

Traditional Wine Landscape as a Rural Heritage: Portuguese Verde Wine Vineyards

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Abstract: Verde wine has a traditional and unique range of patterns and processes of cultivation that result from the interactions between communities and environments. The result of this interaction characterizes the local wine culture and rural landscape and creates diversity of characteristics developed through times. In this context, vineyard historical landscape assures the range of differentiation of rural places and contributes to the image of wine as a cultural asset based on the cultural heritage accumulation and the slow transformation of the landscapes. Safeguard this historical resilient landscape could reinforce the local character in his own unicity, authenticity, significance, diversity as a testimony of identity. Safeguard the historical wine landscape promotes the preservation of old techniques and fragile tangible and intangible heritage condemned to disappearance with the new standardized exploitations. In this context, this study identifies the values of Verde wine landscape as a unique heritage in the world, aiming to safeguard this traditional landscape in the perspective of local communities with a tourism approach. The methodological approach is to analyse, reflect and open the debate about Verde wine landscape elements and characteristics, to evaluate its importance and residents' satisfaction, and to compare aesthetic perceptions with other elements of Verde wine landscape. Quantitative approach with survey questionnaires was applied to residents of the Verde wine region. The results identify local wine culture and rural landscape and find the diversity of characteristics developed through times in different places. The residents find Verde wine landscape beautiful and attractive, and they are attached to the traditional Verde wine vineyards, quality of wine and quality of gastronomy. The study reinforces the safeguard of this historical resilient landscape and the local character in his own unicity, authenticity, significance, diversity as a testimony of identity. It promotes the preservation of traditional and ancient techniques and fragile tangible and intangible heritage of Verde wine.

Keywords: wine, landscape, traditional, values, perceptions, rural heritage

1. Introduction

Several studies focus on the importance of the rural landscape protection and the conservation of rural cultural heritage. Cultural heritage is a key element in the management and development of local and regional value dynamics (Freitas et al., 2017). It is a crucial element in tourism development (Ismagilova et al., 2015) and in the creation of local strategies for economic and social development (Vargas, 2018). From another point of view, the valorisation of local cultural assets increases the relationship between residents and visitors, and develop feelings of ownership and satisfaction in residents, promoting tourism development (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2019) in urban and rural places (Karagiannis & Metaxas, 2020).

In the historical relation between societies and nature (Council of Europe, 2000), the cultural layers accumulated over a place, build elements of identity that characterise places and brings diversity in a larger context. Each place has its own experience, its life living and many stories to tell, through the linkage of nature and human relations and practices (Wijetunga & Sung, 2015). This is the case of Verde wine region, where the territorial values create an interesting area to visit and to appreciate. Rural landscape is a representation of cultures around the world and local cultural traditions (ICOMOS, 2017). Individual and group identity are closely linked with history and events associated with the tangible and intangible environment surrounding (Dredge & Jenkins, 2003). Mitchell & Barrett (2015) focus their attention on conservation of the rural landscape as an emerging subject and as an opportunity to merge heritage values and environmental strategies. Safeguarding the cultural heritage and preserving the cultural memory of a community is essential for the development of a local identity, attractiveness and sustainability of economic activities, where tourism is included.

The first initial question that opened the possibility of this study, results from the observation of the traditional Verde wine landscapes that are disappearing. New intensive and industrialised vineyards are increasing in the

rural world and are changing cultural and traditional landscapes. This phenomenon drives to a cultural loss with the disappearance of the traditional way of life (Ye et al., 2020).

The traditional Verde wine vineyards, a resilient testimony of local cultural, material, and immaterial heritage, produced by the generations of residents in a certain place, began to be fragile towards the rural mechanization and the wine production. The economic growth of the wine industry associated to the demographic decrease in the rural lands, cause abandon of the family rural exploration system and, therefore, farms and traditional vineyards abandonment. As a result, the tangible and intangible heritage linked to the old-style rural exploitation is in risk of disappearance as well as the rural landscape associated.

