

Article

Key Elements for the Design of a Wine Route. The Case of La Axarquía in Málaga (Spain)

Elena Cruz-Ruiz ¹, Gorka Zamarreño-Aramendia ^{2,*} and Elena Ruiz-Romero de la Cruz ²

¹ Department of Economics and Business Administration, University Málaga, 29013 Málaga, Spain; ecruz@uma.es

² Department of Economic Theory and Economic History, University Málaga, 29013 Málaga, Spain; emruiz@uma.es

* Correspondence: gzama@uma.es; Tel.: +34-607-91-40-68

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Abstract: The design of enotourist routes represents an opportunity for the sustainable development of rural territories. This qualitative study was structured in three parts to reach a cohesion model representing the academic literature, visitors, and winemakers. This research focused on the region of La Axarquía in Málaga (Spain) because of its wine and tourist tradition. In relation to the methodology, this study used content analysis techniques for the analysis of both the relevant literature and the questionnaires completed by all the winemakers of the territory, 60 tourists who visited the wineries, and the 10 most representative agents linked to the tourist development of this region. The findings provided a model with the elements to be taken into account in the creation of a wine route or itinerary in any destination of the world. The application of this model will contribute to the creation of new tourist policies that can move towards efficient progress of the region.

Keywords: sustainability and development; wine routes and tourism; model design; wineries; heritage and culture; rural tourism; Málaga (Axarquía)

1. Introduction

Economically profitable and sustainable activities should be part of the new models for the development of rural territory based on different patterns of tourism demand. In this sense, it has been observed that there is a rejection of standardisation and a growing interest in local products such as wine and gastronomy [1,2]. Particular consideration should be given to origin-linked wines, which are now transforming the experience of this tourist segment [2,3].

The 2008 crisis has had a negative impact on many towns and villages in Spain. Many regions need to boost their development and recover their identities. Heritage and landscape wealth along with services are gaining significance in the context of the current thrust towards sustainable development [4–6]. Wines with appellation of origin contribute to generating quality tourism [7,8], making possible other additional incomes to the agricultural community [9] and representing an interesting way for the development of rural territories [10].

The origin of wine routes in Spain is unknown, since wine has been a basic good in the Mediterranean culture, and circuits around quality wines have always existed [4]. Recently, the 25th anniversary of the beginning of the wine tourism model created by the Spanish Association of Wine Cities (ACEVIN) was commemorated. This association works with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food in order to promote the culture and wine tourism. It currently has 30 certified routes, constituting a model of public and private collaboration [11,12].

Early studies have their origin in certain areas widely known for their wines. As an example we can mention the cases of La Rioja [13,14], the Jerez area [14], Aragón [15], the County of Huelva [8], the Canary Islands [16], Marco de Jerez-Sherry [17,18], Montilla–Moriles [19–22], Ribera del Duero [23,24], Valencia [25], Ribeiro [26], and Málaga [10].

There is a growing interest among tourists in products that preserve the environment and the landscape [27]. These products are gaining a prominent role in the economy of rural environments due to their ability to revalue the destinations, thanks to their emotional, identity-related, environmental, and recreational richness [28–30]. Additionally, the services associated with wine tourism should take into account the opinions of wine tourists. For this reason, their identification will be crucial for the success of the entire experience. In this way, they generate value at multiple points before, during, and after the winery visit [31].

The research is focused on the province of Málaga and, more specifically, on the region of La Axarquía (Figure 1). The potential of the wine routes is of great value, and their origins date back to Phoenician and Roman times. Other outstanding features are the region's culture, landscape, and history [11]. Its wines are protected with the designation of origin Málaga (MPDO), Sierras de Málaga, and Pasas de Málaga, integrating the three designations into a single Regulatory Council.



Figure 1. Map of the region of Axarquía (Málaga, Spain). ETRS89 UTM 30S. Source: Authors.

This region has its own identity within the framework of the Málaga Designation of Origin [32] and can benefit from a tourist projection, because of its proximity to the eastern Costa del Sol [33].

The creation of an enotourist route as a factor of revitalisation of the rural territories is an opportunity for sustainability and development. The aim of this article is to provide an approach to the elements that are basic in the development of the rural territory dedicated to viticulture. For this reason, this case study analysed the academic proposals and the responses to the interviews conducted with the different stakeholders. There are tourists who spontaneously visit certain spaces due to the attraction of their wineries, wines, and heritage. In this sense, it is necessary to propose a model that includes the most important elements for the creation of an enotourist route where the criteria of efficiency, profitability and sustainability prevail.

From there, it will be observed whether these elements exist in La Axarquía, and if they, in the opinion of the experts, constitute an opportunity to create an itinerary. First, to structure our proposal, a study of the elements present in the academic literature was carried out. Second, the interviews revealed the needs and opinions of a group of stakeholders made up of winery representatives and political and social leaders. Finally, the tourists visiting these cellars were interviewed with identical questions to test if this conjunction of interests could exist between the demand and the offer of the wine tourism product.

On the basis of the above, it was possible to specify key elements that bring together the contribution of the state of the art and the perspective of the interviewees. The elements that appear in

the proposal can be applied to other destinations that have wine as a tourist attraction, especially in territories that, like La Axarquía, enjoy a millenary tradition in wine culture. La Axarquía is a territory of reduced dimensions, which has always had an important resource in wine, and today it can be revalued with a certified wine route, with the elements recognised in the state of the art. It is true that this circumstance is a limitation of our study; however, the important thing is not the size of the territory. The important thing is that it has sufficient elements to favour the development of tourism based on the quality provided by the wine routes, taking into account the opinions of the respondents.

2. State of the Art

Wine tourism involves the possibility of an influx of travellers, where the trips and stays of the visitors are focused on getting to know the landscapes and spaces where wine is produced, as well as carrying out activities that increase the knowledge about this product and generate development in the wine-producing areas [34]. Enotourism has become one of the fields that has been able to adapt more quickly to the tourist panorama in the last decades. The development of new tourist modalities beyond the traditional vacation period has favoured the creation of new models that have as main elements the natural environments and the local traditions [35–37]. This tourism segment has developed worldwide, from Europe, in countries such as France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Germany, Serbia, Romania, or Georgia [17,36,38–44], to—and more intensely—the USA, Canada, South Africa, and New Zealand [45–47], or in emerging areas [48,49].

