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A cross-country comparison of wine in cultural foreign policy in Portugal and Hungary

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper assesses the differences in the use of wine, as a consumed food substance, in the formulation of Portugal and Hungary's cultural foreign policies between 2010 and 2022. By comparing the degrees of effectiveness of these two traditional wine-making countries' approaches in shaping their national image, we contribute to the limited literature on wine diplomacy and cultural foreign policy. We highlight the disparities in policies and state organizations responsible for formulating the respective policies. Wine diplomacy enhances international affairs and strengthens political and economic ties, hence its importance in cultural foreign policy.

Design/methodology/approach – The authors apply the concept of soft power and draw on neo-liberal foreign policy theory to conduct research. The paper is a descriptive-analytical study, comprising a theory testing approach through the application of the concept of soft power. It employs content analysis of wine diplomacy literature, as well as process tracing between the statistical results and the structure of the domestic organizations and their policies.

Findings – Our findings show that an international wine strategy can be utilized as a form of soft power. Furthermore, Portugal produces nearly three times as much wine as Hungary and exports more than twice as much. However, Portugal's international wine strategy is less developed than the Hungarian one. This fact creates a puzzle that requires further investigation.

Research limitations/implications – Wine is seen as a form of soft power that may enhance a country's international relations, project a favorable country image, foster cooperation and cultural exchange through events and institutions. In this way, when appropriately utilized, wine can also strengthen political and economic relations.

Originality/value – The paper addresses a gap in the existing literature by applying a mixed-methods approach to the comparison of Portugal and Hungary's wine foreign policies at the formulation level and presents a novel means for examining wine as a soft power element in international relations.

Keywords Cultural foreign policy, Hungary, Portugal, Soft power, Wine diplomacy

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Wine is a food substance of such importance in global trade and foreign policy that the existing literature refers to the term *wine diplomacy*. Wine diplomacy enhances international affairs and

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Data availability: The datasets were derived from sources in the public domain: International Organization of Vine and Wine (OIV), Country Report, for Hungary and Portugal at <https://www.oiv.int/what-we-do/country-report?oiv>; EUROSTAT International trade – International trade in goods – detailed data, EU trade since 1988 by HS2-4-6 and CN8 accessed at https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ds-045409/legacyMultiFreq/table?lang=en&category=ext_go.ext_go_detail; Hegyközségek Nemzeti Tanácsa, HNT (National Council of the Wine Communities) at <https://www.hnt.hu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/egy-fore-juto-fogyasztas.pdf>.



strengthens political and economic ties (Luša and Jakešević, 2017; Akhtadze, 2018; Sánchez *et al.*, 2023). In this way, traditional winemaking-countries have a comparative advantage concerning the cultural foreign policy goal and the construction of the state's image as part of it.

This paper addresses the following question: *How is wine used as an element of attraction in the present-day cultural foreign policy of Portugal and Hungary at the formulation level?* By narrowing the study to fortified and dessert wines between 2010 and 2022, the article not only describes the state-of-the-art literature on the topic and contributes to the literature on cultural foreign policy and wine diplomacy but is also an original research piece. It compares two traditional winemaking countries to investigate whether, and if so, how effectively they employ their celebrated wines in foreign policy formulation for building their national image. The study further narrows the topic to foreign policy formulation only, leaving aside other empirical consequences connected to foreign policy implementation. The latter are, nevertheless, addressed in the discussion.

A gap in the literature justifies the selection of the cases. There have been no comparative studies of Portuguese and Hungarian wine production and its role in cultural foreign policy; additionally, both countries have had Protected Denomination of Origin (PDO) wines – *Porto* and *Tokaj* wines – for roughly the same amount of time (since the eighteenth century), which are similar in that they can be consumed as digestive or dessert wines. The article builds on Sánchez *et al.*'s (2023) concept of “enodiplomacy” to bridge the above-mentioned gap.

We also apply Nye (2004)'s concept of soft power in our study by observing whether the current promotion of wine is connected to the history and culture of the selected countries and if, consequently, the latter make use of those historical and cultural backgrounds in the international arena. At the same time, we further extensively apply the concept of soft power by testing the theoretical conception of “potential attraction” in the research problem by comparing the wine trade statistics of Portugal and Hungary, simultaneously looking for elements to connect historical aspects with wine trade and cultural foreign policymaking.

The paper is a descriptive-analytical study, comprising a theory testing approach through the application of the concept of wine diplomacy and soft power. It begins by presenting the general theoretical and conceptual framework within a literature review (Section 2), followed by a section on research methods (Section 3). The (historical and social) contexts of the wine images of Portugal and Hungary, as well as the wine trade statistics, the state's organizations and the wine policies in both countries comprise Section 4 entitled results. The discussion contrasts our approach and results with previous studies, suggests paths for future research and highlights implications for both theory and policy.

We identified that whereas Portugal produces almost three times more wine than Hungary and exports more than double, Portugal's international wine strategy is less developed as compared to that of Hungary. This puzzle opens a new research path.

