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# Potential of Vineyard Landscapes for Sustainable Tourism

Ángel Raúl Ruiz Pulpón \*  and María del Carmen Cañizares Ruiz

Department of Geography and Land Use Planning. University of Castilla–La Mancha, 13071 Ciudad Real, Spain; MCarmen.canizares@uclm.es

\* Correspondence: Angelraul.ruiz@uclm.es

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**Abstract:** According to the World Tourism Organization, sustainable tourism fosters the conservation of natural resources, respects the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities and ensures the maintenance of economic activities in the long term. With reference to these three areas, this article examines how vineyard landscapes, seen as one of the many resources of wine tourism, represent a potential for promoting forms of sustainable tourism, which be understood as tourism that assumes a balance between the environmental, economic and social determining factors behind a region. For this purpose, different theoretical and thematic approaches are used to highlight the importance of key issues, such as the status of the vineyard landscape as part of the conservation of natural resources in general and the elements linked to tangible and intangible heritage as part of the social authenticity of these landscapes. The results show how the strong cultural nature of vineyard landscapes, which are rich in heritage and aesthetics, guarantees their sustainability for tourist activity, provided that appropriate planning criteria are used.

**Keywords:** vineyard landscapes; wine tourism; sustainable tourism; agrarian heritage; cultural ecosystem services

## 1. Introduction

The spread of globalization in its different aspects (economic, labor, cultural, etc.) has led to significant changes in the countryside. In fact, globalization has played an essential role in consolidating the socio-economic patterns that are usually identified with today's post-industrial society (economic restructuring, a commitment to innovation, and the expansion of the service sector as opposed to industry, for example [1]), accelerating the complexity, diversity and depth of this type of change. We are, therefore, discovering a new scenario in the relationship between rural and urban environments, based, among other things, on the growing reciprocity of these two and on a re-evaluation of the natural, cultural and heritage attractions of rural areas. Within this new scenario has come a new understanding of the term "rural" that is distinct from the dependent, secondary nature of the industrial economic stage [2], in which concepts such as culture, sustainability, landscape and heritage acquire a new dimension.

The concept of landscape groups together and gives new meanings to these values. According to the European Landscape Convention [3], landscape is understood to be "any part of the land, as this is perceived by the population, the characteristics of which are the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors". It is not only an important element of the quality of life but also a "synthesis of the heritage values of the region, precisely because of its ability to integrate nature and culture through social perception" [4] (pp. 169–170). This ability to integrate biotic and abiotic components makes the landscape a synthesis of the cultural, ecological, environmental and social aspects of rural regions, as well as a very positive factor for the development of tourism.

Tourism associated with the enjoyment of the landscape, which we usually identify with nature or rural tourism, has ideally been conducted in protected natural areas or areas of high aesthetic interest.

Today, this type of tourism extends to all types of landscapes, including cultural and heritage attractions. In this sense, there is a growing interest in “the landscapes of rural spaces, physiognomically and functionally characterized by agro–silvo–pastoral activities, to which new uses and demands have been added, constituting an excellent environment for thought and action” [5] (pp. 31–32). This is a type of landscape that is seen as an expression of spatial, geographical, natural, historical, ecological, economic, social and cultural structures; it shows the configuration of a site and reflects the influence of a culture on a place; it is also a self-image and even a moral expression of the relationship between people and their surroundings. Therefore, the multiple activities of farms and the reappraisal of the cultural heritage can be considered to be strategies for rural innovation, providing a new discourse in counterpoint to standard wine production.

This new dimension for agricultural activities has been interpreted from a variety of theoretical approaches, such as the so-called post-productivist transition [6] which, broadly speaking, defines a new relationship between the agricultural and environmental policies that emerged at the end of the 20th century, together with policies for the extensification of production and the protection of the quality and safety of food products [7,8]. In this context, agrarian spaces are not only interpreted in economic terms but also as places where post-industrial society can enjoy other resources that have recently been re-evaluated and identified with the rural world, such as peace and quiet, aesthetic value, heritage, gastronomy, which are all linked to tourism. Despite the facts that the extensification of production and a commitment to sustainability have been necessary issues for the fulfilment of the Common Agricultural Policy since 1992 and that post-productivism has been questioned for its apparent non-existence or irrelevance by other narratives on the agrarian transition in Europe, such as neo-productivism or non-productivism [9,10], we cannot forget that this is a logical response to the concerns of today’s post-industrial society, which has shown a growing interest in environmental and heritage conservation. In this sense, post-productivism interprets the rural environment as a place where environmental, landscape and cultural values are integrated [11], reflecting a specific cultural and natural history that shapes emotional and aesthetic feelings around a certain type of regional organization, landscape and traditions [12]. Consequently, agrarian landscapes reveal the identity of those who inhabit them, and the people linked to them find their own identity reflected in how they are configured. Many of these sites are already recognized as cultural landscapes on the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) World Heritage List, having met a series of requirements based on their institutional, historical, social, and aesthetic representativeness [13].