Wine routes are defined as those circuits that delimit the itineraries in a geographical area, with all the spaces that motivate tourists on their journey being duly signposted. The concept of wine tourism can be observed from three different approaches: as a consumer behaviour, as a regional development strategy, and as an opportunity for the wineries to market their products directly to the final consumer [46]. Taking the consumer's perspective, the wine routes are defined by the vineyards, wineries, festivals, and shows of a given producing region [47]. These routes highlight the wineries as the main element, to which is added, whenever possible, information on monuments and other cultural representations of interest to visitors [14]. Based on these elements, some authors have outlined wine tourism routes that start from an integrating and sustainable perspective with the rural environment [50–52].

Some concepts such as “terroir” or landscape were taken from geography [53]. This has contributed to making the definition of wine tourism more complete. In this way, the territory is the starting point for the development of the enotourist proposal. The terroir is conceived as that space that has a series of climatic and soil conditions where the vineyards are developed [54]. In this sense, the tourist attraction, the typology, and the quality of the wines will depend directly on the terroir. Linked to the terroir is the concept of the wine landscape. Geographers defined it as the set of characteristics of a wine-producing area, including the vineyards, the type of wine-producing activity related to the orography, the accidents of the terrain, and the presence of cellars where the wine is produced and stored. This definition was quickly incorporated into the literature and is widely used in wine tourism [55–58].

Wine tourism and gastronomy appear linked on most of the occasions [59–62], being a binomial that defines many of the routes set up in Europe. To these we must add the heritage attractions of the wine-producing areas [63,64]. These aspects are not alien to wine routes in other parts of the world, where even the attractions offered by the wine landscape, gastronomy, and terroir have been exploited more efficiently [65–67]. The increased interest in visits to production areas has created synergies between wineries, hotel businesses, and accommodation owners [68,69]. In many cases, the wineries offer a complementary range of services, from the gastronomic experience to accommodation [39,63,70]. In this way they end up becoming elements of the dynamisation of the territory.

The challenge of designing a sustainable enotourist route on the basis of an integrated management of all the interests that converge in this type of tourist offer has been approached from different points of view [52]. Sustainability is not only understood as an economic concept. In the last few years the

wine routes have begun to be understood as a model of sustainable development whereby it is possible to value and protect the heritage of the rural areas [71–73].

Elements Involved in the Design of Enotourist Itineraries

The existence of wineries is basic for the promotion of wine tourism [14,39,74–79]. Wine can enhance tourism, as it has the effect of creating a desire to travel to the origin where it is produced [80]. Researchers have found that the primary interest of wine tourists is to taste and buy wine [81–84]. They also pay particular attention to the activity that takes place within the cellar [14,74,76,77,85,86].

It is necessary to recognise and identify the gastronomic, social, ecological, historical, landscape, and technical values as elements to be taken into account in the rural economy [9,15,87]. The Baeza Charter provides a mechanism to plan and classify elements [88]. It is a tool that can be applied to any agricultural landscape and especially to wineries [14,35,89,90]. In this document, several levels of elements can be distinguished: tangible or material heritage, which includes movable goods, singular real estate and joint real estate; intangible or immaterial heritage, where traditional crafts and gastronomy are found; and, finally, natural and genetic heritage, where the characteristics of the physical environment and the types of grapes are included [9].

Elements such as architecture, historic buildings [91], and museums [35,92] should be taken into account. They represent what [15]. Tourist destinations and wine regions contain combinations of elements, highlighting the necessary facilities and services for the creation of attractive wine tourism routes for the visitors [84,93]. The services offered in addition to the wine cellars also seem to be an important incentive for the tourist visits, highlighting the accommodation, the catering services, and the wine cellars, as well as the existence of tourist service enterprises and information centers [9,92].

Accommodation possibilities, especially those related to agrotourism, are very attractive [9,55,77,92,94] because they favour the conversion of the economic activity into a sustainable one [95]. The accommodation offer is reinforced by the restaurants where the local foods can be tasted [1,9,15,75,78,92,96].

Wineries can serve as an incentive to the visitors [9,79], as well as the companies that offer tourist experiences related to the enotourist visit [9,35,92,97,98]. Moreover, the possibility of receiving information about the route is another aspect indicated as necessary [39,78,79,92].

Visiting a wine region implies the existence of motivation for wine consumption. Obviously, there are secondary motivations such as socialisation, learning about wine culture, or enjoying rural areas and nature [55,75,90,96,99]. In all of them, the wine landscape as well as the events and festivities play a special role [55,75,79,92,97,98].

The characteristics of the destination also cover activities not directly related to wine [100], especially gastronomy and celebrations [55,75,79,93,97,98].

Table 1 shows authors whose studies focused on the creation of enotourist routes. Special attention is paid to the elements that each author identifies as necessary for the creation or the existence of a route.

Table 1. Elements involved in the creation of an enotourist route, according to the state of the art (2006–2019).

