

Article

The perception of tourism sustainability by stakeholders. The case study of the “Sierra de Aracena y Picos de Aroche” Nature Park, “Sierra Norte de Sevilla” Nature Park and “Sierra de Hornachuelos” Nature Park (Andalusia, Spain)

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Abstract: As a form of protection, a nature park is often created to protect and valorise natural and cultural heritage in peripheral rural areas. However, in terms of multi-functionality, new nature parks are incorporated into traditional productive activities, such as recreational and tourist activities, which sometimes compromise sustainability. The research objective is to study the relationship between tourism and sustainability in the Nature Parks of “Sierra de Aracena y Picos de Aroche”, “Sierra Norte de Sevilla” and “Sierra de Hornachuelos” that makes up the Dehesas de Sierra Morena Biosphere Reserve in Andalusia, Spain. Therefore, selective interviews have been carried out with the stakeholders to establish their perception of sustainable tourism and the presence of dominant discourses. The main conclusions indicate (1) the presence of different dominant discourses on sustainability, namely the conservationist and mercantilist ones, with the prevalence of the economic dimension; (2) poor awareness and adaptation to the context of global change; and (3) the presence of competitive relationships that generate difficulties for the governance of sustainable tourism.

Keywords: Protected areas; stakeholders; sustainable tourism; Sierra Morena.

1. Introduction

Since the mid of the 20th, there has been a progressive disempowerment of rural communities, downgrading them to the periphery [1,2], marginalizing them “to the dominant development processes” [2](p. 2) and exposing them to external decision-making and the continuous loss of competitiveness and employment [3,4]. As a result, these processes conditioned sustainability and generated a difficult institutional context for the development of these areas. Agriculture lost its monopoly in rural areas [5] and the multifunctionality of uses and diversification became an opportunity to adapt to the changing reality [3,6]. As adaptive strategies [6], a novel [7], new non-productive socio-economic activities were incorporated. These activities included leisure and recreation (tourism, restoration), conservation and maintenance of biodiversity and valorization of natural and cultural heritage, residential development [3,8] and traditional productive activities were reinterpreted [3,8].

In this context, the public administration understands the need to protect, conserve and safeguard natural and cultural resources, establishing Protected Nature Areas (hereinafter PNA) to conserve biodiversity and ecosystems [9], to provide ecosystem services [10] and search for solutions to climate change [11]. Rural, previously agricul-

tural, turned into so-called "preserved spaces" [12], where environmental attractiveness and ease of access generate advantages, yet with certain limitations of use since local decision-making is subject to conservation criteria [2]. Nonetheless, such a nature conservation process is not exempt from contradictions [13] when attempting to turn into a natural environment socio-ecological system. This generates different perceptions, conflicting opinions, rejection, and management problems resulting from the relationship between the social system and its environment [14] and the discourse between conservation and productivism. Therefore, it is necessary to integrate the local population into the processes of establishment, decision making and management of PNA [15]. By integrating the NPA into the social and territorial environment through management instruments, these areas would evolve from the so-called "museum" to conservation in a broad sense and compatibility with the rational use of resources [16,17].

Different categories of PNAs are created, which often overlap in the same territory, ranging from total protection (naturalization) to flexible protection structures, in which the protection of natural and cultural heritage coexists with socio-economic development and socio-ecological systems [10,15]. This is the case of Nature Park (hereinafter NtP) in Western Europe that sometimes are integrated into more conservationist models, as in Spain [16] and Portugal [18], while others are multifunctional models, such as in Germany [19] and France [20]. In the NtPs, an important role is given to leisure activities [21], and tourist and recreational activities [22, 23], which positions NPA with comparative advantage in the tourism market with a competitive advantage, until this NPA form a pillar of the Community Agricultural Policy and the LEADER initiative [22,24]. In this way, the NPA appear as one of the large-scale tourism typologies of peripheral rural spaces [4]. Although environmental tourism is the classic motivation in NPA, in this case, it is not only ecotourism or nature tourism, but rather rural tourism where nature-based products and services are added [21,24,25]. In the context of post-Fordism or *a la carte* tourism [26,27] rural (passive) tourism incorporates a progressive segmentation (sports, nature-based activities, etc.), the search for experiences and sensitivity to environmental issues as a response to changing demand [21,24,25,28]. However, it often goes from promoting the place to selling it [29], and tourism simultaneously produces and hides the contradictions of capitalism based "on creating attractions, or new sources of an accumulation from the very crises it produces" [30](p. 529). Thus, three processes converge in the territory, namely, (1) patrimonialisation through the protection and conservation of natural and cultural heritage, (2) enhancement of tourist value through the creation of new spaces [1] and (3) commodification of nature [30]. These coexisting processes generate discourses between conservation and exploitation [2,31], authenticity and trivialization [32], abandonment of traditional activities and implementation of new ones, changes in use and simplification [33], or public use and private use [30]. Thus, in the context of increasing recreational and tourist frequentation [21,24] sustainability and sustainable tourism in the rural areas and NPA are perceived as a challenge given the complex and conflicting relationships [34] and exposure to risks due to their inherent fragility [35].

Since the 1980s, there has been a growing interest in the application of sustainability to tourism [36,37,38,39]. According to the UNWTO, sustainable tourism is 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" [40](p. 12). However, as Saarinen [39] and some other authors [41,42,43] in the scientific literature point out, this vision introduces the necessity of the industry, despite the need, to establish limits to growth. On the other hand, it is difficult to apply the concept of sustainability imprecisely [44] which results in continuous failure [45]. This has led to consider sustainable development and sustainable tourism diversely, flexibly [46] and indistinctly [45], leaving sustainability as "a 'wicked' or meta-policy problem that has led to new institutional arrangements and policy settings at international, national and local scales" [47](p. 5). Ultimately, the rational use of resources that sustainability entails depends on values and ideologies [47] and, therefore, must be understood within the con-

text of political-economic discourse aiming for sufficient and efficient tourism [48]. Consequently, despite contradictory, divergent or tangent discourses [49], sustainable tourism as a dominant paradigm in tourism development is identified [27,36,39,50,51]. Nevertheless, it fails to orient itself towards genuine sustainability of planning, management and policies, democratic empowerment, environmental conservation and social justice [51] or behavioural change towards sustainability [52], generating a hybridisation between neoliberalism and sustainable development [51].

Currently, a dominant discourse of sustainability and sustainable tourism appears rather rhetorical, and more of a fashion to address the public [53] since sustainable tourism is considered an end in itself. Another prevailing discussion considers sustainability as the need for neoliberal growth defined by the markets [54] which is based on introducing new definitions instead of solving issues. On the other hand, sustainable tourism development tends to focus on the product [45] and tourists who buy sustainable tourism products are still fewer [55]. The ideal green tourist does not consume less, rather, it does so responsibly [56] which results in businesses focusing on responsibility rather than sustainability [57] since responsible tourists pay for it. This situation often masks the unsustainable activities of companies [39]. In other words, responsibility arises from tourist segmentation or from the emotional relationship with nature (perception) [46]. Considering the above, there is room for a critical analysis of the relationship between sustainable tourism and sustainable development [58] which does not emphasize establishing the limits of growth [48] and avoiding its impacts [39], understanding that "more does not mean better, and growth does not mean development" [42](p. 131).

