carles Pastrana described that: ‘Then, a moment [1991] comes when you have a production of 1,000 bottles per person and suddenly a group of people came that no one knew, one person named Robert Parker said that it is the best wine in the world. Following, people started to call us every 20 minutes’.

**Theme. Opportunity for success. Terroir.** The Closes understood that to sell high quality wine would require putting Priorat back on the world wine map. Based on a few years of working in sales and on commercial dealings for the Palacios winery in Rioja, Rene Barbier knew that even the best wine needs to be packaged appropriately and needs a story. Aware of the specificity and high potential of the soil, the Closes were not discouraged by the poverty of the region and its lack of resources and infrastructure, outdated winemaking knowledge, lack of recognition and low morale of the local population. The Closes created a setting where the richness of the terroir offered the possibility to produce high quality wines. Barbier explained that: ‘We have a common idea about how to preserve the nature and the vineyards, and how to protect the types of production, so that the region can survive and sustain its characteristics’.

However, although the Closes saw the opportunities for producing and selling high quality wines, the local inhabitants initially were not motivated to join this initiative. Rene Barbier was the entrepreneur who recognised an opportunity in Priorat and who wanted to engage Priorat in his vision. He explained that: ‘after the first meeting with the local cooperative, I left with optimism and intention to not fail them. They [local people] were unprotected and did not know what they had in the region’. Barbier and the Closes had to overcome several problems and obstacles in the
shape of the resistance of local winegrowers and cooperatives, lack of infrastructure for their entrepreneurial activity, and lack of market for their product.

*Storying: Blending Priorat’s regional identity and the story of the Closes*

When the inhabitants of Priorat began to hear news of the Closes success in relation to production of high quality wine and achievement of international recognition, and saw the quality and size of their business network, the local viticulturists decided to reembark on winemaking activity. The Closes' story was accepted by the locals because it highlighted the local, cultural and historical values of the region. For example, the Closes made an active effort to refer to the centuries’ long tradition of wine making in the region, and the unique terroir (on the steep slopes of a mountain).

A local winemaker explained:

> 95% of the people here were talking about grapes and some bad wines and they [the Closes] talked about good wine as a final product that they were going to sell. That's why we were in two completely different worlds. The change came from people who knew the wine market and had contacts in the world of wine.

The Closes shared their story with the local region to increase the region’s wine making legitimacy and contribute to economic growth. Priorat had no previous experience of the international wine making industry. While local winemakers observed the entrepreneurship of the Closes, they drew on their local heritage. A local winemaker explained that:

> once the Closes received international attention, new cellars emerged and winemaking and selling is possible in small quantities. Then, you dream with it and give everything to continue the work of your ancestors.
Story 2: Transforming the region

Setting. The setting of the first story corresponded to individuals concerned with rejuvenation of the region and reinforcing its characteristics. It emphasized the importance and uniqueness of the local terroir and grapes and the region's heritage. It is interesting that, initially, the local inhabitants were focused more on introducing new methods of production, while later they concentrated on improving the wine quality and creating a variety of classical products and a reputation for consistency. Montserrat Nadal, a local winemaker, said that:

For me there is a danger in people who think solely about business, the market changes quickly, one year it exists and the next it does not. It is important to work with oenologists. It is important to maintain the quality.

Now, the local winemakers' efforts are focused on remaining attractive to their customers and maintaining the Priorat region's reputation. A local winemaker told us that: ‘These new wines that Carlos Pastrana, René Barbier and these people were making were receiving a very positive reception; people started to talk about them as the best wines in the world. I wanted to be part of it.’

Characters. Apart from the Closes, many new winemakers become active characters of the second story. The initial characters assumed roles of educators and facilitators, while the new ones are portrayed as new entrepreneurs. The examples below illustrate clearly this distinction.