2. Literature review

2.1 Cultural foreign policy and wine

Wine culture has been a part of humanity for millennia; today, it is thriving more than ever. It is still present as a religious symbol, a symbol of celebration and a unifying element of traditions and customs, without forgetting its importance as an economic driving force in many regions of the world (Vinissimuss, 2023). Sánchez *et al.* (2023) present the concept of “enodiplomacy” (wine diplomacy) – using wine to promote and develop an image associated with cultural and human relations. Regarding other aspects of the drink, wine is a language of diplomacy and a vehicle for communication (Anson, 2022), facilitating informal discussions and relationship-building between diplomats. It can create a convivial ambiance that facilitates dialogue and brings out a shared humanity. Wine also plays a role in highlighting cultural identity and societal issues, such as gender discrimination in the wine industry. Furthermore, wine events and tastings can be used to showcase a country's wines and promote international commerce. However, wine can also cause diplomatic incidents and scandals (Anson, 2022). Finally,

consumers in China, Russia, the United States and elsewhere appreciate fine wine as one of European culture's great gifts to the world (Castriota, 2020).

Agnoli and Outreville (2021) suggest that wine consumption and production are influenced by factors such as culture, economic development, digitalization, population's preferences and attitudes toward wine. They found that a country's culture significantly affects wine consumption and production. Moreover, the latter highlights that culture is an integral component of wine consumption, and it is essential that the industry understands this to promote and market wines successfully.

According to Akhtadze (2018), wine has always been one of the strategic products of Georgia and has played a mediating role in strengthening political and economic relations with the outside world. Opening US and EU markets to Georgian wines was a significant part of the country's foreign policy, which aimed to achieve integration into the Western political system and strengthen relationships between the countries, supporting the further development of the wine industry in Georgia. The role of wine in foreign policy is to strengthen political and economic relationships with other countries. Wine facilitates the establishment of connections and promotes cultural exchange between nations. It helps to enhance a country's image and export capacity, contributing to its integration into the global market. Maguire and Lim (2014) argue that representations of Chinese fine wine consumption in the media often reinforce European/Western cultural dominance while conferring economic dominance on China. The study highlights the importance of understanding the cultural globalization of taste in the Chinese luxury goods and services market. The role of wine in foreign policy is highlighted, with the claim that the Chinese government has used wine as a diplomatic weapon in a trade war with the EU (Robinson, 2013). This incident demonstrates how wine can be used to exert influence and gain leverage in international relations. In addition, Barr (2015, p. 2) concludes that wine can be a product of cultural identity and national prestige. Riviezzo et al. (2016) examined wine producers' perceptions of terroir and its use in marketing strategies to promote local identity and cultural heritage. From an analysis of wineries in the Pic Saint-Loup area in France and the Sannio Valley in Italy, the research identified three dimensions of terroir: product authenticity, institutional authenticity and internalized authenticity. The research uncovered the definition and potentialities of terroir according to wine producers. Mariani et al. (2012) examine the international wine trade, world wine imports, importer geography, new markets and supplier performance. The paper highlights that China is expected to become the world's largest wine consumer, but stable consumption requires quality assurance, fraud prevention and adequate retailing systems for further international wine trade development.

Marini (2015) discovered a connection between Italian wine and health, nature, luxury and the Western lifestyle in Chinese wine advertisements, including an economic analysis of the Chinese red wine market and the importance of online promotion and sales. According to Sontikul (2017), food, including wine, is an important factor in destination image marketing and tourism. This is called gastrodiploacy which is the interplay of diplomacy, food, and tourism, encourages positive associations, motivates travel to the country, repeated visits to the nation (Sontikul, 2017). This approach can contribute to strengthening long-term diplomacy.

2.2 Wine as a soft power

Wine can play a role as a soft power element and contribute to a country's diplomatic efforts by showcasing the latter's history, culture and human relations. Wine is often present at official international events. Sánchez et al. (2023) present the concept of "enodiplomacy," which refers to the cultural foreign policy of wine. This involves using wine to promote and develop an external image associated with cultural and human relations. Wine may be seen as a form of soft power that can enhance a country's international relations and project a favorable image. This can be achieved, for example, through events, such as receptions, banquets and official international gatherings, where wine is used to foster friendship, cooperation and cultural exchange. Wine can also be used as an institutional gift to represent national values and

traditions. Overall, wine diplomacy recognizes the potential of wine in forging international connections and promoting cultural understanding. In general, there is cross-cultural variation in drinking behavior, but drinking culture is changing due to the globalization of the world economy (Agnoli and Outreville, 2021). Having studied the role of wine in Portuguese foreign policy from the eighteenth to the twentieth century using the concept of enodiplomacy, Sequeira (2023) concluded that the Portuguese state maintains a strong tradition of both the economic and diplomatic promotion of Portuguese wines using the diplomatic network for that purpose. Luša and Jakešević (2017) concluded that food is recognized as a soft power tool in diplomatic practice of Croatia. Vesela *et al.* (2023) analyzed the Czech wine market, foreign wine trade and domestic demand. Their results show stable growth in wine consumption over the last 20 years, with a faster growth rate than domestic production. Factors influencing domestic demand include age, education, income and consumer income. Table 1 presents a short overview of the reviewed literature on the cultural foreign policy associated with wine.