We consider that, among all agrarian landscapes, those associated with vineyards best exemplify that close relationship between man and the environment, with a strong cultural character, and in which the dynamics associated with post-productivism are highly relevant. Vineyard landscapes are the result of the transformation, over time, of natural landscapes by a social group; in this case rooted in an area within the Mediterranean agricultural tradition where wine growing is the agent, the natural area is the medium, and the landscape is the result. It is a human landscape in which the re-evaluation of the regional culture has had a significant impact on everything relating to heritage [14]. Its nature is, therefore, dynamic, a result of the social and economic processes it has been incorporating over time, and complex, because it is made up of natural and anthropogenic components [15]. Its imprint “is not only reflected in the physiognomy of the terrain: it also contributes to defining the character of the people who inhabit it, who take advantage of the resources it offers; in short, who live in it”, [16] (p. 8). We are talking, therefore, about the people who work and live in these landscapes—people who perceive them in a unique way as representing an important tangible and intangible heritage that is part of their legacy for the next generation. This cultural and heritage character is complemented by its economic function, which is a strategic factor in regional development.

Starting from the viewpoint of considering landscapes as a resource—in this case, vineyard landscapes in a given region—we can progress towards their potential as a tourist product capable of sustaining an activity based on the multiple elements that characterize their agricultural heritage. We refer to the cultivation of vines, to wines as the companions to a unique cuisine,

to their constructive elements, to festivals related to wine or to rituals such as the grape harvest itself, as previously discussed. In this context, “wine tourism” has gained special interest as a form that, in a variety of wine regions, brings together gastronomy, culture, architecture and art, leisure, contact with nature, health and quality of life. Vineyard tourism is therefore based on the enjoyment of an experience that could be considered complete and unique [17–19]. It is complete because it offers a wide range of activities, from visiting a winery or vineyard to tasting or contemplating the landscape, and unique because the experience is enjoyed exclusively in a specific place, with a unique combination of physical, cultural and natural aspects that we could classify as “terroir tourism” [20]. There is, therefore, a strong, demonstrable link between the landscape and the quality of the tourist product, making it the fundamental strategy followed by a large proportion of these estates [21], where income diversification is the common challenge for producers, tourist agencies and consumers [22].

The interconnection between nature, know-how and economic activity makes it possible to suggest that wine tourism is a clearly sustainable activity. Obviously, the environmental, social and economic criteria are not always combined in the most effective way. In a context where capitalist agriculture continues to be hegemonic, it is sometimes difficult to devise economic diversification initiatives that faithfully respond to the sustainability paradigm, offering either impersonal tourist products or experiences that do not respect traditions, rituals or landscapes.

By presupposing a balance between the environmental, economic and social determining factors of a region, the aim of this article is to determine how vineyard landscapes, considered to be one of the many resources contained in wine tourism, have the potential to promote forms of sustainable tourism. This is done using a variety of theoretical and thematic approaches to endorse these potentialities, highlighting the Cultural Ecosystem Services proposed by the United Nations and the efforts to catalogue or inventory heritage assets proposed in the Baeza Charter on Agrarian Heritage [23]. We have the advantage that vineyard landscapes provide an intrinsic environmental value that is adapted to natural conditions that give meaning to their use, a cultural and social value based on the identification of elements that can be seen as heritage and that can also generate emotions and feelings within a real experience, and an economic value derived from the vineyards’ ability to attract visitors.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The research method was based on a theoretical study that integrated several notions. The study methodology was based, firstly, on a literature search that focused on the concepts of sustainable tourism, wine tourism and the cultural value of agrarian landscapes. Secondly, an in-depth study was made of the latest opinions on sustainable tourism, highlighting the World Charter for Sustainable Tourism [24], the conclusions of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development [25] and the definitions established by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) regarding this concept. Thirdly, the result was the identification of all the precepts of sustainable tourism that are reproduced in vineyard landscapes in general, for which we have relied on several theoretical and thematic approaches that have analyzed the potential of these landscapes.

Figure 1 allows us to relate sustainable tourism with environmental, social and economic considerations that incorporate most of its definitions, especially the last one made by the WTO, to which we will refer later. According to this organization, sustainable tourism should contribute to the conservation of natural resources, respect the socio-cultural authenticity of the host communities, and ensure the maintenance of long-term economic activities. In relation to these three points, in order to discover the potential of each of these aspects in vineyard landscapes, a number of theoretical approaches were taken that reveal the importance of key factors, such as the state of the landscape itself in relation to the conservation of vineyard landscapes and elements linked to tangible and intangible heritage in relation to the authenticity of these landscapes. These approaches highlight the landscape and heritage values, both tangible and intangible, that reinforce a commitment to environmental and cultural conservation, as well as ultimately ensuring their economic viability.



Figure 1. Sustainable tourism and its application to vineyard landscapes.