Authors Elements	Tangible Heritage		Intangible Heritage			Natural Heritage		Services			Others							
	Historical/Traditional Architecture	Museums	Archaeological Heritage	Wineries Cellars	Gastronomy	Wine/Traditional Festivities	Crafts/Local Products	Environment	Landscape/Wine Landscape	Climate/Weather	Leisure	Wine Shops	Restaurants	Tourist Service Companies	Tourist Offices	Accommodation	Signage	Good Road Network
Alant and Bruwer (2009)	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x		
Alonso and Liu (2011)				x	x								x		x	x		x
Baraja, Herrero, Martínez Arnáiz, Plaza (2019)	x	x		x		x	x		x				x	x		x		
Baird, Hall and Castka (2019)				x	x	x	x			x	x		x					
Bruwer (2003)		x		x	x	x	x		x		x	x					x	x
Carlsen (2004)				x	x	x			x		x			x				
Charters and Menival (2011)		x		x					x				x			x		
Carmichael (2005)	x			x	x	x			x		x		x			x		
Cohen and Ben-Nun (2009)		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x						x
De Uña-Álvarez and Villarino-Pérez (2019)	x			x	x	x	x	x		x						x		
Faugère, et al. (2013)	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x		x		x
Ferrerira and Hunter (2017)	x	x		x	x	x			x	x	x		x	x		x		x
Festa, Riad Shams, Metallo and Cuomo (2020)				x			x		x	x						x		
Getz and Brown (2006)	x			x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x
Houghton (2008)				x		x					x	x						
Jeambey (2016)	x			x	x	x	x		x							x	x	x
Kirova and Vo Thanh (2018)	x	x		x		x	x		x		x	x					x	
Koch, Martin and Nash (2013)				x		x			x		x				x	x		
Marzo and Pedraja (2012)		x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Meraz and Ruiz Vega (2016)	x	x	x	x	x	x					x	x	x			x		
Mitchell and Hall (2006)				x		x			x		x							
Movelli and Fuste (2016)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x			
Plaza, Cañizares, Ruiz Pulpón (2017)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x			x		
Popp and McCole (2016)	x	x		x	x	x	x			x	x	x			x			
Privitera (2010)	x	x		x	x	x	x				x					x		
Scorrano, Fait, Iaia and Rosato (2018)	x	x		x	x	x			x	x								
Thomas, Quintal and Phau (2010)	x			x			x	x	x									
Ye, Hang and Yuan (2017)				x	x	x				x								
Wargenau and Che (2006)				x	x	x			x				x	x	x	x	x	

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

Q₁. What are the most important elements involved in the creation of a wine route, according to winemakers' perceptions?

Q₂. What are the most important elements involved in the creation of a wine route, according to social agents' perceptions?

Q₃. What are the most important elements involved in the creation of a wine route, according to tourists' perceptions?

Q₄. Are these elements present in the geographical area of La Axarquía?

3. Materials and Methods

This study was conducted in three steps using the technique of content analysis, according to Wimmer and Dominick [101]. This in-depth review of the literature was carried out in order to obtain the most important elements in the creation of an enotourist route. This exploration was carried out through the analysis of certain key words (e.g., Wine Route, Oenotourism, Wine Tourism, Material

Heritage, Traditional Architecture, Landscape, Museum, Wine, Gastronomy, Food, Wine festivals, festivities, Crafts, Cellar, Winery, Demand, Signage, Leisure, Climate, Weather, Services, local products), using the bibliographic reference manager Mendeley and performing a search of relevant articles present in the Web of Science and SCOPUS.

A second step was the completion of a structured questionnaire with open questions [102–105]. The questionnaire was designed by a team belonging to the SEJ 121 research group Mediterráneo Económico of the University of Málaga. It was structured in a single section of 10 questions (the questionnaire can be consulted in Appendix A), including relevant aspects, according to the elements considered in the existing literature, on studies that have analysed other wine tourism routes and itineraries in Spain. Dillon et al. [106] pointed out that the questions should be able to convey how they relate to issues raised in the research. Repeating the same questions to groups of interviewees allows them to be collected in data organised in such a way that they can be analysed collectively.

The questionnaires were completed by 100% of the winemakers on several visits to the wineries. These were concentrated in eight municipalities. Vélez Málaga and Competa hosted two wineries and the rest were distributed in the nearby towns of Árchez, Colmenar, Moclinejo, Sayalonga, Sedeya, and Torrox. Similarly, a representative group of agents involved in the development of tourism in La Axarquía was invited to complete the questionnaire. Ten responses were collected from institutional representatives, managers of public and private companies, and other entities, which represented 70% of the institutional sector present in the territory of La Axarquía.

The study was completed by a third set of questionnaires conducted with a group of 60 wine tourists who were visiting the wineries at the same time as the researchers were conducting the field study. Since the research sought to establish certain aspects of the enotourist offer, the vision of the enotourist was complementary and worked as a sample of convenience, which verified that the elements indicated by the winemakers and the stakeholders were of interest to them.

To avoid problems of understanding and interpreting the data, a pilot study was carried out on a sample of two members of each group. This study showed that no changes were needed to the questionnaire. All the respondents participating in this research gave their consent to being a part of this study.

The research was conducted between April and November 2019 (see Table 2). Subsequently, a qualitative analysis of the data obtained using the NVivo software was carried out. This software stands out for being a tool capable of automating non-numerical data such as interviews, surveys, and textual content, and thus helping researchers [107] in the treatment of qualitative data by allowing the elaboration of models through intersection matrices [108].

Table 2. Fact Sheet.

Data Collection Method	Open-Ended Structured Questionnaires
Sample:	Winemakers Institutions, Stakeholders linked to the Region of Axarquía Wine tourists 80
Sampling size	April–November 2019 Wineries (10): Bodegas Hermanos López Martín, Bodega José Molina, Bodegas Almirajara, Bodegas Luis Picante, Bodega A. Muñoz Cabrera, Bodegas Bentomiz, Sedella Vinos, Bodegas Medina y Toro, Bodegas Jorge Ordoñez & Co., Cooperativa Unión Pasera de La Axarquía (Ucopaxa)
Field Work Date	Stakeholders (10) (Member or representatives of these institutions): Association of Municipalities of the Axarquía, Center for Rural Development of the Axarquía (CEDER-Axarquía), Andalusian Regional Government Agriculture Delegation, Association for the Tourist Promotion of La Axarquía (APTA), Andalusian Tourism, Vélez Málaga Business Association, Nerja Business Association, Association of Young Farmers (ASAJA-Axaquia), Small Farmers Union (UPA-Axarquía) and Nerja Cave Foundation 60 wine tourists

Territory under Study

The research focused on the province of Málaga and, more specifically, on the region of La Axarquía. The potential of the wine routes is of great value and their origins date back to Phoenician and Roman times. Other outstanding features are its culture, landscape, and history [11]. Its wines are protected with the designation of origin Málaga (MPDO), Sierras de Málaga, and Pasas de Málaga, integrating the three designations into a single Regulatory Council. The Málaga wine route was recently certified [11].

The territory of La Axarquía is located in the eastern part of the province of Málaga. It has a total surface of 1026.7 km². The Mediterranean Sea borders it on the coast in the south, while in the north and east we can find the province of Granada; in the west, it borders the capital of Málaga and the regions of Antequera and Noroma [109]. It has a peculiar physiognomy, orography, farming systems, and diversity of landscapes and resources. The average altitude of the region is 391 m. This territory is characterised by steep slopes that alternate with open areas. It is currently made up of 31 municipalities and up to 67 districts. The total population in the last municipal census amounted to 214,188 inhabitants, with Vélez-Málaga being the most populated town with 81,643 inhabitants [110].

