

THE REGIONAL ROOTEDNESS OF PLACES: YOU CAN PLAN WITH THAT

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Introduction

“Our senses are local, while our experience is regional. So the discussion will cover things as large as air basins and freeway systems and as small as sidewalks, seats, and signs” (LYNCH 1978 p.10). Such were the words that Kevin Lynch employed in his celebrated essay, dated of 1976, in which he envisages the possibilities for “managing the sense of a region”, and so, to enhance what he understood as the sensory quality of a region. Probably, this visionary thought seems to still hold true, even in present times, around thirty years after it was firstly stated. As a matter of fact, the reasoning behind this statement actually supports the theoretical background that underlies the present paper. In the paper, the prevalent reasoning is based on the assumption that a sharing of common attributes can be recognized as inherent to all (or at least to most of) the settlements that comprise an urban region. This is so because these attributes lie at the very *rootedness* of the region’s centres, assigning them a somehow distinguishable pattern that, in the end, becomes responsible for marks that evince the linkage each centre establishes with the region. In this case, perhaps the best term to express this connectedness is undoubtedly “rootedness”. The authors are borrowing this expression from the writings of the classic humanist geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, who describes the concept as: “Rootedness is an unreflective state of being in which the human personality merges with its milieu” (TUAN 1980 p.6). This is what is precisely meaningful for the purposes of the paper: to acknowledge the existence of a sort of amalgamation that develops from the interactions between people and environment. The manifestation of a people-environment fusing will be assumed as a basic issue in the paper arguments. Moreover, this sort of interacting also lies at the basis of the concept of *place*, a concept that will be often called throughout the paper’s contentions, and whose main lines explain that “A good place is one which, in some way appropriate to the person and her culture, makes her aware of her community, her past, the web of life, and the universe of time and space in which those are contained”. (LYNCH 1982 p.142). Accordingly, places that constitute a region, irrespective of their physical scales, will convey intrinsically mutual characteristics, which will work towards labelling all places under a regional umbrella-like unifying identity. Or, in other words, will gather them within a system collectively characterized by the regional rootedness of places.

It is the assumption of the paper that the identification of a regional rootedness of places may work as a positive factor enhancing the possibilities for planning the region’s development. The paper will attempt to substantiate this conviction by examining pragmatic manifestations that will help to show that the rootedness of places is not merely a theory. In particular, two constellations of urban places in the hilly “Serra Gaucha” region, in the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, are significant insofar as the rootedness of places is concerned. United by common roots, the region’s settlements show that there are grounds to believe that this rootedness not only does exist in the real world but does also help to enhance the attempts to governing and managing a territory run as an urban region.

A regional dimension for the concept of *place*

As information technology shortens time-space distances, it contributes to accelerate the globalisation process today’s world engages in, thus creating homogenized environments that rapidly replicate themselves in a worldwide scale. Therefore, the importance of a regionalized system of places, formed by individual localities that retain their identifiable character though constantly subject to a massive exposition to intense global flows, represents an inspiring achievement. This seems to be the case with the regions discussed

further below. But before doing so, it seems important to debate the extended dimension the concept of *place* is receiving in today's discussions.

Though a theoretical construct of the area of spatial studies, *places*, in the real world, is a concept that operates at the crossroads of current social, political, economic, and environmental issues. Notwithstanding, it is people and their use of the environment that contribute, over time, to the differentiated status a place can attain in a city, in a region, in an urban region. There are two clauses in the previous sentence that demand closer attention. One is the inference that a joining process agglutinating "*people and their use of the environment*" is in action in the genesis of a place. Therefore, places may be said to result from the interaction between a community and their collective use of space, which, in turn, implies that places are a *social construct*. And the other is the expression "*over time*", which implies the presence of historic factors which lay deeply imbricated within the concept of place (and that remain immerse during the process of pragmatic creation of the place as well). Therefore, the influence of memory may be seen as an important factor in the genesis of a place, since memory evokes on the recondite domains of the regional community's cognition, intertwining social, historical, and psychological components into a place's significance. In fact, it is from their regional rootedness that places become originally structured - physically and subjectively. The manifestation of this regional influence in a place's creation is also acknowledged in philosophical terms, which state "(...) creation consists in the production of particular places out of pre-existing regions (...)" (CASEY 1998 p.35). There is a common acceptance, then, that a place is layered with the symbolic attributes that evoke the role this place played in some of the most significant times the region has experienced. Consequently, the roots shared in common throughout the places of a single region have an influential role to perform in the definition of the region's future.

