

The Economy of Tourism in Vale Dos Vinhedos – Bento Gonçalves – RS –BRAZIL- 1990 A 2005

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Abstract:

Tourism has become one of the most important economic activities worldwide. Together with grape and wine production, it has become one of the instruments responsible for economic development in the Rota do Vale dos Vinhedos (Valley of Vineyards Route) in the municipality of Bento Gonçalves., Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. In Vale dos Vinhedos, the economy has specialized in grapegrowing and winemaking (viticulture and viniculture). The activities of current types of cultivation and production systems in the Valley present different situations, both in terms of generating economic surpluses and their distribution among the agents that participate in their appropriation, consequently leading to different impacts on the dynamics of development in this region. The main purpose of this paper is to study the economy of the Vale dos Vinhedos Route development during the 1990-2005 period, looking at variables wine and tourism as potential factors driving change in the local economy. The results indicated that all the types analyzed present positive added value margins of contribution, emphasizing the systems that involve grapegrowing and winemaking as integrated and segmented activities.

Key words: Regional Development, Tourism, Wine and Vale dos Vinhedos Route.

1. Introduction

According to data from the World Tourism Organization – WTO (2006), tourism is considered one of the fastest-growing economic activities in the world, and it participates with about 10% in the world GDP. The economy of tourism, according to WTO (2006) is responsible for about 6% of sales of goods and services in the world, and it is estimated that the number of international tourists should rise at a mean rate of 4.1% in the coming years. By 2020 it should reach 1.5 billion visitors.

Tourism as an activity has been growing at an extremely rapid and constant pace throughout the world, ensuring economic, social and political advances in many different countries and regions, thus allowing movement in leisure trips, business tourism, labor market expansion and the generation of direct and indirect jobs.

Tourists will be spending over 2 trillion dollars a year on their trips. Thus tourism is an activity with a high potential for economic development in this globalized world. (FRIEDMAN,2005 e BAUMAN, 1999).

Besides the economic implications, globalization assumes a theoretical displacement from production-centered analysis to an emphasis on consumption. Jameson (2001), emphasizes that the production of merchandise is now a cultural phenomenon in which products are purchased both for their image and for their immediate use.

This new form of reorganizing and enhancing production resources generates what Touraine (2007) calls a new paradigm. This new paradigm in which service and knowledge are the most important elements of competition, is a function mainly of what Boltanski & Chiapello (2002) called the new spirit of capitalism. It requires new managerial attitudes, both at the company level (VALDES, 2002; ETKIN, 2006), and at the more human level (CASTELLS, 2002; MIDDLETON, 2004; BONAGLIA & GOLDSTEIN, 2006; and SACHS, 2005).

Rabahy (1990) considers tourism as an economic activity whose consumption depends on the level of income of a country. As the economies of countries grow and their real income increases, there is a tendency to expand the consumption of certain non-essential goods, including tourism and wine, which are superior goods according to the classification of a tourist's income.

The economics of tourism in Brazil represents 4.32% of overall Brazilian production. At the same time, the GDP of tourism was calculated as 77.5 billion *reais* in 2002, i.e., 5.56% of the Brazilian GDP. Thus, one could say that tourism is an industry that adds more value than the average of the other economic sectors.

In the 1990s Bento Gonçalves became one of the most important tourist routes of the Serra Gaúcha (the Mountain Area of Rio Grande do Sul). With slightly over 102 thousand inhabitants, the city is among the ten largest economies in the State, with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 2 billion *reais* and annual *per capita* income of 21 thousand *reais* (FEE, 2006). The winemaking industry is the third largest economy in the municipality, with 12.4% participation in the market. More than 127 thousand tons of grape, and the equivalent to 91 million liters of wine are produced annually (APROVALE, 2007). Currently, Bento Gonçalves has several tourist routes which are responsible for a demand of almost 500,000 persons.

2. The Economy of the Tourist-Grape and Wine Route of Vale dos Vinhedos

In the Serra Gaúcha and between the municipalities of Bento Gonçalves, Garibaldi and Monte Belo do Sul, lies the Vale dos Vinhedos (Valley of Vineyards) which has a tourist potential characterized by grape growing and winemaking, the history of its immigrants, nature and its historical monuments.