Table 1. Review of relevant literature

Authors	Country	Period, sample	Findings	Role of wine in foreign policy
Agnoli and Outreville (2021)	Various countries	2003–2017 79–185 countries	Culture is an integral component of wine consumption	To promote and market wines successfully
Barr (2015)	China	NA	Chinese traditional culture offers a cure for modernity	Wine can be a product of cultural identity and national prestige
Maguire and Lim (2014)	China	1980, 1990, 2000, 2010	The East/West difference in fine wine consumption	The Chinese government used wine as a diplomatic weapon in a trade war with the EU
Akhtadze (2018)	Georgia	NA	Georgian wines were a significant part of the country's foreign policy	Wine played a mediator role in strengthening political and economic relations with the outer world
Sánchez <i>et al.</i> (2023)	Spain, Spanish wine	NA	Wine's historical connections to civilization, culture, and art are explored, highlighting its role in diplomatic activity, international relations and cultural ambassadorship	- Enodiplomacy/wine diplomacy refers to cultural foreign policy involving wine - Wine used as a tool to promote and develop an external image associated with cultural and human relations
Riviezso <i>et al.</i> (2016)	France and Italy 11 wineries	NA	Wine producers' perceptions of terroir and its use in marketing strategies to promote local identity and cultural heritage	Terroir can promote local identity and cultural heritage
Luša and Jakešević (2017)	Croatia	2014/2015, 2015/2016 2016/2017 308 students	Food is recognized as a soft power tool in diplomatic practice; further development in gastrodiploamcy is expected	Food is recognized as a soft power tool in diplomatic practice
Vesela <i>et al.</i> (2023)	Czech Republic	1995–2016 946 respondents	Wine market, foreign wine trade and domestic demand	Factors influencing domestic demand include age, education, income and residence size

Source(s): Authors' own work

2.3 Placing wine amid foreign policy and its goals

According to Bessa (2012), “foreign policy is an inevitability. Either a foreign policy is conducted based on the real potential that a state enjoys at a certain time or, alternatively, that foreign policy may become an object of another state” (Bessa, 2012, p. 66). Bessa (2012) added that isolation is, *per se*, a form of foreign policy.

Foreign policy is, to a large extent, the response of states to the unstoppable changes and pressures of the international system. However, our theoretical framework leaves much space for the creativity of leaders, which is influenced by powerful private interests, perceptions and capacities, among other aspects.

Coming back to Bessa (2012) – with the sole purpose of contextualizing our topic but not yet defining a methodological roadmap – we ask the following question: what may be the goals of a state’s foreign policy? We synthesize the answer in a particular way: The primary purpose of foreign policy is to guarantee the survival and territorial integrity of the state. The instrumental purpose is to extend the state power’s radius of action. To achieve both purposes, three specific goals must be addressed: (1) security and political influence, (2) economic success and (3) cultural expansion and image creation.

(1) Security and political influence means guaranteeing the survival, independence and integrity of the State. As power and security are relative, it is not possible to verify when or if this specific purpose has been or is being achieved. Therefore, the success of measures such as engagement in alliances in military or bilateral blocs or the accumulation of internal military power is also relative. Political influence is an equally intricate topic. Exchanges of contacts or real military, political, technical and academic lines of command constitute some of its material bases. Gathering information is a vital matter.

The second goal, (2) economic success, comprises aspects such as supply chains, both for raw materials and products, the defense and expansion of markets, the protection of internal markets against foreign attacks, the defense of the currency, analyses of internal and external investment, exports, economic sanctions and industrial espionage.

Finally, (3) cultural expansion and image creation essentially refer to language, historical events, art, fashion and technology. Cultural and language institutes, foundations and mass media are the vehicles for this. Even restaurants and pastry shops may contribute. And it is at this level that we can include wine as an element in the construction of the national image and where wine diplomacy comes into play. Although very expensive, cultural expansion and image creation are the most efficient goals in the long term. This is because once a state or a culture successfully disseminates how to think and whom to like best, the results will be filtered into the foreign policy of other states and cultures. Consequently, the impact will also be felt on the two previous goals. It is thus established that the creation of an image and its projection in international politics represent one of the goals of a state’s foreign policy. While security and economic prosperity are primarily pursued through hard power instruments, cultural influence and the creation of an image of the state are attained through the means of soft power.

3. Research methods

Neoliberal foreign policy theory (Pan, 2022) is frequently linked to soft power. Nye defined “soft power” as the ability to shape the preferences of others through attraction (Nye, 2004, p. 10). In other words, to make others do or want what one wishes them to *without* coercing them (i.e. threatening to use violence or using violence). Unlike hard power, soft power relies on a wider variety of resources. Successful soft power measures may require intangible means, sometimes less apparent and unconventional. Soft power is not a new phenomenon in international relations. For centuries, states have invested large sums of money to accumulate and promote their cultural heritage abroad. Nye’s conceptualization of soft power (Nye, 2004) helps us understand initiatives connected to the history, language, culture, arts, technology and food of the country that promotes them. Within this already mentioned finality of the creation

and projection of image, wine culture and the promotion of certain types of national wine are valid objects of study.

