

## Tourist routes strategies of local development

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**Abstract:** Tourism as an economic activity can contribute to the social, economic and cultural development of a region. In order to understand these dynamics, it is important not only to introduce the guiding principles of development, but also to think about strategies to implement and develop the activity in specific regions. The positive and negative factors of tourism can be shown based on the peculiar characteristics of each area. However, rather than a general discussion of the problem, this study presents the planning and management strategies of tourism of the Vale dos Vinhedos (Valley of Vineyards) Wine Route, which is presented as a case study of designing tourist routes yielding local development.

**Key Words:** tourism strategy, local development, Vale dos Vinhedos, tourist route., rural tourism.

### Rutas turísticas y estrategias de desarrollo local

**Resumen:** El turismo como actividad económica puede contribuir al desarrollo social, económico y cultural de una región. Para entender estas dinámicas, es importante no sólo para introducir los principios rectores del desarrollo, sino también para pensar en estrategias para implementar y desarrollar la actividad en regiones específicas. Los factores positivos y negativos del turismo se pueden mostrar en base a las características peculiares de cada área. Sin embargo, en lugar de una discusión general del problema, este estudio presenta las estrategias de planificación y gestión del turismo en la Ruta del Vino del Valle de los Viñedos como un estudio de caso de estudio de rutas turísticas que visan el desarrollo local.

**Palabras Clave:** estrategia de turismo, desarrollo local, Vale dos Vinhedos, ruta turística, turismo rural.

### 1. Introduction

Tourism today is seen as an economic solution for many municipalities, and it often acts as an incentive to non-agricultural activities in marginalized rural areas. The reason for this role and potential of rural tourism can be found in the return of "urban man" to the countryside. In the 1980s, rural life became a tourist attraction, not only for environmentalists and nature lovers, but also for urban families seeking a life free from exposure to contamination by chemicals and to the noises and disturbances of urban spaces. According to Kosmaczewska (2008), agritourism has

the capacity to influence the income of the local community, but there is difficulty in understanding the difference between agriculture and tourism. For Kosmaczewska (2008), tourism in rural areas needs to bring results to the community as well as to the visitor.

Due to this new demand, rural tourism became a major promoter of sustainable local development, helping to improve the quality of life of rural populations. This activity meets the need for new alternatives to keep man living with dignity in rural spaces, at the same time preventing the disorganized rise of urban agglomerations without the equipment and services, which allow living

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according to the standard of living criteria recommended by the United Nations program, which looks at the HDI (Human Development Index) of each country. However, the tourist demand for rural spaces also exposed the general difficulty for inhabitants of rural areas to supply services and products with the quality usually expected by tourists.

The rural tourist experience in particular must be understood as the overall experience of a large number and diversity of resources, attractions, services, people and environments offered by a destination, not all principally designed for tourist use, but all of which impact on the experience and are potentially sought out and valued by tourists. (Ribeiro and Marques, 2002)

The purpose of this study is based on Mintzberg *et al.* (2000) theory of intended, emerging and fulfilled strategies, to find out whether the proposals for the management of regional tourism development in the Vale dos Vinhedos Wine Route fit this model. The article is organized as follows: first, the theoretical foundation for strategic theories and regional tourism development is presented and then the case of the Vale dos Vinhedos Wine Route is analyzed as a model to apply development strategies according to the concepts formulated by Mintzberg *et al.* (2000).

The study aims to discuss theoretically the mechanisms responsible for the efficiency and effectiveness of the wine tourism economy and therefore considers the segments responsible for the sustainable economic development of the Vale dos Vinhedos Wine Route. The methodology was exploratory, based on a descriptive case study, with qualitative research. Data were collected in 2007 through convenience interviews with 15 winemakers and agents of tourism in the Valley of the Vineyards Route, with representatives from the public sector (Secretary for Development, Tourism Secretary and the Deputy Mayor of Bento Gonçalves – Rio Grande do Sul) and representatives of the sector entities under study, namely APROVALE, ATUASERRA, EMBRAPA-Grape and Wine, which are wine producing associations which promote local development.