Two types of theoretical approaches were chosen to study the potential of vineyard landscapes for sustainable tourism. Both carry out an important classification of vineyard values, illustrating how these assets could be used for touristic activities. Therefore, they were the main tools of research.

The first is based on the identification of emotions and feelings that arise from the contemplation of a landscape, starting from the hypothesis that the better the state of conservation, the better the visitor's or the local population's perception of it. These feelings are understood to be the benefits that nature transmits to humans, classed as Ecosystem Services by the United Nation (UN)'s Millenium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA) [26]. This proposal reflects the considerable benefits that the transformation of natural ecosystems has had for human well-being and the need to implement measures that promote and maintain these kinds of services. Among the contributions made by ecosystems are the "cultural" contributions, which in this case seem especially noteworthy to us because they are linked to non-material benefits that promote spiritual enrichment, cognitive development, reflection, and an aesthetic and recreational experience, all of which are possible applications based on the re-evaluation of heritage and the development of tourism [26]. We insist that a positive perception of landscapes is based on their conservation, an essential criterion for the WTO in the treatment of the tourism/sustainability relationship. Thus, cultural ecosystem services (CESs) tie in with the analysis of cultural landscapes and are to be understood as "the result of the action over time of people and the natural environment, whose expression is a terrain perceived and valued for its cultural qualities, the product of a process, and supporting the identity of a community" [27] (p. 13), linked to certain types of activities and processes. For its part, heritage, under the approach proposed by the CESs, includes historical objects and intangible aspects that foster collective identity [28], symbolizing ways of life that the local people share and that are projected into creative and ceremonial activities, contributing to human well-being in terms of projected identities and associated experiences [29]. As a result, there is a new commitment to the notion of "land understood as heritage", that is to say as a complex cultural asset that is broken down into spatial and temporal layers and whose value lies in tangible and intangible attributes [15,30]. All this can be specifically applied to the analysis of agricultural cultural landscapes based on their physical and human characteristics and the agricultural heritage contained in them.

The second part consists of cataloguing and identifying the heritage values of vineyards, with a view towards re-evaluating the tangible and intangible assets that must be respected and preserved in order to guarantee their authenticity, an aspect that also brings us closer to the WTO's proposals for sustainable tourism. The basic document that performs this function is the Baeza Charter on Agrarian Heritage [31], in which these heritage values are classified into tangible and movable assets (essentially tools, means of transport, and documents) and immovable (constructions) and intangible assets, which are derived from culture and are directly related to respect for social authenticity, as they are based on specific linguistic contributions, traditions and rituals, and, in short, the regional identity of a community. We believe that the most important contribution of this document is that

agricultural heritage must take ownership of the highest and most important values and meanings that agriculture, livestock breeding and forestry represent for people: their contribution to food; their harmonious relationship with the land, manifested in a sustainable and dynamic use of natural resources; their identity as part of the relationship between culture and nature; and their indispensable contribution to biological diversity (expressed in the genetic heterogeneity of local varieties and indigenous breeds) and cultural diversity (associated with the innumerable forms of management existing in the world). The recognition of agrarian value as a general value for the identification of this type of asset and, specifically, the agronomic, economic, social, ecological, historical, landscape and technical values is therefore called for.

Ultimately, optimizing the environmental and cultural resources of vineyard landscapes is the key to guaranteeing their 'pull' as a tourist destination, thereby generating income and responding better to the sustainability paradigm.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Tourism and Sustainability

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) defines tourism as "the activities of people travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes", [32]. Currently, in the post-Fordist phase, tourism is considered to be a social, cultural and economic phenomenon related to people travelling to and around places at an increasing rate and with an increasingly significant economic impact. Today, 10% of the world's gross domestic product is related to tourist activities, and 1 in 10 jobs is linked to them. This is an economic sub-sector in continuous growth because, in 2018 there were 1.326 billion international tourist arrivals (57% in Europe) (7% more than in the previous year), an income of \$1.34 billion generated by international tourism (37% in Europe), and 5% more than in the previous year; in addition, the WTO foresaw an increase of 3%–4% in 2019 [33] (pp. 2–3).

Some factors have been key in explaining its evolution (elite tourism, mass tourism, and post-Fordist tourism) and the importance at the present time of the progressive increase in leisure time, and, therefore, the readiness of the population, at least in developed areas, to travel. Additionally, distances have shrunk in terms of mobility, where progress is obvious, and in access to information. Available income and tourist consumption capacity, together with sociological elements such as the conversion of holidays and leisure time into a basic need, have become related, more and more, to personal well-being [34]. With all this, today, tourism has become one of the main agents of globalization and is practiced in accordance with different typologies (urban, rural, cultural, beach, etc.). Here, we explore in depth tourism in rural spaces linked to vineyard landscapes.