On the other hand, the interpretation and application of the sustainability concept differ according to the type of destination [46], the natural environment, the characteristics of the community, the institutional framework and the management policies [59] that are necessary to be adapted to the context [60]. Thus, in NPA, including rural areas, sustainability and sustainable tourism are given significant importance and a challenge of sustainability is perceived as the *sine qua non* condition. Thus, tourism sustainability is at the same time a planning criterion for future development [43] and a major instrument to increase the quality of life of the local population, maintaining natural values and attractions, and improving the quality of the tourist experience [61,62]. Tourism in rural areas or NPAs is often considered to be sustainable in itself [63] because it attracts a small number of visitors, does not require a wide range of "services, infrastructures and [types of] equipment" (hereinafter SIEs), tourists tend to be interested in the host community, its landscape and environmental attractions. Yet such correlation lacks support in the scientific literature [64] and many intended measures have not effectively contributed to sustainability [63]. Even more, many of such intents fell into perverse effects [42] by generating negative impacts indicating that conservation strategies are key to sustainable development [16,65,66]. Therefore, although sustainability is one, it is necessary to take into account the presence of its four interdependent and interconnected dimensions [43,46,67] as follow:

- The environmental dimension relates to the optimal use of natural resources, compatible with the maintenance of ecological processes and the conservation of biodiversity [43,68]. It is essential to understand that tourism depends on the conservation of the resources that attract tourism [69]. The environmental dimension, especially, the management and control of environmental impacts, were the main topics of early studies on sustainable tourism [3,70,71,72].
- The economic dimension focuses on economic growth, efficiency and optimisation of resources [43,68,73] for the satisfaction of material human needs and objectives [72], job creation and long-term competitiveness [43], while preventing that economic growth pressures other sustainability dimensions [71,74]. Although there are increasing constraints for tourism policy, planning and management to consider and incorporate sustainability issues [37,75], often biases occur towards the economic dimension [36,37].

- The socio-cultural dimension emphasises respect for the material and immaterial culture of the community [2,43,61,72], and social capital [43] that results in the strengthening of equity, social cohesion and improvement of the quality of life [43,73] and contributes to intercultural understanding and tolerance [43]. The socio-cultural dimension is useful to address the problems of tourism development [66], fundamental in rural tourism that is based on a close personal interaction between residents and visitors, contributing to the revaluation of authenticity and identity [2,76].
- The political-institutional dimension concentrates on the political system and the distribution of power [73,77], including the development of management systems, governance, and stakeholder participation [43,72,78] and a favourable context, defined by the regulatory framework and institutional structures [39] without which sustainable tourism cannot exist.

This multidimensional vision of sustainable tourism and the above-indicated dimensions prevail in the literature and are considered a tool to define sustainability issues, highlighting that the interconnectivity between the dimensions is widespread as a holistic and long-term concept [46].

Therefore, this study aims to address the stakeholders' perception of the sustainability of tourism activities in a subregional area of Andalusia (Spain) forming three NtP: NtP "Sierra de Aracena y Picos de Aroche", NtP "Sierra Norte de Sevilla" and NtP "Sierra de Hornachuelos" that together constitute the Dehesas de Sierra Morena Biosphere Reserve. The research, thus, raises the following questions: (1) What are the functions of the PNAs and the dominant dimensions of sustainability?, (2) What discourses are present among the stakeholders and how are they manifested?, (3) How sustainable are tourism activities?, and (4) How do relationships between stakeholders influence governance and sustainability itself?

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Data and methods

This research uses the case study that has been applied in the analysis and the prevailing discourse of the perception of sustainable rural tourism [79], the perception of sustainability by stakeholders [17,46,53,67], relationships between stakeholders and governance in rural spaces and PNA [15,80,81,82,83].

This research attempts to analyse the awareness, understanding, commitment, attitudes and practices of those involved in or influencing the sustainable tourism planning process [4,84,85] through their opinions and perceptions [17,46,80,86] on three central themes: (1) the presence of dominant discourses and the rhetoric of sustainability [49]; (2) sustainability, including its dimensions, and tourism [43,46,67]; and (3) management problems derived from relationships between stakeholders [68,80,84]. For this purpose, semi-structured interviews (hereinafter Int) are carried out [87] with 10 open questions (q) (see Table 1), adapted from Renfors [46].

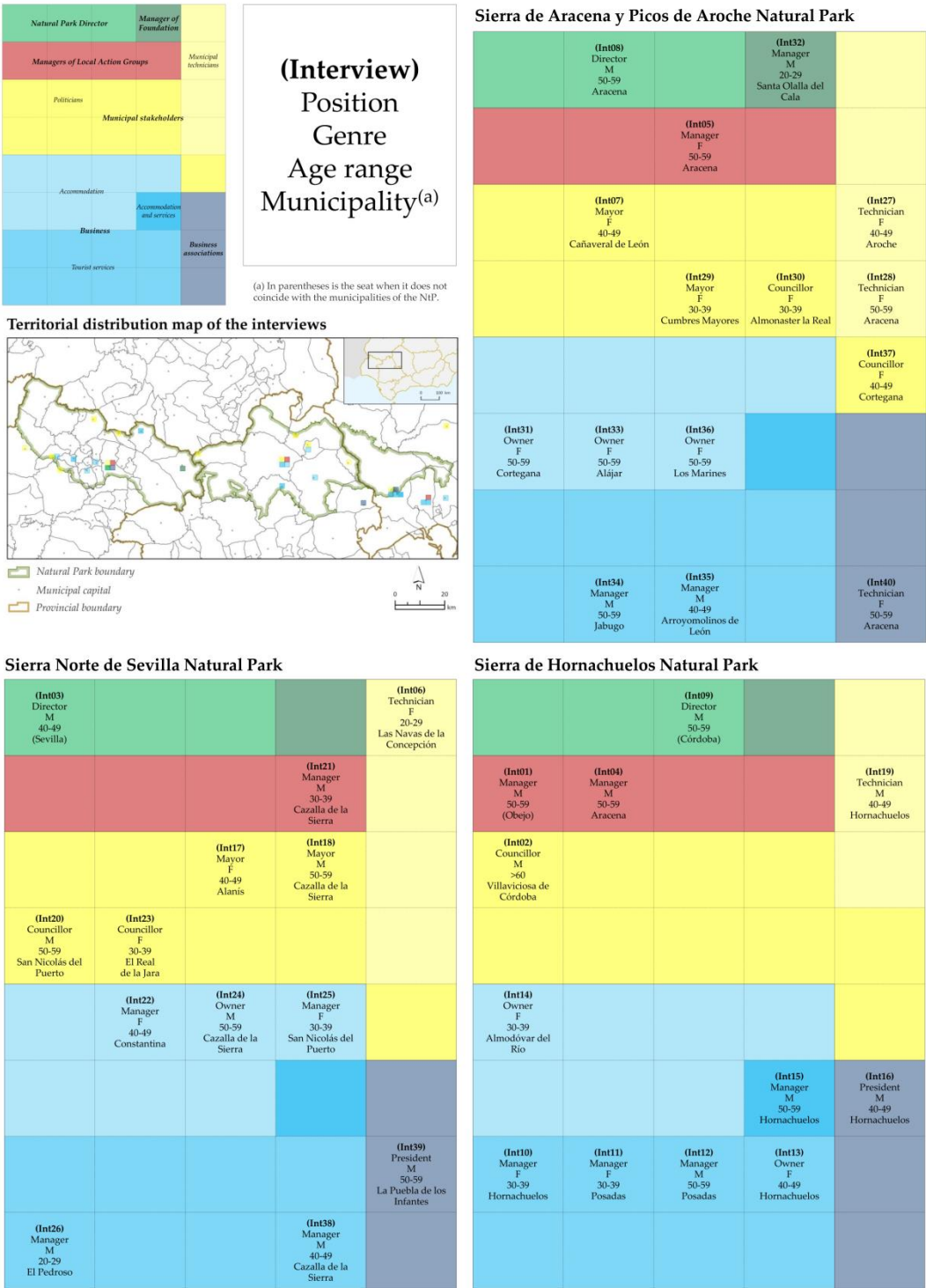
Table 1. Interview questions

Code	Question	Topics
(q1)	What function do the Nature Park and Biosphere Reserve have in your destination (and others)?	(1,3)
(q2)	What is the value of the landscape in tourism?	(1)(2)(3)
(q3) ^(a)	How do you perceive sustainable tourism development in your destination?	(2)
(q4) ^(b)	Does sustainability have a strong effect on the tourism development of your destination? Why?	(2)

(q5) ^(a)	What kind of conflicts related to sustainability is created between stakeholders?	(1)(2)(3)
(q6) ^(a,c)	Could you give a practical example of sustainable tourism development in your destination? What would you improve?	(2)(3)
(q7) ^(c)	What happens in the context of global change with your destination?	(2)(3)
(q8)	Are there difficulties in managing the tourist space?	(1)(2)(3)
(q9) ^(b)	Does tourism contribute to local development?	(2)(3)
(q10)	What consequences has COVID-19 had on the destination?	(2)(3)

^(a) Questions based on Renfors [46]. ^(b) Questions adapted from Renfors [46]. ^(c) Control questions are aimed at the total or partial understanding of what the interviewees are being asked and to establish whether the answers respond to the awareness or dominant discourse. Authors' elaboration.