## 2. Rural Tourism

This paper follows Holloway's concept of tourism (1994), which defines it mainly as an industry supported by a chain of several intervening sectors that intersect and complement each other. When tourism in rural areas is analyzed, it is considered here as a non-agricultural activity that is supported by agricultural activities. According to

Schneider (2005) the growth of non-agricultural activities in rural environment is contributing to the development of pluri-activity based rural households. It should be pointed out that tourism is not the only activity that can complete and reinforce agricultural activities, as is the case of services, communications, handicrafts and others, depending on local peculiarities. All of them, especially rural tourism, create new jobs and redesign the rural economic space itself. Rural tourism induces the growth of non-agricultural occupations in the rural environment (Silva, 1997).

According to Martínéz and Monzonís (2000: 10), rural tourism can be described as an activity that is able to join the characteristics of supply and the motivation of tourist demand. Thus, they define it as tourist activity performed in a rural space, consisting of a demand-oriented offer integrated with leisure, whose main motivation is the contact with the rural surroundings combined with relationships with local society. Silva *et al.* (1998) believe that rural tourism generates occupations that complement agricultural activities and it becomes part of the daily life on farms, whose extent depending on the specific farm.

Rural tourism plays a major role in the retention of inhabitants in rural spaces, since it helps keep individuals professionally active, not only in agricultural activities, but especially in rural spaces. It is thus an important factor to reduce migratory flow to the urban areas. This new tendency, according to Ramon (1995: 98), is called neo-ruralism. In Brazil, the rural tourism program is being implemented by EMBRATUR, the Brazilian tourism authority, and its purpose is to regulate this tourism activity, whose focus of attraction is the relationship between man and the rural environment. This type of leisure/tourism is reflected in weekend trips, in which the tourist travels more often for short stays.

According to Beni (2002: ), in a business-oriented analysis, rural tourism is the name given to travel to rural spaces in programmed or spontaneous itineraries, staying overnight or not, in order to enjoy the scenery and the facilities of the countryside. The author stresses that roads, routes, and forms of development are rarely compatible and comparable, since in each country, region, municipality or place a number of factors interact: economic, social, political and cultural, which over time are molded into a specific, unique form of tourism, which is precisely why they are so attractive.

The perspective of this rural new world creates a content which provides sustainability to local development, seen as "the actions of man within a specific territory, providing appropriate direction to building equipment and facilities, thus avoiding

the negative effects on resources, which destroy them or reduce their attractiveness.” (Ruschmann, 1997: 165). If new alternatives for local development are possible, a new rural territory can be observed for production and consumption by the urban-industrial society, where the countryside has been characterized as a reference of a good place to live. Thus, new development opportunities arise, such as leisure associated with living in the natural environment, like through ecological tourism, appreciating rural handicrafts, visiting family agribusinesses, wine-tasting and others. In this way, a new process began to sustain the development of rural spaces where the elements of local culture are taken over by new values, habits and techniques.

The development process began to be seen not only as basically economic, but also as political, cultural and geographic, within a social context of production of wealth, life in society, cultural exchange relations, and others (Beni, 2002). Thus, government strategies began to include forms of social control, with the crucial participation of the actors in the process of defining productive activities within the geographic/social/economic territory.

### 2.1. Strategy and Planning

Mintzberg (Mintzberg *et al.*, 2000:125) defines strategy broadly and eclectically, emphasizing that the definition cannot be simplified and needs multiple approaches. Therefore, he proposes five definitions, which he calls “the 5 Ps of strategy”: Plan, Ploy, Pattern, Position and Perspective. In another work (Mintzberg *et al.*, 2000), the same author catalogues ten different views on the process of strategy, or ten schools to formulate a strategy, namely: design, planning, positioning, entrepreneurial, cognitive, learning, power, cultural, environmental and configuration.

Therefore, the strategic plan is formulated to allow the company to position itself in its environment. Given this complementariness, strategy is described by Henderson (1989: 8) as the deliberate search for an action plan to develop and adjust the competitive advantage of a company (a concept of competition that originates in positioning). In strategy as a perspective, Mintzberg (1996:15) looks into the organization, into the minds of its strategists and upwards to the great vision of the company. The content is not only the position chosen, but also the rooted (and shared) way of seeing the world.