Grape and wine production in Vale dos Vinhedos goes back to the early days of colonization, at the end of the 19th century. The years passed, the grapegrowing and winemaking techniques improved, production increased and the region became known, nationwide, for its wine. Until about the 1980s of last century, the grape farmers of Vale dos Vinhedos sold their production to the large wineries in the region, and the small amount of wine that they themselves produced was for family consumption.

Reality changed when wine sales dropped on the Brazilian market, and consequently the price of grapes was devalued. Grape farmers began to use their production to make their own wine and sell it directly to the consumers who visited their winery, and thus they were able to increase their profits.

The technological evolution of the last few decades, applied to the grapegrowing and winemaking process enabled them to conquer more demanding markets, and the wines of Vale dos Vinhedos were recognized. The development of vitiviniculture in the region became the most important goal of the Vale farmers, to achieve their aims and fulfill the legal requirements of geographic indication. Six wineries joined together in 1995, and established the Association of Fine Wine Producers of Vale dos Vinhedos – APROVALE³ (*Associação dos Produtores de*

³<http://www.serrars.hpg.ig.com.br/vale.htm>.

Vinhos Finos do Vale dos Vinhedos). Currently the Association consists of 3 companies and a number of other contributing members, besides more than twenty other members such as restaurants, hotels and inns. One of the aims set at the time the organization was established was fulfilled, the indication of origin. The main idea was to obtain the D.O.C. (Denomination of Controlled Origin) for the of Vale dos Vinhedos, whose climate and soil are favorable and have a decisive influence on the quality of wine.

The association between tourism and wine is clearly visible in the region, according to Bruwer (2003). Essentially, the wine industry makes a good match with tourism (BRUWER, 2003).

Vale dos Vinhedos began to offer its tourist products in sequence. These were identified as tourist routes, which are nothing new in the world of possibilities of leisure. Routes are itineraries, roads, paths taken by tourists in order to enjoy a context within the whole of attractions, in an organized, attractive manner.

According to McIntosh (1998), tourism must attract and provide courteous transportation and accommodation for visitors, fulfilling their wishes and needs. In order to do so, the economy must rationalize the productive resources to respond to market demand.

The conglomerate of activities, according to Sessa(1983) makes it possible to create the tourist product which, in its final phase, is the productive activity of services. In this way, natural and cultural goods become directly productive goods, participating in the general process of economic expansion.

The demand is represented, according to Lemos (2001) by the volume of attributes the tourist validates in a given locality, which mobilize him to make available part of his income and time, to take a trip. Whichever the motivations of tourist travel, it implies a relationship between the visitor and the natural and cultural resources of the places visited, and between the visitor and the host community. Therefore there are changes, generally significant, in the natural and sociocultural heritage of these places. These changes may have positive and/or negative impacts.

Tourism concerns itself with the production and distribution of goods and services which enable the benefits expected by tourists during their travels. The economic treatment of tourism however, requires an approach which, besides scientific analysis, will take into account the human element which is essential for its manifestation.

The Winery Route of Vale dos Vinhedos, a region in the rural perimeter of the city of Bento Gonçalves-RS, has the characteristics of rural life, with a climate, vegetation and landscapes that help charm the tourist who seeks quality of life through rural experiences. Thus, a new profile of tourists, concerned with quality of life and nature-related aspects began to visit the Grape and Wine Region.

Despite the close relationship between these two domains, academic research on this subject is still incipient, especially as regards interlinking grape and wine tourism with other areas (HALL E MITCHELL, 2000). Indeed, the first great impulse for scientific activity in the research of tourism involving wineries occurred only at the end of the 1990s, with the first conference on vitivinicultural tourism in Australia, in 1998, which was decisive to drive the publication of scientific articles in this field (CORREIA, 2005).

Getz (2000) conceives vitivinicultural tourism from three different perspectives: a) that of the producers, who will find an opportunity to differentiate themselves in this, educate the consumers and sell their product directly; b) of the travel or regional tourist agencies, which will be able to develop a destination around the added value

associated with the attractive vitivincultural tradition; and, c) that of the consumers, who will be able to find a diversified product and enjoy new experiences.

However, one of the great problems involving vitivincultural tourism is due to the difficulty that the industry has in conceiving tourism as a product that it too can offer, and that may generate added value for it. For many producers, their product is their wine, and not the ensemble of experiences that the consumer may associate with consuming wine (HALL & MITCHELL, 2000). This creates an obstacle to establishing relational networks between wine and tourism and, consequently, to the affirmation of tourism on vitivincultural routes.