This is a territory that, in spite of being historically recognised by its wine tradition [111], needs a change of growth model. This region has its own identity within the framework of the Málaga Designation of Origin [32] and can benefit from a tourist proposal, due to its proximity to the eastern Costa del Sol [33]. The Málaga wine route was recently certified [11]. The certification of the route is a requirement in the case of wine routes in Spain [11]. They are periodically accredited by complying with the rules of the manual of the Wine Routes of Spain tourism product, obtaining the right to use the Spanish Wine Routes brand [112]. In other countries, it is not necessary to guarantee the quality of a route since its existence depends on public–private initiatives.

4. Results

Viticulture in La Axarquía enjoys a special qualification as it can be defined as heroic, a term referring to the difficulty imposed by the physical environment on the tasks of maintaining the vineyard and harvesting that must be done completely by hand [113]. This represents a way of life that is integrated into the landscape and cultural heritage, forming a unique territory of great cultural and tourist value. This fact is reflected in the opinions gathered in the winemakers' interviews.

4.1. Elements According to the State of the Art

The literature review resulted in the identification of 19 elements (Figure 2) that are involved in the conformation of an enotourist route/itinerary.

There are nine elements that are most frequently mentioned by the state of the art (Figure 3). The winery is the essential element for the design of a wine route or itinerary. After that, experts mentioned festivities, gastronomy, and food. These are followed by the landscape and, especially, the wine landscape, which together are a unique motivation to travel to destinations that have this resource. Restaurants also mark a point of reference in the enotourist visits, together with leisure activities and the purchase of local products. Services related to accommodation are considered as another significant element of wine tourism, which is completed by elements of traditional architecture.

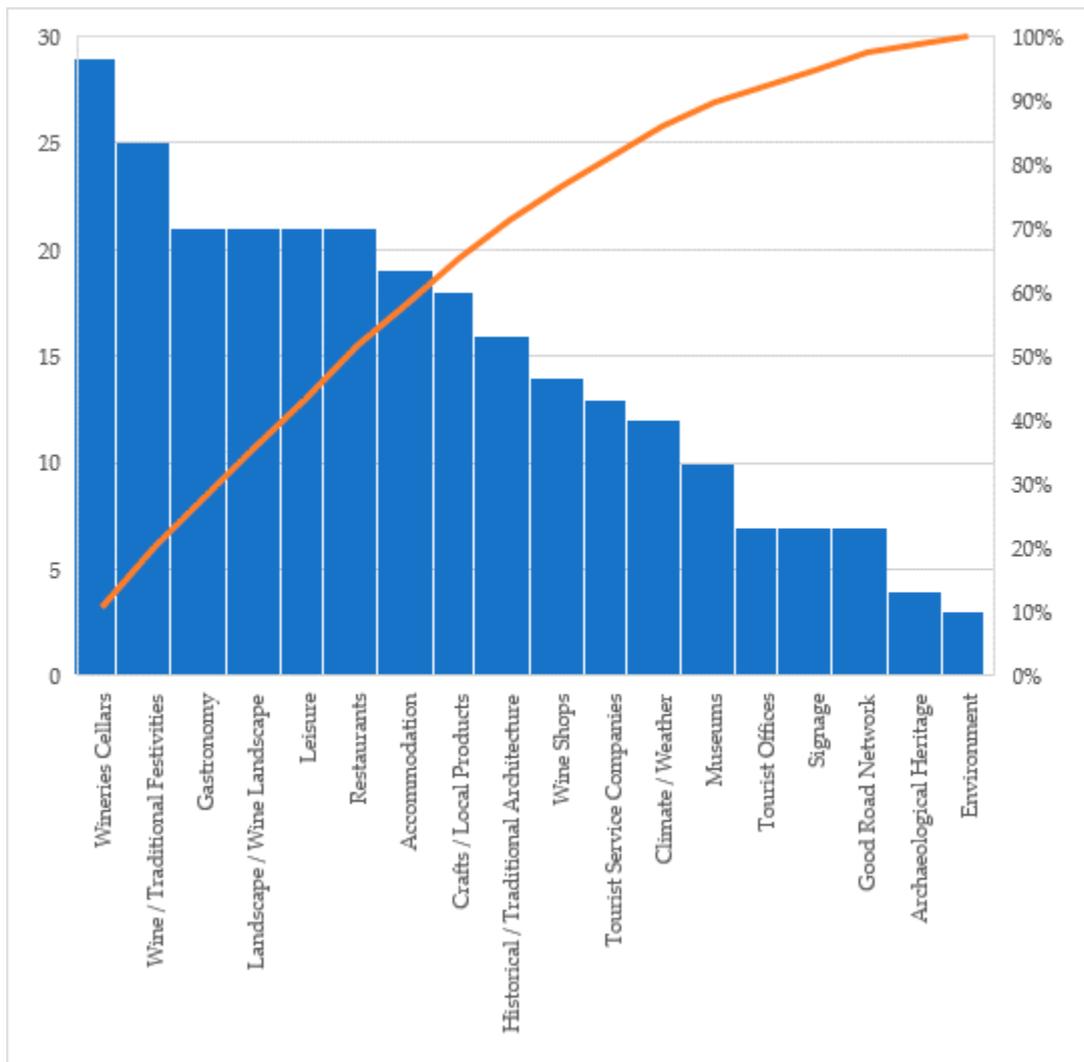


Figure 2. Elements mentioned in the literature review ordered in a Pareto chart. Authors.