This paper extensively applies Nye (2004)'s concept of soft power. The concept helps to frame the state's capacity for persuasion and attraction theoretically as modes of action in international relations. In this context, Nye (2004) subdivided "smart power" into "hard power" (military and economic dimensions) and "soft power" ("the ability to shape the preferences of others") (Nye, 2004, p. 5). Regarding sources of soft power, Nye (2004) identified culture, political values and foreign policies. Therefore, the application of this concept accurately engages with the scope of the research. We operationalize Nye's concept of soft power through a methodological path developed by Bessa (2012, pp. 16–30) built upon (1) a theoretical core, (2) historically tracing the subject and (3) considering domestic organizations, wine trade and wine policy as the thematic nucleus. In this way, we proceed by (1) establishing our theoretical approach and the set of research methods (Sections 2 and 3), (2) assessing historical and social aspects of wine associated with the traditional cultural foreign policies of Portugal and Hungary – to demonstrate the weight of traditions of winemaking – in sub-Sections 4.1 and 4.2 and (3) analyzing these countries' domestic mechanisms of wine promotion internationally, as well as compare the volume of their wine trade through statistics examination to highlight how much wine Portugal and Hungary produce, and export, in sub-Section 4.3. The successes and failures of Portuguese and Hungarian organizations and wine policies, and consequently, whether they can explain or not the wine trade volume – and therefore their contributions or the lack thereof to the states' cultural foreign policy – are appraised in the final Section 6.

The paper is a descriptive-analytical study, comprising a theory testing approach using the soft power concept. It employs content analysis of literature and statistics, and equally employs process tracing between the statistics results and the structure of the domestic organizations and their policies.

4. Results

4.1 Context of the wine image of Portugal

4.1.1 Historical account. It is certainly not an exaggeration to claim that to speak about Portugal is to speak about wine. The Tartessos, Phoenicians, Greeks and Celts cultivated grapes and produced wine in what would later be called Portugal well before the Romans arrived in that territory.

However, it was with Romanization that wine culture was perfected, and wine was exported from *Lusitânia* (the Portuguese province in the Roman Empire) to Rome. With the Christianization of the Iberian Peninsula – and the importance of wine in the Eucharist – wine occupied such a strong position in the proto-Portuguese culture that not even the Islamic occupation (711–1249) – which forbids the consumption of alcohol – managed to extinguish it. With the foundation of the Portuguese state in 1143 and the organization of the nation's economic structure in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, wine became Portugal's most exported product, and its fame spread throughout Europe. With the discoveries of the Portuguese in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, this fame spread worldwide. It was also at this time that it was observed that the quality of some Portuguese wine, due to it being transported stored in barrels in ships for months under the Equatorial sun and shaken by the ocean's waves, would improve (this wine is named *vinho de roda* or *torna viagem*).

Consequently, a huge amount of documentation on the production of wine in Portugal had already accumulated by the seventeenth century. In the following century, in 1703, the Methuen Treaty was signed. This treaty between Portugal and England regulated bilateral trade and improved the conditions for Portuguese wine to enter the English market. To this day, the United Kingdom remains among the top ten most important markets for Portuguese wine. Still, in the eighteenth century, the Portuguese minister Marquês de Pombal (1699–1782) reformed the production of wine in Douro through a series of legal documents and promoted

the demarcation of the region, making it the first demarcated region in the world (1756). In the twentieth century, strong state intervention in the production of wine occurred. Salazar's government bought and stored excess wine in bountiful years and reintroduced it to market in years of scarcity. The consumption of wine domestically and abroad was regulated by determining prices (IVV, 2018). The harmonization of production and consumption activities with EU legislation occurred from 1986 – when Portugal joined the EU – onwards.

4.1.2 Sociological and cultural account. In parallel with this long “state” history, we should also address wine's deep roots in Portuguese culture and society. This aspect can be observed in countless popular sayings, proverbs and aphorisms about wine (Teixeira, 2020).

Translated into the English language, some of the following are: “On Saint Martin's day, go to the cellar and taste the wine,” “A good wine dispenses with advertising,” “Where you have garlic, you will have wine,” “Of rich wine, of diminished reason,” “Bread for its color, and wine for its flavor,” “For meat, wine, and bread, I leave as many delicacies as there are,” “Half of life is the lamp, and wine is the other half,” “Water to the fig and wine to the pear,” “Olive oil from the top, honey from the bottom, and wine from the middle,” “Bread of today, meat from yesterday, and wine from the previous summer make a man's health,” “Do not drink pear wine, and do not give it to anyone you care for,” “Women and wine take the man out of his senses,” “Rains of Saint John take your bread and wine away,” “Old wine, old friends, and old gold,” “Pigs with a cold and men with wine are both very noisy,” and “Advertise wine and sell vinegar.”