The winemaking industry of the Vale dos Vinhedos Route can be considered as formed by three categories: a) small producers (*cantinas*); b) cooperatives; c) medium and large producers, with the same characteristics as commercial companies. The production chain is constituted by a series of companies, bodies and agencies that complement, regulate, control and support the sector (Figure 1).

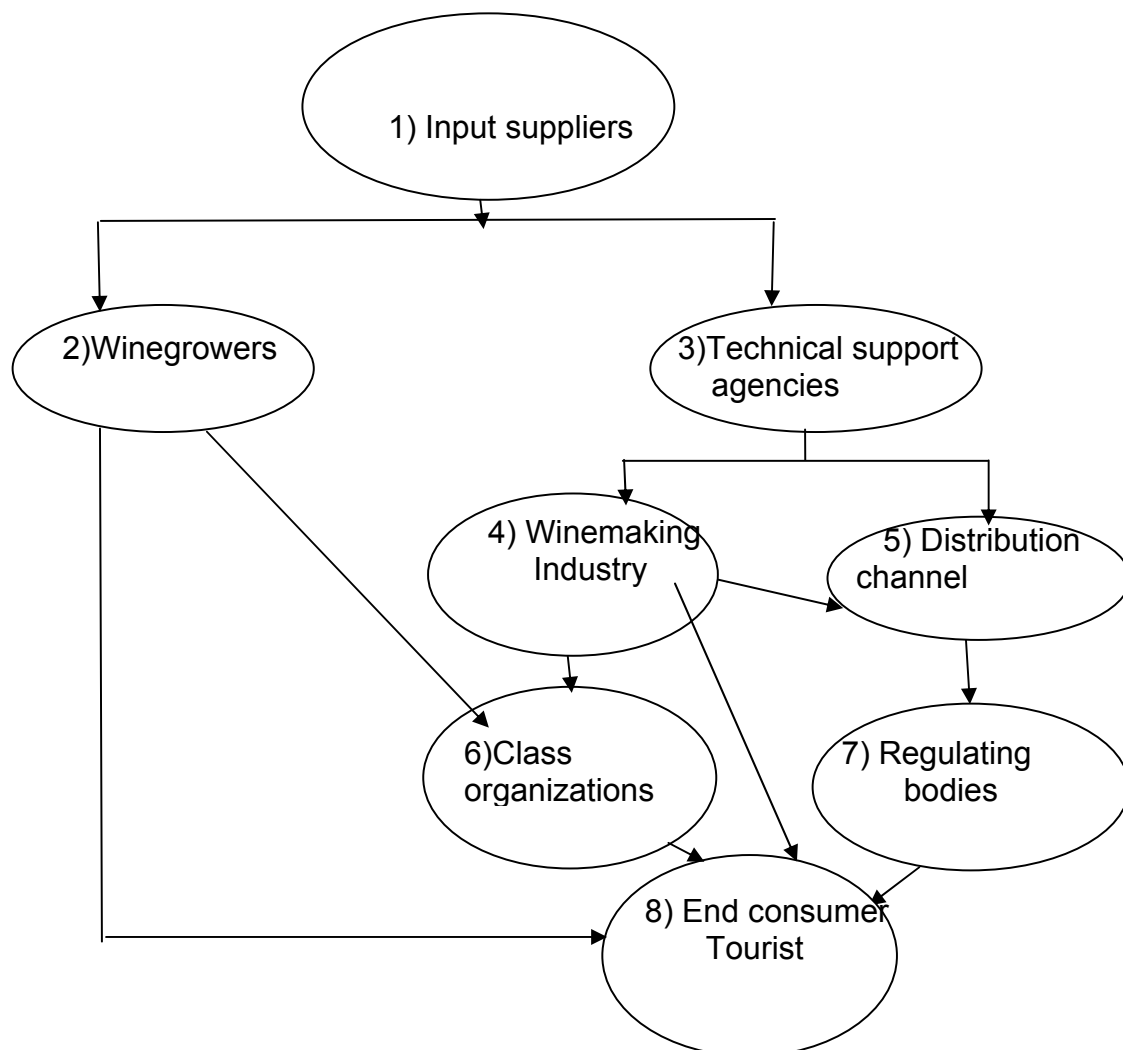


Figure 1. Production chain of the winemaking economy of the Winemaking Route of Vale dos Vinhedos.

