

Governance and promotion of territorial heritage along the wine routes of Spain

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Abstract: Wine tourism has become a complementary source of income in wine regions. To take advantage of this opportunity, in Spain, various wine routes have been launched. The objective is to analyse the type of heritage elements that each Spanish wine route prioritises in relation to its governance and the type of actors that integrate them. The sources of information were documents published on the internet concerning wine routes. From this information, two variables have been calculated: one regarding the heritage elements valued as tourist resources on the routes themselves and another related to the number and type of partners that make up the route package. The wine routes have been classified into two types based on the average values of each variable and with Fisher's exact test it has been verified whether or not there is a dependency relationship between both variables. The findings highlight the existence of an association between the type of partners and the heritage elements that are valued: the greater the variety of partners, the greater the number of assets promoted. These results allow us to consider governance of wine routes as strategic within rural development programs.

Keywords: Wine tourism; Wine route; Governance; Territorial heritage; Spain.

Gobernanza y promoción del patrimonio territorial en las rutas del vino de España

Resumen: El enoturismo se ha convertido en una fuente de ingresos complementaria en las regiones vitivinícolas. Para aprovechar esta oportunidad, en España se han puesto en marcha diversas rutas del vino. El objetivo es analizar el tipo de elementos patrimoniales que cada Ruta del Vino de España prioriza en relación con su gobernanza y el tipo de actores que la integran. Las fuentes de información fueron documentos publicados en Internet sobre las rutas del vino, mediante los que se han calculado dos variables: una respecto a los elementos patrimoniales valorados como recursos turísticos por las propias rutas y otra relativa al número y tipo de socios que forman parte de ellas; las rutas del vino se han clasificado en dos tipos en función de los valores medios de cada variable; con el test exacto de Fisher se ha comprobado si hay o no relación de dependencia entre ambas. Los resultados muestran la existencia de una relación entre el tipo de socios y los elementos patrimoniales: cuanto mayor es la variedad de socios, mayor es el número de bienes promocionados. Estos resultados permiten considerar el esquema de gobernanza de las rutas del vino como estratégico dentro de los programas de desarrollo rural.

Palabras clave: Enoturismo; Ruta del vino; Gobernanza; Patrimonio territorial; España.

1. Introduction

Wine tourism facilitates the diversification of economic activities that are carried out in wine-producing areas (Fernández-Portela and Vidal-Domínguez, 2020) by offering complementary products to wine itself (Miranda-Escolar and Fernández-Morueco, 2011). In this context, wine routes play an important role. These routes have a highly territorial character (Miranda-Escolar and Fernández-Morueco,

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2011). Through them, elements such as cultural heritage and wine landscape can contribute to rural development (Grande-Ibarra, 2018), making them a dynamic element of rural areas (Fernández-Portela and Vidal-Domínguez, 2020).

For different countries, the importance of wine tourism as a source of income for wineries and as a development strategy for rural areas has been highlighted (Randelli and Schirmer, 2013; Gabardo and Valduga, 2019; Bernier et al., 2020). From the perspective of rural development policies, wine routes allow them to take advantage of the set of resources available to a territory (Martínez-Puche and Morales-Yago, 2016). However, the cultural systems and practices that are carried out in each area have an effect on vineyard landscapes, how territorial identity is built and the development of wine tourism itself (Gabardo and Valduga, 2019). However, it is also worth considering whether, in addition to these elements, there are others that in one way or another condition policy, such as the wine tourism in each area and the impact of each patrimonial element of a territory. Accordingly, Plaza-Gutiérrez and Fernández-Álvarez (2020) have shown differences in the process of resource valuation among wine regions.

Wine routes are integrated by actors such as wineries, restaurants and other entities. The specific composition of each of them can lead to different governance models where some patrimonial elements are prioritized over others according to the interests of their partners. Therefore, this work aims to verify this, i.e., to demonstrate whether the composition of wine routes has any effect on the characteristics that are promoted for each route. This issue is relevant because although the heterogeneity of actors can make it difficult to define common objectives (Gatelier et al., 2014), it can also help establish governance models that allow the maximum mobilization of heritage resources; hence, collaboration between actors is of vital importance (Debos, 2008).

The concepts of territory, landscape, heritage and identity make up a consistent theoretical framework, shared by the social sciences, especially useful in tourism studies. The authors have been working for years on the application of this framework to Spanish wine regions with a Protected Designation of Origin (Esteban y Climent, 2020). The wine routes synthesize very well the links among those four concepts, which has led to the accomplishment of this work on the Wine Routes of Spain, as a logical continuation of the previous ones. The work has an exploratory nature, so it is expected to be enlarged in the future.