Also related to Portuguese culture, Fado is probably the most important and well-known of the traditional styles of songs abroad. It is noteworthy that there is a full *fado* only about wine, entitled *Oiça lá ó Senhor Vinho* [“Hear me out, Mr. Wine”] by Amália Rodrigues – the popularity of which is maintained by the younger generations of *fadistas*.

4.1.3 The most renowned Portuguese wines as a tool of diplomacy during history. This rich history and culture have been associated with Portuguese wines from different regions (Coutinho, 2008). Porto wine is probably the most famous of these, whose grapes are produced around the Douro River and stored in Vila Nova de Gaia on the river's south bank. Madeira wine is equally famous, having been consumed during toasts connected with the drawing up of the US Constitution and in the execution of George Plantagenet, Duke of Clarence (who requested his death sentence be carried out by drowning him in a barrel of Madeira wine in the fifteenth century). Moscatel of Setubal has been highly appreciated in England since the fourteenth century. In the region of Lisbon, Bucelas wine bottles were sent by the Duke of Wellington to King George III in the nineteenth century and Colares vineyards date back to the thirteenth century. The Dão wine region is also called the Portuguese Burgundy, and bottles of Pico Island wine (from the Azores) were found in the wine cellars of the Russian Tsars after the communist revolution of 1917.

Portugal is divided into 14 wine regions (Read, 1989). The north of Portugal (Minho, Douro, and Trás-os-Montes) is home to more than 40% of Portuguese vineyards by area (Santos *et al.*, 2021). The Douro wine region (a Protected Designation of Origin) produces some of the most exquisite and highly valued wines in the world, and the Pico Island wine region is one of the two UNESCO-protected wine regions of Portugal.

4.2 Context of the wine image of Hungary

4.2.1 Historical account. The Celts, Romans were the first people to begin cultivating grapes in the Carpathian basin called Pannonia, which is located in Western Hungary today named Transdanubia. There are four languages whose word for wine is not derived from the Latin word “vinum”: Greek (*oinos*), Basque (*ardo*), Turkish (*sarap*) and Hungarian (*bor*), which is of Middle Eastern origin (Wine Folly 2016; Molnár, 2001). The Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian Basin led to a considerable increase in wine production (Mészáros, 2023). Historically, Hungary has been a white-wine country (red wines appeared only in the seventeenth century). Even today, two-thirds of Hungary's wines by volume are white.

However, whites and reds are equally represented within the premium segment (Tóbiás, 2023). The first mention of self-governing vineyard councils (promontories) dates from 1271. Hungarian wine production faced challenges during the Middle Ages because of the Ottoman occupation (1541–1699). The first written proof of Tokaj Aszú dessert wines in the Hungarian Tokaj region dates to the 1550s. Acts of 1655 and 1723 established rules for verifying wine origins (Mészáros, 2023). The Tokaj dessert wines provided the most exciting story of Hungary's role in the modern history of wine. Meanwhile, in other countries in Europe producers also used the word “Tokay” on their wine labels to entice buyers. This confusion resulted in the official classification of the vineyards of Tokaj in 1730, which led to a royal decree issued in 1757 that established the closed production district of Tokaj-Hegyalja region (Wine Folly, 2020). To date, Tokaj is Hungary's most famous wine region, one of the oldest classified wine regions in the world, and also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. To receive the Tokaji denotation, dry or sweet, a wine can only contain the six native grape varieties (Bánfalvi, 2018). “The ‘invention’ of aszú wine as it is known today is attributed to Szepsi,” writes Lambert-Gócs (2010) in a book entitled *Tokaj Wine: Fame, Fate, Tradition*. “By most accounts, this happened around 1620, although others [thought] it might have been earlier. . . The fact that a 4-puttonyos wine of 1646 was exported to Poland and a law of 1655 required [the] separate harvesting of botrytized fruit strongly suggests that aszú wine production was taking place since at least 1600” (Bánfalvi, 2018). “Tokaj's vineyards have been classified at various points in their history: 1641, 1700, 1770 and 1995,” writes Tim Atkin (2003). “The 1700 classification divided the vineyards into First, Second and Third Growths. Many of these vineyards remain highly prized to this day” (Bánfalvi, 2018). Due to an outbreak of Phylloxera in the 1880s, the two World Wars, and forty years of Soviet collectivization aimed at large-scale production, Hungarian wine production experienced significant damage. The rejuvenation from 1990 to the present day of not only Tokaj but the Hungarian wine industry as a whole coincides with Hungary's accession to the European Union (EU) and the introduction of new wine laws covering Hungary's historical regions.

4.2.2 *Tokaj wine as a tool of diplomacy during history.* In the past, more than one hundred years ago, European royal courts consumed Tokaji wine from crystal spoons (Wine Folly, 2016). This wine was coveted by royal customers like the Hungarian nobleman Ferenc Rákóczi II, Peter the Great, King Louis XIV, Catherine the Great, and the Austrian composer Joseph Haydn who received payments in the form of wine (Wine Folly, 2020). In the 1700s, Tokaj was home to a major wine economy, with Poland and Russia fans of Tokaji Aszú. Peter the Great stationed a permanent military barracks in Tokaj to ensure uninterrupted wine supply to the royal palace in St. Petersburg (Wine Folly, 2016).