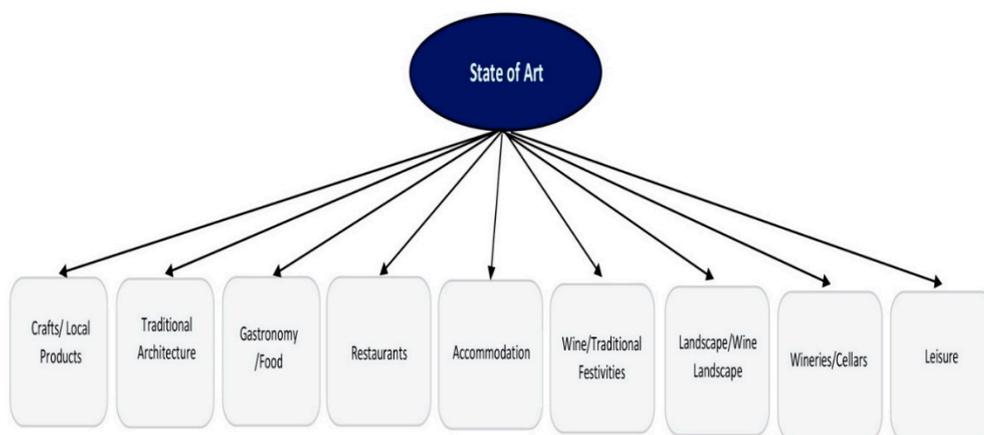


Figure 3. Elements involved in the creation of a wine route, according to the state of the art. Source: Authors using NVivo software.

4.2. Elements Selected by Winemakers

Figure 4 shows in order of importance the elements highlighted by the winemakers.

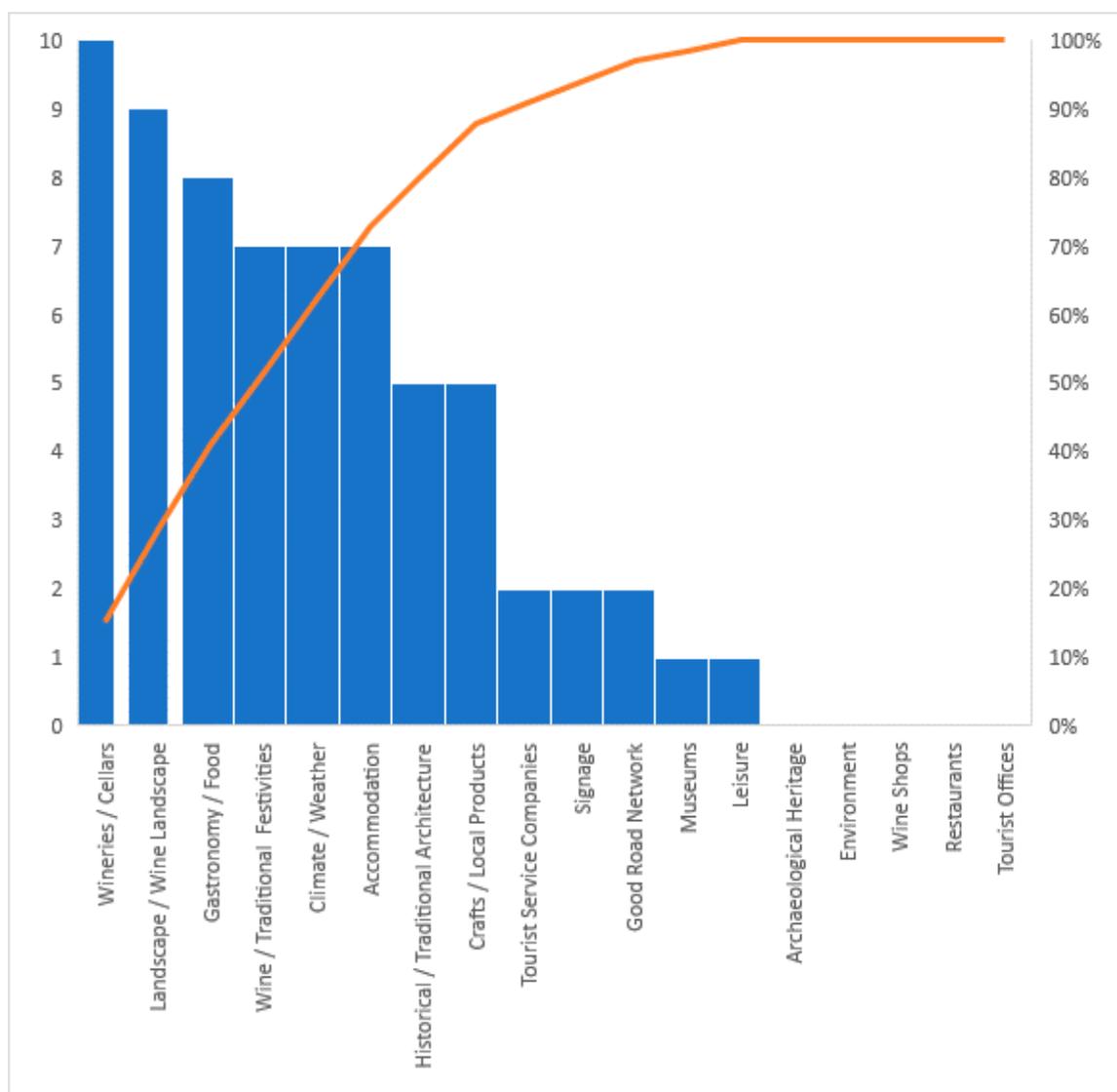


Figure 4. Elements mentioned by winemakers ordered in a Pareto chart. Authors.

The analysis revealed the existence of several common points and interests among winemakers (Figure 5). The wineries they manage were the central axis of the enotourist offer, to which two elements were added, the natural and wine landscapes. Gastronomy was another element to be taken into account, followed by a second group made up of the climatic conditions that allow the development of the activity almost all year round, the offer of accommodation in the visited area, the popular festivals, especially those in which wine is the protagonist, and the traditional architecture.

4.3. Elements Selected by Stakeholders

Agents provided answers very similar to winemakers (Figure 5).

Wineries took the lead, followed by heritage elements such as traditional architecture, the natural and wine landscapes, and gastronomy (Figure 6). For this group of prescribers (Figure 7), the products and the local craftsmanship should be part of the offer available for wine tourists. The weather conditions were again highlighted as one of the most important factors, as well as the varied offers of accommodation available in the region.