Ohmae (1998: 55) states that in developing the strategy it is important to take competition into account, but not to put it first and foremost.

According to the author, strategy does not mean defeating competition, but working to understand the inherent needs of the customers and, consequently, developing an appropriate product to meet those needs, not only an improved version of the competitors' products.

Ansoff and McDonell (1993: 295) believe that, especially since the external environment of the company has become increasingly changeable and discontinuous compared to the past, the importance of strategic management has grown, because the objectives, by themselves, are not sufficient as rules of decision to help guide the company to adapt to new challenges, threats and opportunities. The State's intervention in this new rural space must be strategic in the same sense as the 5 Ps suggested by Mintzberg *et al.* (2001), and reposition this space needs to take into account both agricultural and non-agricultural activities. For this purpose, it has to create the infrastructural conditions for local development.

### 2.2. From rural development to local development

The study of innovation propensity begins with the work of Schumpeter (Theory of Economic Development, 1982), which discusses the action of innovation as creating breakdown processes in the economic system, affecting the equilibrium of the circular flow. This breakdown process (introduction of innovation) is caused by the entrepreneur who has the ability to be the first to introduce new combinations of productive means, thus transforming the established circular flow.

Therefore, innovations in Schumpeter's conditions (1982) are represented by new combinations of production, which arise discontinuously, a completely revolutionary process in the status of economic development, thus replacing the traditional form of competition (price competition). The former is considered a steady state and gradual process. Economic development, on the other hand, is a phenomenon of spontaneous, discontinuous change in the flow channels, a disturbed equilibrium, which forever alters and displaces the previous state of equilibrium (Schumpeter, 1982: 47).

Rural development in its classical interpretation has been identified as a “Green Revolution”<sup>1</sup>, by incrementing chemical and biological processes of agricultural products, based on the development of large-scale production factors. This process caused the industrialization of small farms in order to respond to increasingly demanding and dynamic mass consumption. In this scenario, reproduction characteristics of the “mercantilist system” can be identified, focusing on international, unilateral and very aggressive trade. In developing countries, this

meant to export all possible economic resources produced. In this sense, the only function of the State was to foster agricultural productivity in order to meet the demand for major agricultural commodities, without much concern for the social wellbeing of the marginalized populations who, for several reasons, had not been touched by the "Green Revolution" that began in the 1950s.

The possibility of development being seen from a local perspective appeared as a new way of promoting more sustainable mechanisms to maintain the community's economy. The strategies then became finding or arousing local vocations, developing specific potentials, fostering external research using local productive advantages. Here, the concept of "local" should not be confused with small, and it does not necessarily refer to diminishing or reducing. On the contrary, "local" is not a micro space, and it can be a Municipality, which is equivalent to a county, or even a region including several municipalities (Presidência da República do Brasil, 1998: 4).

Thus, it uses the endogenous resources and potentials; it seeks to stimulate the participation and involvement of local populations, promoting an effort to bring together several interests of different interveners. Along similar lines, Sen (1999: 52) refers to development as an "essentially friendly" process, which may be exemplified by beneficial exchanges, the work of social security nets, political liberties or social development, or one or the other combination of these supporting activities.

In this sense, development is essentially a strategy for interrelated actions, in which the nature of the disequilibrium process is overcome by the equilibrium of the trajectory of the main economic and social variables: "From this perspective, people have to be seen as actively involved [...] in shaping their own destiny, and not only as passive beneficiaries of the fruits of ingenious development programs (Sen, 1999: 71)". On the other hand, according to Souza (1999), in a more traditional perspective of the economy, development involves qualitative changes in people's way of life, institutions and productive structures. In this sense, development is characterized by the transformation of a modern, efficient economy, together with the improvement of the way of life of the population as a whole. This discussion is coherent with a new concept of sustainability, which studies simultaneously economic, social and environmental concepts of sustainability.