Pope Pius X was a great fan of the drink and gushed: “Such wine is worthy of the Holy Father.” When Empress Maria Theresa sent Pope Benedict XIV a gift of Tokaj wine, he exclaimed: “Blessed be the soil that hath grown thee, blessed be the woman who sent thee, and blessed am I who drink thee.” In addition, Catherine the Great, Frederick II of Prussia, Napoleon III, Goethe, Schubert, Beethoven and Ferenc Liszt all appreciated the Tokaj noble rot wines. Emperor Franz Joseph sent Queen Victoria Tokaj Aszú as a birthday gift every year. Finally, Voltaire acclaimed his favorite wine as: “Tokaj brings vigor to the smallest fiber of my brain and revives the enchanting sparkle of wit and good humor” (Bánfalvi, 2018). Tokaj wine was treated as a symbol of Hungary and used as a diplomatic tool.

4.2.3 *Sociological and cultural account.* Hungary has been traditionally considered a wine-drinking country. At the end of the nineteenth century, Hungary was the second-largest European producer of wine after France (Bánfalvi, 2018). Furthermore, grapes and wine have a first place in the gastronomical traditions of the country. However, the latter is of far greater cultural significance than the tradition of consuming fruit from the vine (Folklife, 2023). There are many famous sayings and proverbs about wine in Hungary and the Hungarian language (see Vinopedia, 2023; Margalits, 2023; Paczolay, 1991; Borneked, 2023). Most refer to the importance or the advantageous effect of drinking wine to create a good mood or humor. “Wine, wheat, peace, I wish you a beautiful wife!” “In wine, there is truth,” “Wine speaks for

itself.” Another Hungarian proverb indicates the “self-marketing” capacity of good wine: “Good wine needs no bush.” Some Hungarian wine-related proverbs are connected to the habits of hypocritical people: “He drinks wine and preaches water.” Everyday life is connected with many proverbs that refer to wine and wine drinking – for example, “Life is too short to drink bad wine.” Other well-known proverbs emphasize the fame or nobles associated with Tokaj wine: “The wine of kings, the king of wines.” This proverb still appears on some Tokaj wine bottles for marketing purposes. Furthermore, the Hungarian National Anthem also mentions the vines of Tokaj and “noble rot” wines: “And let Nectar’s silver rain/Ripen grapes of Tokaj soon,” – here, the latter appears as God’s blessing/gift to Hungarians.

4.3 Wine promotion by Portugal and Hungary: trade, state organizations and policies

Success in wine diplomacy can be measured by the impact on international trade and diplomatic relations, capitalizing on the historical context and cultural significance of wines. Both Portugal and Hungary have been successful in leveraging their wine industries for diplomatic purposes, but the effectiveness of this varies depending on specific objectives.

We continue the path to answering the research question of how wine is used as a tool in present-day cultural foreign policy in Portugal and Hungary. In this section, we look at the wine industry statistics and wine trade relevance of the two countries, as well as state agents responsible for promoting wines abroad and their policies or lack thereof.

4.3.1 *Wine trade relevance in Portugal and Hungary.* Table 2 may better illustrate at a glance the relevance of wine trade to the countries under study:

The statistics above indicate that Portugal is a more prominent player in the global wine market compared to Hungary, with higher production, export levels and per capita consumption. Portugal’s wine production is much higher than Hungary, reflecting its larger vineyard area and more developed wine industry. Portugal exports twice as much wine as Hungary, which is consistent with its higher production levels. This suggests that Portugal with higher share of the global wine market, has a stronger presence in international wine markets. Hungary, while still significant, but has a smaller scale of operations and global market presence.

4.3.2 *State organizations responsible for wine promotion in Portugal and Hungary.* State organizations responsible for the promotion of Portuguese wine abroad include (1) the Institute of the Vineyards and Wine (IVV), (2) the AICEP Portugal Global – Trade and Investment Agency (AICEP) and (3) the Planning, Policy and Geral Administration Office (GPP). Our analysis indicates the lack of coordination among these organizations; thus, duplication of efforts occurs (e.g. “country-market info files” with the same information) due to the lack of a central authority to uniformize an internationalized global wine strategy. Despite this administrative inefficiency, wine from Portugal is preferred by some of the most significant wine consumers, as demonstrated by the ProWein report (Loose, 2022).

The state organs that promote Hungarian wines are the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, National Tourism Agency and National Council of the Wine Communities. The Ministry of Agriculture manages the protected designated origin of Hungarian wines, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade is involved in promoting wine through embassies and cultural institutions, and the National Tourism Agency supports wine marketing (Hungarianwines, 2023a). The National Council of the Wine Communities (HNT) aims to increase international recognition and find export markets for Hungarian wines (Hungarianwines, 2023b). The Hungarian Wine Marketing Agency and Agricultural Marketing Centre are the most important promoters of the wine industry. The Hungarian Wine Marketing Agency offers opportunities to commercialize wines (Woods, 2023). The Agricultural Marketing Centre (AMC) aims to strengthen its position and increase its share of premium category Hungarian wines (Hungarian Wine Summit, 2023).