A non-probabilistic sampling method was used by conducting 40 interviews between April and July 2021 (Figure 1). Some of the interviewees were directly identified, namely, NtPs directors, managers of Local Action Groups (hereinafter LAGs), municipal stakeholders, including mayors or councilmen and municipal tourism technicians, and a private foundation, i.e. nature conservation NGO. While tourism companies and business associations were selected according to the type of services they provide, e.g. accommodation and tourist activities, and their local or foreign character [88], and also through good practices (q6), applying the snowball technique [46,89]. The territorial balance of the interviews was sought (relevance within each NtP, centrality/periphery) (Figure 1). Given the restrictions imposed by sanitary measures due to COVID-19, the interviews were conducted via videoconference Google Meet©. The interviews were complemented with territorial recognition, i.e. patrimonial valuation, accessibility analysis, and informal interviews with the local population between September and November 2021.



vation Areas (hereinafter SCA) and Special Protection Areas for Birds (hereinafter SPAB), and they were declared as the UNESCO Dehesas de Sierra Morena Biosphere Reserve (hereinafter DSMBR) and SNS was declared as the UNESCO World Geopark (hereinafter UWGpSNS) [91]. Within the 3 NtPs, 4 Natural Monuments have been declared (see Figure 2) [91].

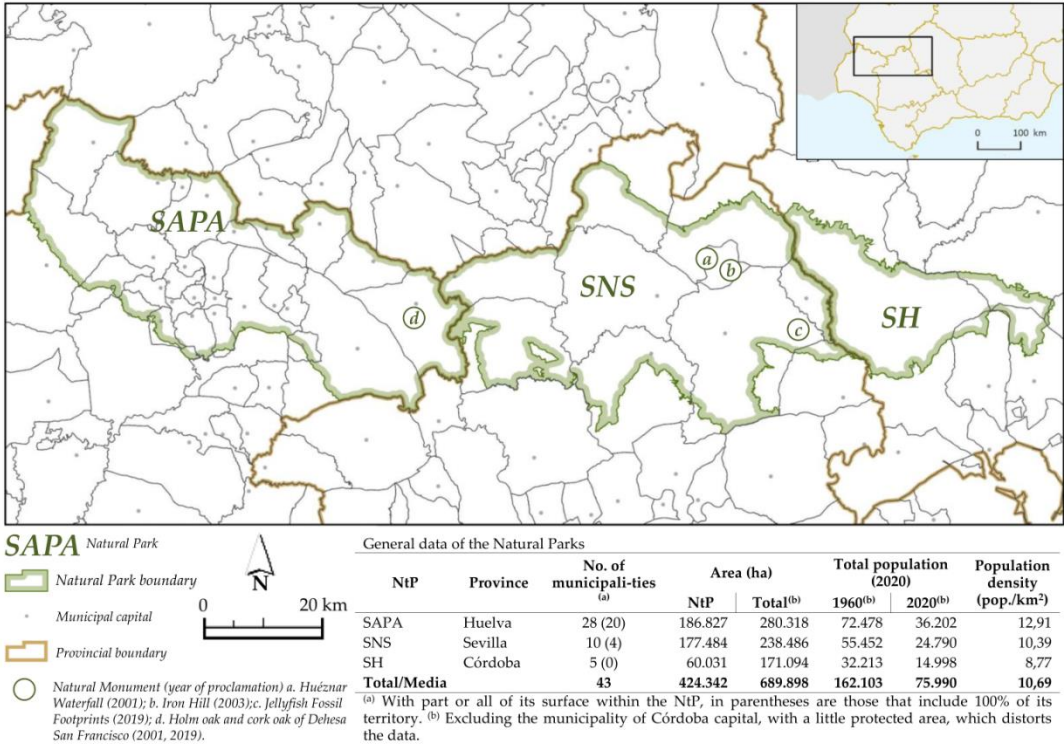


Figure 2. Scope of the study. Source: [91,92]. Authors’ elaboration.

The specific characteristics of Sierra Morena gave rise to an agro-silvo-pastoral exploitation system that is unique in the world known as “dehesa”, or “montado” in Portuguese (Figure 3), a cleared Mediterranean forest (mainly *Quercus ilex*, *Quercus suber*) where a forestry, livestock and hunting vocation predominates, with an exploitation system dominated by large estates [93,94]. The dehesa has generated an exceptional landscape with high heritage values [95], yet it is subject to change processes of coverage and degradation due to abandonment or overexploitation [96]. Currently, the dehesa is facing the extreme effects of climate change and the seca (fungal disease of *Q. ilex* and *Q. suber*) [11].

SAPA and SNS are large NtPs with population settlements in the interior, while SH has an intermediate area and large properties predominate, lacking an interior network of settlements (see Figure 2) [23]. In addition, in these NtPs most of their surface is a private property [23].

Since the 1960s, several general and specific factors have generated the crisis and the massive rural exodus in Sierra Morena [97], losing 52.55% of its population between 1960 and 2020 (Figure 2). Today it has an ageing population and low demographic density (10.69 inhabitants/km²) with 18 municipalities with <10 inhabitants/km² [92]. Only 4 municipalities have >5,000 inhabitants (2020), whereas 18 municipalities have <1,000 inhabitants [92]. Traditional economic activities are linked to the dehesa [94], highlighting the Iberian pig farming in SAPA and SNS (Figure 2) and its associated industry [97,98], while in SH hunting and forestry activities predominate [23].



Figure 3. Dehesa de San Francisco, Santa Olalla del Cala (SAPA). Dehesa of cork oaks where you can see free-range Iberian pigs.

SAPA and SNS have regional entities with LAGs that are practically identified with their territory, while SH is distributed between two LAGs (see Figure 4).

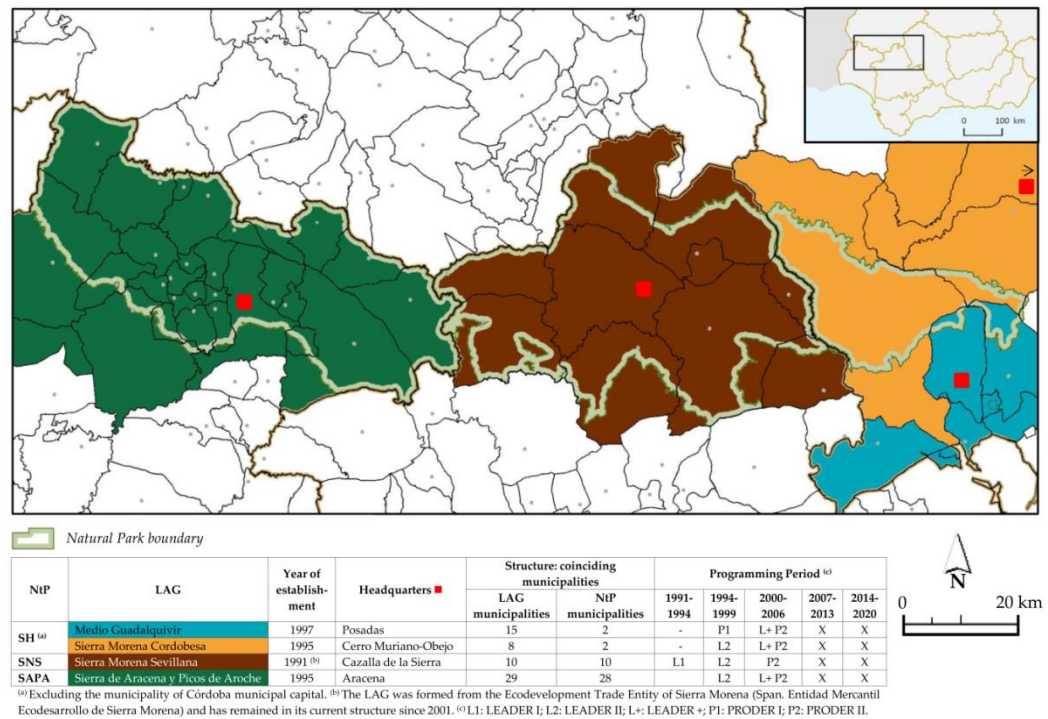


Figure 4. LAGs in the scope of the study. Source: [99]. Authors’ elaboration.