There are several approaches to local development, such as industrial districts, localized productive systems and innovative procedures. However, the common trait among them is that these are experiences of development based on endogenous

forces, where the institutions and local authorities play their own economic roles, independent of the central State (or of other instances above them). The local economy seeks its dynamics in factors that are peculiar to it, from its past, with roots in local history, often in geophysical conditions, but also in cultural traits and technical-artisanal wisdom rooted in the social-territorial unit.

The local actors (persons and institutions) play a crucial role in a context in which the economic logic is not always dominant. Cooperative practices and collective initiatives have been cited in the literature as decisive factors to strengthen the local social tissue, often providing economic advantages, which would not be obtained otherwise. The strength of local development derives from the social tissue as a whole, since it is based on the human aptitudes filtered through historical, social and natural factors. As a matter of fact,

(...) the experiences of local development show the local collectivities' capacity to adapt to the impositions of internationalization of competition based on their potential for organization. It is found that there are very local organizations that respond to the uniformity of behaviors caused by globalization of exchanges, and allow finding more effective forms of enhancing wealth (...)" (Pecqueur, 1996: 19).

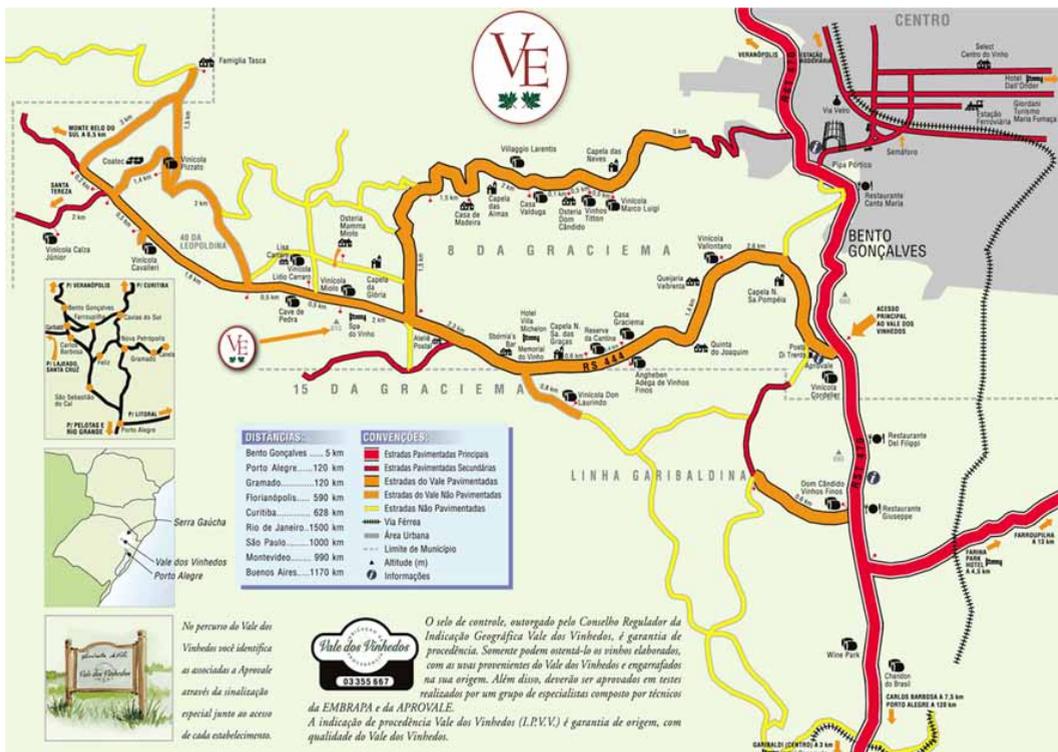
In the view of Sengenberger (1993: 355), local development is a new proposal for socioeconomic leverage, where thanks to a better use of resources, improved collaboration among companies, skilled workers for endogenous demand, and other factors, local economies can promote comparative advantages, responding to the unavoidable imperatives of efficiency and innovation. According to this author, local development transcends immediate economic interests, insofar as it mobilizes citizens to participate in the social, political and cultural life of the region, helping strengthen regional identity.