To assess whether governance has any impact on wine tourism, the Spanish wine routes in the Wine Routes Club of Spain's published guides were analysed and then classified based on two dimensions. The first dimension refers to route governance, i.e., whether there is a predominance of wineries among the actors that compose the routes or not. Second, the routes were classified according to the characteristics of their tourist offerings, i.e., between those more focused on wine and those that promote a large number of heritage elements. Subsequently, the independence of both dimensions was contrasted, demonstrating how the governance of wine routes affects their characteristics.

The work has a double academic interest: on the one hand, establishing differentiated categories within the wine routes, based on the tourist resources they offer; on the other hand, to relate these categories to the number and type of partners, that is, to the governance of the routes. But it can be useful to the partners themselves for identifying the routes with which to establish alliances or synergies and also to policy makers for making decisions better tailored to the routes for which they have responsibility.

The article is organized as follows: next, the theoretical framework and the research hypothesis are developed. In the methodology section below, the data sources that were used, the details of the analysed route dimensions and the use of the hypothesis contrast technique used are presented. In the results section, in the first place, a characterization of the analysed wine routes is carried out according to the heritage elements that are highlighted in the guides. Second, the composition of actors and governance models identified in each case are presented. Third, the contrast in the hypotheses regarding governance and route types is discussed. Finally, the work concludes with a discussion of the obtained results and the main conclusions.

2. Theoretical background and research hypotheses

It is generally accepted as true that Protected Designations of Origin (PDOs) are legal entities that contribute to the territorial development of the area where they are located: the production in a delimited

space of a singular product whose characteristics are derived from local resources is an activity that generates employment and economic benefits, positively influencing the quality of life of its inhabitants. PDOs fit into the concept of a local production system since they are groups of companies that develop complementary products and coordinate with each other to carry out activities of common interest, specifically, guaranteeing product quality standards and avoiding fraudulent uses of their product name. The wine PDOs bring together winegrowers and wineries, being endowed with their own system of governance, via regulatory councils. Thus, PDOs generate a profitable and lasting activity—economic sustainability—favouring the survival of agricultural holdings and winegrowers—social sustainability—and contribute to the conservation of landscapes of great value—environmental sustainability.

However, this positive assessment of PDOs is questioned in several works revealing some of the contradictions of the model. Firstly, the creation of a PDO involves the precise characterization of the qualities of a product, that are reflected in the specifications (*pliegos de condiciones*); this process can give rise to standardization, partly necessary to meet the health requirements of food products, but that sometimes responds to the commercial interests of the promoters of the PDO, as is the case with Teruel Ham, that opted for pig breeds introduced in Spain since the late 1960s and that could not be considered native (Del Arco, 2023). In the case of wine, it is observed that in some DOPs native grape varieties are cultivated exclusively, such as La Rioja, while in others foreign varieties have been adopted, external to winemaking tradition, such as Somontano (Esteban y Climent, 2020).

Secondly, a PDO implies that the companies making up the local production system give heritage value to a collective good, the name itself, which they appropriate, excluding those companies that are not part of the system. This consideration problematizes the positive character usually attributed to PDOs, because the processes of giving heritage value do not necessarily benefit a community as a whole, nor do they conserve the environment, nor reduce social inequalities nor contribute to rural development (Del Arco, 2023).

2.1. Governance and heritage in Protected Designations of Origin of wine: the wine routes

Both the territory and productive sphere of a PDO constitute an important natural and cultural heritage. Like all heritage, this must be managed in a way that generates income while being conserved and increased to be transmitted to future generations. Although the central economic activity of a PDO in this instance is the production of wine, others can be developed around it—wine tourism exemplifies this—that are capable of sustainably profiting the natural and cultural heritage of an area, fostering an imbrication of the productive sphere of a PDO and the territory itself. Wine tourism is a type of specialized or thematic tourism that is linked to a specific agro-industrial activity, which has allowed the economic base of some wine regions to be broadened, and a close collaboration between the agents of a territory.

The joint tourist exploitation of wine and territorial heritage is an objective shared by numerous wine-producing regions, usually through the collaboration of local official and private actors, even in countries where the vine is a not very widespread crop, such as Japan (Wang, 2020). However, such exploitation can be unbalanced, benefiting some actors and harming others. An interesting example is offered by Stari Grad Plain, a UNESCO World Heritage-listed cultural landscape on the Croatian island of Hvar, where many farmers are abandoning agriculture in favour of tourism industries (Skinner, 2019). Other studies reveal the presence of hegemonic wine companies that maintain control over the territories (De Jesús et al., 2020). Yelvington et al. (2012), in their study on Temecula Valley, in Southern California, question the sustainability of a great scale wine tourism, especially regarding the availability of a key natural resource, the water. Taking in account these challenges and with the aim of promoting wine tourism that harmonizes diverse interests, wine routes have been developed.