Following the separation of the businesses by Closes, the Closes focused on linking other local winemakers with international distributors. Carles Pastrana asserted that: ‘We have convinced local winemakers that there is a buyer, there is a way to do things and they have a product that
counts’. The Closes also convinced the winegrowers that selling to them and other local winemakers could be more beneficial as they paid three times the money the cooperatives paid and that this would allow the winegrowers to invest in their vineyards. Salustia Alvarez explained that:

They [the local winegrowers] visualized that there is another world, when we started to bring wine magazines that included wine scores. We began to teach them that there were wines bottles that were very expensive and that consumers bought and agreed to pay a high price. Then people started minimally, clearly not to believe it, but they ended up accepting higher prices for the grapes.

Many of the new winemakers strove to maintain the high-quality production initiated by the Closes and to keep the characteristics of Priorat wines. For example: ‘These new wines that Carlos Pastrana, Rene Barbier and these people were doing were receiving very positive reception; people started to talk about them as the best wines in the world. I wanted to be part of it.’ Also, others followed this logic. Pere Rovira, a new winemaker told us that:

From the first day, we decided we would be among the five best wines of Priorat. Now, we are among the five best wines. I do not want to be better than the Closes, but I want my business to be right behind them … we do not want an industrial company, we want to remain an artisanal production with a bottler and a labeller, we do not have a bottling line.

Plot. The main challenge for the Priorat was to link the winemakers' and viticulturists' practices to regional development. The aim was to transform the local winegrowers from being grape pickers to becoming high quality wine producers. This involved increasing the quality and the
price of the grapes, which allowed local cultivators to invest part of their earnings in wine production. This was explained by the local winemaker, Salustina Alvarez:

We interwove the winemaking World with the world of viticulture. What we did was to bring to the Priorat all possible information as to where Priorat wines were internationally positioned and recognized. This was expected to help people to have the feeling what they got with their grapes. They would not simply think of selling but also of participating in the wine production. Globally, recognition of Priorat depended on the quality of the wines which in turn, depended on the quality of the grapes.

There was also the challenge of identifying and acquiring resources, especially financial resources, for the production of wine. Due to the recession in the region, local cultivators lacked the financial resources to build new cellars and buy new machinery. Also, the right type of human capital was scarce in the region. The Closes shared their experience of how to minimize costs by, for example, sharing cellars and collaborating over the commercialization process. They advocated adoption of new wine production process using a wider range of skills and knowledge from oenologists and viticulturists educated in Roviri i Virgili University, a regional university which had launched new study programmes on winemaking in the Priorat. This new way of producing and commercializing the wine initially was disorientating for the local winegrowers. However the number of both the native and non-native actors interested in cultivating vineyards and making wine, increased in Priorat during this phase.

**Theme:** Growth is the overarching theme of this story, where improving attractiveness of the region and its infrastructure as well as creating new product markets were central. We identify
two subthemes in the main theme: growth as development and growth as exploitation of opportunities.

While the earlier subtheme focused on the improvements of infrastructure and services in the region, the latter one emphasized the identification of new markets that occurred through product diversification. More specifically, growth as development sees entrepreneurial activity as embedded in the region and emphasizes the need to improve the attractiveness of the region, provide new infrastructure with hotels, lodgings, restaurants, etc. Local winemakers engaged in arguing that:

We need to make a plan to make this a tourist destination where people can come to visit wine cellars, and tourist attractions such Scala Dei and go to a restaurant. We need to be more visionary. People do not see the area as a tourist destination at the moment.

They also stress the need to maintain the quality. For example, Pere Rovira said:

So, if you have beautiful flour for bread, why would you make a mediocre bread? No? Try to do better than you are doing right now. (...) You need to put your love into this place, into what you do and care for it; then you will be triumphant; if you don’t, you will not fail, but you would be just one of many.

Growth as exploitation of opportunities focuses on efficiency increases, and search for alternative paths to offer similar products or services to a lower price. For example, the wine produced by the Closes satisfied high-end customers willing to pay a high price. There was no production of wine that the average Spanish customer could buy. One of the newcomers, Xavier Buil, created a product to satisfy this latent market segment
We do not produce very intense and complex wines, we produce less rustic and finer wines. People drink wine with their friends, with their families, no one buys a bottle of wine to give a score to it, unless you are Robert Parker. People buy a bottle of wine for a meal with friends or family.