### **3. The Vale dos Vinhedos Wine Route: a strategy integrated to local development**

A wine region is a geographic area where grapes are grown and harvested on a large scale in order to obtain their derived products such as juice, wine and raisins. Wineries currently assume the technological processes for harvesting, pressing and vinification. In Brazil, the efforts of the grape growers have resulted in the expansion of the grape growing and winemaking industry.

Vale dos Vinhedos is known for the valleys that constitute its natural and man-shaped landscape. This region is located in the Serra Gaúcha Mountains, between the municipalities of Bento

Figure 1. Map of the Vale dos Vinhedos.



Source: www.aprovale.com.br, 2012.

Gonçalves, Garibaldi and Monte Belo do Sul. Currently, the municipality of Bento Gonçalves has four districts and the last to be created, in 1990, was Vale dos Vinhedos. An area was separated from Monte Belo do Sul, which had not yet become emancipated from Bento Gonçalves, together with another area belonging to the district seat, to form this new district.

Italian immigrants who came to Brazil seeking lands and prosperity first settled in the valley. They farmed the land and their life in the region was not characterized only by grains, vegetables and livestock. They brought many cultural elements with them, including growing grapes, wine making and drinking. A characteristic of the Vale dos Vinhedos Wine Route (Figure 1) is that it concentrates some of the main wineries in Brazil, both as companies and as cooperatives, as well as small and medium-sized wineries, agribusinesses, family farms (mostly grape growing) and an expanding organization of tourism around wine production and the rural landscape. A structure to promote the image of wine in association with the rural (agricultural and ecological) landscape and gastronomy

is identified as a planning and positioning strategy. This seeks to strengthen both the tourism industry directly, and grape growing and winemaking in particular, which depend partly on the same thing, in their promotional strategies. In 1995, in order to add potential to the development and planning strategies of the tourist economy in the region, APROVALE<sup>2</sup> was founded aiming at furthering tourist activity and the competitiveness of the wineries in the region, and to protect the social and cultural heritage of the Route.

According to Aprovale, Vale dos Vinhedos is the right route for people who wish to learn about the grape and wine culture. Achieving the Seal of Indication of Origin of Vale dos Vinhedos (I.P.V.V.)<sup>3</sup> ensures the original quality of what is produced in the region, distinguishing it from the others. Only wines made from Vale dos Vinhedos grapes and bottled at the source can use the seal, and they must also be approved in tests performed by a group of specialists consisting of specialists from EMBRAPA- Grap and Wine (the Brazilian Agency for Agriculture - Grapes and Wine), and APROVALE.

Thanks to the work of APROVALE and entrepreneurs in the winemaking sector, together with the actions of the government and the local community, the valley and its products have received the Registration of Protected Designation of Origin. This strategy shows that local stakeholders seek a high standard of quality (Mintzberg, 1996). Theoretically, the importance assigned to the quality of products produced in the region improves competitiveness and strengthens the winemaking industry. Looking at it from this perspective, the strategy utilized may develop certain competencies present in the Route, which tend to support or redirect this pattern, based on the resources and competencies developed and controlled by the wineries associated with "APROVALE", and later in the competitive environment in which they are positioned.

Enhancing the production of local goods based on territorial resources may make the economic tissue more dynamic (bringing back traditional activities, stimulating new jobs) and also help reinforce its identity, bringing the population closer to the territory. At the same time, the need arose to encourage consumption of these products. Commercialization began for this purpose. Forms of promotion, dissemination and distribution were organized. Based on this example, one may conclude that once the regions' value is acknowledged, the population seeks ways to render their resources more profitable, taking an active role and intervening in the development process of their territory.

The tourism development strategy of the Vale dos Vinhedos Wine Route is clearly based on a rural space where values and identities that determine local communities are still preserved, due to the culture introduced and maintained alive basically by Italian immigrants. In this context of development, visibly, the region's agriculture has taken on a multifunctional role, not only offering consumers agricultural products, but also including other roles involving the integration of diverse economic activities.