Wine route can be defined as “a cluster of activities and attractions that encourage cooperation between different companies, public and private, which exist in the geographical area and that serve, in this way, as vehicles to stimulate economic development through tourism” (Rodríguez *et al.*, 2010, p. 218).

Although there are medium and large cities on wine tourism routes, they mainly affect rural areas, given the agro-industrial activity to which they are linked. Thus, they can be considered a facet of rural tourism, which is one of the main means of promoting sustainable local development and improving the quality of life of rural populations. In addition to their positive effect on development, wine routes foster other intangible elements that rural societies typically lack: “the rediscovery of this resource has contributed to favouring self-esteem, the sense of belonging, the promotion of territoriality and the establishment of action networks in the territory; [...] wine has become an element of social cohesion”

(Castelló and Hernández, 2011, p. 71). A wine route also implies a rural society's enhancement of its heritage elements, e.g., landscapes, monuments, festivals, traditions, gastronomy: "All of this converges to offer an experience destined for the entertainment and enjoyment of visitors, a diverse way of seeing the rural world; at the same time, it will entail a very significant boost to development and economic diversification" (Fernández and Vidal, 2020, p. 7).

From another perspective, wine routes are considered a complementary product for those areas of conventional tourism, such as sunbathing and visiting the beach, which seek to expand existing offerings, e.g., the Tacoronte-Acentejo wine route on island of Tenerife (Díaz, 2008), the Jumilla and Bullas routes in Murcia (Millán-Escriche, 2012) and the Alicante wine route in the province of same name (Andreu and Verdú, 2012).

Moreover, wine routes have been created in numerous countries, both in the *New World*—the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand (Vachiano and Ramón, 2013), Chile (Zamora and Barril, 2007), and Brazil (Brazil and Schuch, 2014)— and in Mediterranean Europe —France (Lignon-Darmaillac, 2019), Italy (Cinelli, 2015), Portugal (Cordeiro, 2012) and, of course, Spain.

In the early twenty-first century, the Association of Wine Cities (ACEVIN) and the government of Spain launched a programme to create wine routes —*Rutas del Vino de España* (RVEs)— which currently comprises a total of 31 routes. A wine route is thus defined as an "integration under the same thematic concept of the tourist resources and services of interest in a wine-producing area, built on authenticity and experiential vocation, to create a product that is based on the identity of the destination while optimizing the joint marketing of the area, its level of demand satisfaction, and the comprehensive socioeconomic development of the territory" (Hernández, 2017, p. 44). To obtain the official RVE seal, compliance with the quality criteria agreed upon by ACEVIN and the national government must be initially accredited and periodically confirmed.

2.2. Hypothesis and objectives

There is abundant literature on RVEs; however, the numerous relevant case studies show few differences between them. It is likely that the need for institutional accreditation has produced some standardization, as this has also occurred in other countries, such as Portugal: "there are no clear differences between the various routes in terms of the type of offers available" (Cordeiro, 2012, p. 16).

Nevertheless, some studies suggest that there is a gradation between wine routes that are exclusively focused on visits to wineries and vineyards (Zamora and Barril, 2007) and routes that integrate other experiences. De Jesús et al. (2020), in a comparative study of two wine routes, identify two models: one operated from a business logic, focused on a food and wine product, and another built from a territorial logic, which associates wine with landscape and heritage. Cordeiro (2012) proposes a typology that distinguishes three types of routes: *brand*, focused exclusively on the wine sector; *terroir*, open to other agents of the territory linked to a wine sector; and *territorial*, open to all agents of the territory.

RVEs, as they are officially conceived and defined, can be considered territorial. Given that they arise from the voluntary association of diverse agents, however, in practice, there may an exclusive, or nearly exclusive, focus on the wine sector. This is the initial hypothesis of this study.

Hence, the objective of this study is to test this hypothesis. Thus, first, an attempt will be made to determine whether there are some RVEs that focus exclusively on the wine sector, called *oenological* routes, and whether others integrate wine resources with other heritage resources, called *territorial* routes. Provided this duality is demonstrated, the second step will be to determine and establish the significant relationships between the nature of these routes and their governance, including the set of agents that participate in them.