He and some other winemakers adopted this strategy to avoid direct competition with the Closes in an already saturated market.

The Priorat wines were good wines, but very pricy. My idea was to do wine for everyone; a wine that everyone can afford to buy. Of course producing here involves higher costs, so we cannot produce wine for 1 EUR, but still it is possible to offer wine at lower prices. To me it seemed that the market of expensive wines was saturated; competing there did not make any sense; instead I saw other opportunities – producing higher volumes at lower price.

*Storying 2: Creating a conducive environment for the region: Collaboration practices and new business segments*

While the second story portrays different actions performed by the Closes and other local winemakers, the storytelling was designed to motivate the local actors to increase their entrepreneurial activity. Two activities are captured in this storytelling: search for new growth opportunities and need for collaboration. Priorat’s winemakers expected that the region's future growth would depend on understanding the customers' expectations about the wine, and acquiring the knowledge to produce high quality wine. However, different actors understood it differently. For some, to maintain the territory’s recognition by consumers meant that quality needed to be preserved, while for others it meant following the rhythm of modernity. Some of the
new winemakers saw their opportunity in modelling other wine regions, for example Napa Valley. They intended to combine commercialization of wine with the accompanying culture and habits and emphasized how important the development of tourism would be for the development of their businesses. Xavier Buil explained this as follows:

We looked at the American Model. Although we cannot apply the Californian model to Priorat, we copied some things. For example, opening dates, wine tasting courses. I’d like this to become a tourist destination. I think that this is the future for our region. Some wineries and the Capcanes and Falset cooperative started with less ambitious objectives. This year tourism represented 15% to 20% of our business.

The storying focused also on the need to collaborate more in terms of wine quality, production techniques and marketing channels. As mentioned by Josep Garriga, a winemaker: ‘Probably, today we are still the wine-growing area with the highest level of collaboration and closeness among wineries in relation to products and knowledge exchange. We are still the area where there is a higher level of understanding at the level of owners and labourers’.

**Discussion**

This paper shows that transforming a regional identity can influence individual entrepreneurial action and regional development. More specifically, we studied how the changes to regional identity contributed to an increased interest in creation and appropriation of new value in the region. We discussed the important role of stories in the process of transformation of regional identity and raising regional conscientiousness. We analysed the role of entrepreneurial individuals, and the emerging stories involved, and showed that the existence and interpretation
of stories is not a sufficient mechanism to create successful entrepreneurial endeavours; it requires the ability to story, for example, to co-create elements of the story. We discuss our findings below in light of the extant literature.

**The process of regional identity transformation**

Regional identity refers to identification with a region and its symbolic and material features (Paasi 1986). Our analysis shows that regional identity is the institutionalisation of identities of the people identifying with the region. Simply put, although it is ascribed to the region, regional identity collectively represents individual identities of people of the region. If the regional features are not compelling enough, enterprising individuals are likely to engage in enacting an environment to enable identification and entrepreneurial endeavour (McKeever, Anderson, and Jack 2014). Similar to Anderson’s (2000) findings, our analysis shows that the regional revival was initiated by outsiders. They saw the potential and value in the region's resources, that is its vineyards, and were keen to engage in entrepreneurial activity. International recognition of the wine produced by the Closes influenced the early development of Priorat. The Closes managed to convert the region into a promising area for high quality winemaking by introducing the wine and Priorat to international wine experts and wine distributors, emphasizing the uniqueness of the terroir, convincing local winemakers to adopt a new production methodology, demonstrating the importance of sharing resources to reduce costs, and focusing on quality assurance resulting in the PDO designation. The interest in the region increased both the number of wineries and the demand for resources such as infrastructure and vocational education. This added further to revitalization of the region. This is in line with work that suggests that creating new ventures (in this case, vineyards) ‘raises regional productivity and competitiveness levels’ (Benneworth 2004, : 441). In the process of creating these conducive conditions the individuals became
embedded in the local structures, achieved recognition among the local community and help institutionalize a new regional identity. While the focus of the Closes primarily was on establishing the right conditions for their entrepreneurial activity in the region, that is, high quality wine production, they contributed to better conditions for entrepreneurial activity in general. The new generation of entrepreneurs in the region engaged in either expanding the legacy of Closes, offering complementary services or exploiting the possibilities (i.e., broadening served market segments) created by the Closes. This supports Huggins and Thompson’s (2014) findings that regional values and norms influence the type of entrepreneurial activity and that culture may make entrepreneurial activities more acceptable (Jack and Anderson 2002; Wennberg, Pathak, and Autio 2013). Yet, we show that it is the entrepreneurial agency in form of active storying that drives this process.