Taking a different look at "development", and considering the individual, rural areas might be considered potential sites for industrialization (agribusiness) and social development. This not only provides better quality of life for those who remain in rural areas, it also increases the potential provision of products for urban areas. Development requires the rational use of resources. This statement involves the importance of territories as a support for the effective management of natural, cultural, human and economic resources. Territories cannot be taken as a simple geographic reality, a physical support of life. Enhancing means acknowledging and using. For instance, on the Vale do Vinhedos Route, an action strategy of public policies

that can be identified is local development, where the social relationships of production actually occur.

Thus, the advantage of a country, region or locality is acquired in relation to its learning capacity, which is the essential condition for the process of innovation and consequent development. These aspects indicate the importance of economic and non-economic factors in the learning, innovation and competition processes that are rooted in each locality, immersed in the local culture.

The public sector initiatives for the region can be classified according to Mintzberg (1996), as training, structuring and business strategies, according to the summary table 1:

According to a report by the municipal government representatives (as transmitted in the interviews held on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2007 and July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2006), these actions have been implemented and are being monitored by the evaluation of local actors and visitors. Analyzing the information, giving more relevance to the literature by Mintzberg *et al.* (2000), it could be concluded that the Vale dos Vinhedos Wine Route still lacks strategic actions to promote local development. It is noted that the emerging and most significant initiatives have been taken by private enterprises and institutions connected to the wine and tourism industry in the region (Table 1).

According to Table 1, the elements necessary for sustainable economic development, it is necessary to invest in training, in public policy structures and in promoting local business. In Brazil, the Ministry of Tourism conducted a study to assess the competitiveness of tourist destinations. This study encourages development, which evaluated the structure of tourism destinations under five macro dimensions: infrastructure, tourism, public policy, economics and sustainability (Barbosa, 2002). As shown in Table 1, the results of the research in the Vale de Vinhedos Wine Route, it is clear that the participation of local actors is still incipient, regarding the potential of collaborating with supporting institutions and the government. Thus, it reflects the structural conditions and the strategies for promoting business.

Thus, in the strategies chosen, the interaction of the actors with their peers needs to be stimulated, and then coordinated with the State, research/teaching institutions, and the players within the value chain of tourism and wine production. Only with this collaboration amongst central local stakeholders and based on endogenous resources, one may yield sustainable development (Saxena *et al.*, 2008).

Here, it becomes clear that the local development model is in fact to be structured based on the local potential, and not by central planning or exogenous

**Summary Table 1. Structuring and business strategies**

| Training   | Structure   | Business  |
|--|---|---|
| Activities that promote the community's sensibility for tourism;<br>Dissemination and institutional promotion of the attractions of the region and the itinerary for tourism on the Vale dos Vinhedos Wine Route using videos, folders, lectures and film;<br>Technical and administrative support to perform an inventory of tourism assets in the region, in partnership with the University of Caxias do Sul. | Preparing the structure of the Rural Master Plan;<br>Adapting infrastructure services such as water supply in the localities, public lighting and paved municipal roads;<br>Restoring and painting the columns at the side of roads and highways;<br>Supporting the businesses, especially wineries, making access easier | Support for cultural projects such as the hot spiced wine ("quentão") festival, and the Vale dos Vinhedos choir;<br>Negotiation of a partnership with the Visa credit card company. |

**Source:** adapted by the authors, based on Mintzberg (1996).

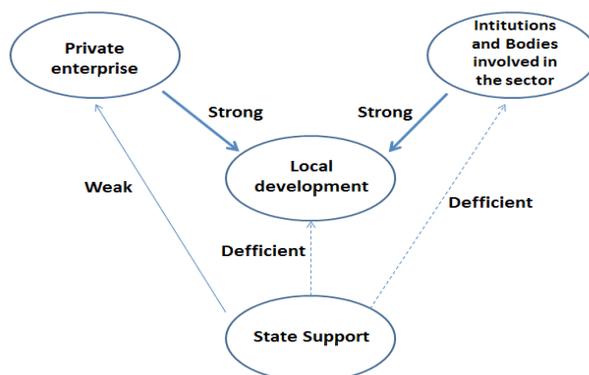
forces, but the structure is now developed through a process already set by local actors, through broadening the base of autonomous decisions (Boisier, 2005). Therefore, the strength of local development comes from the whole social fabric as a central part of human skills, filtered by historical, social and natural factors.