3. Methodology

Since this work comprises an initial exploratory analysis, a simple methodology was used, which was both qualitative and quantitative. The primary sources of information were documents published on the internet concerning RVEs. First, using the *Digital Guide of the Wine Routes of Spain* (RVE, 2018), the heritage elements that are valued as tourist attractions were identified. In the guide, three pages are dedicated to each route, which include a presentation and three sections: "the best", "the wine" and "what to do". The first discusses each route's highlights, the

second the route's aspects related to wine and grape varieties and the third what route activities can be carried out. For each section, the elements highlighted in the headlines were considered and then grouped into seven categories: a) wine character, b) grape varieties, c) gastronomy, d) identity, history and culture, e) architecture, f) festivals and g) nature and active tourism. A double-entry table was generated, where the columns correspond to the elements and the rows to the routes and where a "1" in the cells of each route correspond to an element that is mentioned. The number of mentions in each route of categories "c" to "g"—those not directly related to wine—was counted, with an average of 1.4. Based on this figure, the routes were then classified into two types: those that mention one or less of these heritage elements, i.e., oenological routes, and those that have two or more, i.e., territorial routes.

Second, RVEs governance schemes were investigated. Therefore, the lists of partners that appear in each route's downloadable webpage materials were evaluated. These partners were classified into the following types: regulatory council, winery, wine shop, wine museum, company of local agri-food products other than wine, town hall, tourism office, association, non-wine museum, accommodation, restaurant and leisure, travel or retail firm. A second double-entry table was thus generated, where the columns correspond to the types of partners and the rows to the routes, with each cell noting the number of each type of partners that is present on each route. Having converted these figures to percentages, on average, the wineries represent a third of route members. Based on this, the routes were then classified into two types: those where wineries exceed a third of members and those where they comprise less than a third.

Although there are 31 routes currently certified as an RVE, not all of them appear in the *Digital Guide* (RVE, 2018) or provide their partner lists on their websites. Therefore, only 25 routes were included in the study, 81% of the total 31. Once the aforementioned tables were prepared, each of these routes was characterized via two dichotomous categorical variables.

Finally, these two variables were compared to verify whether they are independent, that is, if the frequencies of one variable depend on those of the other. Given the small number of observations, a hypothesis contrast was carried out using Fisher's exact test, with a significance level of 0.05. The null hypothesis was that the oenological—or territorial—nature of a route is independent of the existence of a governance scheme with a high—or low—proportion of wineries; the alternative hypothesis is that it is not.

4. Results

By applying the study's methodology, as detailed below, the oenological and territorial routes were identified based on their number of heritage elements that are not directly related to wine. Similarly, the routes were classified according to the relative proportion of wineries in their group of partners. Finally, a hypothesis contrast was performed, which rejected the null hypothesis.

4.1. Outstanding heritage elements: Oenological and territorial wine routes

In the *Digital Guide of the RVEs*, 22 of the headlines of its 25 routes highlight the specific characteristics of their wine, mention grape varieties or present both (Table 1). Strikingly, in the section dedicated to wine, the other three highlight elements other than wine: gastronomy in Rías Baixas, sensation in Ribera del Duero and pairing in Rioja Alavesa. The following elements that are not directly related to wine appear less frequently: identity, history and culture in 56% of RVEs, gastronomy in 36%, nature and active tourism in 28%, architecture in 12% and festivals in 8%. Half of the routes, 13, highlight only one element, and three do not mention any. The latter use very general headlines that could be valid for any thematic route focused on wine or any other attraction. For example, Ribera del Guadiana, in its "the best" section, highlights "where the senses travel", and in the "what to do" section highlights "a multitude of unique experiences".