With this first diagnosis, a question arises: Is this traditional and cultural landscape valorised by local communities and by tourists, visitors, and local territorial stakeholders? With this initial doubt, the study reflects around cultural heritage and rural identity through a traditional wine landscape, considering the values, memories, identity, aiming to disseminate historical uses and testify the passage of times. It is in the cross analysis between all regional stakeholder that allows to understand the significance and the values of a landscape (Freitas; Sousa & Ramazanov, 2020). The present study will focus only on the residents' point of view, the future studies will present the visitors and other territorial stakeholders' perspectives.

2. The significance of rural landscapes

The historical construction made by local communities marked the passage of time and maintain resilient activities that created tangible and intangible cultural assets of great significance that remain vital for the *spiritu loci* (ICOMOS, 2008). For those communities is a daily life use and local engagement. For the external perspective is an historical heritage, material or immaterial, that it is still in use (Katapidi, 2021). Those communities as actors and heritage builders, made possible to reach landscape unicity and diversity structures that are elementary bases in the increasing of rural tourism numbers (Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2015). The continuity of agricultural and forestry exploitation and the permanency of the territorial management system continues to create and maintain the history for future generations. As Mitchell & Barrett (2015:703) refer "the continuity and vitality of cultural systems and traditional production have influenced characteristic patterns of land use, the biodiversity of plants and animals, community development and a distinctive sense of place". Considering all this value, meaning and importance for the past, present and future, the memory of communities should be kept alive and heritage must be preserved to promote places character and quality (Andrade-Suarez & Caamaño Franco, 2020). The rural and forest places and its heritage elements are, as Prats (2012) points out, the result of a symbolic social construction that occurred at a given historical moment. With this noteworthy reference, the present generation should maintain the integrity, respect and act concerning the cultural and natural protection (Moldoveanu & Neacșu, 2018) to preserve values of identity for new generations. As referred by ICOMOS (2017), rural landscapes are vital heritage elements (ICOMOS, 2017). Chen, Ren and Zhang (2021) underline that heritage is a vital resource of rural development. Trying to understand the concept of "justified heritage value", the Burra Charter (1999), applied to all significant places including land or landscape in its action sphere, recognise cultural significance as "aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations" (Figure 1).

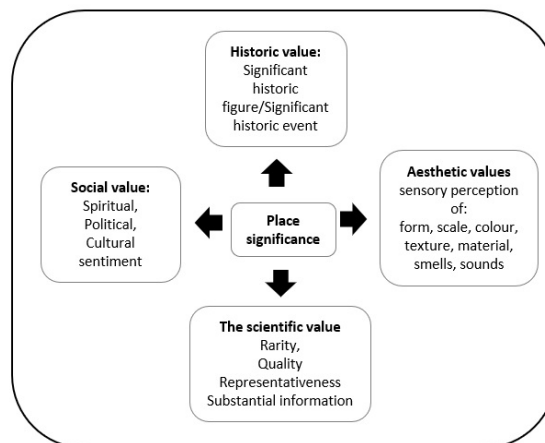


Figure 1: Indicators of value according to Burra Charter (1999)

Source: author's compilation based on Burra Charter

Claimed the *spirit of place* (ICOMOS, 2008) through the diverse and unique characteristics of the tangible or intangible heritage that give place identity, significance and authenticity, the internal values constructed by traditions, practices, local and traditional knowledge, or multiple form of tangible and intangible expressions, are the real meaning and significance of places.

UNESCO and ICOMOS recognised rural landscapes as cultural landscapes, places of ways of living representation that expresses the relation between places and people, and they are inscribed in the World Heritage List. ICOMOS (2017) identify the productive land as heritage as well as the cultural knowledge associated, traditions, practices as elements that confers to landscapes the capacity to be considered as heritage – “rural landscapes as heritage are expressions of social structures and functional organizations” (ICOMOS, 2017). To recognise the rural past as heritage (ICOMOS, 2017), the efforts should be focused on the comprehension of what is heritage to be conserved in those places, which still didn't have the sufficient attention from the scientific community and decision makers.