**The role of the story in the transformation process**

Identity stories reflect regional culture, that is the values and beliefs important in the region. Regional culture has been shown to influence new firm formation rates and, thus, regional development (Davidsson and Wiklund 1997). While it is clear that the actions of the five entrepreneurs were the initial driver of the changes in the region, our analysis shows that the identity story that was created gave the locals the incentive to engage in entrepreneurial activity. For example, they were proud of the positive reviews of ‘their’ wine and of its being served in restaurants such as el Bulli. The emergence of the story resulted in growing acceptance and legitimacy for the actions of the Closes. Legitimacy was built by the inclusion of references to achievements in the story (Brown 2006), which attracted new winemakers to the region (Mellander, Florida, and Stolarick 2011). This legitimization contributed to change of the regional identity, values and norms (e.g., culture) (Anderson and Smith 2007; Jack and Anderson
2002). Receiving positive feedback from acclaimed critics and being considered part of the mainstream winemakers was important (Rao, Monin, and Durand 2003). Equally important, was the search for elements and characteristics that allowed the Priorat winemakers to claim distinctiveness (Beverland 2005). Consequently, we show how creating own story contributes to building a story of the region and how this story helps to change the regional identity.

In addition, the stories of enterprising individuals influenced local people’s perceptions of the vitality of the region and their propensity for entrepreneurial behaviour (Liñán, Urbano, and Guerrero 2011). By retelling the story, the locals engaged in legitimization of new entrepreneurial values and in strengthening own regional conscientiousness. Hence, the experience of a collective identity story, and pride in being part of the region were important for changing the values and norms of the region as well as increasing the motivation and propensity for entrepreneurialism. Simply put, the stories not only portray agency of the local actors, but also provide a vehicle for change.

**Difference between storytelling and storying**

Our findings show that the ability to engage in storying, that is, purposeful elaboration of stories to achieve desired outcomes, is important for entrepreneurial action. The extant literature posits that storytelling ‘presumes a story which is prepared to fit a plot which already exists’ (Johansson 2004, 284) and focuses on a ‘culturally appropriate story’, that is, a story transmitting values deemed appropriate in a given community (Lave and Wenger 1991). However, we observed that the Closes engaged in a different process, one of story creation where new action was introduced, new elements, including norms and values were added or old were removed, new attributions were made and new implications introduced. This challenged the social expectations of local
stakeholders. Simply put, storying is about devising a story and inventing a plot that do not necessarily comply with extant norms and expectations (Johansson 2004).

Engaging in storying presumes the intentional agency of individuals. We argue that storying was instrumental in the development of the region because it enabled enterprising individuals to create the conditions conducive to their entrepreneurial actions, and to become embedded in and part of the region and its legacy. We suggest that storying is an important mechanism of regional identity transformation and reflects the intentional actions of enterprising individuals. So, it is ‘not a passive ascription of qualities or personal attributes’, but it is an active storyline enacting and identity production. The changes introduced to the stories over time suggest that our winepreneurs purposefully shape the plots and introduce new themes to rationalize and legitimize their own activity. As such we show that storying is strategic, purposeful and ongoing; and to be successful it requires convincing others about coherence and authenticity of the story.