New trends for regional planning in Brazil

Despite several well-intentioned efforts, one cannot say that regional planning is a successful practice in Brazil, and new trends are strongly demanded in the area. Although a practice dating from the second half of the twentieth century, it never really achieved satisfactory pragmatic implementations¹. Most of the plans produced at that time were basically analytical, often following extensive technical examinations, but in the end, not capable to present any straightforward guideline, ready for prompt implementation. Additionally, most policies were not accompanied by design outlines, thus bringing severe difficulties for their accomplishment when applied to the local level. In fact, as a general rule, local governments are unprepared, or not used to, to take the politically charged regional decisions that are engulfed within the plans. Therefore, regional planning in Brazil progressed slowly and has been rather ineffectively in its attainments. Incidentally, elsewhere in the world, with few exceptions, the regional planning scenario was not entirely different. In the United States, for example, "Attempts to foster regional planning have a long history. Sadly, the story is not a thrilling one: with some notable exceptions (...) it is typically a succession of false starts and disappointed hopes" (CULLINGWORTH & CAVES 2003 p.56). Naturally, successful exceptions can be pointed out, mostly the ones whose objectives aimed at developing undeveloped or impoverished regions (of which, the Italian "Mezzogiorno", the Brazilian Northeast "SUDENE", and the North-American Tennessee Valley Authority seem to provide satisfactory examples); or at smoothing the excessive urbanisation of certain areas (like in the New Towns policies). Surely, also among the exceptions is mandatory to include some of the so-called "world cities". This term, christened by Patrick Geddes as early as 1915, refers to what he envisaged as the greatest urban agglomerations of his time: the first urban "regions" formed by a conurbation of urban centres surrounding a metropolitan pole. Several years later, the major "metropolises" of the world became individually singled out, as listed in the classic book called *The World Cities*, by economic geographer Peter Hall (1966): London, Paris, Moscow, the great city complexes of Holland (Randstad) and the Rhine Ruhr; and outside Europe, New York and Tokyo. In the extended lists prepared by Hall naming the world's metropolitan regions around the year of 1960, only two Brazilian cities were

mentioned, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Nowadays, however, this situation has been significantly altered. In the 2000s, over 80% of the Brazilians are now residing in urban areas, the country became largely urbanised, so as to actually present numerous concentrations of urban centres, sprawling over regional scales. Worldwide things have changed dramatically as well, and it hardly seems accidental that ISOCARP - the International Society of City and Regional Planners - addresses the present 40th World Planning Congress of the Association stating "One of the most important transformations faced by cities at the beginning of the 21st century is the emergence of urban regions". Admittedly, "the terms more often used to describe today's collective, spatial forms are 'megalopolis', 'edge city', 'heterotopia', and 'cyberspace'" (LAVIN 1999 p.347). As interpreted by Garreau, for the particular North-American situation of the novel "edge cities" their society is now experiencing, urbanites are already facing a third wave in their urban ways of living: "First, we moved our homes out past the traditional idea of what constituted a city. This was the suburbanization of America (...). Then...we moved our marketplaces out to where we lived. This was the malling of America (...). Today, we have moved our means of creating wealth (...) - our jobs - out to where most of us have lived and shopped (...). That has led to the rise of Edge City" (GARREAU 1992 p.4, underlined by the authors). This circumstance described by the journalist is not far from the increasing number of urban regions we currently encounter all over the world, and which accompany the homogenized ways of living produced by globalisation.

Understandably, the emergence of intensive clustering of urban centres and their growing mutual interdependence pose a difficult challenge to Brazilian planning. Any attempts to define a pragmatic path aiming at a suitable management of today's numerous urban regions, represent a welcome and needed topic to the subject of regional planning. Consequently, even incipient manifestations, likely to introduce a regional thinking into the planning of a dispersed cluster of urban centres, must be taken into account. This is why the lessons raised by spontaneous activities actually occurring in certain Brazilian urban regions are investigated in the paper.