From a geographical point of view, we are interested in highlighting how tourism is based on the social valuation of certain geophysical and geocultural components [34], especially the resources and pull factors linked to tourist destinations, to which we will pay special attention. Additionally essential are the characteristics of the departure point, the mode of transport, the distances and scheduling of trips, and the morphology of the destinations. Obviously, there are many benefits to be gained, both at the origin and the destination: increased incomes and employment at the destination, opportunities for cultural exchange and personal learning, the planning and conservation of natural and cultural heritage, etc. Some of the most negative consequences are also well known, such as their possible repercussions on inflation, currency outflows, alterations in the destinations' local life or environmental degradation due to the overexploitation of natural and cultural resources, with which we will deal later.

The last point provides a link with the sustainability or, rather, the "unsustainability" of many tourist activities. Regarded today as a process, a lifestyle or a philosophy that brings us closer to "moderation in the behavior of individuals and social processes, in relation to the use and enjoyment of natural resources" [35], sustainability has become an unavoidable requirement of any economic activity, given the need to minimize man's footprint on the planet. However, this process began with the

appearance of the concept of “sustainable development” in the Brundtland Report [36], by identifying the “development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” [37], consolidated at the First Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. The Rio Declaration included, as Principle Number One, that “Human beings are at the center of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature” [38]. This marked the beginning of the so-called Agenda 21 (Agenda for the 21st century), from which, in regard to the subject of this paper, Agenda 21 for the travel and tourism industry (1996) stemmed.

At the present time, after four Earth Summits, the last one once again being held in Rio de Janeiro in 2012, the lack of international agreement and consensus on key issues, as well as the slow progress on solving some environmental problems, leaves us with a somewhat complex future. New approaches have followed one another (Millennium Summit, Millennium Development Goals, Post-2015 Agenda, Summit for Sustainable Development, etc.) up to Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the resulting 17 Sustainable Development Goals, in which, incidentally, there is no express reference to tourism despite the fact that, logically, this activity is related to some of them—most directly to Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth (job creation); Goal 12: Responsible production and consumption (sustainable consumption and production); and others such as Goals 14 and 15, regarding, respectively, marine life and life in terrestrial ecosystems.

### Sustainable Tourism

The environmental consequences of tourist activity are diverse and not without complexity, normally owing to a lack of adequate planning. Clear examples are changes to the landscape, an accumulation of waste and effluent, excessive water consumption in crowded destinations, increased emissions of pollutants (CO<sub>2</sub>) and their impact on climate change, a loss of biodiversity and the alteration of natural and cultural heritage. The causes are mainly to be found in increased mobility, noise, congestion and traffic, land consumption and increased artificiality.

When tourism is linked, as an economic activity that affects regional development, with the sustainability requirements applicable to any type of socio-economic activity, tourism needs to be sustainable; in other words, it must meet the needs of tourists and regions and protect and promote employment opportunities. In the mid-1990s, the World Charter for Sustainable Tourism [39], signed in Lanzarote (Spain), established 18 principles for creating a global strategy for tourism based on sustainable development. Shortly after that, the UN and WTO approved the Global Ethical Code for Tourism [40]), in Santiago de Chile, with the aim of promoting responsible, sustainable tourism.

In Spain, a country in which tourism generates 12% of GDP and more than 12% of employment, tourist arrivals exceeded 81 million in 2018, while revenues reached almost €90 billion (€89.678 billion.) [33] (p. 15), the Spanish Strategy for Sustainable Development [41] considered that the main goal for the future of tourism was to “re-evaluate tourism in terms of sustainability”. To do this, “sustainable growth must focus on respecting the carrying capacity of destinations, reducing the negative impacts of tourism, preserving the social and cultural environments in the different tourist destinations and emphasizing sustainable tourism” [41] (p. 53).

Today, there is insistence on the need for a “balance” between the economic, social and environmental aspects, the three pillars of sustainability. In fact, the document *The Future We Want* that came out of the Rio +20 Summit [42], states that “. . . well designed and well managed tourism can make a significant contribution to the three dimensions of sustainable development, has close linkages to other sectors and can create decent jobs and generate trade opportunities” [42].

In 2015, the Sustainable Tourism +20 Summit held in Spain launched the World Charter for Sustainable Tourism, 20 years after the previous charter, issuing a call for action to all stakeholders: governments and international organizations, destinations and local communities, the tourist industry, consumers, researchers and educators, networks and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) [24]. Shortly after this, 2017 was declared the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development,

with the aim of supporting a change in policies, business practices and consumer behavior towards sustainability, with special attention to five key areas: 1. inclusive and sustainable economic growth; 2. social inclusion, employment and poverty reduction; 3. resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change; 4. cultural values, diversity and heritage; and 5. mutual understanding, peace and security. At the same time, campaigns like "Travel, Enjoy, Respect" are being developed, targeting consumers and with a great impact on society. Their aim has been to create awareness of the value and contribution that sustainable tourism can make to development.

Recently, the WTO defined sustainable tourism as "Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities" [43]. This must be applied to all types of tourism and to all tourist segments. According to this agency [43], sustainable tourism should:

- (1) Make optimal use of environmental resources (. . .), maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural resources and biological diversity.
- (2) Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.
- (3) Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed (. . .) and contributing to poverty alleviation.

Sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building. This is a continuous process, and it requires the constant monitoring of impacts, introducing preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary. It should also maintain a high degree of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them. These points will be related to vineyard landscapes.

### 3.2. Landscape and Agricultural Heritage

As we have just mentioned, the WTO insists on respect for the socio-cultural authenticity of the host communities and the conservation of their cultural, architectural and traditional values and assets in order to bring about sustainable tourism. Landscapes, as individual parts of the area with their own natural and/or cultural characteristics, can be valued as heritage as they personify the socio-cultural identity of the local population. In this sense, the landscape is, in its formal configuration, the imprint of society on nature, the sign that imprints "character" on each region, and it is therefore to be understood as being heritage [4]. Agricultural landscapes are clearly representative of this nature heritage because they stem from the idea of collective belonging, a social recognition of material and cultural values, and a public concern for preserving and passing them on [44]. Without forgetting that its purpose remains clearly productive and that the current scenario of the liberalization of agricultural markets is not conducive to cultural recognition, there is an urgent need for comprehensive policies that will ensure the compatibility of both economic and social activities and make it possible to maintain the cultural, natural and landscape diversity of Europe, as envisaged in the European Territorial Strategy (1999) [45] or the premises recommended by the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development [25] commented on above.

We consider that heritage related to agricultural activity should incorporate all the relevant contributions that it has made to the history of humanity. Heritage cannot therefore distance itself from either scientific and technical advances or historical forms of organizing work or property that may be objectionable or debatable today. When we speak of agrarian heritage, we are therefore referring to the legacy linked with the historical heritage of farms (cultivated areas, meadows, pastures, and man-made forests), whether tangible (landscapes, buildings related to the production and processing of agricultural products, infrastructure and equipment, and types of rural habitat) or ethnographic (trades, crafts, and folklore) [46], which must be properly protected and valued. In fact, UNESCO has recognized and

protected some cultural landscapes such as Honghe Hani Rice Terraces, the Coffee Cultural Landscape of Colombia, or the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland.

These elements are associated with a classification of heritage that has received various names: heritage related to the agro-industry or agri-food industrial heritage [47,48], as well as rural heritage [49], as its location in rural areas is obvious, and we now have the concept of agrarian heritage, named after the appearance of The Baeza Charter on Agrarian Heritage in 2012 [31]. This latter came from the scientific debate on the undervaluation of agricultural assets and the inadequate treatment given to them, in many cases, by urban and land use planning instruments, as well as the danger of deterioration and alteration to which many of them are subject.

The Charter states that agrarian heritage “is made up of all natural and cultural, tangible and intangible assets, generated and used by agricultural activity throughout history”. It therefore includes movable assets (utensils, implements or tools used for farming, the transport, storage and manufacture of crops and livestock, documents and bibliographic objects, etc.), individual real estate assets (construction elements considered separately: country estates, orchards, agricultural processing centers, granaries, fences, plots, etc.), joint or linear real estate assets (landscapes, rural settlements, irrigation systems, unique agro-ecosystems, livestock trails, roads, etc.), intangible heritage (language, beliefs, rituals and festive events, knowledge, gastronomy and culinary culture, craft techniques, living treasures, etc.), and natural and genetic heritage (local crop varieties, local livestock breeds, seeds, soils, vegetation and related wild animals, etc.). This is a heritage that, in spite of this diversity of goods, has a holistic and unifying character derived from the main constituent element that is agrarian activity that is to be understood as a social practice of undoubted importance for the development of Man and the reason why this legacy is considered above all to be “cultural”.

Its uniqueness is centered around the activity as a fundamental constituent of its relationship to its regional dimension and the interrelationship between natural and cultural assets. The final aim of this document is to encourage a public debate (scientific, social and institutional) from which principles and mechanisms can be agreed upon for recognizing and preserving the value of historical and traditional agricultural spaces and assets, and to serve as recognition and honor for the agricultural sector.

From the point of view of heritage, we started from the consideration that all regions have a stock of heritage elements—or heritage capital—that grew up during the process of adaptation by human groups to the strengths and weaknesses arising from the characteristics of an area in order to satisfy their needs, taking into account their changing tastes and trade relations with other regions, to which we must add, in this case, technical changes in the forms of cultivation. In order for this stock to be able to have a heritage value and convert its assets into resources, “it must go through a process of adaptation/transformation that ensures its ability to satisfy a series of contemporary needs and demands” [49]. Therefore, although heritage elements existed previously, heritage resources are produced a posteriori, and these may convert areas into tourist sites if they are suitable for consumption as such [50].