Source: Based on Souza's proposal (2001) of the Winemaking Production Chain of the Rio Grande dos Sul Mountains (Serra Gaúcha). Author (2007).

The chain has eight rings: input suppliers, adaptation of the cultivation of new

viniferous grapes, grapes, centers for technological research, winemaking industry, wholesale, retail, and end consumer. Each actor (ring) has the following characteristics:

a)Ring 1: input suppliers: these are companies that supply fertilizers and pesticides to the grape seedling producers. Other outstanding suppliers are for bottles, corks, capsules, cartons, labels, and others. This also includes industries that supply machines and equipment to the wine industries. In the Serra Gaúcha region, the specific investments for grapegrowing are limited:

b)Ring 2: grapegrowers: responsible for planting, preserving the vineyards and grape production;

c)Ring 3: technical support agencies: technical support is represented by universities, technical schools, research centers and state agencies. The main ones in the region are EMBRAPA – Uva e Vinho (EMBRAPA- Grape and Wine), UCS and IBRAVIN;

d)Ring 4: winemaking industry: responsible for the vinification process, juice production, sparkling wines and other byproducts;

e)Ring 5: distribution channel: this ring includes the transportation, storage, import, operation and maintenance companies, which have relationships with almost all links in the main chain;

f)Ring 6: regulating bodies: the Ministry of Agriculture, the Rio Grande do Sul State Department of Agriculture and Supply, and INMETRO are the most representative regulating and enforcing bodies of this industry;

g)Ring 7: class organizations: outstanding class organizations in the production chain: Aprovale, Uvibra, Ibravin, AGAVI (Rio Grande do Sul Association of Winemakers), Fecovinho (Federation of the Winery Cooperatives of Rio Grande do Sul), and others; and,

h)Ring 8: end consumer /tourist: Brazilian wine consumption per capita/year is around 1.8 liters; in Rio Grande do Sul this figure rises to 5.8 liters (EMBRAPA – Uva e Vinho, 2003).

The wine production chain of the Vale dos Vinhedos Route can be considered using basic elements such as grape growers and input suppliers, and establishing links with the agencies connected to the tourist business and the local body, APROVALE, promoting relationships between the production sector of the input supplier until the grape grower and winemaker and the consumer (tourist) of this market.

The experiences and attributes around a grape growing and winemaking region can be so varied and cover so many different interests that many of the so-called vitivinicultural tourists cannot associate themselves with this label or designation. (CHARTERS & ALI-KNIGHT, 2002).

“The Vale dos Vinhedos Route gives tourist not only the opportunity of visiting a wine producing region, but also of learning about wines. Vitivinicultural tourism goes beyond everything that has already been said and written about it, since it is a unique personal experience, just as each vintage is a vintage and each wine is a wine. Seeing the vineyards, picking grapes, tasting, feeling, watching how it is done, chatting with enologists are unique, remarkable experiences.” (Testimony by a grape and wine industry entrepreneur of the Vale dos Vinhedos Route; In Marques: Dissertação de Mestrado, UCS, 2007).

In fact, wine production and associated tourism is an intensely geographic or territorial phenomenon. Dickenson & Salt (1982) consider it the experience of a territory, and Bell & Valentine (1997) show how the experience of the territory and its

culture is intrinsically linked to knowledge about wine.

3. Local development: from wine to tourism

The Grape and Wine Route of Vale dos Vinhedos is characterized by the presence of some of the main wineries of the country, both as companies and as cooperatives, and some small and medium-sized wineries, agribusinesses, family farmers (most grapegrowers who make wine), and a growing tourist organization built around wine production and the rural landscape.

The region is characterized by small rural properties, with a mean size of 15 hectares, 40% to 60% of which can be used for agriculture. A medium-sized vineyard is only 2.5 hectares and mechanization is often difficult because of the topography. Labor consists basically of the family (EMBRAPA, 2007).

Wine consumption in Brazil is still rather insignificant, less than two liters/year per capita, because of economic and cultural factors, and the climate. Even so, wine production in the country began to be economically important already at the end of the 19th century, when Italians settled in the mountain area of Rio Grande do Sul. In 1970, a few foreign wineries entered the country, and this changed the production pattern, which began to produce more fine wines (ROSA e SIMÕES, 2004). From then until 1980, production was seen to expand, based on the improved organization of the Rio Grande do Sul producers and on then-existing restrictions against imports. This occurred in the case of lower quality demijohns of wine, produced in the Serra Gaúcha by small farmers belonging to cooperatives.