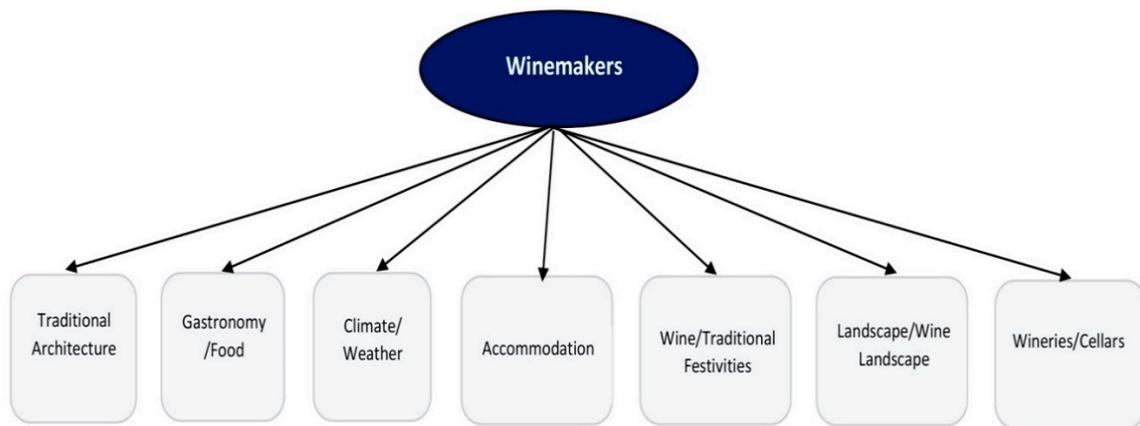


Figure 5. Elements selected by winemakers. Source: Authors using NVivo software.

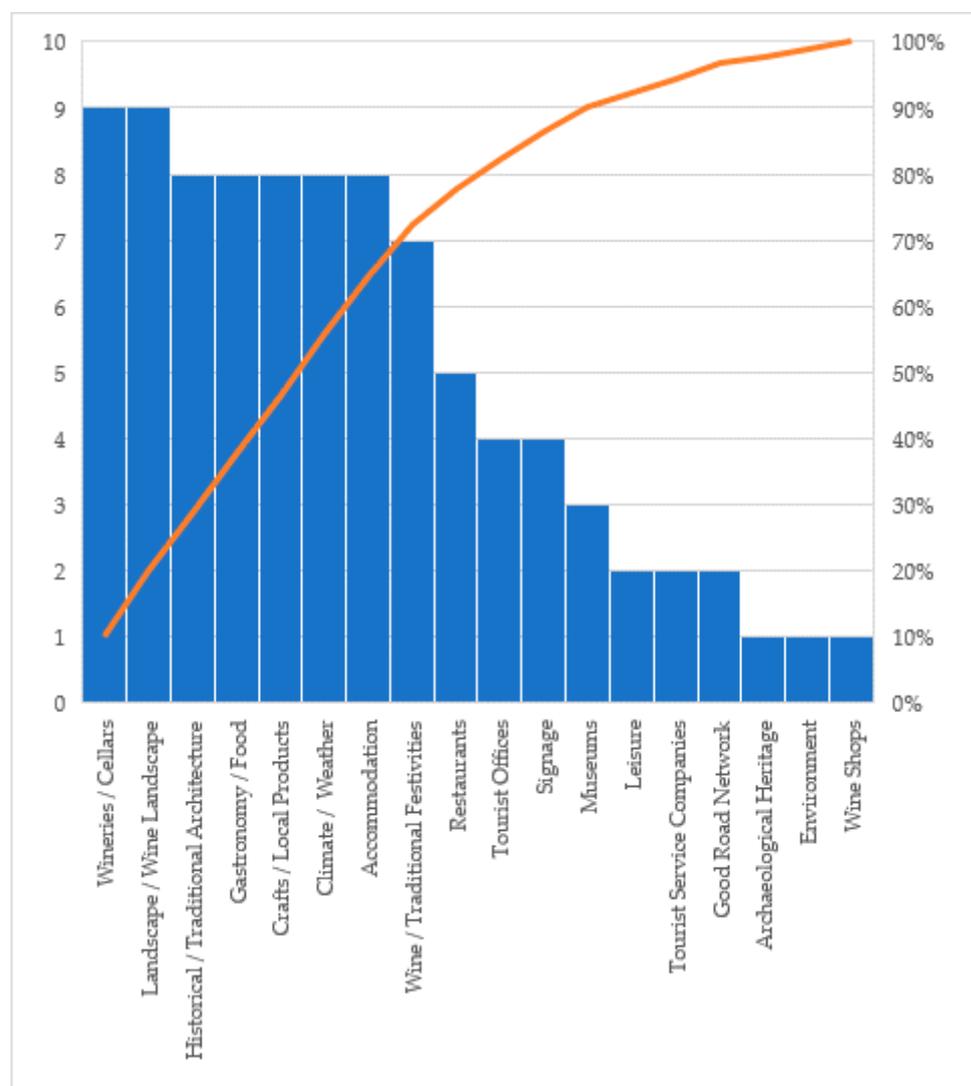


Figure 6. Classification of elements mentioned by the ordered stakeholders in a Pareto chart. Authors.

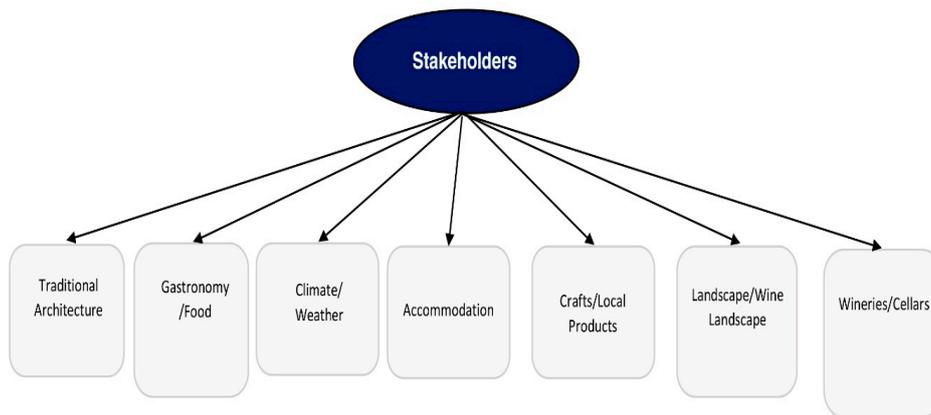


Figure 7. Elements selected by stakeholders. Source: Authors using NVivo software.