However, the role of the state in the Route's political and administrative status happens to be one of the decisive factors for the local development initiatives. It is also critical to strategic bargaining between local socio-economic actors (business associations, financial institutions, advisory centers for companies, universities and research institutes and development agencies, among others), to seek joint access to new technological innovations and organizational and productive advantages in the business context. Local development was considered

based on Figure 2, showing local development as depending on other sectors.

The interviews were conducted in the period May-July 2007 with the residents of the Vale dos Vinhedos. The questions were semi-structured, sent via e-mail and answered by representatives of ATUASERRA, APROVALE, and representative of the secretary of the public sector in Bento Gonçalves, RS, and tourism agents. Through the data, we can observe the behavior of the main actors involved in local perspectives of local development.

Figure 2, shows the involved segments of actions and reactions in the face of potential and latent needs in the Vale dos Vinhedos: The actions of the private sector represented here by companies in the wine industry and the tourism sector in the region; educational and research institutions and entities of the wine industry and tourism; and followed by proposals for public policy of the State

**Figure 2. Local development as depending on other sectors**

**Source:** Authors, 2010

to encourage the wine and tourism economy in the Vale dos Vinhedos.

The analysis of the interviews show that private enterprise and the grape growing and winemaking industry bodies provide strong support to local development, but that government initiatives are insufficient. At the same time, government support is also seen to be deficient, followed by weak support from the institutions and bodies of the grape growing and winemaking sector to private enterprise, as seen in figure 2. One of the main goals of planning in tourism is to organize integrated opportunity spaces in order to create a complete product and thus develop a marketing differential. According to Smith (1988: 85), tourism as a product is a composition of everything that can be consumed, tried, observed and appreciated during a trip.

Vale dos Vinhedos offers its tourist products in the form of routes, identified as "tourist routes"<sup>4</sup> which are no longer a novelty in the world of leisure options, in recent years. However, the configuration of space is important in tourism development as a possibility of producing enchantment, fantasy and fulfillment, since objectively space only exists in its relationship with human awareness. In this sense, tourists consume a global product that is the result of travel experience as a whole. The offer of this global product results in the intervention of a network responsible for producing tourism by-products (accommodation, transport, restaurants, attractions), which, as a whole, constitute the different components of the tourism product from a global perspective. Staying at a hotel, having a meal at a regional restaurant, visiting the museum and the places where tourists receive information, such as the tourist information center, or purchasing handicrafts at local shops, are a few examples of by-products consumed by tourists during their stay in a given region.

Consequently, the products, goods or services that a municipality or region can offer to visitors, because of their structure, complexity and heterogeneity, compose an ensemble of economic, social and cultural activities. Likewise, it is important to emphasize that tourism planning must be carefully carried out in a region in order to avoid needless expenses, local imbalances and negative social and cultural consequences.

The place is regarded as the result of the cluster configuration of social relations. It is also the place where culture and other features are fixed in a not transferable manner. Bava (1996) emphasizes that the endogenous development born out of the internal forces of the community, also constitutes a whole, with ecological, cultural, social, economic, institutional and political dimensions, and

that the goal of action should be to integrate all these dimensions. However, the support of local development means not only enhancing business performance, but also the ability of local actors to undertake coordinated action in pursuit of common strategies.

However, the peculiarity of developing wine routes consists in potentiating the tourist activity through the setting into value of wine production, often centered around the associated habits, customs, climate, traditions, culture and landscape. This leads to the need of assuring the coordination between the various dimensions of the experience and corresponding actors involved in all segments of the economy with a market-oriented perspective. This idea fits into the concept of sustainable local development.

In addition to being a space for environmental conservation, country life began to be seen by those responsible for framing public policies also as an opportunity to create new forms of work and income for the population segments that live there, and who generally do not have the necessary qualification to become part of the expanding urban sectors or may, indeed, not wish to move away from their land.

The position of the development proposal for Vale dos Vinhedos is based on the interrelationship of economic activities around the wine production process, which is also multifaceted, trying to integrate two main activities: grape growing and winemaking and tourism. These sectors may enhance not only economic prosperity, but also the socio-cultural well-being and reinforce regional identity in the relationship among the economic, social and cultural players present in the region.

