

PASTORAL TOURISM ISSUES

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Abstract: Pastoral tourism is a new tourism niche, very much related to agritourism, cultural tourism, educational tourism, and sustainable tourism due to its numerous implications involving the attitude of both farmers/shepherds and of tourists. There is a multitude of terms related to pastoralism and transhumance, which shows the potential of this new sub-type of tourism involving a multi-millennial practice all over the world. The authors present the different constraints hindering both pastoralism/transhumance and pastoral tourism, as well as a considerable number of solutions to these issues.

Key words: *transhumance, tourism, pastoral tourism*

INTRODUCTION

Pastoralism [1,2,3,6,9,12,17,24,27,30] is defined as “keeping or grazing of sheep or cattle”. Literature also speaks of agropastoralism [23]; mobile pastoralism; moving pastoralism; transhumant pastoralism [7]; pastoral activities/practices; pastoral farming [14]; pastoral movement; pastoral system [16]; pastoral transhumance [5]; agro-sylvo-pastoral practices; and eco-pasturing [14].

On the other hand, transhumance [8] has been defined as “the action or practice of moving livestock [farm animals regarded as an asset] from one grazing ground to another in a seasonal cycle, typically to lowlands in winter and highlands in summer” [13], as “a very old form of pastoralism” [4] and as “one form of mobile pastoralism”. Authors also speak of transhumance movement; transhumance system; altitudinal transhumance; inverse transhumance; normal transhumance; seasonal transhumance; vertical transhumance; transhumant farming system; transhumant grazing system; transhumant livestock breeding; transhumant pastoralism; transhumant system; and migratory management system [2,10,11,18,24,27,30].

This review of the terminology of pastoralism and transhumance is meant to be an argument in favour of the introduction of these “practices” in what has started to be pastoral tourism, a niche tourism, a sub-type of agritourism, or of cultural tourism, or of sustainable tourism etc. Most of the authors mentioned above emphasise that both pastoralism and transhumance are matters of cultural importance [21,22,29] given the fact that they have a multi-millennial tradition all over the world.

The attempts of introducing transhumance routes among tourism routes are still young. However, a few examples can help tour-operators understand the novelty of such enterprises and suggest how beneficial it would be for both the rural area and tourists coming from urban areas.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The material used in this paper is focused on pastoralism and transhumance and on possible ways of using them in the establishment of a new tourism niche-pastoral tourism. The method used is the case study method: several initiatives-mainly Italian ones-are detailed and turned into models for further initiatives.

RESEARCH RESULTS

There have been attempts to include transhumance routes as tourist resources in pastoral tourism. Below are a few examples of good practices in the field.

Italy [16] presented a methodology meant to assess the conservation state (in terms of both track accessibility and viability and of heritage presence) of these routes in Southern Italy [3] studied transhumance as territorial (paths and pastures) identity factor from pre-history to modern times from a cross-disciplinary approach (archaeological, geographical, and historical) in Southern Tuscany (Italy).

Heinz [10] identified and discussed indications (indirect factors) for mobile pastoralism in Southern Italy. Cammerino [4] approached the issue from the perspective of strategies meant to conserve agricultural landscapes again in Southern Italy.

Italy, France, Finland, and Spain developed a European transhumance network (unfortunately, despite the millennial tradition of transhumance in Romania, it is not part of this network) focusing on the enhancement of ecosystem services due to large-area environmental systems; the potential of inland areas in the policies of redistribution of settlement density; the role of urban spaces and proximity green spaces for the sustainability of dense settlements; the value, not only cultural, of secondary historical settlements.

France. In this country, they organised Boulonnais sheep transhumance to maintain remarkable natural environments.

The literature cited above shows that, unfortunately, the inclusion of transhumance as a feature of pastoral tourism (which includes elements of the cultural landscape such as historic rural architecture, transhumance routes, stone-made enclosures and terraces, traditional buildings) [15,19,20,25,26,28] has been threatened, in the last two decades, by a series of constraints of different types: (Figure 1)