The new literature about landscape heritage focuses on the material or immaterial aspects, but it is still possible to find a gap. Those new and important studies that are changing the perspective of the rural landscape and changing the focus of the landscape study to heritage, still do not have enough debate about traditional agriculture technics as an important component of the landscapes and also, do not focus on the perspective of landscape valorisation made in traditional ways.

The successive communities' layers of generations that transformed the landscape with the daily work, developed the landscape and its aesthetics. With these successive layers, the landscape can be a lived and interpreted place heritage in the present (Lekakis & Dragouni, 2020). Accordingly, the concepts of landscape, heritage and identity must be integrated into the spatial and physical planning of regions aiming to create value (Tengberg et al., 2012). To create this value, tourism is one of the important activities for rural areas for its distinctiveness and character (Zakariya et al., 2019). By other side, tourism could be a strategy to safeguard historical and cultural landscape uniqueness as an important way to increase the visit of small cities and rural areas (Ashworth, 2013).

Wine tourism is an essential regional and local development element, since it creates possibilities of joining culture, traditions, history, heritage and environment as natural basis of the rural economy (Andrade-Suarez & Caamaño Franco, 2020). The historical and traditional structures and processes of landscape transformation that maintain a traditional design are more sustainable, multifunctional, biodiverse, and resilient (Calabrò & Vieri, 2018). As Gibson (2020) refers, culture and heritage make a link with the past that could create value, reinforcing economic, cultural, social and sustainable growth.

2.1 Perceptions of wine landscape value(s)

Nowadays the wine landscapes present some risks of standardisation resulting in upgrading of agriculture processes in relation to the diversity of places and work techniques. The rural areas are places where our collective heritage is still alive, but in degradation and in risk of disappearance (Miranda et al., 2016). Big changes occurred in the traditional landscape, because wine consumption is the most significant concern in wine demand (Sottini et al., 2019).

The new and industrialised wine landscape, intensive and less sustainable, has recently some reactions from the traditional agriculture, more related with local identity and more sustainable, as an alternative (Steinhäuser, 2020). This traditional landscape is attached to material and immaterial heritage and is more emotional, as it is a strong link with the local community's history. As Šťastná and Vaishar (2020) argue, the rural landscape has always some values for local communities as support of identity, locality, ownership, and the sense of belonging. In the same way, Agnoletti et al. (2019) understand the rural landscapes as an expression of history and cultural identity of the societies in History.

The significant historical value of traditional rural landscape has an enormous impact in sustainable strategies and play an important role in the territorial development (Fazio & Modica, 2018). In this perspective, it is important to characterise the traditional wine landscape, and identify some natural and cultural elements that could mark the difference (Bruwer & Gross, 2017).

It is important to notice that the historical process and techniques of wine production could be a great element to justify not only the identity of places, but also the cultural diversity that could be a stimulation to the economic development. As Winkler and Nicholas (2016) argue, the landscape is “*more than wine*”, it is a complex cultural ecosystem where we have different perceptions from the traditional vineyards landscape.

Williams (2001) refers that wine tourism regions are investing on themselves to attract tourism and visitors. As Bruwer and Joy (2017) reinforce, natural scenery and landscape are very high rated. In this way, rural and natural areas and small cities could increase the tourist approach on the territory (Guedes and Rebelo, 2020). The economic value of the wine landscape aesthetic is a territorial reality (Freitas, et al., 2017).

In the field of wine tourism, tourist and visitors look for a high-quality product linked to a specific wine region with particular characteristics, usually a well-defined territory that integrates the dual concept region/landscape (Croce & Perri, 2010).

Thus, wine is history and identity (Foronda-Robles, 2018) and old vineyards contribute to the place aesthetic, reinforcing the heritage and cultural values of wine landscape with its ancient and traditional vineyards (Abraham et al., 2014).

3. Research area and methodology

3.1 Verde wine region

Verde wine region is located in the northwest of Portugal, occupying almost 8400 km² (Figure 2).