#### 4. Final Considerations

The productive process in tourism is neither totally autonomous nor unique. Several sectors are responsible for producing tourism products, which seems to be particularly true for rural tourism. Thus, it might be said that besides generating income, particularly foreign currency, tourism can integrate the local economy and generate complementary products, which are not necessarily agricultural, but add to the tourist experience and foster local development.

There is a growing perception that well-formulated and appropriately implemented strategies are crucial factors for the organizations to become successful in their aims, thanks to the greater internal alignment around their overall objectives, the positioning of the organization towards the environment in which it acts, and to maintaining consistency over time.

Consequently, tourist activities can only be efficient and viable over a medium and long-term horizon, if the resources they depend on are maintained and even improved. Attention must be given to territorial organization and environmental quality, and strategic actions to certify the quality of tourist services.

Since experiences in local development are the result of a particular combination of historical, social, economic and geographic factors, it should be emphasized that, at most, each case is unique and, consequently, the phenomenon cannot be deliberately reproduced elsewhere. It is therefore difficult to take it as a model, which, however, is often done when framing policies with the intention of creating development in a given region.

It should be pointed out that even if local development is based on enhancing internal resources of the region, this does not mean that we are looking at an autarchic form of development, which would not make the least sense in a relational economy like the current one. Local development cannot be seen as a “closed” experience, whose success comes from this closing or self-sufficiency. On the contrary, local development is an ambition which needs to set into value relationships and also exchanges with the outside for its own benefit. These relationships are, therefore, subject to certain conditions and articulated with regional needs. The winning regions are precisely those that find their own mode of integration in the national and international markets, not those that close themselves away.

According Kastenholz *et al.* (2012), strategy for local tourism, is based on the creation of distinct brands, local products, and networking among stakeholders in the tourism sector. Also Kastenholz *et al.* (2012) warns against the lack of an integrated strategy vision for the region, and that sub-optimal use of existing infrastructure becomes a constraint to local development process. Dealing with local development, however, is a demanding task. Sustaining a development process depends not only on the performance of local businesses, but also, and especially, on the capacity of local agents to undertake coordinated action in search of common strategies. This idea is part of the concept of local development.

The definition and implementation of tourism development strategies is the individual and shared responsibility of the different actors involved. However, the State, in its different spheres, should define sectorial policies that may positively influence the tourism activity. In the case studied, it was seen that the State has not provided the necessary infrastructural support for the region to integrate different activities and consolidate it as an attractive rural space for tourists. In order for this to occur, it

is necessary to be aware that the development of rural zones must be conceived globally, integrating economic, social and cultural dimensions, and, finally acknowledge that this development is based on people and on dynamic rural communities.

Tourism, as opposed to other sectors, is characterized by the market coming to the product. For effective consumption of tourism as a product, the tourist will have to travel to the structure that supports his/her experience: *the tourist destination*. It is impossible to dissociate an approach to the product in tourism from the tourist destination. Indeed, this element favors the development of positioning, environment and configuration strategies for the central region of the tourist activity.

Finally, specific characteristics of this activity, which are generally identified in all of regions as fundamental for local development are: (a) transformation of local resources into wealth; (b) the understanding of tourism as an economic activity by the local community; (c) stimulating the creation of local infrastructures.

Only by developing a tourism system well integrated into the local economic and social structure can local development be sustainably achieved.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> "Green revolution" is the name used for the productive process that appeared in the 1950s, prioritizing the use of agrochemicals in agricultural crops.
- <sup>2</sup> Associação dos Produtores de Vinhos Finos do Vale dos Vinhedos (Association of Fine Wine Producers of Vale dos vinhedos).
- <sup>3</sup> Established in 2001, the PI "Vale dos Vinhedos" for wines from the 81 square kilometer region lying between the municipalities of Bento Gonçalves, Garibaldi and Monte Belo do Sul, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul.
- <sup>4</sup> Routes are itineraries followed by tourists in order to enjoy a context, seen as a whole, in an organized, attractive manner.

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