From the perspective of local development driven by grapegrowing and winemaking, table 1 shows the volume in millions of liters of the beverage traded during the 1990-2005 period. The dissemination of the local product led to the development of other activities providing services to those who sought this market, privileging the community with new incomes and improved living conditions.

Table 1 Wine sales in the State of Rio Grande do Sul (1990/2005) (in millions of liters)

Wines	Table wines	Special wine	Viniferous wines	Total of wines
1990	164.725.646	1.371.223	39.885.259	205.982.128
1991	190.134.895	1.354.861	37.526.111	229.015.867
1992	180.230.431	882.564	39.537.060	220.650.055
1993	201.168.480	1.849.251	49.916.112	252.933.843
1994	180.295.366	1.423.645	46.541.918	228.260.929
1995	146.583.828	1.396.441	40.195.501	188.175.770
1996	165.831.436	1.261.662	43.695.771	210.788.869
1997	174.768.638	790.617	46.442.209	222.001.464
1998	181.576.649	194.075	32.456.318	214.227.042
1999	200.578.746	234.696	37.096.571	237.910.013
2000	221.023.603	249.345	34.195.829	225.468.777
2001	221.518.224	492.272	28.701.658	250.712.154
2002	227.447.392	270.364	25.438.750	253.156.506
2003	217.082.959	205.269	23.293.171	240.581.399
2004	225.021.830	66.989	19.884.366	244.973.185
2005	271.248.493	285.994	22.306.004	293.840.491

Source: UVIBRA and IBRAVIN – Winemaking register of Rio Grande do Sul, 2007.

According to data from the Winemaking Register of Rio Grande do Sul in 2005, 293,840,491 liters of wines were sold in Rio Grande do Sul, 7.59% of them from viniferous grapes. The state of Rio Grande do Sul absorbs about 11.42% of its fine wines production. The remainder is purchased, especially in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Santa Catarina, Paraná and in states in the Brazilian Northeast.

Commercialization includes distributors and sales representatives who get the products to the final sales points (bars, restaurants, supermarkets and specialized stores). Other links are part of this chain: transport, financial institutions, State institutions (sanitary surveillance, for instance). Since the market for this product is very demanding and competitive, the chain is largely regulated by the consumption link (MEIRA and LINS, 1995), and distribution also plays a strategic role, because the wine is produced at small wineries, characterizing offer as a monopolistic competition where the product presents differentiations.

The Brazilian vitiviniculture presents a few marked characteristics which will probably be important for its future. Most of the production is concentrated in the mountain area of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, especially in the city of Bento Gonçalves, in the Vale dos Vinhedos Route. The product can be described as complex because of the great diversity of types of wine and multiple legislations concerning this product. At the same time, it can be seen that the consumption of wines and tourist routes is directly proportional to the consumer's available income and has great elasticity on the income effect. In the second half of 2005, the

national economy went through a period of economic stability providing new employment opportunities with greater purchasing power to citizens, enabling a better quality of life and enhancing the natural environment and leisure. This new scene was combined with the offer of wine as a product, in a place that privileges a natural landscape and bringing back the culture. In this link established between the two products, a structure of logistics and sale was consolidated, in the service of grape and wine tourism.

The owners of small wineries sought alternatives to transform their wineries and vineyards into tourist attractions and looked for private initiatives involving wine and gastronomical tourism. Today (2007) visitors can follow the process all the way from harvesting the grapes to making the wines, taste rarities from the wine cellar and purchase colonial products. The local businesspeople who are aware of the importance of their cultural heritage have concerned themselves with maintaining the characteristics of life on the farms, and showing it to the visitors.

The grape and wine region of Vale dos Vinhedos Route, in the Serra Gaúcha, according to the President of APROVALE (2007), was structured to provide wine tourism, and thus the program has a combination of hotels, restaurants, wine cellars and products involved in the grape and wine culture. The relevance of tourism in areas where family farms predominate can be verified, insofar as this association provides new opportunities for work and income, since in these cases, the local economy is activated by diversifying new forms of farm work.