4.3.3 *Wine policies in Portugal and Hungary.* Unsurprisingly, both Portugal and Hungary participate in ProWein, which has been held for the last 30 years and is the only international trade fair for wines and spirits that covers the entire world market. In addition, ProWein also

Table 2. Wine industry statistics for Portugal and Hungary

Country	Vineyard area (in hectares)	Annual wine production (in hectoliters)	Wine export (in hectoliters)	Share of wine production (% of world market)	Share of wine exports (% of world market)	World ranking of wine producer	World ranking of wine exporter	Wine consumption per capita (liters/year)
Portugal	191.879	7.359.000	3.288.000	2.8	2.9	10th	9th	58
Hungary	60.161	2.484.000	1.365.000	1.1	1.3	17th	14th	20.7
Source	OIV (2023)	OIV (2023)	OIV (2023)	OIV (2023)	OIV (2023)	OIV (2023)	OIV (2023)	STATISTA (2023) HNT (2023)

Source(s): Authors’ own work based on [OIV \(2023\)](#), [STATISTA \(2023\)](#), [HNT \(2023\)](#)

publishes a yearly report, as already stated (Loose, 2022). Although Portugal has created several instruments to promote its wine abroad, such as the 2008 study for developing Portuguese wine brands (IVV, 2008) and the website *Wines of Portugal* (Wines of Portugal, 2023) we could not identify a strategy for wine internationalization. Two relatively isolated documents can be emphasized in this regard. First, a joint document from the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and AICEP entitled *Comprar a Portugal* (AICEP, 2023). However, this document is not only about Portuguese wine but also Portuguese olive oil and fruit (especially *pêra rocha*). Second, the national support program for the wine sector 2019–2023 from the Ministry of Agriculture aims to help Portuguese companies export their wine (PNA, 2023).

Recently, Hungary elaborated a National Wine Marketing Strategy for 2023–2026, which aims to strengthen the awareness of Hungarian wines and focus on education, digitalization, research, sustainability, tourism and regulation (Wines of Hungary, 2023). To implement the strategy, in 2022, the Hungarian Wine Marketing Agency was established to build a relationship with winemakers, provide them with information to help them reach the market, and assist with organizing international campaigns and fairs (VG, 2023). In 2022, the Agricultural Marketing Center (AMC) organized the Hungarian Wine Summit, a large-scale, professional wine-themed event dedicated to Hungarian wines. It also organized Wine Export Academy courses and business (B2B) events and presented Hungarian wines in the UK, Finland, Germany, Lithuania and the Czech Republic. Furthermore, the latter ran international communication campaigns in the most important wine magazines, the German *Meininger* and the English *Decanter* (Hungarian Wine Summit, 2023). The Hungarian Wine Marketing Agency launched a campaign in 2023 to promote the purchase of wine at Christmas fairs in the capital city of Budapest (Hungary Today, 2023). They also produced educational content on Hungarian wine regions for the trade, as presented in a video series, and created a dedicated spot for Hungarian wines at Liszt Ferenc International Airport in Budapest (Turizmus Online, 2023).

5. Discussion and implications

5.1 Comparison with previous studies and future research

Wine can be recognized as an economic and cultural element that may contribute to enhancing cultural foreign policy and country's image. In this context, Brookes (1993) pointed out that there is strong competition in the British wine market (the biggest import market for wine), where consumers are looking for value for money and where also wines are associated with a strong national image. Sustainable winemaking can build a positive image too, consequently making a country more attractive to foreign buyers, once demonstrated a country's commitment to environmental protection. Wine labels can be used to communicate sustainable wine practices in a targeted way, and consumer education can contribute to increasing demand for sustainable wine (Pomarici et al., 2016). By actively promoting sustainable practices and engaging with consumers on environmental issues, wineries can build brand loyalty among eco-conscious consumers (Omidvar et al., 2024). This could involve creating community initiatives or partnerships that resonate with consumers' values.

Similarly to the positive environmental and economic impacts of community actions mentioned by Rusciano et al. (2020), wine can also have many other positive impacts on societies, contributing to more sustainable and culturally rich societies. Wine producers' community are able to promote local products and sustainable practices.

As a cultural product, wine can embody a country's values, traditions and lifestyle, making it an effective soft power element. Value for money, consistent quality and effective promotion are important for the successful marketing of wines. A well-formulated cultural foreign policy is expected to build a positive country image and strengthen international affairs through wine (Brookes, 1993). Moreover, Prys Jenkins (1992) stresses that a fruitful marketing strategy is needed to enter a foreign wine market successfully. Therefore, an appropriate international

marketing strategy, which considers the specificities of the target market, and the cultural values associated with their wine, is essential to the success of wine diplomacy.