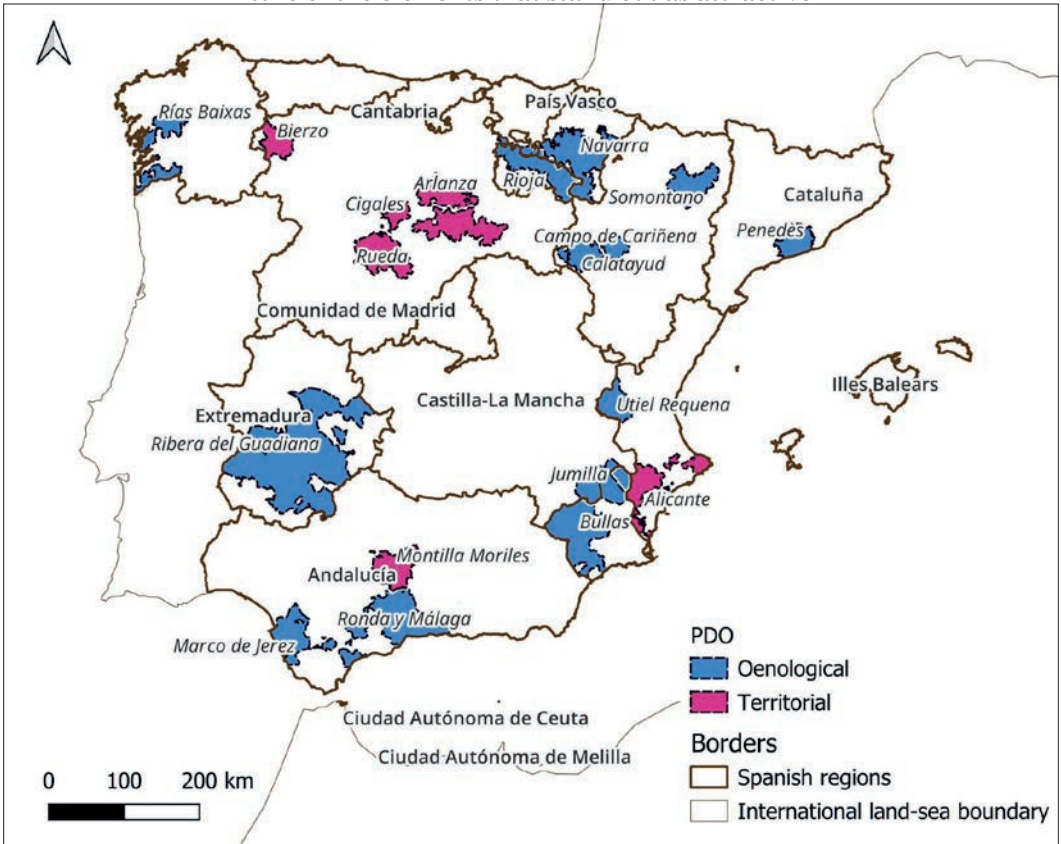
Table 1: Heritage elements that are highlighted as route tourist attractions.

Wine route	Type of element 1							Number of c, d, e, f, g
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	
Alicante		1	1	1		1		3
Arlanza		1	1	1			1	3
Bierzo	1		1	1				2
Bullas		1			1			1
Calatayud	1						1	1
Campo de Cariñena	1			1				1
Cigales	1		1	1				2
Garnacha	1	1		1			1	2
Lleida	1			1	1		1	3
Jumilla	1			1				1
Marco de Jerez	1			1				1
Montilla Moriles	1			1	1			2
Navarra	1			1				1
Penedès	1		1					1
Rías Baixas			1					1
Ribera del Duero				1		1		2
Ribera del Guadiana	1							0
Rioja Alavesa			1					1
Rioja Alta	1						1	1
Rueda	1		1	1			1	3
Ronda y Málaga	1		1					1
Sierra de Francia	1	1		1				1
Somontano	1							0
Utiel Requena		1					1	1
Yecla		1						0
Total routes	17	7	9	14	3	2	7	-
Percentage of routes	68	28	36	56	12	8	28	-

¹ a: wine; b: grape varieties; c: gastronomy; d: identity, history and culture; e: architecture; f: festivals; g: nature and active tourism. A “1” indicates that this element is mentioned.
Source: *Digital Guide of the Wine Routes of Spain* (RVE, 2018). Own elaboration.

Consequently, 16 of the 25 routes —64%— are classified as oenological, since they are focused almost exclusively on wine. The other 9 are classified as territorial, as they highlight at least two types of heritage elements that are not related to wine (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Types of wine routes based on the nature of the elements that stand out as attractive



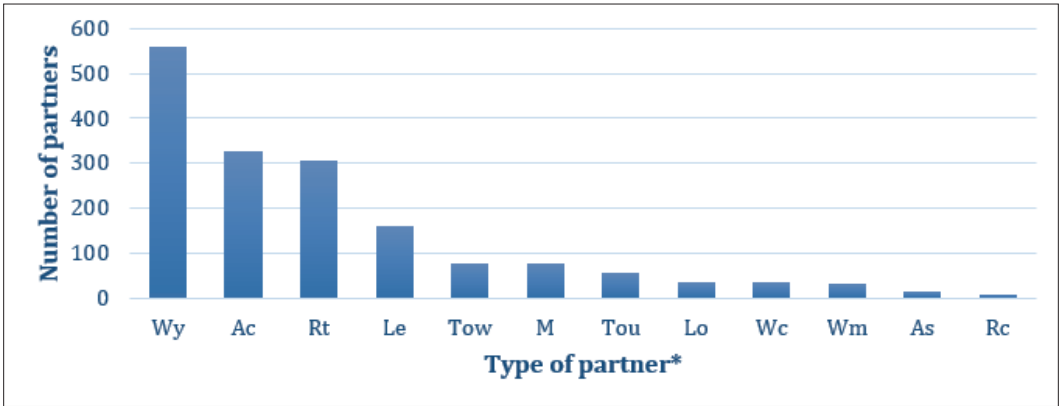
Source: *Digital Guide of the Wine Routes of Spain* (RVE, 2018) and MAPA (2017). Own elaboration.

