From *Filière* to *Territoire*: the case of Wine District in Sicily

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In recent years economic—agrarian studies has been attracted by the interpretative instruments offered by economic literature in the industrial sector. This interest can be traced to the nature of the agricultural enterprise, which is linked to the territory and forms part of a local society, the development of which is not determined only by human economic capacity, but also by the features of the producing environment in which the economic structure is located.

Theoretical studies have been guided both by the need to understand the dynamics that have made some local producing systems particularly “vital”, and by the possibility of achieving the definition of an alternative way of promoting rural and agrifood systems. Indeed, the spatial dimension of the agrifood system and its interrelations with the territory have represented an interesting topic for analysis for some time now, also considering the continual adaptations introduced by policies in the sector.

Economic development concentrating on a specific agricultural sector has seen in vine cultivation one of the most exemplary models in the Italian productive scenario in general and the Sicilian scenario in particular. There are various reasons for this: grape cultivation in Italy over the past twenty years has undergone a profound evolution principally related to progress in growing techniques and in new forms of breeding that have permitted higher returns. Modernization of the wine industry has thus radically changed the orientation within the market of companies in the sector. The role played by the consumer in this change needs to be mentioned. Indeed, the consumer is the main protagonist in this evolution, in that it is the consumer’s curiosity and the quest for new taste sensations that creates movement that is also associated with other elements such as the territory, tourism, quality, etc.

With the legislative decree n. 228 of 18/05/2001 (Orientation and modernization of the agricultural sector), rural and agrifood districts were set up, through which regional administrations (who are asked to define the identification criteria) receive further instruments for the promotion of productive processes that are developing in their area. The importance of this legislative definition of the development model in agriculture highlights how legislators intend to promote local development by privileging the district-based plan.

But if the methodological contribution present in the literature is particularly profound and widespread, the same cannot be said of the content of the delegated decrees with the evident lack of a specific discipline. The regional legislator therefore must not only draw up a policy for the enterprises within the district, but must also set up instruments that are able to influence the local system.

This study has as its objective the definition of a methodological route leading to the identification, in the Sicilian region, of local wine-producing systems with district-based features, therefore likely to be included in the norms in favour of the districts. Beginning with the results of the latest censuses, and on the basis of previous contributions present in the literature, a series of indicators will be defined on a common basis. Mono- and multivariate analysis techniques will be applied to this set of values, thus identifying some “sets” of common factors that can be applied to local systems. Subsequently, we will seek to highlight those systems with economic features that might benefit from district norms recognition.