Indeed, the development of wine tourism may have effects on the whole economy of the region where it is based. Thus, one of the main stimuli for the development of local wine tourism may be the result of understanding the extent of its effects throughout the area where it expands. Thus, it can call, articulate and potentiate several related elements, such as accommodations, gastronomy, culture, , natural landscape and others. A typical example of this articulation are the wine festivals and wine fairs which, as shown in Houghton's study (2001), are especially important, since they manage to attract new tourist segments to the wine regions, and allow associating cultural, historical and gastronomical traditions, among others.

Table 2. Total number of visitors on the Winery Route of Vale dos Vinhedos (2001-2005)

Year	Total number of visitors
2001	45,000
2002	60,000
2003	82,000
2004	102,000
2005	115,737

Source: APROVALE, 2007.

The growing search for specific knowledge on wines also shows the increased number of visitors to Vale dos Vinhedos. According to the APROVALE (Association of Fine Wine Producers of Vale dos Vinhedos) the first semester of 2007 had a 12% increase in the number of tourists who visited the region, compared to the same

period the previous year. Until June 2007, 54,200 tourists visited Vale dos Vinhedos, while in the same period of 2006 the tourist route received 48,400 visitors. In July 2007, the high season for tourism in the Serra Gaúcha, APROVALE expected an even greater increase in the number of visitors, attracted by the cold and by the launches of the 2005 vintage red wines, one of the best vintages in recent years. In July 2006 alone, 15,900 persons visited Vale dos Vinhedos, quite a large number compared to previous periods.

Concern about the standard of quality of products of the region theoretically improves the competitiveness and strength of the wine industry. According to this type of analysis, the strategy employed may develop certain competencies in the route that tend to support or redirect this standard. They are supported by the resources and the competencies developed and controlled by the wineries that are members of APROVALE, and later by the market in which they are positioned.

These new business perspectives gave an impulse to the entrepreneurial qualities of the hotel industry in Bento Gonçalves. Concurrently, the neighboring towns looked for new forms of leisure to offer their guests, and wine and grapes, genuine products of the regional culture, began to be used systematically as a tourist attraction. Other attractions were also created, such as visits to vineyards and to the small wineries in the Vale dos Vinhedos Route district.

Based on this one can understand the relationship between the wine industry and tourism on the Vale dos Vinhedos Route in Bento Gonçalves. According to HALL (2001) the importance of tourism in the development of a region is due specifically to its capacity to create jobs, its contribution to regional economic activities and to the various indirect effects of the money spent by the tourists.

In 2007 the Vale dos Vinhedos Route implemented the Grape and Wine Tour of Vale dos Vinhedos, responding to the expectations of the APROVALE (Association of Fine Wine Producers of the Vale dos Vinhedos), especially the six wineries that participate in it (Casa Valduga, Cave de Pedra, Don Laurindo, Lídio Carraro, Miolo and Vallontano). The project was launched on February 1, 2007. The initial results already showed that the aims are being achieved. Thus the Grape and Wine Tour is now consolidated, with the challenge of getting new wineries to join and strengthen the project even further, a factor that is already being noticed among the member wineries (APROVALE, 2007).

McIntosh *et al.* (2002) also advocate the idea that the development of tourism should be guided by a carefully planned policy, based not only on balance sheets and profit and loss statements, but on the ideals of human well-being and happiness. The author also emphasizes the importance of solid policies in the sustainable development of tourism, in which this can help create a strong, growing economy, preventing or reducing the social problems resulting from impoverishment. Solid development policies may generate a growing tourist industry, while preserving the natural and cultural resource which, basically, attracts visitors.

Tourists can share in the culture of drinking some wine, the farming activities of the grapegrowers and winemakers, and the life of each of the local residents. It is in this sense that the Vale do Vinhedos Route may provide a potential that is strongly linked to the development of the men and women who live in this region.

4. Final considerations

Tourism is still seen as a means of promoting development in a region. Grape and wine tourism focuses on wine, on the local environmental, cultural and gastronomical areas, and also on several other products, for instance arts and crafts.

Tourism in the Vale dos Vinhedos Route increased the possibilities of the local economy, consolidating the rural way of life as an attraction for people living in metropolitan areas, allowing them to share gastronomic and cultural traditions which might have been forgotten. These traditions are saved and enhanced, which means bringing back the self-esteem of farm people, since the enhancement of the cultural identity is encouraged by the presence of urban tourists, stimulating local production and development. What would basically have been a complementary income, has become important in family budgets.