In search for new trends in regional planning, especially on the planning of the newly formed urban regions, two situations will be examined in the paper. One focuses on the management initiatives employed in the planning of an urban region known as the "Grapevine region", in which all initiatives are taken under the supervision of formal (private) agents. The other focuses on the informal activities that are been employed in the management of a region called the "Hortensias region", also stimulated by private agents. They are both situated in the hilly portion of the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, within a larger geographical region named "Serra Gaúcha" (Sierra Gaucha). Either formal or informal, both cases deal with procedures anchored precisely on the strategic factors related to the region's cultural roots. So, once understood what we mean by the regional rootedness of a place, lets move forward to understanding why do we believe that "one can plan with that".

The "Serra Gaúcha" Region

The scene is the state of Rio Grande do Sul, in southern Brazil. With a population of over 10 million inhabitants, 82% of which living in urban areas, the state enjoys a good socio-economic status in Brazilian terms. According to data from the IBGE's² Census, its gross domestic product amounted, in 2000, to US\$46,290,529,879.00 and the GDP per capita to US\$4,544.00. Social development indicators are also good, with the state showing a low illiteracy ratio (6%); a coefficient of infant mortality also low (18.3 children per thousand); and 97.5% of the dwellings served with sanitary facilities.

The region was originally populated by a huge bulk of European immigrants, Italians and Germans, who came to the area in the second half of the nineteenth century. The sierra gaucha is a region blessed with beautiful landscapes, both natural and cultural. Nature provided the region with rich and dense vegetation, covering the hilly undulated scenery and establishing delightful panoramic vistas. The immigrants, attracted by the temperate zone

climate and by the mountainous features predominant in the region, soon founded there a flourishing occupation, tinged with a rich cultural blending. Two different clusters of urban regions are highlighted in the paper: the “Grapevine” and the “Hortensias” regions (FIG.1).



Figure 1 - The map of Rio Grande do Sul showing the Grapevine and Hortensias Regions.
Source: elaborated by the authors on INTERNET base map.

In certain parts, the scenery is very reminiscent of European regions, either by the natural features or by the cultural manifestations. The strong influence, especially Italian and German, made the region a different place from the rest of the country. Furthermore, Rio Grande do Sul's subtropical weather is responsible for precise distinctions among the four seasons, imparting to the sierra region the rare spectacle of snowfalls in winter, a curiosity for the rest of the country (FIG.2). However, not only the snow attracts attention elsewhere in Brazil. Germans and Italians brought with them their recognized disposition to work, and also all their practices, their shared knowledge, and their common values. Their adaptation to an alien territory resulted in the thriving of an extremely rich and varied culture, characterized by particular tastes in arts and manners. Traditional architecture, traditional foods, traditional drinks, in short, traditional roots, ended up by differentiating the region and furnishing the grounds for marking the special character it eventually attained.



Figure 2- Snowfalls in Gramado's Lago Negro. *Source: Zero Hora Newspaper*

The formal management of the Grapevine Region

The Grapevine Region, colonized by Italian immigrants in the end of the nineteenth century, comprises 25 municipalities where Italian ethnicity is absolutely prevalent. Proud of their origins, citizens cultivate their roots through the preservation of the habits, customs, traditions, gastronomy, and even through the dialect “veneto” (the same of the first immigrants), that can be listened in the streets. The population of the region summed up 728,000 inhabitants, occupying an area of 7,040km² (IBGE Census of 2000).

Its management as a region started with an informal proposition attributed to a former resident, who had migrated to the state’s metropolitan capital, Porto Alegre (SEBRAE 2003). In 1980, returning to his hometown, Bento Gonçalves, he wondered why the region was not being able to retain the intensive rural exodus it was experiencing. Property’s abandonment, loss of cultural identity, socio-economic depression, marked the scenery among the Italian descendants, mainly youngsters. Furthermore, former tourist activities experienced an agonising decline, as the hotel run by his parents was showing. A casual experience led him to what could be an alternative to that dismal scenery: he toured the hotel’s guests to a visit to the neighbouring vineyards. The visit turned out to be such a success, that he perceived that the cultural rootedness of the region still presented a strong tourist appeal. This initial finding precipitated a series of connected actions, triggering a successive flow of events. First, it was created the brand “Vale dos Vinhedos” (Grapevine Valley), followed by the inauguration of ATUASERRA (the Tourist Association of the North-eastern Sierra). Some years later, in 1998, a covenant was signed between ATUASERRA and SEBRAE, the Brazilian Service of Support to Micro and Small Enterprises³. The first work of the recently established joint venture started by processing a thorough examination of all business opportunities that already existed in each of the municipalities⁴. It followed the launching of a special project aiming at the development of Tourism, Agribusiness and Craftsmanship activities, working under the orientation of a Management executive group. Besides ATUASERRA and SEBRAE, the managing council included also representatives of some of the municipal governments (including two of the Mayors, and several Tourism and/or Agriculture Secretaries); members of the Hotels and Catering Services Union; the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (in charge of establishing a formal registered control for the wine production, known as D.O.C⁵); and the University of Caxias do Sul⁶ (in charge of establishing specific educational services, including a Bachelor and Master degrees in Tourism).