In sum, wine can be an effective element of soft power, influencing international public opinion through its attractiveness. In contrast with previous literature, this paper brings the contribution of studying wine from a foreign policy point of view at the formulation level. We applied mixed-methods approach to this problem, and we compared Portugal and Hungary's cases of wine strategy as a soft power element.

For future research, we suggest the following avenues: (1) explaining why Portugal produces and exports more wine than Hungary in spite of the absence of an international wine strategy; (2) studying Portugal's mismatch between, on the one hand, a lack of pyramidal structure of organizations and a subsequent rigid international wine policy and, on the other hand, an efficient diplomatic network action on international wine promotion as noted by [Sequeira \(2023\)](#), and (3) looking for confirmation of whether a better developed wine diplomacy improves the countries' economies by increasing not only wine trade but also trade in general (i.e. by attracting more tourists).

5.2 Implications for theory

The research results are counter intuitive. Whereas it could be assumed that a well-formulated cultural foreign policy – in the examined case, an international wine strategy contributing for the creation of a country's image – would result in higher trade, our case shows the opposite trend. Portugal, which international wine strategy is less developed than Hungary's, has a much higher wine export than Hungary. It should be noted, however, that the size of the country's wine sector and the efficiency of national wine marketing strategy may also limit the impacts of cultural foreign policy.

5.3 Implications for policy

Regarding policy implications, wine producer countries should prioritize the development (and implementation) of well-designed international wine strategies. As highlighted in the study, wine assumes the form of a soft power ([Nye, 2004](#)) element that can enhance international affairs ([Sánchez et al., 2023](#)) and foster cultural exchange ([Agnoli and Outreville, 2021](#); [Barr, 2015](#)). By applying wine-related international marketing and communication techniques (events, fairs, festivals and educational programs), these countries can strengthen their political and economic ties in the realm of international relations. As pointed out above, Portugal could consider reforming its relevant state agencies/organizations devoted to the promotion of its wine. Furthermore, it could also consider creating a condensed wine strategy as Hungary did.

In addition, in promoting wine internationally, the importance of historical and cultural contexts can be emphasized as well. Both countries should integrate their rich winemaking traditions into their broader cultural foreign policy narratives ([Akhtadze, 2018](#)). In this way, they could improve their national image and attract more tourism and more investments for their wine business. Old World producing countries in general can stimulate social and ecological innovation by promoting sustainable winemaking practices. By positioning their wines as environmentally friendly, these countries can appeal to a growing global market that values sustainability ([Pomarici et al., 2016](#)). Policies that incentivize sustainable practices, such as organic certification or support for eco-friendly technologies, can augment the international interest of their wines and, at the same time, be align with UN Sustainable Development Goals. Countries can likewise develop community actions ([Rusciano et al., 2020](#)) that involve local communities in the winemaking process and promoting local products ([Riviezzo et al., 2016](#)). This could include festivals of local winemakers, and marketing initiatives that promote rural or local wine tourism. Wine though wine or gastrodiploamacy, as component of destination image marketing, also encourages travelling motivations to the country ([Suntikul, 2017](#)).

Finally, by integrating these approaches into their wine diplomacy, Portugal and Hungary can effectively build a favorable country image and further develop diplomatic ties.

6. Conclusion

This paper has analyzed wine as an element of cultural foreign policy in Portugal and Hungary at the level of foreign policy formulation. The research question was addressed by presenting historical, cultural and sociological overviews and connecting them with the wine production of the two countries, the responsible state organizations and their policies. Through adopting the frame of Nye (2004)'s concept of soft power (employed to observe a state's capacity for persuasion and attraction), this study compared the foreign policymaking of two winemaking countries of the "Old World." While Hungary has formulated a National Wine Marketing Strategy for 2023–2026, a similar document could not be found for Portugal. In other words, research results show that from the point of view of state policy concerning "attraction" in cultural foreign policy using wine as a tool, Hungary has been more efficient than Portugal.

In fact, regarding Portugal, the research has shown (sub-Section 4.1) that while various Portuguese wines undoubtedly have a role in historical cultural foreign policy, results presented in sub-Section 4.3 demonstrate that Portugal has partly failed in terms of activating state organizations and state policies in this regard; and that, therefore, current cultural foreign policy using Portuguese wine as tool requires extensive reform and development. In spite of this, Portugal produces three times as much wine as Hungary and exports more than twice as much. This means that by improving the structure of departments dedicated to wine and by formulating an international wine strategy, Portugal could probably increase its wine exports even more.

Concerning Hungary, wine diplomacy has been focused on promoting its unique varieties and showcasing its winemaking heritage. Hungary is leveraging wine diplomacy to promote its wines internationally. Various ministries, tourism and marketing agencies are involved in commercializing Hungarian wines. In addition, Hungary has developed a National Wine Marketing Strategy that includes the tools of wine diplomacy focused on education, digitalization, research, sustainability, tourism and regulation.

Literature defines wine diplomacy as an essential element of cultural foreign policy that is employed to promote and develop an external image associated with cultural and human relations. Wine is then conceived as a form of soft power that may help in projecting a favorable image. In this way, when appropriately utilized, wine can also strengthen political and economic relations.

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