In the case of vineyards, we found a series of unique elements that endorse their cultural and heritage character. From the cultural point of view, theirs is a use with an indisputable historical background in Europe, linked in their origins to the expansion of the Roman Empire. In addition, they are the clear result of a certain physical environment and of Man’s ability to transform this environment, which has evolved over time and has allowed vines to be cultivated with various economic functions. Vineyards’ cultural nature also has a social dimension, thanks to the strength of the direct family farming model, which is complemented by a solid agro-industrial sector dedicated to manufacturing, processing and commercial distribution, with hundreds of indirect jobs. This nature also represents a clear element of identity for the local population in which this crop has been their mainstay, associated with a broad tangible heritage, mainly of a constructive type (wine cellars)—as can be seen in Figure 2—and intangible heritage (traditions, folklore, festivals, etc.), which is still deeply rooted.



**Figure 2.** Osborne Winery (Jerez, Spain).

When characterizing the agrarian heritage of vineyards, its elements present a certain diversity. In regard to the tangible elements, there is, in the first place, the movable assets referred to as utensils, implements or tools used when working with the vines and in the storage and production of wines; elements linked to transport; and we could even include pictorial works in this section. Of much greater importance is the individual immovable property that is identified, mainly, by constructed elements that present a certain uniqueness and are linked with the cultivation of vineyards, such as farmhouses, waterwheels, wells, and ponds, as well as constructions linked with the processing of the products, especially wine cellars. In short, the authenticity required by the WTO is demonstrated by a large number of assets that require conservation and re-evaluation as evidence of human activities rooted in the land and that are linked to the landscape as an indissoluble whole.

A third set of elements with heritage value are those that are part of the intangible agrarian heritage, perhaps more difficult to identify but equally representative of the local identity and wine culture. Among them are the elements related to language (specific terms), beliefs, rituals and festive events, mainly local festivals associated with religion, and know-how, crafts and traditions.

### 3.3. Cultural Ecosystem Services

The optimum conservation of natural resources and cultural and heritage assets also serves to promote the generation of feelings and emotions during the tourism experience. The intangible benefits generated by the enjoyment of ecosystems, landscapes, locations or places are identified with what the United Nations calls cultural ecosystem services (CESs). These kinds of services promote the spiritual enrichment, mental health, cognitive development, reflection and the aesthetic and recreational experience of the people who inhabit, work and enjoy them, all of which can possibly be applied based on a re-evaluation of heritage and the development of ecotourism.

As a result, landscapes can offer a wide range of experiential and intellectual services. These benefits will differ, depending on whether the interaction with the environment is active or passive. When the interaction is “active”, it allows for the direct stimulation of a sensory, aesthetic and contemplative experience, whereas scientific research, education, culture, the re-evaluation of heritage and the definition of religious symbols and meanings correspond to a “passive” type of interaction [51] (p. 6).

In regard to vineyard landscapes, we recognize an important diversity of cultural services to the population due to their dynamic and cultural nature. We have already mentioned how the specific interrelationships between physical and human elements throughout history have given rise to a rich tangible and intangible heritage of various types, fostering the perception of rural spaces as places offering different values, such as beauty, peace and quiet, authenticity, and cultural value that are characteristic of the re-evaluation of rural spaces today [52,53]. In their study, Winkler and Nicholas identified up to a total of 12 types of ecosystem services that are complemented by theoretical approaches to other forms of ecosystems or sites, such as cultural or agricultural landscapes (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Indicators proposed as cultural ecosystem services (CESs) in recent studies and research.

Millenium Ecosystem Assessment [26]	Cultural Landscape Pleinenger et al. [54]	Agrarian Landscape Berkel y Verburg, [55]	Wine Landscape Winkler and Nicholas, [56]
Cultural diversity	Spiritual services	Recreation	Existence
Spiritual and religious values	Educational values	Aesthetic beauty	Legacy
Knowledge systems	Inspiration	Cultural heritage	Physical
Educational values	Aesthetic values	Inspiration	Experiential
Inspiration	Social relations	Spirituality	Scientific
Aesthetic values	Sense of place		Educational
Social relations	Cultural heritage		Entertainment
Sense of place	Recreation and ecotourism		Aesthetics
Cultural heritage	Restlessness		Heritage
Recreation and ecotourism	Fear level		Symbolic
	Noise level		Spiritual

Own production.

As we see it, there are a series of services, such as inspiration, spirituality, cultural heritage and recreation, which are repeated in each of these studies and are, a priori, easily identifiable services in vineyard landscapes. The first, inspiration, is identified as a driving force for artistic creation (literary, pictorial, etc.), and also in relation to architecture, identity symbols and folklore, with which it decisively contributes to the generation of cultural heritage, both with tangible and intangible elements. When applied to vineyard landscapes, it is related to aspects as diverse as movable assets (in the case of literary and/or pictorial works), distinctive immovable property (such as traditional buildings,) and, above all, the intangible heritage associated with the uses and customs that are based on the traditions of each region.