Curiously, the greatest emphasis of the project focused on the rural development of the region, seeing the rural-urban *continuum* as an integrated development unit. In effect, therein lies a determining aspect of an urban region’s planning. In particular, in the case in point, this focus proved highly strategical, mainly because: (i) the region is densely urbanised (84% of the population); (ii) the project’s intention is to work in close association with the micro and small entrepreneurs’ interests; (iii) it aims at increases in the number of jobs and in the average incomes; (iv) a major proposal is to attain an upgrading in the quality of regional services and products; (v) it emphasises the growth of regional businesses and the formation of partnerships among the regional actors. Obviously, important consequences may result from this sort of procedure, such as preventing the rural exodus, providing new job opportunities for the natives, keeping them “rooted” to their cultural and natural environment joining the company of their families and their community, and increasing their self-esteem. In general terms, this tends to further the environmental sustainability through a harmonic development of the regional places, both rural and urban.

The informal management of the Hortensias Region

The Hortensias Region is an example of a successful partnership established between four municipalities - four *places* - symbolically representative of the region’s assets. Even if the findings described here derive from informal entrepreneurial initiatives, in which municipal agents act freely, manifestations of a collective nature may be singled out. Through a series

of strategic projects these places managed, over time, to get together, in order to promote the most distinguished attribute they share in common, their environmental heritage. Surrounded by a beautiful, mountainous landscape, the places, formerly tiny trade areas supporting the colonial hinterland occupied and exploited by Italian and German migrants, eventually developed as winter vacation resorts. The four municipalities spread over a geographical area of 4,117km² occupied by just over 100,000 inhabitants. Although most of the population concentrates in urban areas (80%, in 2000), the overall population density is quite low, about 26 persons/km². This situation results, in part, from the relative wilderness of the municipality of São Francisco de Paula, whose huge territorial boundaries occupy roughly 80.7% of the region's whole area.

São Francisco de Paula (12,269 persons in the urban area), in spite of its scarcely occupied territory, is one of the oldest places in the State of Rio Grande do Sul. Its origins date from the eighteenth century, when Brazilians from São Paulo firstly managed to enter, explore and eventually, occupy, the southern territories of Brazil. At that time, the area was just an advanced post for the stopovers of the cavalry trails, though an incipient urban settlement was already present, providing catering and trading services. Soon the area got fractioned, subdivided into cattle raising ranches. Eventually, the urban area evolved into an authentic “gaucho’s” place. As such, it presents the traditional features usually associated to the “gaucho” image, that is to say, showing all the well known signs displayed by this ethnic type, such as the typical “bombachas” they are used to wear, their feeding habits based on eating red meat in the form of “churrasco” (barbecue), the “matte” tea they are used to drink in special cups, as well as their rodeos and cultural festivals, that add to the distinctiveness that characterises the southern Brazilian cattleman (FIG. 3). These features, allied to the temperate climate and the splendourous scenery, attracted, since the early times, people prone to take a quiet, cheap and distinctly holiday period in very simple hotels and vacation resorts.

As the state's territorial occupancy went on, the official colonization fronts that populated the region turned to São Francisco de Paula's adjacent territories. Ultimately, this set the trend for the Sierra Gaúcha general occupation and, more precisely, for siting the places known today as Canela, Gramado and Nova Petrópolis.



Figure 3 - Typical “gauchos” in front of the native pine-tree (*Araucaria brasiliensis*), and a monument to the sipping cup for drinking “matte”. Source: *Convention & Visitors Bureau*

Canela (30,760 urban residents), the closest municipality to São Francisco de Paula, shows today a mix of influences resulting on the one hand, from the primordial localization of Brazilians' farms that characterized São Francisco; and, on the other hand, from the colonial

immigrants' occupations. As a consequence the place is ethnically mixed today, revealing its multi-cultural original influences. It is very "Italian" in matters such as the food served to tourists, relying strongly on homemade pasta and polenta; but one can also encounter a real dressed-up "Gaúcho" on horse back in his daily life activities; or enter into a replica evoking "German" architecture, as the stone gothic cathedral planted amidst the central park of the city, a monument to people's religiosity, side by side to quite simpler timber Italian buildings (FIG. 4).



