

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

A DECADE OF TOURISM WITHOUT BORDERS. THE CASE OF THE DUERO / DOURO REGION, RIVER TOURISM AND TOURIST DIVERSITY

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1. INTRODUCTION

Works on fluvial tourism and water activities in Spain are rare, maybe because they conform a recent touristic segment and, in our case (the Douro region), because they have been developed in the Luso territory, where they have had a significant impact (Ferreira, 2009, Nunes *et al.*, 2016, Campesino Fernández, 2016, Carvalho Teles, 2012, Nuno Torres Senra, 2014, Amorín *et al.*, 2012, Cruz Ruiz *et al.*, 2018).

Our analysis will focus on the attention that fluvial tourism gets in the Iberian Peninsula and in the Douro Region, at both sides of the Luso-Spanish border. At an international level, this kind of tourism is an example of the power that rivers have as a touristic attraction and as revitalizing agents of shared territory (Buckley *et al.*, 2018, Mohd Nasir and Hanafiah, 2017, Kovacic *et al.*, 2017).

This study will try to give an answer to questions like: Which are the resources that the Douro river has at a touristic level in both sides of the Luso-Spanish border? Which activities are generated by fluvial tourism in the region? Which are the products that favour development through fluvial tourism?

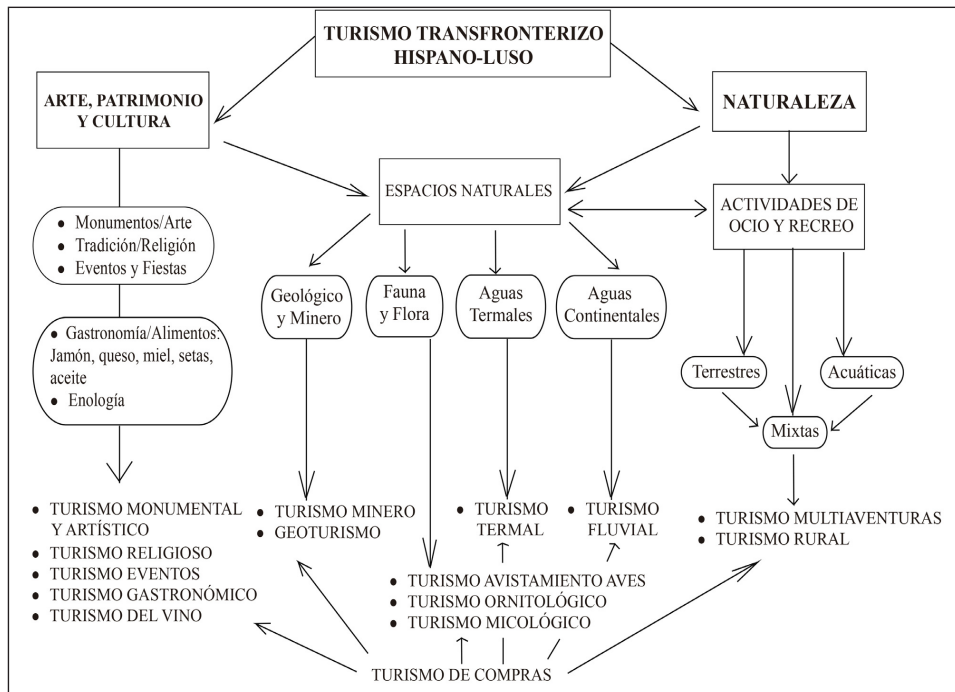
2. CROSS-BORDER TOURISTIC RESOURCES IN THE DOURO REGION

The Douro river is associated to the touristic progress in the areas where it flows, invigorating the resources which, both at the Luso and the Spanish sides, give an identity

to the peoples that have lived through history, sharing poverty sometimes and, in other times, progress.

In Figure 1 it can be seen the existing touristic diversity, based, on the one side, on *Culture, Art and and Heritage* and, on the other side, on *Nature*, specially in protected areas, which allow and encourage the so-called active tourism, which generates special conditions for sport and tourism to grow (Hortelano Mínguez, 2014b: 78, 2015: 259).

Figure 1
TOURISTIC RESOURCES AND DIVERSITY IN THE DOURO RIVER AND THE DOURO



Source: The authors.