As a whole, it is a space with a marked peripherality, poor land communications with the provincial capitals and, especially, within and between the counties. The better

accessibility of the East of SAPA and South of SNS leads to the development of leisure and residential functions linked to the city of Seville [94,100,101]. There was practically no tourist offer at the time of the proclamation of the NtPs [102], assuming the tourism offer will organise itself organically [24,64]. However, unequal distribution of activity remains up to date with a predominance of rural houses and the recent appearance of tourism activity companies [103].

3. Results

3.1. *The presence of dominant discourses and the rhetoric of sustainability*

The declaration of the three NtPs is supposed to protect biodiversity and guarantee territorial with the unanimity between NtPs directors and the Foundation. The managers of LAGs agree on the importance of protecting and conserving yet highlight the lack of revitalization of the territory by the NtPs. This also indicates that it is necessary to "overcome its function as a figure of conservation, as has happened in other NtPs of Andalusia" (Int01) despite some existing differences. While tourism companies and business associations highlight conservation, they only partly assign protection to be a guarantor of environmental sustainability. For municipal stakeholders, the figure of NtP is related to limitations imposed on the local population from outside.

For NtPs director and LAGs managers, NtPs have been fundamental for attracting tourists, although mostly central areas benefited more due to better accessibility, tradition and tourist offers. Companies that offer outdoor activities highlight that there is still much-untapped tourism potential. Tourism companies and business associations relate NtPs (and DSMBR) with promotion and marketing opportunities, emphasising that being part of an NtP allows for ecotourism and sustainable activity for a specific type of tourist/visitor. Nonetheless, it is indicated that often efforts to foster environmental protection are limited to advertising and posters, without producing a real change in the client, although they do generate a pull effect. The municipal stakeholders do not relate the NtPs with the promotion of tourist activities, although they recognise that over time they have become the main tourist attraction in the central municipalities.

Considering the above, NtPs directors and LAGs managers highlight that the declarations of the NtPs have led to the development of other protection types, including DSMBR, SPAB, SCA, UWGpSNS, and to obtain other certifications, such as the European charter of Sustainable tourism (hereinafter CETS) and Sierra Morena Starlight Reserve (hereinafter SMSTRE). Although the DSMBR is perceived as motivating by the NtPs directors, they affirm that its importance has not been visualized nor its potential developed, because there is no management instrument (this document is currently being drafted) and it is divided between three provinces which makes it unfamiliar to the LAGs managers. For tourism companies DSMBR is rather unknown, even denying its existence. For municipal stakeholders, these declarations and certifications are considered just "titles such as Pueblos con Sabor [Villages of Taste] or Pueblos Mágicos [Magic Villages]" (Int29) or patrimonial protections, linking their quantity directly to the inflow of visitors. Only one of the municipal stakeholders highlights that DSMBR is a recognition of the traditional way of exploiting natural resources, assuming international promotion and the receipt of public aid.

For the directors, sustainability is a context for the development of NtPs as established by the regulation. The managers of LAGs point out that the values of sustainability have been recognised during the pandemic, with citizen participation being of crucial importance to achieve it yet without undervaluing its economic costs. It is generalized among municipal stakeholders to affirm that traditional and tourist activities have always been sustainable despite prevailing three visions as follows:

- 1) The sustainability of traditional activities and tourism is a necessity, "without sustainability there is no development" (Int07), and it is essential to raise awareness among companies and the local population.

- 2) Traditional and tourist activities are sustainable, but sustainability creates "a difficulty to compete" (Int02), urban spaces receive "water, air and recreation" (Int21) for which the NtPs "need compensation" (Int08).
- 3) Sustainability is "something to sell nature" (Int19) and now "everything has to be sustainable" (Int29).

For a part of tourism entrepreneurs, sustainability is an end, but they affirm that this is not the case for the majority of tourism companies that seek sustainability because of the subsidies that can be obtained or because tourists demand it. Other tourism entrepreneurs even say that "sustainability is an invention" (Int25) because tourism activity in rural areas must necessarily be sustainable, while others claim to be learning to use sustainability "as a strength for development" (Int40).

3.2. *The pre-eminence of one dimension over the others in sustainability in tourist activities*

The NtPs directors perceive that there is sustainability in tourist activities because tourism is highly regulated by laws within the PNA, making it a comparative advantage for tourist satisfaction. Additionally, they tend to question the sustainability of some tourist actions stressing the need to exercise greater control overall and especially of water resources. While they understand that nature tourism and ecotourism have great potential and the effects of over-frequency and overload are punctual time- and space-wise, sometimes they cause problems for the owners at harvest time, e.g. fruit theft. The emergency in the light of global change, relating it to alterations in biodiversity, desertification and degradation processes, changes in land use, global climate change and alterations in biogeochemical cycles are particularly emphasised with accompanying proposals to make investments, e.g. of Next Generation EU funds, to address them. The suggested measures for sustainability are the control of access to maximum protection areas, the promotion of energy self-sufficiency in urban centres, support for active tourism and advice on diagnoses and environmental plans for companies. Among best practices, the implementation of the Andalusian Natural Park Brand (hereinafter ANPB), SMSTRE and stargazing, mushroom picking and hiking as well as specific examples of certified companies in areas of accommodation, outdoor tourist activities and risk sports and agritourism are pointed out. The model to follow would be that of other Andalusian NtPs.

LAGs managers agree on the increasing sustainability of tourism activities and the positive and growing influence of sustainability on the destination. However, they point out that many times the activities are sustainable for companies because of "opportunity (business) and not because of conviction" (Int05) as a way of advertising since tourists traditionally do not choose the destination entirely only because it is sustainable. Although they point out that the trend is changing and the investments necessary to achieve sustainability are amortized thanks to the satisfaction of a "new view of the tourist" (Int04) who pays for sustainability and for nature tourism and ecotourism linked to experiences, companies incorporate sustainability into their management and facilities through "personal awareness" (Int05). In case of the overfrequency and overload, LAGs managers share the views of the NtPs directors, as indicated above, while highlighting the economic viability of farms, mostly noticeable in urban centers (SAPA). Likewise, while LAGs agree with NtPs directors on the issue of the global, they indicate that "those who most notice the changes are the smallest peoples" (Int05). Although they tend to think that "it is not something imminent" (Int04) and "they only see the problems when they translate into something economic, as occurs with the drying of the oak" (Int05), they call for necessary measures to raise awareness among the population and strengthen the nature preservation legislature. They underline as measures for sustainability the promotion of energy self-sufficiency and the reduction of light pollution. Good practices focus on projects resulting from cooperation networks such as SMSTRE and the Ruta del Jabugo (hereinafter RJ) and the LongDistance Trail 48 (hereinafter LDT-48) and activities linked to the UWGpSNS. Similar to the NtPs, LAGS also discourse about outdoor activities and extreme sports and accommodation companies but critically assesses

the certifications that "tax quality" (Int21). Contrary to the NtPs, LAGs do not provide role models.

