Wine Production and Local Sustainable Development

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This paper aims at analyzing the relationship between wine production and local development in terms of sustainability and quality of life. The global wine market in the last decade has been going through a deep evolution, both at the supply and the demand-side, which has brought many changes at either the global business environment level or at the single firm/wine region level (Zanni, 2004; Nomisma, 2008; OIV, 2008; Unioncamere, 2009).

There has been a great emphasis on regional responses to global pressures: the emergence of the role of territories both at the policy maker and the competitive arena level (Pasqui, 2005; Trigilia, 2005; Aylard & Zanko, 2006), the role of regional clusters within a global environment (Kearins, 2005; Ogumnokun & Wong, 2004; Roberts & Enright, 2004; Giuliani, 2007; Giuliani & Bell, 2005), the importance of regional identity and branding (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005; Anholt, 2006) and a redefined role for small and medium sized firms within these regions. There is evidence that wine firm clusters create a positive influence in terms of place identity, sustainability, local development, quality of life and territorial branding in addition to innovation, knowledge flows, supply chains, research, regulatory frameworks and general firm interaction (Porter, 1998, 2000; Aylward, 2004).

The paper defines some synthetic indicators of wine production and quality wine production, studying the correlations and the statistical relations with the indicators of local development adopting the ESA model (Ciciotti and Rizzi, 2008). ESA is a framework to describe territorial systems and grounds on a theoretical scheme called SEST (socio-economic territorial systems), which connects performances of the local system with socio-economic structure, external economies, public/private strategies and territorial governance. ESA model is focused on the three pillars of sustainability: economy, society and environment.

The major findings concern the identification of synthetic indicators for the measurement of the relations between local sustainable development and wine production. Such measures are quite rarely applied to the local system analysis in relation to wine production and the above relations can represent the empirical base for new sustainable development models to be developed in future research. The analysis of the Italian system of quality wine production at regional level according to the Denomination of Origins (DOC, DOCG and IGT) allows to position the Italian wine regions according to the importance of VQPRD regional wine production on total wine production. The indicators of quality wine production are then put in correlation with different indicators of local sustainable development, like for example quality of life index and ESA index, looking for significant relations that used for the study of new local sustainable models of wine regions.

There is very little empirical evidence on the relations between sustainable development and wine production. The original value of the paper consists in the attempt to measure these relations, basing the local system view on a model of growth that doesn’t just consist in the increase of purchasing power, but rather in social and environmental aspects that may determine the local well-being level (Daly, 1973; Dasgupta, 2004).

Keywords: Wine Cluster, Wine Production, Sustainable Development, Local System.