4.4. Elements Selected by Wine Tourists

As can be observe in Figure 8, tourists also agreed that the winery was the most important element in the creation of an enotourist route.

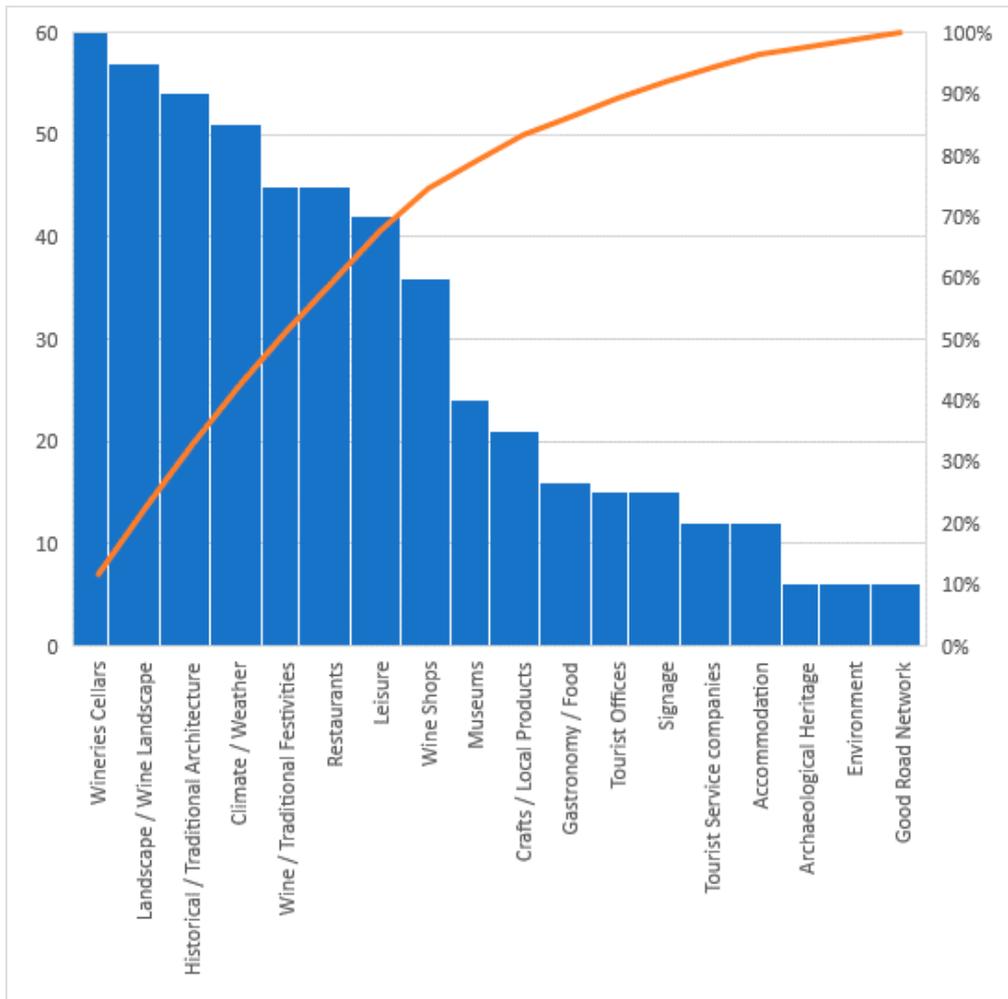


Figure 8. Classification of elements mentioned by the ordered enotourists in a Pareto chart. Authors.

This group highlighted eight elements (Figure 9). Almost all of them included the natural and wine landscapes and traditional architecture. In the second group of elements, as far as the level of

mentions was concerned, we found the traditional festivities and the restaurants. Leisure and the weather conditions were also at this level.

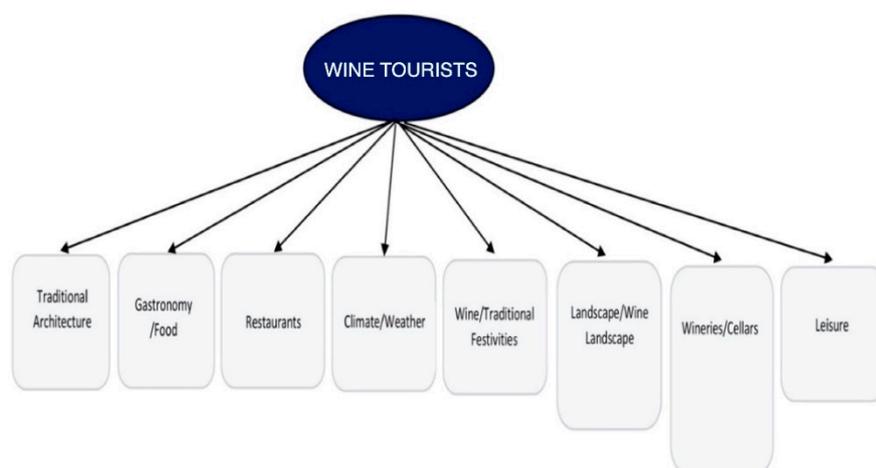


Figure 9. Elements selected by wine tourists. Source: Authors using NVivo software.

4.5. Key Elements Involved in the Wine Routes. Study Case

The results of the research allowed the design of a model, as seen in Figure 10, which synthesises the elements taken into account in the creation of an enotourist route in La Axarquía. This proposal is based on a combination of the elements found in the academic literature (Model A) and in those mentioned by winemakers (Model B), stakeholders (Model C), and tourists (Model D).