Municipal stakeholders agree that tourism, including traditional activities, is sustainable. Nonetheless, there are three dissimilar opinions:

- 1) The majority consider that sustainability is inherent in traditional and tourist activities since "the environment has been preserved because traditional activities are sustainable" (Int18). They relate nature tourism and ecotourism to recreation and some complementary activities. Despite some denials, they mostly defend the need to control capacity to avoid overcrowding so that it does not damage traditional activities. Only some interviewees identify climate change as an issue without considering it something imminent and refuse to foster legislation expressing that "it is necessary to adapt, but we are used to it" (Int06). As measures for sustainability, these stakeholders propose betting on experiential ecological tourism and Smart Rural Destinations (hereinafter SRD), with the limitation that there are no subsidies and aid for sustainability, whereas others suggest sustainable investments, e.g. renewable and efficient energies, electrification and charging points for electric vehicles, diversification of products, e.g. motorhomes, and enhancement of resources, e.g. trails, paths, and renovations. Good practices are related to the development of municipal strategic plans and are exemplified by accommodation companies, agri-food companies with a tourist offer, outdoor activities and extreme sports, adventure parks and heritage rehabilitation. The model to follow as a destination refers to other municipalities of the NtP, and other NtPs of Andalusia and the Basque Country.
- 2) The perception of sustainability as the basis of development is a perception limited to some municipal stakeholders who advocate that traditional and tourist activities are generally sustainable but "not everything rural is sustainable" (Int23), making awareness necessary. They identify nature tourism and ecotourism with active and sports tourism, disconnection and personalized services and experiences. They highlight a non-massive context, especially in more peripheral municipalities, and the need to limit the tourist flow and plan. Tourist companies are held responsible for overcrowding "because they think that the more people the better instead of looking for a model of quality business" (Int07) and seasonality is very marked. They relate the global change to alterations in biodiversity, desertification and degradation processes, changes in land use and climate change. The measures for sustainability go through discussion forums as well as awareness campaigns and capacity controls. Collaborative projects such as SMSTRE, LDT-48, RJ, and ecovillages, municipal awareness campaigns and programs against depopulation, cultural and environmental initiatives and activities and accommodation companies with tourist activities (agritourism, gastro-tourism) stand out as good practices. They mention regional models with special emphasis on cultural initiatives.
- 3) Sustainability as an NtP imposition is seen by the minority (SNS, SH) and points out that tourism activity has to be developed "within a sustainable framework" (Int20), it has to be legal and certified to satisfy tourists "who seek sustainability" (Int20) and have increased during the pandemic. They do not consider matters of over-frequency and overload except at specific times due to the pandemic and do not perceive any effect of global change. The measures for sustainability are related to tourism quality while routes oriented to a specific segment of demand are considered an example of good practice. As a model, Navarra is mentioned.

Tourism companies and business associations agree that they act in a sustainable destination where the work of the NtPs with the business community is essential. From here, two different visions are developed:

- 1) A majority group, consisting of tourism companies and business associations attribute tourism sustainability to a) local companies that work for environ-

mental and economic sustainability, while foreign companies do not carry out sustainable activities; b) the activities that are internally monitored as sustainable versus the non-monitored unsustainable ones; c) sustainable private business activities versus unsustainable public ones because they are unrealistic and compete with private ones. These companies agree that sustainable tourism does not exist and sustainability is not a motivation, despite some changes since the pandemic as tourists, especially youth, are progressively getting involved with sustainability and complying with the rules. Betting on nature tourism and ecotourism is done for the main values of the territory, necessary for the tourist to enjoy the "silence, the place" (Int24). New types of transport such as bicycles, and horseback riding is available for a tourist who does not want to go by car, and is respectful of the environment, while it costs more. Overcrowding and overload are not an issue and conflicts are due to the lack of visitors' civility. The measures for sustainability proposed are limited to training and awareness actions and the discourse on global change is rather absent. They are reluctant to converse about good practices although networks like SMSTRE, RJ, service companies such as electric bicycles, adventure parks and the creation of charging points for electric vehicles are mentioned pointing to quality certifications as an impediment. Management models from neighbouring municipalities and NtPs, mentioning companies with activities similar to theirs are noted giving examples such as the Pyrenees or the Spanish Ecotourism Club.

- 2) A minority group of tourism companies perceives that tourism sustainability is due to the efforts of the company since many wield "the flower of sustainability, and those who have spent their entire lives working in the territory, on the other hand, do not have any recognition" (Int31). They relate nature tourism with a source of employment that provides differential value without damaging environmental resources or generating imbalances, distinguishing between ecotourists who come from abroad looking for a specific offer and sustainability, and nearby travellers looking for a place for their vacations and travel in a group while their satisfaction is unrelated to sustainability. The overcrowding and overloading are considered a "cancer of the territory" (Int34) that occurs in specific attractions, as a result of the lack of action and regulation, especially in best-connected places. Self-limitation, the non-admission of large groups and the search for under-tourism are pointed out as the measure for sustainability. These companies understand global change as a problem with alterations in biodiversity, desertification and degradation processes, global climate change and connectivity, e.g. search for nearby destinations by international tourists. Although it does not currently affect reserves, going so far as to point out that it is necessary to "educate ourselves and educate others" (Int36), the change of tourist activities towards sustainability and the search for new, nearby markets is needed. They mostly emphasise the individual measures for sustainability, e.g. not having a pool, eliminating chemicals, ensuring energy efficiency, creating ecotourism experiences offer, and realising fam trips and environmental certifications. Good practices include the implementation of municipal 2030 Agendas and programmes against depopulation, promotion of stargazing and bird watching, and strengthening companies with specific cultural and environmental activities in the open air or extreme sports without emphasising role models.

The Foundation voices the lack of sustainability of some traditional and tourist activities. It considers that nature tourism and ecotourism are necessary but ensures controls to avoid over-frequency or overload. The measures for sustainability include the awareness of the local population and tourists raising as well as capacity controls. It focuses on climate change, especially the dry season, and notes that all activities must be made sustainable, not by prohibiting, but rather by controlling traditional practices to adapt to "five-month summers that change the conditions of nature" (Int32). Activities

such as bird watching and mountain biking are highlighted. The Foundation perceives itself as an example of good practice.

3.3. *The political-institutional dimension. The relationships between stakeholders and the difficulties in the management of the tourist space*

The different stakeholders establish collaborative relationships with other stakeholders, among which:

- Municipal stakeholders: collaboration with other municipalities based on formal and informal networks.
- Municipal stakeholders and tourism companies: municipal support for companies.
- LAG managers: the generation of networks with the other LAGs and with other external local agents.

Other cooperation relationships are highlighted by only one type of stakeholder, regardless of whether it affects several stakeholders, e.g., the vertical and horizontal coordination underlined by the NtPs directors (see Table 4).

Competency relationships are of crucial importance for all stakeholders, while the most visible are the following:

- The disagreements between the regional administration, i.e. NTPs, regional ministries, and the municipal stakeholders, are seen by other stakeholders, except the business associations, which generate management conflicts and divergences caused by the restrictive regulations, the top-down approach, the ineffectiveness of the NtPs and the lack of communication.
- The competition between municipalities, observed by LAGs, municipalities and business associations, that generates a lack of coordination, tourist micro-destinations and inequality in the distribution of public and private SIEs, caused by the rivalry between municipalities and the generation of lobbyists, centre and periphery relations and the lack of communication.
- The lack of inter-territorial cooperation, perceived by the NtPs director, all the LAGs managers and a municipal stakeholder, produced by the administrative limits.
- The lack of coordination and a common tourism strategy within the NtPs, perceived by tourism companies and business associations, causes the lack of destinations and a brand.

Other competition relations are only verbalised by the tourist companies in reference to conflicts between the tourist activities and the owners that dominate the NtPs due to the usurpation of cattle trails, and the limitations that private property supposes in the NtPs, as noted in SH. Competition between tourism companies based on local-foreign discourse, main-secondary activity, lack of business culture and originality and presence of non-business activities, including unfair competition, including unfair competition of the municipalities, is also pointed out.