Figure 4 - A blend of Italian, German and "gaúcho" cultures. Photos: L. & I. Castello

Gramado (23,328 urban residents), a straightforward product of the European colonization is, nowadays, a renowned tourist centre and probably the best-known tourist town attracting people from outside the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Initially a modest vacation spot, it soon grew into a reputed holiday resort, offering several tourist attractions. In the last years, the town experienced a remarkable growth, close accompanied by important investments in the real estate business. The introduction of varied tourist activities, followed by sound marketing strategies, rapidly transformed Gramado in a requested *place*. A curious feature the town displays, though, is the intentional resemblance of its architecture to that of a European alpine village. Tyrol roofs, Swiss chalets, Bavarian gables, engraved friezes, the whole lot of alpine artefacts intertwine in Gramado's urban landscape so as to produce a patchwork of architectural styles, to the enchantment of visitors (and despair of architectural scholars). Moreover, the fantasy does not end in the real scale architectural elements of the town. Among the favourite spots there is an outstanding "Enchanted-world Park", exhibiting a miniaturized reproduction of the Hortensias Region colonization. The "Palace of the Festivals", an immense edifice in the style of Italian Alps buildings, placed in the main street of Gramado, is the major headquarters of the Annual Movie Festival, which draws competitors from all over Latin-american and Iberian countries. The "Lago Negro", the Black Lake, an artificial lake and one of the most visited points in town, has its name taken from Germany's Black Forest, simply because it is surrounded by luxuriant woodland composed entirely of exotic plants that duplicate the species found in the famous German forest. This same exotic vegetation is also found in another man-made lake, the "Joaquina Bier" (Fig.5). Both Canela and Gramado are now experiencing a booming in the real estate sector, through the rapid growing industry of "condominiums", gated communities designed according to the local thematic architecture.



Figure 5 - Joaquina Bier Lake and Gramado Main Street: even an old-fashioned bus for touring the countryside adds magic to the local fantasy. Photos: I. & L. Castello

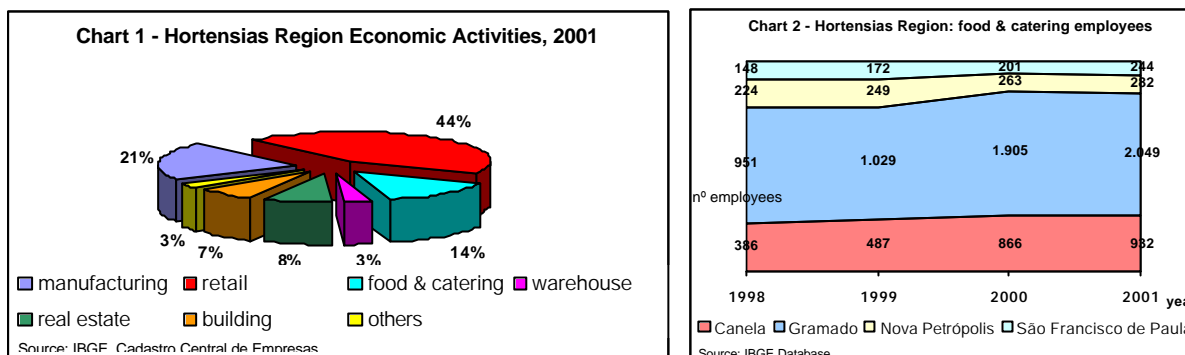
Nova Petrópolis (12,208 urban residents) is a charming little place situated in the centre of the provincial colony founded in 1858. Carefully planned to allocate the German immigrants, the territory was initially partitioned into allotments of equivalent size (roughly 50ha), assisted by colonial settlements distributed at every 10km. Centrally located, the colonial administrative seat was designed accordingly, and assigned as a *Stadtplatz* (city place) to perform the management of the colonial area. Taking advantage of: (i) the short distance to Porto Alegre, the state's capital city (about 90km.); and of (ii) the high accessibility provided by the bordering road (the first cross country connection opened in Brazil), the zone soon managed to attract economic activities, generating an upgrade in the local standards. The signs of the Germanic culture are found everywhere in the municipality (FIG.6).