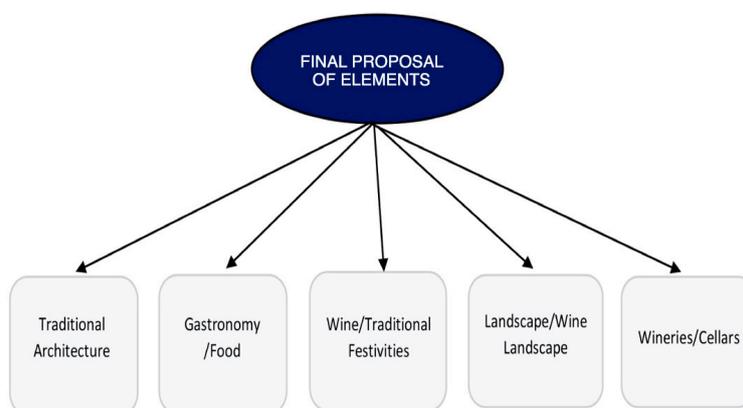


Figure 10. Final proposal of elements for the creation of a wine route. Source: Authors using NVivo software.

The proposal is a synthesis that meets the expectations of the different target groups. The wineries are the central axis on which elements such as traditional and wine festivals, natural and wine landscapes, local gastronomy, and traditional architecture pivot.

5. Discussion

Wine tourism is a complex activity that goes beyond the traditional tourist approach. However, the development of an enotourist proposal that includes a wine route or itinerary requires a transversal work that involves various public and private agents, and that has as its axis the territory itself, its heritage elements, and the local population [68]. Wine tourism can contribute to tourism development by improving the sustainability of the territory, promoting the preservation of cultural traditions and agricultural heritage, especially those related to wine.

The tension generated by the attempt to attract tourists, the evident economic benefit, and the real possibilities that the territory has to offer are important factors to take into account in the creation of an itinerary or route. There is no wine route without wineries, but neither can it exist without the attractions offered by the different heritage elements and the specific services offered to visitors.

By observing the background mentioned in the literature on enotourism, the question of sustainable development was perceived from the initial stages of the design as a paradigm for the development of the enotourist offer [52]. Any sustainable economic activity that aims to endure and have a positive influence must generate a different value chain. A wine route allows us to bet on the development of local and quality products and, as far as possible, organic ones. A perfect complement to generate an adequate and sustainable enotourist offer, based on wines of high quality and differentiated character.

Taking into account the small size of the territory of La Axarquía, the opinions of 100% of the existing wineries and of a very high number of stakeholders in this study were available. Only in the case of tourists was the number used to corroborate the opinions of the other interviewees, which constitutes a limitation. Even so, we preferred to consider them since they provided a complementary but reduced vision to this study from the point of view of supply.

6. Conclusions

The review of the literature shows that scholars' attention to the key elements of the wine routes is crucial to study their development and success. Thus, it has been possible to observe the elements that the academics consider relevant in the wine routes, allowing us to trace a wide group of elements that should be present in an enotourist route. The field research made it possible to delimit these elements in the case study. This has a series of direct consequences for the planning of the routes. This research can help to define an enotourist proposal that will satisfy the visitors to these routes.

The design of the wine routes should at least include the elements resulting from the investigation. In the case of Spanish routes, ACEVIN, the entity in charge of certifying Spanish routes following the criteria established by its European counterpart, established a series of requirements that do not specifically refer to the territory and its resources. The research established that traditional architecture, gastronomy, traditional and wine festivals, as well as the wine and natural landscapes are indispensable elements for success. In the case of routes that do not follow this certification model, the common elements obtained in this research should be incorporated as parameters of obligatory analysis for the success of their offers. In particular, although the private and public operators are the ones who promote the creation of the enotourist route, the interests of the enotourists and their desire to have a hedonic experience around the wine, the territory, and the cellars should not be left aside.

La Axarquía is an area where the culture of wine is both a factor of economic development and a formula for preserving traditions in a unique landscape. It is a territory that has a special tourist attraction, thanks to the traditional ways of harvesting. In addition, the field study revealed an interest in tangible and intangible heritage resources. The limited network of small wineries is a fragile reminder of the need to implement actions that guarantee their survival and the expansion of the activity.

Enotourists know what they are looking for and are aware of the heritage values and the need for resources to be sustainable. Quality and differentiation, without forgetting the authenticity provided by the territory and the people who live in it, are the keys to the success of wine tourism. This is a challenge that winemakers must face with the institutional support, ensuring the survival of a thousand-year-old tradition. There are still unresolved questions: What is the role of the local population in the success of the wine tourism routes? How should wineries and service companies adapt to the growing pressure to become sustainable businesses? In addition to this, there is a change in the paradigm that is leading to a new model of enotourist experience based on the expansion of digital resources, at the levels of both communication and marketing.

The results obtained in the research demonstrate the interest of researchers in all aspects related to wine routes, opening an interesting field of study on the impact that heritage elements have on the success of the routes in conjunction with the interests of all parties involved in its design and subsequent enjoyment.

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Appendix A

Open Questionnaire Model. Axarquía Wine Route

Winemakers and Stakeholders

Name:

Position:

Institution/Company:

Date:

Ref#:

1. Do you consider it interesting that La Axarquía has its own itinerary on the Málaga Wine Route?
 2. Are the resources and services of La Axarquía enough to attract wine tourists?
 3. What needs do you detect in La Axarquía to attract the wine tourist?
 4. Do you think that the current offer of La Axarquía is interesting to the tourists?
 5. What problems would you identify in La Axarquía regarding wine tourism activity?
 6. How would you rate the tourist accommodation offer in La Axarquía?
 7. How would you rate the accommodation offer in La Axarquía?
 8. What should be the involvement of private agents and institutions of La Axarquía in the creation of a wine route?
 9. What should be the implication of wineries in the wine route?
 10. Do you think you can design a sustainable wine tourism offer in La Axarquía?
-

Tourists

Sex:

Age:

Country of origin:

City (Village) where you stay:

Length of stay (in days):

Type of accommodation:

Ref#:

1. Do you consider it interesting that La Axarquía has its own itinerary on the Málaga Wine Route?
2. What tourist resources do you consider to be the most important for creating a wine tourism route in La Axarquía?
3. Do you think that the supply of wineries is sufficient in La Axarquía?
4. What kinds of tourist services should be present in a wine route in La Axarquía?
5. Is the accommodation offer in La Axarquía sufficient?
6. What kinds of accommodation should be present on La Axarquía wine route?
7. What kinds of services should be included in La Axarquía wine route?
8. What distinctive values/elements does La Axarquía wine route have?
9. What aspects of your visit produced the most satisfaction?
10. Do you think that a sustainable wine tourism route can be built in La Axarquía?

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