Table 2. Relations between stakeholders and the indicated causes

Interviewees(a)						Relation	N° interviewees /total interviewees at NtP			Relation	Indicated cause (verbalized)	Institutions and organisations involved							
NtPD	LAG-M	SM	TC	BA	FO		SAPA	SNS	SH			NtPD	LAG-M	SM	TC	BA	FO	OLS	OEA
						+	2	4		Tourism cooperation and complementarity between municipalities	Formation of formal and informal networks								
						+	1			Cooperation with external tourism companies	Control of tourist flows (bundling)								EC
						+	1	1	2	Cooperation between the LAGs and with other stakeholders internal and external to the NtPs	Existence of a network and application of the LEADER approach; outward projection								OE
						+	2	1	2	Cooperation of municipalities and tourism and hospitality companies	Information; technical support; nearest administration								
						+			1	Cooperation in development strategies with NtPs	Shared actors (NtP Governing Board)								
						+	1			Cooperation between similar or complementary companies	The joint vision of destination and trust								
						+	1		1	Vertical (JA-TD-NtP-SM) and horizontal (NtP-PC) coordination	Regulatory framework and organisational structure NtP; participation of the municipalities in the NtP Governing Board							PC	TD
						+	2			Collaboration in nature conservation	Same conservation goals between institutions								
						-	3	3	1	Competition and lack of subsidiarity between municipalities; generation of “micro-destinations”; lack of coordination between attractions; scarcity of tourist activities in municipalities	The rivalry between municipalities; different levels of development; lack of communication; the existence of municipal lobbyists; political decision-making without counting on and considering the tourism sector								
						-	1	2	3	Conflicts of use between tourism and private property	The predominance of private property; lack of entrepreneurship; incompatibility of uses; usurpation of public space								LP LL
						-	3	5	2	Disagreements between municipalities, NtP and JA; management conflicts; a desire to exit NtP	Restrictive regulatory framework; different speeches, politicisation; lack of communication; lack of control of activities; technical ineffectiveness; public oversight of SIEs								LP JA
						-			3	Unfair municipal competition to tourism companies	Creation of SIEs with public money and private management								
						-	1	1	2	Competition between tourism companies	Duality of local-foreign companies, main-secondary activities; lack of business culture; non-business activities; lack of originality								EC

					-	2	2	2	The difficulty for inter-territorial cooperation; lack of a DSMBR planning instrument	3 NtPs, 3 provinces, 4 LAGs, 43 municipalities, different administrations and discourses; lack of coordination; the existence of municipal lobbyist								TD JA
					-	2	2		Non-existence of a coordinating body for tourist activity in the NtP; absence of a destination; lack of a tourism strategy (brand, destination...)	Lack of agreement between the parties and stakeholder involvement; the rivalry between municipalities; politicization; lack of goals; lack of coordination in the regional administration								PC

(a) Number of interviewees. (b) Relations +: cooperation -: competition. Keywords: BA: business association; NtPD: NtP Director; PC: Provincial Council; LP: local population; TC: tourism company; EC: external tourism company; FO: Foundation; LAG-M: LAG manager; LL: large landowners (generally urban); JA: Junta de Andalucía (regional ministries); OEA: other external agents; OLS: other local stakeholders; OE: other local territorial entity external to NtPs; SM: municipal stakeholders; TD: Territorial Delegation JA. *Source:* Interviews. Authors' elaboration.

4. Discussion

4.1. *The presence of dominant discourses and the rhetoric of sustainability*

Each stakeholder builds their reality [104] where they express their interests [105] collected in the dominant discourse and a representative framework [49].

The conservation of the natural heritage is embodied by the regional administration through the NtPs directors who are assigned the role of the so-called gatekeepers [106] in a process of patrimonialisation and with a conservationist discourse where sustainability is the objective established by Law 42/2007 and amended by Law 33/2015 [107,108]. A conflict is generated by the management of resources between conservation and traditional activities that manifest the "nature-society dualism" [109], demanding compensation by municipal stakeholders for the right to economic development and productivism despite limitations [110], incorporating the idea of local heritage, which opposes the collective patrimonialisation that comes from outside [111].

Tourism acts as an attractor of ecological services that positively interferes with the appreciation of natural and cultural values [112]. In this way, internal and external pressures in the PNA foster the economic use of resources that is greater than the inherent value of natural and cultural heritage [30] and thus it sells products and markets places, cultures and traditions [32]. A mercantilist discourse is formed [113] and linked to a vision of development as an union of endogenous and exogenous forces, public and private, based on endogenous resources yet projected outwards in terms of the flow of tourists, the arrival of capital, and funding [83].

The conservationist discourse is assumed by conviction by proactive tourism entrepreneurs [114] as identified by LAGs and other companies alike, the Foundation based on their purpose [115] and some municipal stakeholders [116]. From the LAGs, sustainability is discussed from a broader perspective of equality and existing challenges, rather than ecological thinking [46] and they position themselves on the side of conservation but complemented with sustainable tourism as an attractor [112].

Firstly, the productivist discourse and then the mercantilist one is assumed by business associations, most tourism companies and most municipal stakeholders [116]. Thus, they redefine the concept of sustainability and tend to fall into contradictions when simultaneously speaking of sustainability and the elimination of limitations or the increase in the number of tourists [48].

These discourses are not permanent and tend to change [83]. Thus, in the municipal elections of 2015 and 2019, the traditional political forces of social and Christian democrats lost the elections in several municipalities. The new leaders changed the focus of local policies which allows us to speak of municipalities of change, as dissenting voices, environmentalists and conservationists, who positively value NtPs as a guarantee of sustainability. On the other hand, in 2019 the regional elections involve a change in the regional government with a centre-right coalition, that promotes a change in the regional environmental administration, currently integrated into the Ministry of Agriculture. The later favoured economic activities such as tourism, seen as an instrument at the service of development and conservation, which implies a more productive discourse, perceived by the interviewees, which contrasts with the previous position that separated tourism, and conservation and sustainability [117].

The personal characteristics of the interviewees, i.e. age and generation, gender, education, place of residence, links with the area, condition the responses [118]. The older age, the greater knowledge of the environment, however, sustainability is valued less [118], and productivism and mercantilism are marked more. While a youth, female and arriving from outside, i.e. neo-rural, returned population, draw on conservationism. Greater personal training makes sustainability more important, but it is the performance that defines the discourse, between technicians and politicians, including their ideological weight, especially in municipalities of change. On the other hand, the mercantilist vi-

sion predominates in the most central areas [94] that see the PNA as a limitation to development, an idea that is less prevailing in the periphery where lack of tourism persists [86].

4.2. *The pre-eminence of one dimension over the others in the sustainability of tourist activities*

Overall, all interviewees agree that tourism and tourism activities are sustainable [3,64]. However, the different stakeholders insist on one of the dimensions of sustainability and interpret sustainable tourism in different ways.

The conservationist discourse is dominated by the perception that the environmental dimension of tourist activity is a necessity to care for and improve the environment in the NtPs, since sustainability cannot be renounced, prior to and outside of tourist activity [64]. This conviction is what leads these stakeholders, namely, NtPs directors, LAGs managers, municipal stakeholders of change, proactive companies and the Foundation, to be concerned about global and climate change [119]. These concerns generate uncertainties about conservation and tourism activities [42,70] and make tourism companies focus on changes in activities and the landscape that affect their business [120], maintaining long-distance visitors without damaging natural capital [38] and how to manage local tourism flows [121]. To mitigate the effects, they propose policies and actions aimed at reducing sources of greenhouse gas emissions through investments and legislation [11,122], sustainable tourism activities planning [122], carry out awareness-raising campaigns for local and tourist population [123,124]. The interviewees attribute to the tourists a motivation connected with their emotions and personal relationship with nature through experiences [24,125,126], rediscovered relationship with the environment after COVID-19 [127], and a progressive involvement in the sustainability of specific tourism, e.g. astrotourism or ornitourism [31].

Environmental sustainability is fundamental for proactive companies of European origin, that specialised in high added-value nature tourism and ecotourism [25] that respond to the conviction by developing sustainable products [55] to turn sustainability into an instrument of business success [128] by focusing on the viability of the company [129] instead of performance. These interviewees consider that tourism does not generate major environmental impacts, except for those derived from the spatial-temporal concentration of demand [64],-pointing out that it is necessary to control the flows by regulating the physical load [28,130]. Thus, companies can limit the offer only to themselves to maintain quality by betting on non-aggressive and low-intensity tourism [86] where only the NtPs directors show concern about the use of water resources [11]. Good practices are identified with the environment and resources conservation [131], the will to preserve heritage for the future [64] and the eco-efficiency of companies [63].

However, the specific examples that emphasise environmental and economic dimensions and, to a lesser extent, socio-cultural and political-institutional, are characterised by innovation [132], generation of cooperation networks [133], a propensity to collaborate [82], enhancement of synergies [128], entrepreneurship [134], generation of employment [135], local sourcing [129], diversification of the product supply [136] and offering quality through environmental accreditations and certifications, e.g. CETS, ANPB [131], the latter being understood as economic compensation mechanisms in NtPs [22]. Many of these initiatives have been launched by neo-rural and foreigners [13,76,137], although there are also innovative local initiatives [62]. Generally, the initiatives mentioned are few, reiterated and concentrated in SAPA, with greater tourism development [23]. These interviewees are concerned about seasonality, which also compromises service quality and business viability [64]. Besides, they highlight the impact of visitors who occupy private farms or steal harvest fruits with the urban idea that everything in the countryside belongs to everyone [46]. They do not follow models and only mention other Andalusian NtPs.