Spirituality and religiosity, according to the MEA, are linked with the elements that are considered valuable for the community because of their tribal or fetishist significance. In the case of vineyards, it is easy to identify these elements of intangible heritage, grouped into beliefs, rituals and festive acts representative of the role of religion on saints' days and festivities mainly associated with fertility. Concerning cultural heritage, in our case, we associate it with the specifically agrarian "made up of . . . set of natural and cultural assets, tangible and intangible, generated or exploited by agrarian activity throughout history" [31] (p. 32). In vineyard landscapes, we find a wide variety of assets already mentioned in the previous section. Finally, in the case of recreation, vineyard landscapes, of which those of the La Mancha region (Spain) can be seen in the following image (Figure 3), are directly linked to various types of tourism, such as ecotourism, rural tourism and, more specifically, wine tourism, all under the umbrella of sustainability. In their study, Klara J. Winkler and Kimberly A. Nicholas discussed vineyard landscapes in two specific areas: the Napa and Sonoma counties in California, as well as an incipient wine growing area in south-eastern England. This study employed a structured survey of 44 statements about 11 possible CES classes, where the assignment of different values to the landscape depended on the nature of the local people, whether residents or wine producers. The results showed that all the proposed CESs had a maximum correspondence with the principles of sustainable tourism, and specifically with the conservation of the natural environment, while the existential and recreational feeling were be more linked with the experience as a whole, accommodating the cultural and economic dimension of sustainable tourism.



**Figure 3.** Vineyard Landscape in La Mancha (Spain).

#### 4. Discussion

The discussion on the obtained results has focused on the potential offered by tourism in vineyard landscapes for sustainable tourism in an attempt to address the objective and the hypotheses put forward. Since we have been approaching this issue from a theoretical and general viewpoint, we will not refer to specific sustainability indicators. Rather, we will review the international documentation that sets the roadmap for sustainable tourism and highlight the aspects relating to vineyard landscapes. We will also briefly mention other circumstances that are negatively affecting them, focusing on the modernization of the wine sector in the context of the globalization of agricultural markets.

##### 4.1. Opportunities for Sustainable Tourism

Beginning with the first World Tourism Charter [39], signed in Lanzarote (Spain), it was recognized that the development of tourism had to be “ecologically tolerable in the long term, economically viable and equitable from an ethical and social perspective for local communities”, aspects that can only be achieved through appropriate planning, which we consider essential for the practice of tourism in vineyard landscapes. We consider this activity to fit “into the natural, cultural and human environment”, as stated in the Charter, as well as to contribute to the recognition of “the traditions of local communities, and support for their identity, culture and interests . . . It involves the participation of all the actors involved in the process and at all levels: local, regional, national and international”. In addition, “the conservation, protection and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage represents a real cultural, technological and professional challenge”, among other important aspects.

With the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism [40], the WTO provided a set of principles designed to guide the main players in tourism development with the aim of maximizing the benefits to the sector while minimizing possible negative consequences for the environment, cultural heritage and societies. Tourism in vineyard landscapes clearly responds to some of its ten articles:

- It contributes to the “mutual understanding and respect between peoples and society” (Article 1) through the enhancement of an agricultural activity.
- It is a “vehicle for individual and collective fulfilment” (Article 2), as well as a factor of sustainable development (Article 3), based on appropriate planning.
- It is a factor in the “use and enrichment of the cultural heritage of humanity” (Article 4), in the agricultural cultural landscapes included on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Moreover, it is “beneficial for the host communities” (Article 5), in which tourism contributes to supplement incomes, generally linked to the primary sector, and stimulate local economies.

In our most immediate context, the European Union (EU) documentation relating to tourism, we should highlight the Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism launched by the commission in 2007 [57] with the objective of promoting economic prosperity, equity and social cohesion, environmental protection and culture. Particularly significant was the reference to the requirement of proposing appropriate policies to provide sustainable destination management, an overarching and very important aspect of rural tourism. From the above principles, tourism, in relation to vineyard landscapes, contributes to the provision of a comprehensive, integrated approach and can and must propose long-term activities that “take care of the needs of both future and present generations”, makes it possible to “respect the characteristics of the destinations”, involve “all stakeholders”, and assess “the reception capability”—always on the basis of proper land planning.

Tourism based on the enjoyment of the cultivated landscapes, in this case vineyards, and their associated agrarian heritage can contribute to the creation of environmental awareness; protect wild flora and fauna, biological diversity, ecosystems, cultural diversity; and increase the welfare and livelihoods of local communities, so it should be supported, like other types of tourism, by following the document *The Future We Want* [42] (p. 28), which came out of the Rio +20 Earth Summit, in which sustainable tourism was expressly mentioned.