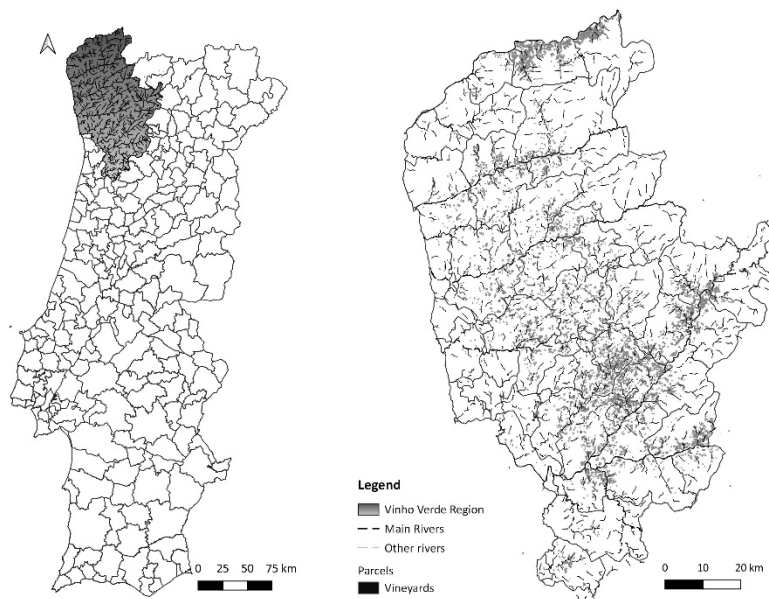


Figure 2: Geographical localisation of Verde wine region

Source: author’s compilation based on CAOP (2019) and COS (2018)

This area is strongly marked by rurality, presenting in its territory a total of 36 cities, contrasting with the 113 villages (INE, 2019). Regarding the agricultural sector, it has very fertile soils, being characterised by small farms, due to the high population scattering across the territory (Cancela d’ Abreu, Correia and Oliveira, 2004).

It is possible to find a varied set of harvests, where the cultivation of the vine prevails, with unique characteristics, such as “*ramada*”, “*bordadura*”, “*uveiras*” and autochthones trees supporting the vine trees, which present themselves as a fundamental and unique aspect of the landscape of this region.

The region is represented by the Viticulture Commission of the Verde wine region (CVRVV), which includes the Denomination of Origin (DO) Vinho Verde and the Geographical Indication (IG) Minho. In the production of wines with DO Vinho Verde 45 grape varieties can be used and in the production of wines with IG Minho 67 grape

varieties can be used, according to the ordinances that regulate their production (Ministry of Agriculture and the Sea, 2015).

This study proposes Verde wine region as a single, exclusive, and unique landscape. In this region, tradition is still a mark of the region wine landscape that made it a single example in the world. The main traditional characteristics of uniqueness of the Verde wine landscape are (Figure 3):

1. the high canopy management (Figure 3a) - the usual of canopy support for those vineyards are autochthonous trees (such as oaks, elm trees, cherry trees, poplars and olive trees, or hollyhocks that give a special flavour to the wines) pruned and driven exclusively to be the wine tree support (Figure 3b). Another special and unique way of canopy management is in horizontal way above local pedestrian paths and small roads called “*ramada*” (Figure 3c).
2. the vineyard cultivation around the fields, called “*vinha de bordadura*” (border vineyard); the land use and share for other agricultural crops, usually cereals, horticulture products and pastures (Figure 3d and 3e).

Ribeiro (1987) mentions that the “*vinha de bordadura*” practice only exists in Italy and Portugal, with the vines taking advantage of the trees to roll up. This system is called *uveiras*, giving rise to a barely ripened grape and producing an abundant, light and slightly acidic wine, the Verde Wine.