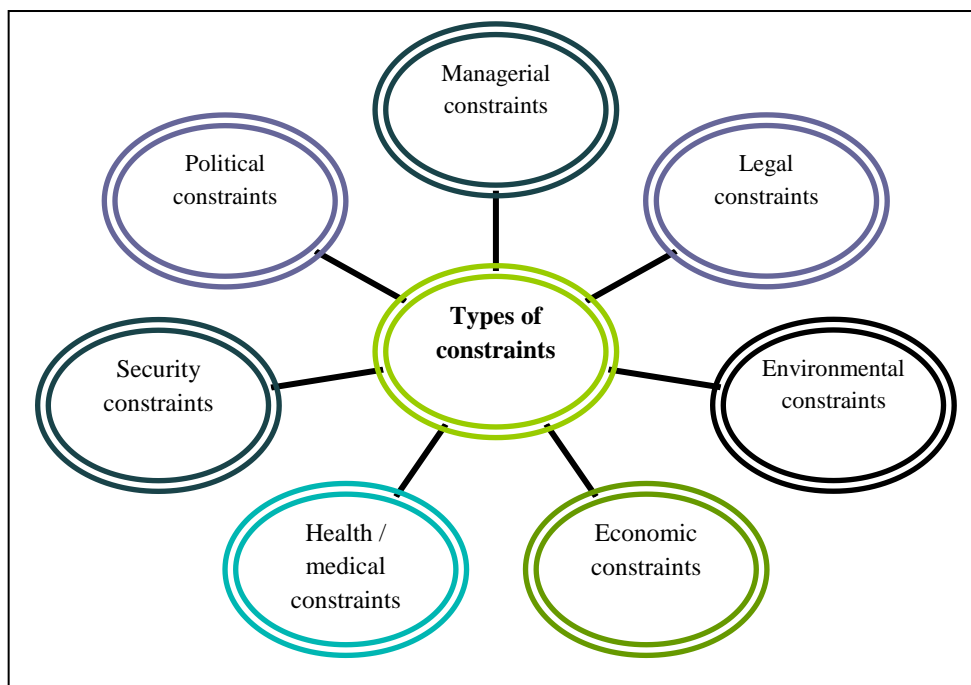


Figure 1. Types of constraints encountered by pastoral tourism

Economic constraints (some of which are also managerial constraints): high cost of development, lack of support services, poor infrastructural facilities;

Environmental constraints (some of which are also economic constraints, legal constraints, managerial constraints and political constraints):

- degradation of pastoral resources;
- degraded pasture land;
- invasion of rangelands;
- land insecurity;
- limitation imposed by community forest;
- overgrazing.

Health / medical constraints: lack of proper vaccination parks, lack of veterinarian medical staff, reticence of farmers and shepherds about vaccination;

Legal constraints: lack of farmers and shepherds' knowledge related to regulations;

Managerial constraints (some of which are also economic constraints and political constraints):

- difficulty of accessing pastures and pastoral facilities (forage, grazing areas, pastoral areas, vaccination parks);
- difficulty of accessing transhumance routes;
- difficulty of accessing water resources for both livestock and humans;
- exacerbation of conflicts between shepherds and other actors (farmers, owners of grasslands etc.);
- inadequate marketing outlets;
- lack of information on administrative documents on transhumance;
- lack of institutional sheep-tracks;
- lack of knowledge about production and marketing;
- plant poisoning problem;
- predatory problem;
- severe production losses due to animal health (pests);
- shortage of shepherds for management;
- transportation problem.

Political constraints (i.e., governmental rules and regulations, some of which are also managerial constraints and security constraints):

- border conflicts;
- exclusion of high-altitude resource management from the process of mainstream resource governance;
- low responsiveness on high altitude livelihoods and resource management;
- transborder conflicts.

Security constraints (these are also political constraints): border security, transborder security.

The same literature also provides economic, environmental, health / medical, legal, managerial, political, and security solutions to these issues:

- ✓ Developing responsive and multi-stakeholder deliberative policy and institution building process for high altitude resource governance to protect the unique culture and rights of the people living in the areas;
- ✓ Devising control mechanisms;
- ✓ Differentiating between forest and grassland;
- ✓ Eradicating toxic plants;
- ✓ Establishing cottage industries, market linkage for the production and product, service centre nearby pasture land, wool processing technology transfer;
- ✓ Identifying and screening the poisonous plants and knowledge of the appropriate antidotes;
- ✓ Improving substantially the living condition and incentives scheme for shepherds;
- ✓ Improving transhumance environment;
- ✓ Introducing an effective animal health treatment program;

- ✓ Introducing high-yielding native forage species;
- ✓ Introducing improved low fertility-demanding forage species;
- ✓ Introducing solar lighting system against predation by wild animals;
- ✓ Investigating disease outbreaks;
- ✓ Managing livestock reception areas;
- ✓ Managing security mechanisms;
- ✓ Raising awareness among the herders towards finding ways to improve and sustain rangeland productivity;
- ✓ Releasing trans-border movement;
- ✓ Training in animal health care;
- ✓ Training in forage cultivation, conservation and utilization practices;
- ✓ Training transhumance actors (administration officials, farmers, shepherds, stakeholders);
- ✓ Treating poisoning cases.

CONCLUSIONS

The large number of phrases related to both pastoralism and transhumance suggest the benefits of introducing transhumance routes and traditions in tourism packages and routes. The wide range of constraints hindering the introduction of transhumance in tourism programmes can be counter-balanced with economic, environmental, health / medical, legal, managerial, political, and security solutions for the benefit of both transhumance actors (administration officials, farmers, owners of grasslands, shepherds, and stakeholders) and agritourists. Romanian tour-operators should definitely include transhumance routes and traditions in their packages and tours.

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