4.2. Actors and governance of wine routes

The actors involved in the governance of RVEs are their partners. The lists included in the webpages of the routes show that the largest group of partners is that of the wineries, which constitute a third of the total (Figure 2). The next group is that of companies directly related to tourism: accommodations, restaurants, travel agencies, leisure and retail businesses. The number of institutional actors, e.g., city councils and tourism offices, is far greater than that of the regulatory councils of the PDOs, who are very poorly represented, as are various local associations. There are also a significant number of museums, both of wine and of other kinds. The RVE panorama is completed by wine shops and companies that are dedicated to the production of agri-food products linked to local gastronomy.

The simple diversity and high participation of partners who are not wineries —two-thirds of the total— indicates that RVEs are projects that seriously involve a broad set of local actors. A total of 60% of the routes —15— even exceed that proportion, i.e., Sierra de Francia, Yecla and Bullas, whose non-winery members comprise more than 80% (Figure 3). In the other 40% of the routes —10— the proportion of wineries is greater than that of the rest of the partners, i.e., in Rioja Alta, Rioja Alavesa and Rías Baixas, wineries are more than half of their members.

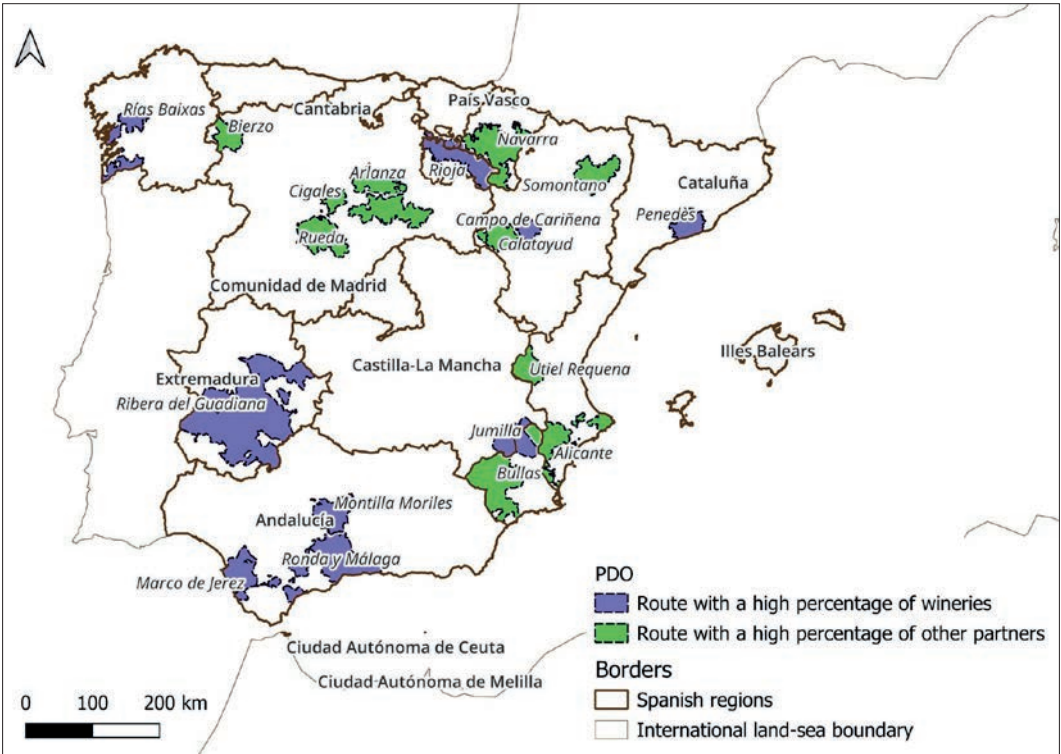
Figure 2: Members of the wine routes of Spain: Total frequencies



* Wy: Winery. Ac: Accommodation. Rt: Restaurant. Le: Leisure, travel and retail. Tow: Town hall. M: Museum (not wine). Tou: Tourism office. Lo: Local agri-food (not wine). Wc: Wine shop. Wm: Wine museum. As: Association. Rc: Regulatory Council.