The economic dimension predominates and is considered the most important [46,72,83] by the majority of municipal stakeholders, tourism companies and business associations, insisting that sustainability is not well sold due to the scarce effort of the administration and necessary public aid for companies [63]. They see tourism as a pri-

vate economic activity [58] from which people live and produce economic growth, which is a more important objective than sustainability [36,37,69], curtailed by the limitations established by the NtPs. While it is not a criticism of sustainability, they understand that the limitations do not benefit the tourism companies and that sustainability is attributed because of the location, the origin and the activities, regardless of whether they are environmentally sustainable and compatible with protection [4,88,138]. Therefore, sustainability is not considered a necessity, but an option [139].

Moreover, for tourism companies and business associations, nature tourism and ecotourism become a business opportunity to satisfy tourists [39,55], create products that emphasise natural heritage and thus increase their profitability [26], and amortize the investment. Thus, sustainability is a learned, rhetorical discourse [52,140,141] where sustainable tourism in a collective context becomes responsible tourism in the personal sphere [39,57] with the main interest to sell nature or receive subsidies, benefiting from the few tourists who buy sustainable products [55] and tourists who seek domesticated nature [25]. Therefore, they do not value environmental sustainability as a tourist motivation [25], but merely the attraction of tourists without considering the impacts [62].

Nonetheless, these interviewees recognise that nature tourists have increased during the pandemic [138] and companies must take advantage of it. They tend to reason that global change is not imminent and is only appreciated when it causes economic damage [11] whereas climate change requires adaptivity [142]. With few exceptions, the majority acknowledges that over-frequency and overload are common in specific places and times [64], especially in central areas and urban centres, mainly due to hikers, and the perimeter closures established during the pandemic [143]. Likewise, it is perceived that the NtPs must solve the issue since the environmental dimension is exclusively their concern of theirs. However, it is not a priority matter and some value positively the high demand caused by COVID-19. In any case, they deny the possibility of developing restrictive regulations that are prevailing a short-term view of local authorities [144] and tourism companies, which are committed to increasing flows instead of improving quality and sustainability.

Almost no measures for sustainability are considered and they identify it with the implementation of plans to promote ecotourism and segmentation through SRD [132]. These interviewees vaguely speak of initiatives, activities and projects that respond to market segmentation, while criticising the accreditation and certification requirements that tax the ecological [131]. The specific initiatives mentioned respond to neo-Fordist products of the Disneyization of nature [25] and are neither innovative nor original [24,25]. On the other hand, electric vehicle recharging points or the diversification of products, e.g. e-bikes or motorhomes, are understood as modernity [145] without considering sustainability, e.g. in terms of carbon footprint or derived pollution [146]. The models to follow are chosen not based on sustainability but on entrepreneurial success, indicated by brand awareness and continuous tourist inflow.

Contrary to the interviewees' opinion, the socio-cultural dimension of sustainability is fundamental for residents [46,78]. LAGs managers and municipal stakeholders interrelate it with the economic dimension [46,67] by linking it with the environment to continue living in the place, maintain and improve the quality of residents' life and preserve vitality, address the depopulation and ageing, rather than with the capacity of the community to accept negative social impacts due to saturation [71]. Additionally, municipal stakeholders tend to understand social good as the maximization of market transactions [113]. As the territorial analysis and the literature on the field of the study indicate [12,94,100,101,147], the interviewees are resistant to mention social impacts and latent conflicts that depend on stakeholders [66]. Given the socio-cultural value of the dehesas and the fact that a large part of the population is still linked to primary activities, the interviewees insisted on abandoning and changing predominant traditional activities [64], focusing on the economic arguments, e.g. low profitability and the abandonment of the activity, rather than social ones, e.g. uprooting, showing that they do not relate the loss of cultural work in favour of tourism and the loss of the landscape that

justifies tourist activities and experiences [135]. Only some interviewees valued agritourism-based initiatives very positively [63,148] and indicated more sustainable, conservationist discourse as examples to follow.

In summary, the socio-demographic and proactive profile defines the attitude towards sustainability and it is the innovators, educated, neo-rural, including sometimes foreigners, and youth who know the functioning of the market and have new environmental values [149]. Women, pioneers and innovators predominate within this group [149]. In terms of global change, there is a greater perception of the issue among the interviewees who are linked to traditional agricultural activities [120]. The feeling of belonging of the municipalities to the NtPs, which depends on centre and periphery models, and the total protected area of the municipality also condition the responses.

4.3. The political-institutional dimension, the relations between stakeholders and the difficulties in the tourist space management

Depending on the participating stakeholders, there are three levels of relationships: public-public, private-private and public-private.

4.3.1. Public-public level

The NtPs directors specify cooperative relations at institutional levels, i.e. horizontal coordination between NtPs, municipalities and the Provincial Councils and external vertical coordination with the regional administration, the latter is the one that sets the management guidelines, responding to a traditional top-down model in PNAs [150].

The relationship between the NtPs and the municipalities is the most competitive, observed by all types of interviewees in the three NtPs, given the non-participatory management model [22,151,152] that makes the NtPs directors to be seen as external agents to the territory [22,117], except in SAPA where the headquarters is in the region and the physical proximity determines this perception. Nevertheless, the directors-conservators consider themselves local stakeholders and assume to be the so-called gatekeepers [106]. According to municipal stakeholders, the regulatory framework imposes limitations from the outside [16,22,94] and restricts the right to development without offering compensation [46]. The NtPs directors perceive the limitations on economic activities and urbanisation as the explanation for conservation, yet they also see opportunities for multifunctionality and diversification, generating an economic boost [117]. However, there are also underlying unspoken issues to be addressed:

- a) Presence of two dominant discourses, i.e. mercantilism and conservationism.
- b) Local politicians understand themselves as the supporters of the local population and the productive system, as the self-assigned function [83].
- c) Related to point b, the role of municipal leadership with the appropriation of heritage as a local government discourse that opposes collective patrimonialisation with the politicisation of nature protection wanting to exist the NtP [22,94].
- d) Directors perception of the municipal stakeholders as the opposition to the NtPs [151].

These conflicts between local administrations and NtPs do not depend on the traditional governing party in the municipality or the region and are related to the dominant economic activities [12], the tourist centrality and the lower identification with the NtPs, showing that the patrimonialisation process has been completed. The municipal stakeholders of the change, even in the periphery, see positively the control of activities and conservation as a collective patrimonial function for non-productive functions that must be controlled in the context of global change, perceiving the significant natural value above of restrictive framework [17].

The NtPs directors also see as an issue the so-called border effect between 3 NtPs in 3 provinces and 43 municipalities, caused by the institutional framework [84] that limits territorial cooperation [153]. This limitation is appreciated in border municipalities, i.e. between provinces, regions, and Spain and Portugal, by preventing inter-municipal cooperation.

On the other hand, municipal stakeholders mostly positively highlight the relationships between themselves through formal networks, e.g. associations, projects, or routes, and informal networks of common interests [82]. Municipal stakeholders mostly indicate competitive relationships between municipalities, the concentration of tourism initiatives, the lack of coordination in the management of attractions and their lack of originality as the drawbacks [24,25] due to the prevalence of local discourses [23]. Furthermore, the municipalities of change and the most peripheral ones communicate the presence of municipal lobbyists in supra-municipal structures, e.g. municipal associations, LAGs [154], aiming to benefit their municipalities by reproducing centre-periphery models [155].

The directors agree that there is a lack of funding, material and personal resources in the NtPs [117] due to a management system based on public budgets and subsidies [28] and not on payment for ecosystem services [156]. For some municipal stakeholders, the lack of budget and continued financing translates into increased costs of sustainability, e.g. through recycling or waste management [63]; while for others, the greatest matter is not financing, but that aid and subsidies are aimed to benefit the same objectives. This opinion is recurrent in business associations, which also point out that sometimes there is immobilized financing waiting for the decision-making [62].