Figure 6 - German architectural and landscape signs. Photos: Germano Schüür & Convention & Visitors Bureau

This brief description of the four places united through the partnership called “Hortensias Region” shows both, the similarities that helped to put them together, and the diversity they imply. All four places certainly share the same geographical region, all present a temperate climate with cold (and sometimes) white winters, exhibit a spectacular landscape, with mountains, valleys and waterfalls. Moreover, they also have in common the capacity to maintain signs and cultural manifestations representative of their origins, i.e. they manage to keep their roots still quite visible. Nonetheless, each place creates its own history, traced by the action of people over the land, over a period of time, and over a common colonial background, evolving into distinctive patterns that enlighten and enrich the regional context as a whole.

The economic strength of the region comes from activities associated to the tourist sector. As Chart 1 shows, besides manufacturing of food, textiles, tourist souvenirs and handcraft goods, activities such as retailing, food & catering, real estate and building are responsible for the greatest part of the regional economy. Chart 2 displays, for the food & catering sector, the share of each municipality in the total number of employees, from 1998 to 2001.



The informal “planning” actions that actually take place in the urban region function under the advisory management of a tourist entity, the “Convention & Visitors Bureau of the Hortensias Region”. A non-profit civil association, this entity congregates mostly enterprisers of the tourist sectors, such as, hoteliers, caterers and festival organizers. Their major purpose is to develop tourist activities, creating, supporting and attracting them to the region. For this purpose, they plan an annual calendar of events, and set them in action through coordinated strategic marketing policies⁸. The regional association started, in fact, as a joint venture of only two places, Gramado and Canela. This goes back to the 1990s, when Gramado, already a sound tourist town, envisaged the potential benefits of expanding the tourist area and, consequently, to amplifying the tourism oriented assets and facilities existing in the region. The natural course for the accomplishment of this strategy was surely to contact Canela’s enterprisers, since the places stand only 7 kilometres apart. So the informal association got started and a monument celebrating the union was erected in the bordering line of the two municipalities. The monument displays two human beings shaking hands – the cultural union – and sharing a bouquet of hortensias, the exotic flower that - as the immigrants - was transplanted into the region and performed so well that it became a regional symbol (FIG. 7).



Figure 7 - A monument in praise of the integration, located alongside the roadway linking Gramado to Canela, marks the association of the “Hortensias Region”. Photo: INTERNET.

In order to aggregate diversity, the association expanded along a regional axis, eventually including São Francisco de Paula to the east (and the Gaucho's roots it represents); and Nova Petrópolis to the west (and the Germanic atmosphere it symbolizes). Actually, the four places stand over a "strip" alongside some 70 kilometres apart, which defines the core of the Hortensias Region (FIG.8).



Figure 8- The Hortensias Region strip. Source: INTERNET

What planners have to learn

As the earlier sections of this paper suggest, planning can extract from the internal texture of an urban region - that is to say, from the places that configure that region - strategic factors that offer fresh directions for the design alternatives that may enhance the region's development.

Although part of the evidence for this reasoning lies within the realm of subjective conjectures there is all possibility, indeed, that the identification of those factors demands a thorough dissection of the *rootedness* that has earlier determined the genesis of the places. Therefore, it seems reasonable to argue that, to parse on the collective rootedness that underlies the regional network of places will surely help to glide along the tracks of decision, and hence, establish the managerial bases for an adequate regional governance. Such a procedure will avail to face one of the important questions that vex our times, the correct management of the complex task of planning an urban region. However, it is important to remember that the study of actual urban regions is still at an embryonic stage and that, as explained by CALTHORPE & FULTON (2001 p.104), "Each region has its own history, ecology, geography, economy, political framework, and social and cultural backdrop. This means that the Regional City will take many forms, adapting itself to the conditions of each region as appropriate".