Source: Official website of the wine routes of Spain: <https://www.wineroutesofspain.com/>. Own elaboration.

Figure 3: Wineries and other partners of the wine routes of Spain



Source: Official website of the wine routes of Spain: <https://www.wineroutesofspain.com/> and MAPA (2017). Own elaboration.

4.3. Governance and wine route types

Accordingly, RVEs can be categorized, on the one hand, as oenological or territorial and, on the other hand, as having a high proportion of wineries or a high proportion of other types of partners. Here, it is therefore necessary to compare the two typologies to verify whether they are independent. Table 2 shows that the frequency of territorial routes is very low among those RVEs with a high percentage of wineries: only 1 out of a total of 10. Similarly, territorial routes are the most frequent type of those RVEs with a high percentage of other partners: 8 out of 15. The difference between the number of cases observed and expected is high in both cases.

Table 2: Types of routes according to heritage elements and partners

Types of wine routes Oenological		Heritage elements			
		Territorial	Total		
Partners	High proportion of wineries	9	1	10	Observed cases
		6	4	10	Expected cases
	High proportion of other partners	7	8	15	Observed cases
		10	5	15	Expected cases

Source: Own elaboration (Tables 1 and 3).

After performing applying hypothesis contrast using Fisher’s exact test, the null hypothesis of independence between the two variables can be rejected with a significance level of 0.05. That is, the oenological or territorial nature of an RVE is not independent of whether there is a high or low proportion of wineries in its governance scheme. On the contrary, there is a statistically significant association between the oenological nature of the routes and a high proportion of wineries among their partners, as well as between the territorial nature of the routes and a high proportion of other partners: their significance level is 0.04.

5. Discussion

The international literature has identified different types of wine routes. Some, managed exclusively by wine companies, basically consist of visits to wineries and vineyards along with other complementary activities that take place in the same facilities, such as gastronomic tasting or wine therapy (Zamora and Barril, 2007; Vachiano and Ramón, 2013; Brazil and Schuch, 2014). Thus conceived, this wine route is an initiative involving a company or group of companies who intend to diversify their business and increase the amounts on their income statement.

But there are also routes that involve both wine companies and a broad group of local actors, including public institutions. These routes offer a wider range of activities based on the exploitation of the heritage resources of a territory, although wine remains the core interest that sustains the entire route. Thus conceived, this wine route constitutes a collective project for territorial development (Castelló and Hernández, 2011; Cordeiro, 2012; Cinelli, 2015; Lignon-Darmaillac, 2019; Fernández and Vidal, 2020). From this perspective, oenological, cultural, rural and gastronomic tourism constitute complementary offerings (Vachiano and Ramón, 2013).

All the RVEs engage a common philosophy, and their adherence to it can be affirmed by how they are conceived according to the second model, that of a territorial nature. However, the obtained results in this work support and provide robustness to the initial hypothesis, which confirms the dichotomy described in the international literature. That is, in Spain, not all wine routes follow the same model. The differences between these routes that have been identified can be linked, at least in part, to the composition of each of them.

It is necessary to highlight the methodological limitations of this work. Among these, those regarding the sources of evidence stand out. Regarding the lists of partners included in the webpage of each route, 17 of the RVEs include a downloadable file based on a standard model, which makes them easily comparable. The other 14 RVEs, however, present this information in other formats in a less systematic way. Even so, RVE partners have a real and legitimate interest in being included in these lists, so these

sources can be considered reasonably reliable. For its part, the *Digital Guide of the Wine Routes of Spain* (RVE, 2018), which has been used as the basis to determine the oenological or territorial nature of the routes, is advertising text. However, it is also a collective document, adjusted to a standardized pattern so that each route is described according to a common guideline. It is therefore an adequate source of information. Nevertheless, it would be interesting for a future study to analyse its consistency in relation to other sources.

The comparative approach described above is an original contribution, since the previous works on RVE are mostly case studies that refer to specific routes or regional sets of routes. The results of some of these works support the characters assigned to the routes in this study. Thus, the analysis of the so-called Marco de Jerez, carried out by Rodríguez *et al.* (2010), focuses exclusively on activities related to wine, coinciding with the characterization of the oenological route that appears in Table 1. Similarly, the work of Fernández and Vidal (2020) shows that in the RVEs of Castilla and León, there are important non-wine heritage resources; in Table 1, most of the routes in this region are identified as territorial. However, the Somontano route, for example, which this study classifies as oenological, has been linked by Castelló and Hernández (2011) with a territorial project of cultural identity.