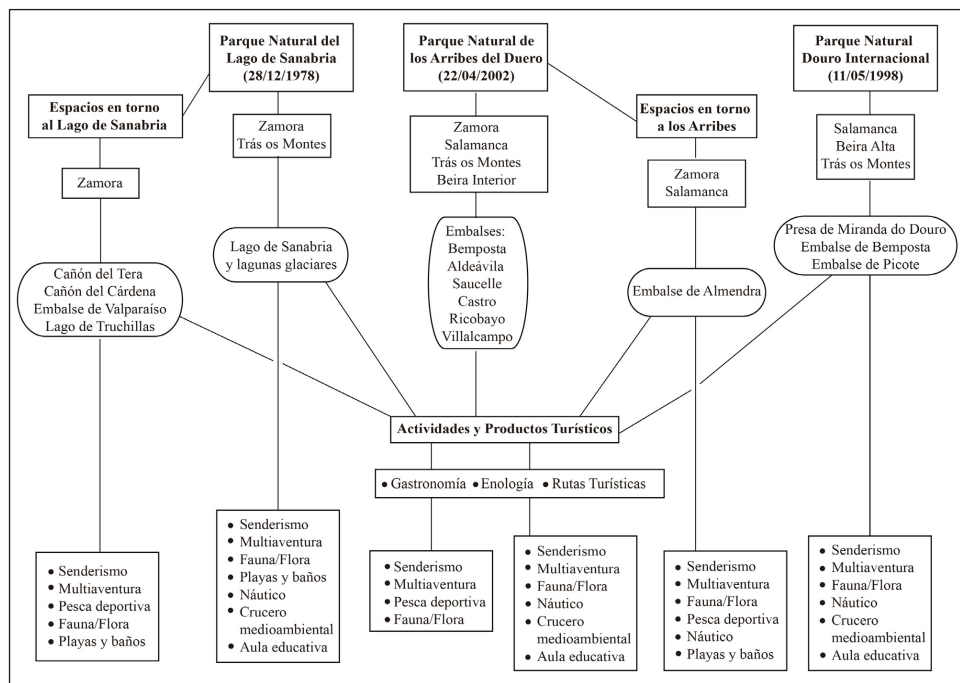
2. RIVER, BORDER, WINE AND NATURE. THE CASE OF THE DOURO

The exploitation of resources at both sides of the Luso-Hispanic border has made possible a touristic development, based on the Network of Natural Spaces, where the Natural Parks “Lago de Sanabria y alrededores”, “Arribes del Duero”, “Parque do Douro Internacional” and other natural spaces are found.

Figure 2 shows a classification of the activities that take place in these protected natural spaces. It has been elaborated by taking into account those works specialized in cross-border tourism between Spain and Portugal, (Campesino Fernández, 2016; Hortelano

Mínguez, 2014, 2015; López Trigal, 2016), as well as those web sites which promote the landscape wealth of the area.

Figure 2
FLUVIAL TOURISM IN NATURAL PARKS:
SPACES OF THE DOURO RIVER AND THE DOURO

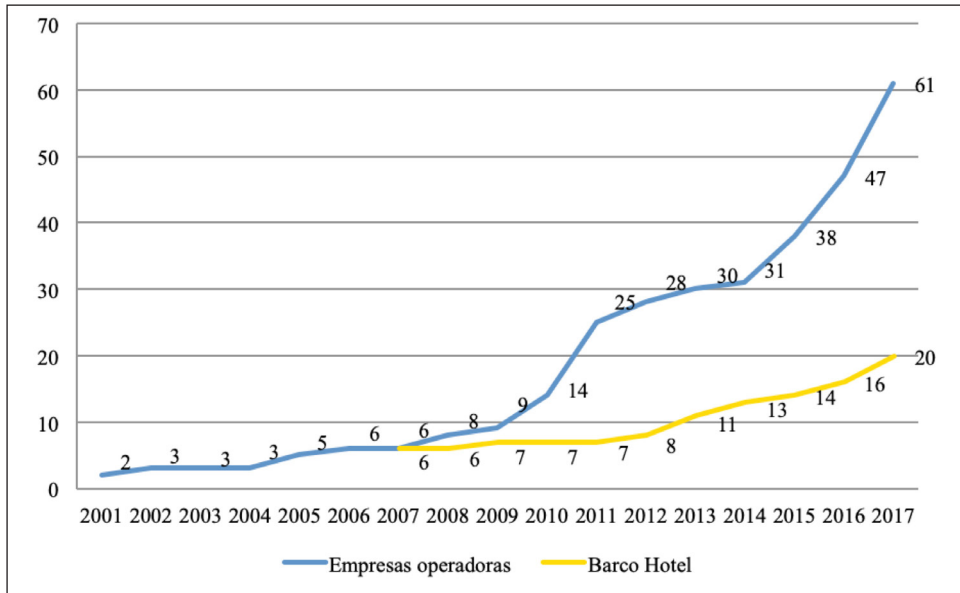


Source: The authors.

3. FLUVIAL TOURISM IN DOURO. TOURISTIC PRODUCTS AND DATA

The evolution of cruise tourism in the river Douro proves that it conforms an activity that has grown consistently, thanks to new infrastructures which have favoured the economic development of the locations placed in these touristic courses.

Figure 3
EVOLUTION OF CRUISE OPERATORS (2001-2017)
AND SHIP-HOTEL (2007-2017)



Source: The authors.

CONCLUSIONS

Fluvial tourism in the Douro Region allows to share the history between Spain and Portugal, through the artistic and cultural wealth of the different stops made in villages and cities, being Porto and Salamanca compulsory stops.

The presence of fluvial tourists answers to different motivations. On the one side, we have the institutional investment of giving the river those necessary infrastructures to improve its navegability. On the other side, we find cruise-operators interested in enlarging the number of their cruisers, favouring that way the progress of this segment (specially in those cruisers in the Albufeira). However, a positive evolution can be observed in hotel-cruiser passengers and one-day passengers.

The tourist projection can be reinforced through fluvial activities and cruisers, becoming these a key piece in the re-valorization of these territories and also becoming a fundamental sector in the future of the Iberian border and beyond, alongside the Douro River and the Douro.

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