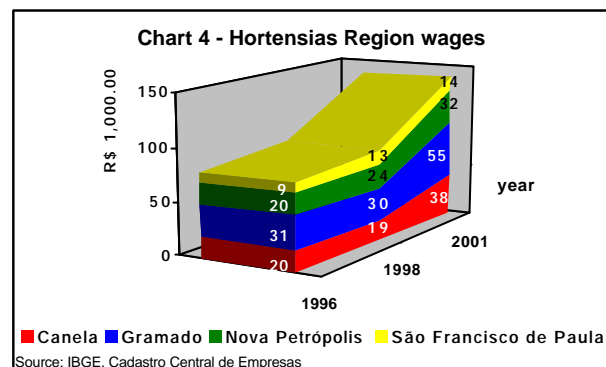
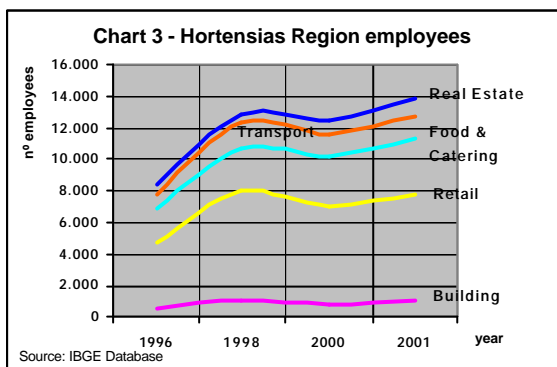
Even a cursory review of the two cases presented shows that the management of both regions examined demanded (and resulted) from a thorough insight into the rootedness of the region's constituent places. It is also interesting to note that *all* places matter: big, medium, small, micro, urban, rural, indicating that the region must be conceived as a *unit*. Furthermore, an urban region represents, today, a new human *locus* of attachment: one pertains to a region. In fact, it is crucial to observe that people see themselves nowadays (as it happened in former historic times) more closely tied economically, and more intimately socially identified with a region, than with the state, as their main referential entity.

The Grapevine Region case shows that tourism was the common interface that the regional dwellers chose as a unifying factor in their goals for an integrated management of the regional system. However, in order to use tourism as a development strategy, they needed to warrant the conservation of the region's cultural assets, to guarantee the preservation of the natural resources, and to assure the maintenance of the regional diversity in all its forms, either on the offer of a balanced mix of leisure activities, either on the blending of the goods that can be regionally produced. In other words: they stimulated the regional sustainability. They also needed a project. This is perhaps one of the most important points to underline here: they realized that they needed to follow the lines launched under an organized path, put forward through the directives of a project. This is why they saw the creation of a non-governmental agency as a tool to bring forward a renewed oxygenation for their purposes; purposes that were already embedded in the regional rootedness. But, that to become effective would require, from each and every community, their efforts on learning how to become regionally articulated, so as to profit from the businesses opportunities that only regional partnerships are able to produce. Today they benefit from the accumulated knowledge that a project may gather in terms of the planning, organizational, informational, administrative and technological advisements necessary to make their purposes true. The Grapevine experience is very recent; the project was launched as early as in 1998. Nevertheless, some good results may be already evinced. Whatever else it may have introduced, the project has opened opportunities for approaching, in a simultaneous manner, a number of regional features scattered over the whole regional system. In this way, a varied spectrum of scales got correctly contemplated, starting from the macro regional pole, the city of Caxias do Sul and its mature industrial power; to the micro locality and the modest handicraft performed by the natives. The mutual advantages are clear. While Caxias do Sul offers a prodigal educational system, both technical and professional, specialising human resources in agribusiness, catering, hotel management, tourist services, arts and crafts, and whatever else the region specifically demands for, the small centres keep the natives attached to the local production, slackening the flux of rural people who migrate to Caxias do Sul in search of job opportunities.

The Hortensias Region case is even youngest: it dates approximately to the year 2000. The major topic is again tourism, but their approach to tourism is rather different. They concentrate on the diversity sought after by tourists, and manage to offer them a balanced sample of the rootedness "flavour" noticed all over the region. So, their proposal for a harmonic tourist product combines a necessary sample of all the traditional characteristics the region presents. Plainly put, the cultural and natural elements that best represent the region's rootedness - real or fake - are put at the service of tourism, even if under the form of a *theme park*. As a matter of fact, in the Hortensias region, rootedness is for sale. The early twenty-first century is bringing to the region a radical change in their managerial practices. The region's management shows traces of what is actually known as *postmodern urbanism*, that is to say, it combines the practices of creating places - "placemaking" - to the mechanisms of selling the places - "placemarketing" - thus created. The trendy world of theme parks became entirely absorbed among the regional decision-makers practices, which regard them as a sure and profitable source of economic turnover. The creation of the "Convention & Visitors Bureau" helps to expand their intuitive knowledge on tourist, entertainment, and catering matters. The energetic pace the council adopts is managing to elaborate a tasty seasonal calendar of events that keeps visitors busy all year round.