Based on the most recent and important contribution, approved at the World Summit on Sustainable Tourism +20, held in the city of Vitoria (Spain) in 2015, the World Charter for Sustainable Tourism +20 [24], which updates the one signed in Lanzarote in 1995, tourism in vineyard landscapes contributes to the respect for and enhancement of “local traditions and knowledge” and also makes it possible to “promote the full participation of local communities (. . .) in decisions affecting them in tourism development projects”, as indicated in its preamble. In relation to what is set out in this document, we would also like to point out that vineyard landscapes favor the understanding of tourism as a “transversal activity” that contributes to fighting poverty, protecting nature and the environment, and promoting sustainable development:

- If well managed, it can “be a transcendental protagonist when it comes to preserving present treasures for future generations, ensuring the protection and integrity of our common tangible and intangible heritage”, in this case linked to the wine culture.
- It may also be “compatible with nature conservation and biodiversity”.
- It is one of the “most promising drivers of economic growth”.
- It constitutes “a driving force for cultural heritage, the arts and cultural and creative industries, in accordance with UNESCO’s cultural conventions and its operational guidelines”. Good examples of this are the agricultural cultural landscapes linked with the vineyards on the World Heritage List. In fact, governments and institutions have been called upon to “use the sites designated by UNESCO as places of learning to foster the harmonious integration of tourism with cultural and natural heritage”.
- As tourist destinations, these landscapes and rural areas, in general, should include all stakeholders, empower local communities, facilitate planning, maximize economic benefits, preserve their values by assessing the threats, risks and opportunities, carrying capacity, etc., and promote educational and outreach activities.

Particularly important in relation to the subject under discussion is the attention that the Charter pays to one key issue: “preserving our common heritage”, in this case, that of agrarian heritage. Starting from the idea that “tourism can and must reinforce the decisive role of heritage, both tangible and intangible, in contemporary society, consolidating identity and cultural diversity”, this can determine the development of many destinations. In this sense, cultural landscapes like the Cinque Terre (Figure 4) in Italy or the Lavaux terraces in Switzerland, both included on the UNESCO World Heritage List, constitute “one of the main components of the world’s tourism assets” while promoting “cultural diversity, universal values, a culture of peace and inter-cultural dialogue”. Preserving its authenticity and integrity is essential.



**Figure 4.** Vineyards in the cultural landscape of Cinque Terre (Italy).

More recently, the declaration of 2017 at the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development again highlighted [25] “cultural values, diversity and heritage” as one of its five key areas. In its promotion of responsible tourism, the “Travel, Enjoy, Respect” campaign [58], which is linked to this event, also encouraged, among many other things, “enjoying everything that makes an international destination a unique and different place”, as well as “purchasing products and handicrafts made in the area” and paying “a fair price”, features that all are perfectly applicable to tourism in vineyard landscapes, especially the sale of local products like wine but not necessarily handicrafts.

#### *4.2. Threats: Market Dynamics and Conservation of Vineyard Landscapes*

We have already commented on how agricultural activities cannot remain apart from the dynamics of globalization that condition the behavior of international markets. In current capitalist or evolved agriculture, factors such as competitiveness, modernization and the adaptability of farms are key factors. The European wine sector, especially in Mediterranean areas, has made significant efforts in this regard. The Common Agricultural Policy, and specifically the rules promoting the Common Organization of the Market in Wine of 1999 and 2008, have ensured the regulation and adaptation of production potential, supporting initiatives that have sought modernization, agronomic improvement, and a commitment to quality. These changes have also had important consequences for landscapes. For example, in the region of Castilla–La Mancha (Spain), the place with the highest concentration of vineyards in the world, the sanction placed on varietal restructuring and reconversion programs in 1999 led to the generalization of trellis vineyards, or the approval, in the 2008, of Common Organization of the Market in Wine Reform, of the uprooting policy to encourage competitive vineyards and its impact on the gradual disappearance of traditional vineyards in order to cultivate other land uses. The withdrawal of low yielding vineyards, some of them of important scenic value and which could produce wines of good quality, and the appearance of mechanized vineyards, with their peculiar physiognomy of posts and wires, has caused serious impacts on the landscape that undoubtedly influence their perception, both in their natural and cultural aspects. Being aware that agricultural uses have a strictly economic purpose, we consider that the authorities must ensure the protection of the landscape of the traditional vineyard, especially that which represents a cultural legacy and important scenic value. It is therefore essential to promote appropriate planning policies that ensure

the economic and cultural compatibility of wine-growing operations, attempting to create tourism products that meet the sustainability criteria outlined here.

## 5. Conclusions

This analysis has allowed us to examine the relationships between agricultural landscapes, particularly those derived from the cultivation of vines (vineyards) and their potential to form part of sustainable tourism strategies in greater depth. Based on the methodological bases provided by the scientific literature, the analysis of the cultural ecosystem services (CES) and the assumptions on agrarian heritage expressed in the Baeza Charter, we have analyzed how vineyard landscapes, due to their cultural nature, their heritage wealth, and the ecosystem services associated with them, guarantee their sustainability in regard to tourist activity, provided that appropriate planning criteria are put in place.

At the present time, there is no doubt that tourism based on the internationally recognized principles of sustainable development is the only way forward for it to develop in harmony with the environment and human well-being, as indicated in the World Charter for Sustainable Tourism +20.

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