Regarding the creation of wine routes in other countries, such as Chile, not only entrepreneurs from the wine sector have participated but other actors, such as the national government, have also done (Zamora and Barril, 2007). Accordingly, as proposed by Zamora and Barril (2007), to sufficiently develop wine tourism, local resources must be integrated into the proposed wine routes that include elements of both historical and cultural heritage as well as natural heritage. However, in Hungary, Lakner *et al.* (2018), in their field work, have observed that according to some interviewees, large entrepreneurs considered territorial heritage a mere complement to the tourism to wineries. That is, they could develop forms of wine tourism that do not integrate the diversity of such existing heritage. This question supports this study's obtained results; in the analysed routes, those that incorporate a greater diversity of actors tend to have a more territorial than exclusively oenological nature. That is, a greater plurality of interests among the social actors that make up a route can impact the diversification of the elements that it incorporates.

In wine tourism, companies from the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors participate (Carlsen, 2004), e.g., winegrowers, wineries and other tourism businesses. Despite this diversity, in the sector, some actors, such as large wineries, can exert great influence on local decision-making processes (Lakner *et al.*, 2018). The presence of the public sector and a greater diversity of social actors that participate in a route can be elements that prevent some large companies, in which tourist activity is rather secondary, from monopolizing decision-making within the wine route.

Regarding the development of sustainable tourism models with a territorial base, concerning governance and wine tourism, it can be positive to integrate small and medium-sized wineries and to cooperate with local authorities and other actors in the sector, such as hotels and restaurants (Lakner *et al.*, 2018). Zamora and Barril (2007), for example, discuss the role and impact of activities that are external to wine production and to a local community in a wine route (Zamora and Barril, 2007). Accordingly, to achieve sustainable development models of rural tourism where wine tourism can be a key element, it is necessary to integrate the different groups that make up a route's local population (Lakner *et al.*, 2018). As this study has highlighted, routes with a greater diversity of actors integrate a greater number of heritage elements. The productive specialization of a region in the wine sector can therefore become an engine for territorial development that enhances and mobilizes other heritage elements. In this process, the presence of differentiated quality brands, such as a PDO, can play an important role (Santeramo *et al.*, 2017). This, amid rural development, can generate bidirectional positive synergies between a wine sector and local heritage.

6. Conclusions

The first conclusion of the study is that there are RVEs oriented exclusively to resources related to the wine sector and there are RVEs with the wine sector as their central axis yet remain open to a wide range of territorial resources. The former have been called oenological routes and the latter territorial routes, but there is no clear dichotomy between the two; rather, there is gradation. Certainly, the nature of an RVE has been treated as a dichotomous variable in this study's contrast of hypotheses, but Table 1 demonstrates certain nuances, since the types of non-wine heritage elements that are highlighted vary between 0 and 3.

Second, there is an association between the oenological or territorial nature of a wine route and a relatively high or low proportion, respectively, of wineries among its partners. This has a logical explanation: wineries value their own oenological resources, offering tourists experiences and activities that are related to wine. The enhancement through tourism of the other heritage elements of a territory should be carried out by other actors. Hence, where there is a sufficient number and a wide range of the latter, it is more likely that the wine routes will incorporate diversified activities.

This leads to a key question not addressed in this work, whose exploratory nature has already been revealed. Not all territories taken in a PDO have the same number and variety of agents or the same social cohesion. With regard to the wine sector itself, Esteban and Climent (2018) pointed out the differences in the business structure of some DOPs dominated by large wineries and large winegrowers and others in which small winegrowers and wineries clearly predominate; the interest in and the capabilities to implementing wine tourism are likely different in both cases. As far as other socioeconomic sectors are concerned, the quantity and variety of potential non-wine partners of a wine route are likely greater in a DOP of a densely populated territory than in another of the so-called empty Spain. These hypotheses, clearly plausible, mark an interesting line of research to be developed in the future.

In short, a wine route can be strictly focused on wine, i.e., managed by wine companies, or it can be open to exploitation of other resources. In this case, the management of the route has to be shared by wine companies and other actors, whether business or institutional, private or public. RVEs are thus defined according to this second model, which is also most suited to the theoretical approaches of endogenous development and the political approaches of the European Union LEADER initiative. However, the implementation and management of these territorial routes require a rather complex governance system, which can be difficult to articulate, depending on the areas characteristics. Therefore, this could be the key to explain why most of the RVEs are oenological instead of territorial.

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