Figure 3: a) High canopy of Vinho Verde; b) The autochthonous trees as support of wine trees; c) Horizontal canopy; d) Vineyard cultivation around the fields; e) Vineyard prune

Source: author’s pictures

The characterisation of the Verde wine region allows us to conclude that we are facing a region with increasing economic importance for Portugal, and for the north of the country. We are also facing a region with a strong cultural and historical elements and values that need to be protected and safeguarded for the future generations. To protect those patrimonial and cultural landscape elements is important to know if this traditional landscape is valorised.

3.2 Data collection and sample profile

Following the gap in literature that do not explore enough the ancient and traditional agriculture technics as immaterial heritage that construct landscapes, this study, in a first step, attempts to know residents’ perceptions about the aesthetics traditional methods of producing grapes. The study was conducted with the residents of the Verde wine region in Portugal. The data were collected using face to face survey questionnaires to the residents of the Verde wine region during local wine events in Guimarães and Celorico de Basto between September 2019 and February 2020.

According to the results, most of the respondents have their residence in Celorico de Basto (39), Guimarães (37), Braga (29), and Viana do Castelo (28). There are also 10 respondents that live in Amarante, 10 in Melgaço and 8 in Felgueiras. The other respondents have their residence in Monção, Matosinhos and Fafe (4 residents in each council), Resende (3), Vizela, Vila Nova de Famalicão, Mondim de Basto, Maia e Lousada (2 in each council), and Penafiel, Marco de Canaveses and Esposende (1 in each council).

With regard to the survey questionnaire structure, it consisted of 4 questions in regard to personal information such as age, gender, education level and local of residence, one question related to the satisfaction level with the viewed landscape/places of Verde wine by the respondents with a 5-point scale and 1 multiple-choice question related to the best characteristics and attributes of Verde wine region according to the perceptions of the residents. The attributes have been selected and included into the questionnaire on the base of the previous studies on wine and rural landscape and review of literature.

A total of 230 valid answers were collected. The data was then analysed using statistical software SPSS.

To select the individuals to participate in the survey questionnaire with more than 16 years old, a convenience sampling approach was applied during the local wine events.

The population is represented by the residents of the small cities and rural places of Verde wine region, where we can still find old vineyards.

4. Results and discussion

Using SPSS software, the frequency analysis has been conducted in relation to the satisfaction level of the residents related to Verde wine landscape. To analyse the level of satisfaction, a Likert scale of 1 (not satisfied at all) to 5 (very satisfied) was applied. The application of this analysis allows us to understand the residents satisfaction in a general context, and subsequently to cross those results with the presence of the old and new vineyards characteristics. The results demonstrate that 62% of interviewees were very satisfied, 30% satisfied and the remaining 8% answered “neutral” (6%), “not satisfied” and “not satisfied at all” (Table 1). Generally speaking, most of the respondents are “very satisfied” and “satisfied”, while very insignificant percentage is “not satisfied”. Therefore, it can be concluded that the residents are aware and valorise an aesthetic of Vinho Verde landscape.

Table 1: Respondents’ satisfaction level with the viewed landscape of Verde wine

<i>Satisfaction level</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Not satisfied at all	2	1%
Not satisfied	2	1%
Neutral	15	6%
Satisfied	69	30%
Very satisfied	142	62%
Total	230	100%

In order to understand what best characterises the Verde wine landscape, an analysis has been conducted on the degree of satisfaction related to the attributes of Verde wine landscape. The general results indicate the most selected variables : the beautiful and attractive landscape (84%), the wine quality (82%) and the wine and gastronomy quality (80%). The least importance was given to the activities related to Verde wine (23%) and the integration of wine tourism infrastructure (28%). It is also interesting to refer some other characteristics that were identified, namely the accessibility to the region (48%), the traditional vineyards conduction as interesting elements of landscape (46%), and the change of the landscape for better with the new vineyards (46%). The wine tourism infrastructures, as wineries, considering the number, accessibility or integration in the landscape, are not significant to the residents.

Residents perceived Verde wine region not only as a landscape, but also as a good quality product (wine and gastronomy), enjoyable in peaceful rural environment. Therefore, the local gastronomy (food and wine) should be considered as primary factors in promoting the region and representing its character (Alonso, 2013; Montanari, 2009). However, it is also true that the local community makes an integral part of the experience and may contribute to the success and positive image of the region.