The economic changes that affected the vitivincultural market in the 1980s and 1990s, the Vale dos Vinhedos Route community, with skills, hereditary talents and the capacity to learn or to adapt to an activity which would generate income, led several winery families, in the 2000s, to begin organizing in order to receive tourists from all over the country and abroad, attracted mainly by the wine produced, and by the Italian culture associated with it.

In brief, the Vale dos Vinhedos Route presents potentials for tourism, but the mere existence of resources is not enough to create revenues and promote development in a region. The resources must give way to properly organized tourist products which can attract tourists and keep them faithful. For this purpose, the Vale dos Vinhedos Route has the support of universities, research institutes, vitivincultural technological centers and the public sector.

Vale dos Vinhedos gained benefits from tourism, which were basically: a) one more alternative for income; b) incentives to the local economy (grape and wine and tourism); c) generation of new direct and indirect jobs (in the vitivincultural and service industries); d) contribution to reduce rural exodus to the cities; e) contribution to preserve cultural values; f) bringing back the self-esteem of people who live on the Route; g) promotion of new activities in properties involved in agribusiness working with receptive tourism.

As a consequence of the interaction process between local and global, new paradigms and values are incorporated to the Route, such as the wish for environments that will promote quality of life, enhancement, the provision of services, products of the leisure sector, recreation, entertainment and environment. Consequently, local development resulted from the specific combination of historical, social, economic and geographic elements. Thus, the participation and awareness of the local population regarding the improvement of facilities or of services rendered to the customer, such as tasting rooms, wine stores, appropriately organized programs, guided visits and good promotion of the product, are a few examples of essential components of wine tourism. At the same time, the Vale dos Vinhedos Route has a potential to offer and improve the wine route, where cultural resources add final value to the product.

Tourism on the Vale dos Vinhedos Route, configured as a phenomenon in the act of receiving visitors in the wineries to appreciate and get to know the production process of wines and their byproducts, provides opportunities to sell the wine and byproducts. The result of this behavior is the economic development of local wineries, then increased income for all actors, whether they live or not on the Route but are involved in the local production chain. From the increased flow of circulating income, it can be noted that the families involved in the grape and wine activities or in tourism are enjoying more prosperous living conditions, such as: better homes, vehicles, moments of leisure, intense consumption of superior usual products in the regional economic market.

Strategic alliances are established on the Route as informal alliances, tacit

agreements for cooperation and exchanges between companies, involving technical assistance, technology and quality control. The proximity to the large industrial centers of the State of Rio Grande do Sul allow easier access to new technologies and information systems, favoring new behaviors of local actors under modern living conditions, with greater value given to life and sustainable resources. Grape and wine tourism can be a catalyst of the regional potentials, thus contributing to local development and to improved living conditions of the rural populations.

The experience of the attributes of a grape and wine region can be obtained in multiple forms, and interlink a large number of actors. From this perspective, grape and wine tourism can be seen as an ensemble of attractions made available in a region, which will mean coordination and action in the production chain.

In tourism wine finds the possibility of reaching new markets. At the same time, the families can continue to perform the activities of the legacy of producing a good wine and making it their specialty. Their work will thus no longer remain anonymous under the vineyards, or in the cellars of their wineries. On the contrary, it will be exposed to the world with the characteristics of the local culture. In this way it will be possible to add value to their products and multiply the family income.

Although the wine and tourism segments show that they contribute to the local development, what is perceived on other similar routes, in countries such as Spain and Portugal, is that these have already become activities with a great representative potential in the local economy. However, in the region studied wine tourism cannot yet be said to be very representative in the local GDP, but a slight increase is identified.

Tourism can be acknowledged as one of the rings in the Vale dos Vinhedos Route, as essential in its dynamism, with a propensity to influence local socioeconomic development thanks to its dynamics. Therefore, the practice of conscious, planned tourism, according to the needs of the local community, may contribute to the desired development..

Based on this study(MARQUES: Dissertação de Mestrado, UCS, 2007), it was perceived that the Winery Route of Vale dos Vinhedos signals a potential for development of the tourist economy, focusing on wine as a product, but there must be planning and the insertion of institutional and public mechanisms as driving and motivating factors to leverage the local economy.

Tourism has presented as a major alternative source of income on the Vale dos Vinhedos Route, and it acts as a catalyst in the producer-consumer-community relationships, since it is a major tool to disseminate the area and promote better living conditions.

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