Conclusions, limitations and further research

In this paper, we mapped the process of transformation of a regional identity story and its impact on the regional development of Priorat. Specifically, we showed that regional identity is the institutionalization of individual identities of the people of the region; we observed that although the regional identity changed as part of creating an environment conducive to entrepreneurial activity, over time, it clearly contributed to the development of the region. We also found that individuals, within the region, used stories differently, some simply told stories, others engaged in storying. Simply put, we show that story and storying can be action and that there is agency of and in stories. As such, the paper makes two contributions. We describe the process of regional
identity transformation and explore the mechanisms and implications of using stories and storying in the process.

The benefit of a single case study is the richness of the data and the level of understanding of the relationships and processes involving the variables. However, it has the limitation that the findings relate to a specific case. Another limitation of our research design is that the data were collected retrospectively, which did not allow us to follow the emergence of the identity story in real time. More research on the emergence of regional identity stories in real time would be an interesting way forward. Also, closer investigation of the composition of ‘pioneering teams’ and how the local embeddedness (or lack of it) of the entrepreneurial agents influences the story’s content and emergence, could lead to further policy recommendations for regional development.

References


Figure 1. Analysis of first order categories into second-order themes and theoretical constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-Order Categories</th>
<th>Second-Order Themes</th>
<th>Theoretical Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An unique and different vision that allowed other local people to understand the Priorat was missing. [RB]</td>
<td>Storying</td>
<td>Mechanisms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have to be professional and you have to know what you do and that you know how to sell! [RB]</td>
<td>Story</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a very nice story; (...) Priorat was always known for wine production, but then all got forgotten [FZ]</td>
<td>Transforming region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is a story that was told already thousands of times; but people want to hear it again and again. [CP]</td>
<td>Achieving dream</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These four had the entrepreneurial drive and passion for wine [AV]</td>
<td>Regional consequentiality</td>
<td>Regional Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have to be professional and you have to know what you do and that you know how to sell! [RB]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are now 12 agro-tourism businesses that did not exist couple years ago. [MN]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rene, Jose, Daphne and Carlos started the adventure; but Rene is the one who discovered the Priorat [FZ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People saw that Rene and Palacios started here, they saw these possibilities and started the whole story [RP]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The School of Enology is very important [RP]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The recognition was due to the quality of the wines; the wines depended on the quality of the grapes [SA]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For some the rurality is an abundance, for others it is a deception; for those there is nothing here [SA]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theses wines are unique in the world, because of their terroir, because of their characteristics [PR]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The most important are the vineyards, they are like a treasure [MR]</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2. Regional identity transformation, elements of stories and storying mechanism

Story 1: Achieving a dream
Setting: Low-scale production; high scepticism; team building
Characters: Small team with different skill sets; intention to help the growth of the region
Plot: Resource acquisition; sharing of facilities; share of potential markets
Theme: Improve the legitimacy of the region; use of local characteristics to create high-quality products; overcome internal resistance, lack of infrastructure and markets

Story 2: Transforming the region
Setting: Sustaining region’s characteristics and emphasizing its resources; focus on maintaining the recognition of the region by focusing on quality
Characters: Separation of the initial team; new winemakers strive to maintain a high-quality wine and produce in smaller quantities
Plot: Connecting complimentary actors to strength regional development; local actors produce products with higher value added; experienced actors provide advice to overcome limitations
Theme: building trust; identification of new markets

Material and symbolic features
- Few people identifies with the region
- No perceive value of local resources

Identity consciousness
- Higher migration to other regions
- Lack of skills to produce high-quality products

Material and symbolic features
- Internalizing local values and stories by new regional actors
- The regional change helped to the return of younger generations

Identity consciousness
- Narratives combine elements of a transforming region
- Stronger collaboration among different and complimentary actors

Storying
- Accepting the possibility and market opportunity brought by external entrepreneurs
- New small business starting the production of the new product with high quality characteristics

Storying
- Understanding customer’s expectations to produce new products
- Improve infrastructure and search for new market opportunities