When isolated the answers of those who understand in a first place that the Verde wine region is a beautiful landscape and compare with other landscape dimensions, we conclude that those who understand the Verde wine region is a beautiful landscape also choose several characteristics (quality of wine, gastronomy, environment, friendly people, routes of the region, climate, accessibility, vineyards in traditional conduction , new vineyards, tourism infrastructure and activities) (Figure 4). The quality of those products joins the aesthetic perception of the Verde Wine landscape that denote the resident’s satisfaction and other important territorial components as accessibility, climate, friendly people, and old vineyards as well.

According to the survey results, most of the respondents linked beautiful landscape with the quality of wine (73%), quality of gastronomy (71%) and peaceful environment (70%). Bruwer and Gross (2017) have the equivalent results for McLaren valley, Australia. It is possible to say that the beautiful scenery and the quality of wines are important elements on a wine landscape perception.

The study results confirm that respondents believe beautiful landscape is also characterised by the friendly and hospitable people (63%). Regarding other characteristics such as Verde wine routes and pleasant climate, they are perceived as a part of the beautiful and attractive landscape by 60% of the residents. According to the residents the least important characteristics are Verde wine activities (22%), accessibility of wineries (32%), tourism infrastructure (37%).

Thus, it is essential to ensure a positive experience by diversification of Verde wine activities in the region, taken into consideration that tourists associate wine tourism with wines, vineyards, wineries and the entire wine culture and heritage. Territory, landscape and heritage are inseparable concepts allowing all the physical, biological and cultural elements that make up the landscape to be used simultaneously.

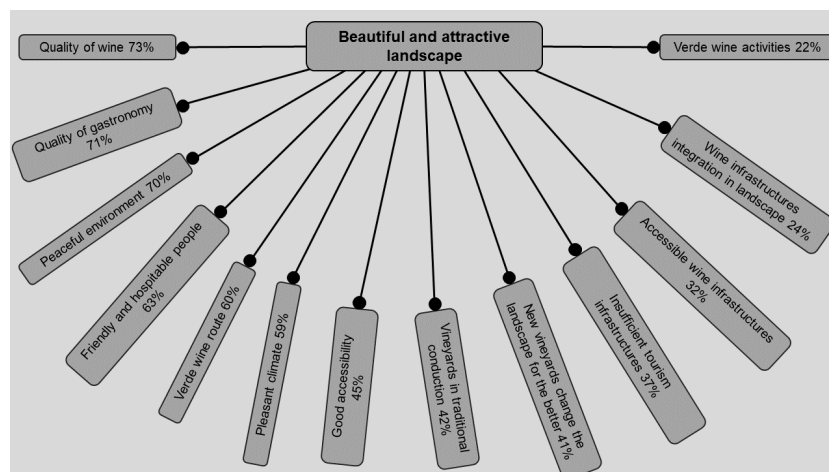


Figure 4: Relation between the beautiful landscape and characteristics of Verde wine region

Source: author’s compilation

Next step of the analysis was to compare an association between the perceptions on beautiful landscape, old and new vineyards and satisfaction level of the respondents by the viewed landscape (table 2).

According to the results, 67% respondents who consider Verde wine region’s landscape beautiful and attractive, are very satisfied with the place and 27,5% residents are satisfied.

Regarding the association analysis between old vineyards in traditional conduction and satisfaction level, more than 90% of the respondents who consider the vineyards (old) in traditional conduction one of the most interesting elements of the landscape, are very satisfied and satisfied with the place. Similar results were obtained when crossing the new vineyards with the satisfaction level.