Thenceforth, the planned marketing of the rootedness continued to foster new and innovative directions for the management of the four places as an urban region.

As for the results that have been already achieved, the four municipalities experienced a remarkable increase in their economic growth. Job opportunities also increased, as Chart 3 demonstrates, despite the general recession the country faced at that time. As expected, the growth occurred in the categories more closely associated to tourism, establishing a sort of chain effect in the offer of employment, linking the catering sector to the accommodation services, as well as to the construction and to the real estate areas. Furthermore, there was also a general raise in the average incomes, shown in Chart 4, producing an upgrade in the standard living conditions, founding a virtuous cycle of economic growth-*cum*-economic development.



The Hortensias Region today counts with a variety of locales “specializing” in the selling of the cultural and natural roots. One can choose whether to visit the reproduction of a German village in Nova Petrópolis or the replica of the early urbanization of Gramado-Canela in the strip that links the two centres, or yet, to attend a rodeo performed by typically dressed “gauchos” in the farms of São Francisco de Paula. The mouth also sells tradition. Local food is a famed attraction so as the equally famed restaurants, “rodízios⁹” and “galletos¹⁰”; homemade chocolate is another temptation; and the so-called “colonial coffee” is a gluttony that overindulges craving tourists. Tradition is also present in the selling of the traditional Gramado’s furniture, exported to all parts of the country; the traditional Sierra’s knitwear, manufactured in the local mills; and also in the retailing of a paraphernalia of souvenirs, dolls, home-made liqueurs, crafts, and whatever. Indeed, no matter what, the region’s rootedness sells extremely well, and became a model in administrative terms. In fact, the region’s management is presently administering the selling of “locality”, but it is doing so according to the lessons learned through technicalities that postmodern “globality” taught them to adopt. Perhaps an illustration of that is the present growth of the new “gated communities” that are invading the realty business.

In short, among all the points that have been commented, the ones that deserve to be highlighted in a synthetical review seem to be: the offer of education (the existence of a regional University); the construction of a regional “brand” (ascribing powerful labels to products such as tourist services, wines and crafts); and the presence of consultive associations, that work under the auspices of the private sector. These are the main strategic factors that are bringing favourable results in terms of: (i) tourist development; (ii) preservation of cultural heritage; (iii) upgrading living standards. All results have close links to the rootedness that defines the region’s places, which is used as a planning strategy either for fixing people to the internal privatopias of their cultural niches; or to introduce them into the heterotopias of a changing postmodern way of living.

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¹ There are only three official administrative Government levels in Brazil: the Nation, the States, and the Municipalities. The "regional" level is not an administrative one, just a geographical division.

² IBGE: Brazilian National Geographical and Statistical Institute.

³ SEBRAE is a private association that fosters entrepreneurial activities and is sponsored by national enterprisers.

⁴ The survey visited 939 establishments and perceived opportunities in 359 of them. Criteria for approving them were based on the assessment of the natural and cultural heritage elements they possessed, and on the possibilities for the expansion of existing agribusinesses and artisan's craftsmanship.

⁵ The D.O.C. seal ("Denominazione di Origine Controllata"), as its equivalent, the French A.O.C. ("Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée") guarantees that a high standard is achieved in the production of fine wines, as the ones produced in the region.

⁶ UCS, the University of Caxias do Sul, offers several units dispersed over the region. Its catchment area reaches a vast extension, and expands over a regional level. Besides, it also provides for the transportation of students from their different municipalities.

⁷ "Gaúcho" is the name by which the residents in the state of Rio Grande do Sul are known. They are frequently seen as the cowboys of the South American pampas. In the Sierra Gaucha case, they would represent a sort of "pampas over the hills" cowboys.

⁸ Among the planned events, the following examples can be mentioned: rodeos, winter fashion festivals, summer musical fairs, photograph workshops, various Conferences and Congresses, furniture show, ecological mountain bikes, international shoes and leather fair, Easter magic, knit fashion, puppeteer's festival, Latin-american cinema festival, Deutsche Weinachten, Christmas Lights.

⁹ A diversity of grilled meats, served in continuous rounds, usually in restaurants called "churrascarias" (barbecues).

¹⁰ Restaurants specialized in serving grilled "galeto al primo canto" (young chickens).