Material and symbolic features
- Demarcation tools increase legitimacy e.g. trademarks, PDO
- People return to the region to participate in the growth of the region

Identity consciousness
- New narratives emphasize local resources to differentiate the region
- Collaboration among small actors
Table 1. The Interviewees and their role in and connection to Priorat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Role in Priorat</th>
<th>Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Rene Barbier</td>
<td>Wine-maker, owner of Clos Mogador; one of the initiators of the revival of Priorat. In good years his wine has obtained up to 98 Parker Points.</td>
<td>From wine making family in France that moved to Spain (Tarragona); studied in Bordeaux; worked for Palacios Family as sales person; in Priorat since 1979; strong proponent of single vineyard wines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Alvaro Palacios</td>
<td>Wine-maker; owner of Finca Dofi and L’Ermita; among the five Pioneers</td>
<td>From Rioja, studied enology in Bordeaux (with Jean-Pierre Moueix); worked with Chateau Petrus. From a family with huge winemaking traditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Josep Lluis Perez</td>
<td>Wine-maker and first owner of Clos Martinet. Biologist; oenologist for many wineries in Priorat. Founder of the Cims de Porrera project.</td>
<td>From Alicante; prior to moving to Priorat lived and worked in Falset teaching oenology there; father to Sara Perez.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Carles Pastrana</td>
<td>One of the pioneers; wine-maker and owner of Clos de l’Obac Winery.</td>
<td>From Tarragona; journalist, married to enologist Mariona Jarque; very strong focus on profitability and organization of his project;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Daphne Glorian</td>
<td>Wine-maker; owner of Clos Erasmus; enabled entrance into the US market in the early stage</td>
<td>Swiss; lawyer by education; worked in distribution and sales of wine; married to Eric Solomon of specialty wine importing company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Marc Ripoll</td>
<td>Wine-maker and owner of micro winery Cellers Ripoll Sans</td>
<td>From Priorat (Gratallops); from a wine growing family, that previously used to sell the grapes to the cooperative without making wine itself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Salustiano Alvarez</td>
<td>President of the DO Priorat (the regulatory organisation); CEO of winery Valle</td>
<td>From Priorat; from family producing fruits and nuts as well as managing restaurants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Sara Perez</td>
<td>Wine-maker, oenologist; runs Clos Martinet; also together with her husband started a restaurant ‘Irreductibles’ in 2004.</td>
<td>Daughter of Josep Perez, married to Rene Barbier son; moved to Priorat as a child; studied in Barcelona biology; runs also Venus la Universa in DO Monsant; a determined proponent of organic winemaking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Ricard Pasanau</td>
<td>Owns Clos Pasanau (joined the family business in 2007)</td>
<td>From Barcelona, although his grandma from Poboleda; industrial engineer, already his grandfather part of the cooperative in la Morera de Montsant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position and Experience</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Rene Barbier Jr.</td>
<td>Wine-maker; runs Clos Mogador; together with his wife owns a restaurant ‘Irreductibles’. Son of Rene Barbier, married to Sara Perez; is managing the Clos Mogador.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Pere Rovira</td>
<td>Wine-maker &amp; owner of Mas d’en Gil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>August Vicent</td>
<td>Wine-maker and owner of Celler Cecilio; owns the first winery registered in the DO Priorat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Xavier Buil</td>
<td>Wine-maker &amp; owner wine cellar of Buil i Giné;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Fernando Zamora</td>
<td>Professor of oenology at URV; wine consultant; co-owner of wine cellar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Montserrat Nadal</td>
<td>Professor of viticulture at University Rovira i Virgili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Joan Vaque</td>
<td>County Counsel of Priorat, local policy maker, responsible for Leader Plus program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Joaquim Sabate</td>
<td>CEO of the consortium of cooperatives in Priorat (Gratalllops, Lloa, Vilella baja and Vilella alta)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Josep Garriga</td>
<td>Wine-maker and owner of Mas Garrian Winery; member of the association of 9 small wineries in Priorat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>