To determine whether the association is statistically significant between categorical variables such as satisfaction level with the place and perception on the landscape attributes, we have used the Fisher’s exact test. According to the results we do reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is enough evidence to suggest an association between beautiful and attractive landscape and satisfaction degree of the respondents

(value of the test statistic is 21.4343, $p = 0.000$), as well as between perceptions on old vineyards and respondents satisfaction levels (test value = 13.009, $p = 0.004$). Nevertheless, the Fisher's exact test indicates that there is no association (p value = 0.403) between perceptions on new vineyards and satisfaction level of the respondents. It is possible to conclude that the perceptions on traditional vineyards influence on satisfaction of the residents with the viewed landscape/places of Verde wine, while the mentioned association is not confirmed in the case of new vineyards.

Table 2: Cross tabulation between perceptions on beautiful landscape, old and new vineyards and satisfaction level of the respondents by the viewed landscape

Landscape attributes / Satisfaction level	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Not satisfied	Not satisfied at all
Beautiful and attractive landscape	67%	27,5%	5%	0%	0,5%
Fisher's exact test Value = 21.4343; $p = 0.000$					
Old vineyards in traditional conduction	72%	21%	5%	0%	2%
Fisher's exact test Value = 13.009; $p = 0.004$					
New vineyards change the landscape for better	64%	26%	7%	2%	1%
Fisher's exact test Value = 3.957; $p=0.403$					

As a synthesis, it is possible to understand that there are several characteristics associated to the wine landscape that contribute to the level of satisfaction of the residents, namely the wine landscape, the wine and gastronomy quality and the peaceful rural environment. It was also possible to conclude that there is evidence that suggests an association between beautiful and attractive landscape and the level of satisfaction of the respondents. Finally, the landscape associated to the vineyards in traditional conduction (old vineyards) contributes strongly to high level of satisfaction of the residents. This is an important result, specifically when comparing to the landscape associated to the new vineyards, which was not possible to associate to residents' level of satisfaction.

5. Conclusions

Exploring the resident's perceptions towards unique wine landscape characteristics and satisfaction levels, is important to notice that residents find the wine landscape beautiful and attractive and attached to heritage. It is possible to infer that the landscape of Verde wine is much more than the Verde wine vineyards. Also, the quality of the gastronomic elements, the peaceful environment, the community hospitality, the wine route, or the climate are significant elements in the Verde wine landscape. All these elements are important to the residents and, as daily actors, are part of their lives. Thus, living traditions and live culture should be preserved.

The conservation of the rural landscape as an element of territorial sustainability that develops local and regional dynamics, focus on the local heritage (cultural and natural) as a factor creating new opportunities for the present and future generations (Mitchell & Barrett, 2015). Associated with the local heritage valorisation, it is necessary to safeguard the memory. In the same way the safeguard of memories kept by the communities is necessary to materialize the strategies of local development. The registration and conservation of this data (inventory, digitalization, and archive organization) will only have success with a collaborative and participatory attitude and with means of national and international dissemination to academics and citizens. The preservation of the cultural heritage and the community memory is essential for the development of a local identity and for the characterization of a regional profile. These attributes promote diversity, territorial attractiveness and the growth of sustainable economic activities that generate touristic demand to local and international level (Samsudin & Maliki, 2015).

Considering that territorial identity, heritage and culture are components of local development (Calabrò & Vieri, 2018) it is important to reflect about some strategies to link sustainable local development, tourism and cultural safeguard. It is important to create an image that promote the old vineyards as a sustainable and cultural issue that could develop and appeal to cultural and sustainable tourism and improve rural tourism. It is also essential that local decision makers could identify old vineyards areas that should be preserved and, consequently, give support to the resilient traditional vineyards with all the historical components (high canopy management with

autochthonous trees, the horizontal way above local pedestrian paths, the vineyard cultivation around the fields). To develop and support the “old vineyards” the development of a brand could be an interesting way to improve rural economy and improve the Verde wine identity.

As Bourdin, Wan and Delbos (2019) argue to observe and take decisions about the heritage management process, the satisfaction of the residents is important but not enough. The perspective of tourists and visitors is the best way to validate the heritage management decisions. However, it is not possible to make decisions on the traditional landscape valorising the process without collecting, in the first step, the perspective of local communities who live in the landscape.

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