4.3.2. Private-private level

Tourism companies are viewed positively by interviewees, according to their activities and their economic, social and cultural contribution. Business associations are seen by the parties as valid interlocutors, such as tourism industry networks [81]. Tourism companies and business associations appreciate a multitude of positive and negative relationships and interrelationships at the private-private level where the work of the LAGs stands out [157]. On the other hand, the cooperative relationships between tourism companies stand out where cooperation is based on their activities, ideological affinity and proactivity and relationships of trust and complementarity [159]. Despite that, competitive relationships are also generated between companies, according to:

- a) Origin of the promoters that are of the endogenous or exogenous nature of the undertaking or investment, local companies attributing sustainability [88] because they are local, and thus, questioning the legitimacy of external initiatives [160]. They do not consider their characteristics and connections with the community [161], nor the role of the neo-rural [76,118] in neo-endogenous tourism [162] or community-based tourism, which is especially visible in SAPA [13]. Foreign companies, however, blame local companies for their lack of originality [24,25].
- b) The professionalisation of the activity refers to companies with tourism as their main activity that emphasize that those with tourism as a secondary, non-professionalized activity do not take care of sustainability. The cause, therefore, is opportunism that considers tourism as an attractor [112] and the lack of business culture and training [64].
- c) The type of activity points to non-business activities as a significant issue as such companies do not have business maintenance costs and act as unfair competition. They consider tourist housing and the offer of cultural and environmental activities by cultural and private associations as either unregulated or illegal [23,64,117] whereas unmonitored activities and autonomous tourism are perceived as unsustainable [74].

4.3.3. Public-private level

The interviewees highlight the relations in the public-private level of cooperation and, especially, of competition, which they relate to the lack of information, communication and participation in decision-making [152].

The LAGs and their managers are valued positively by all the interviewees, as internal, legitimate, public-private institutional actors that respond with collaborative work to an institutional incapacity [163], collecting the interests of stakeholders at different

levels [163], and leading, coordinating and bringing together projects and actions to stimulate and promote tourism [56,117]. LAGs managers point out their cooperative relationships based on the LEADER approach and decentralisation [155] with a multitude of institutional and private stakeholders, and with other municipalities and counties that go beyond the border effect [84] to establish innovative territorial networks such as the Association for the Integral Development of Sierra Morena [23], projects based on a common development strategy and diversification, promoted by other entities, like the RJ [98]. Yet, LAGs are only project developers that may not always achieve real change partly because of stakeholder resistance to cooperation and lack of collective learning [158].

Municipalities in the context of neoliberal governance [39,46] do not have competencies in tourism and environmental policy and often do not have a dedicated budget, yet they act as inhibitors or facilitators of sustainable tourism development, showing local leadership to business disinterest [164] and the top-down directives [77]. However, they frequently face issues related to a new specialisation [83], observed by LAGs managers as a danger of so-called *pan-tourism* where any other activities are disregarded. Municipal stakeholders specify collaboration with tourism and restaurant companies, improving business activities with advice and support, and assume the role of intermediaries, acting to improve the prospects of the tourism sector based on SIEs. The relations between municipalities and tourism companies are also competitive, and the tourism companies explain them as follows:

- a) The benefit of the municipalities to local companies is an obstacle for exogenous companies [46], regardless of their characteristics, especially relevant in the SH.
- b) The benefit of the municipalities to the external companies for the search for external financing, investments and capital flows in the short term [35,61,83] as an expression of the mercantilist discourse and the development of alliances with external capital [12,50] that hinders internal entrepreneurship, particularly prevailing in SAPA and SNS municipalities.
- c) Unfair competition between municipalities and companies that promote SIEs with public investment and the direct management of tourist attractions affecting negatively private business viability and calls for a clear definition of the municipal role for accountability [77,81], as particularly detected in SAPA and SH.

For part of some tourism companies, the NtPs contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and the control of agricultural practices through good practices, technical support and the limitation of urbanisation, while for others, the NtPs suppose limitations and bureaucracy for their initiatives [117], as mentioned by the LAGs managers and recognized as a deficiency by the NtPs directors. The conflicts between traditional and tourism use generate a disconnection between tourism companies and the NtP (SNS), as it does not necessarily control illegal or unlawful activities in the PNAs and nor act diligently due to the scarcity of resources and acting as a so-called foreign administration to the territory [62].

Tourism companies and business associations highlight the lack of coordination between public and private initiatives and stakeholders due to the inexistence of a coordinating body for tourism activities in the territory and a plan that establishes tourism bases and objectives that results in a lack of coordination and inexistence of a formal discourse accepted by all [46,68,105]. This absence exists of an unfavourable institutional framework [59] due to the presence of administrations at different territorial scales and the distribution of environmental (NPAs) and tourism competencies between two regional ministries [74] that lead to ineffectiveness [117], in addition to the lack of involvement of the stakeholders [46], political issues and discrepant interests that result in a lack of coordination of actions [102] and the creation of tourist micro-destinations by the municipalities.

The proactive companies, the municipalities of change and the Foundation positively value environmental conservation and the patrimonialisation process based on

shared objectives [114], regardless of regularly failing communication mechanisms [28,152]. Stakeholders mutually recognise each other [72] and acquire attributes as a result of their dominant relationships with others [68,84,158]. Their assumed identities are also realised through these relationships [84], perceiving themselves differently according to their characteristics, similarities, differences [68], functions, discourses and influence [84,165].

5. Conclusions

Our study shows that, despite contextual differences, the perception of stakeholders about the sustainability of tourist activities is not substantially different from other spaces, with elements as identified by Renfors [46]. The perceptions of the stakeholders and their speeches will be determined by the specific territorial, personal characteristics that determine their proactivity, innovation and creativity, and external factors, such as place of residence and tourism development level and centre-periphery relations. This marks levels of agreement and disagreement within the different groups of stakeholders that are homogeneous in NtPs and LAGs and diverse among municipal stakeholders, tourism companies and business associations.

Overall, sustainability is the purpose of NPAs. However, the interviewees tend to focus on a single dimension of sustainability, seeing (1) the environmental dimension, especially conservation and patrimonialisation, as a limitation of development, (2) the economic dimension, e.g. productivism and commodification, as a danger to conservation, while (3) the socio-cultural dimension of sustainability is often overlooked. The evidence indicates that sustainable tourism has yet not been achieved, although some promote it based on individual actions and personal conviction. It is a threat to consider sustainability as an option when the PNAs rely on it, but sustainable tourism as an instrument of development should not be disregarded. Moreover, having a partial vision, evading or ignoring global change and its effects are escaping the evidence, disconnecting from reality and the irreversibility of changes, particularly in an agro-system such as the dehesa “which has been able to change and reinvent itself at the chance of different socio-economic and historical contexts.” [95](p. 134).

Relations of competition and cooperation, and management issues, based on the dominant discourses, configure a political-institutional dimension that does not favour governance in a clash of public and private interests. Dogmatism and pragmatism of the discourses are equally perilous in a fragile territory where a transaction between the actors is necessary, whereas the rigidity of the normative framework prevents not only from reaching agreements, but also proposing them. The NtPs were created to protect, although they are inhabited spaces where the citizens do not participate. It indicates a paradox of sustainability where we protect the space, and restrict its use, the local population must behave sustainably and the tourist population requires environmental training.

More than three decades after the NtPs proclamation, tourism has developed while sustainability continues to be a matter for a few and the heritage process has not been completed. The accumulation of protection objects does not guarantee conservation, therefore, without proper management and financing instruments, the DSMBR continues to be, two decades later, an opportunity for sustainable tourism development.

The main limitation of this study is that its base on the interviewees' opinions, making it necessary to consider how far to trust them [85]. On the other hand, the snowball technique may be identified as a methodological deficiency, since some responses of the interviewees were recurring

Based on the obtained results, new lines of research are proposed, as follows: (a) examine local development processes and the impacts generated by tourism, contrasting the perception of stakeholders with secondary sources; (b) establish the existing relationships between landscape and sustainable tourism in the NtPs; (c) study the deter-

mining factors of the relations of cooperation or competition between the actors in the NtPs; (d) analyse the existing relationships between proactivity, ideology and gender in the development of tourist activities in NPAs.

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