

Slow tourism as an opportunity for inner areas: The case of transhumance routes in Apulia Region

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Abstract

Slow tourism, often associated with rural and experiential tourism, is having an important impulse in the last decades since it is considered a sustainable form of tourism, that fosters economic development in those areas traditionally excluded by mainstream fluxes, such as inner areas. Italy is not exempt from this phenomenon and, recently, numerous new slow tourism routes have been planned or developed all over the country.

After an introduction of key concepts related to slow tourism, the paper offers an overview of the main features of long distance cycling and walking routes through the literature review and the analysis of international case studies from which key insights are extracted concerning the importance of three factors: landscape; strategic vision; and local community. Afterwards, the paper focuses on a specific case study: Apulia, a region that is experiencing an important growth in the tourism sector, including slow tourism, and that has a notable history linked to the practice of the transhumance, that has left an heritage of about 2000 km of ancient routes: the *tratturi*.

The paper aims to analyse the opportunities that the ancient

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transhumance routes provide for slow tourism in the Apulia Region, highlighting their values as possible long-distance walking or cycling routes, and their unique assets.

Keywords

Slow tourism; Transhumance routes; Cycling and walking routes; Inner areas; Apulia Region

The golden age of slow, experiential and rural tourism

As carbon footprint reduction is one of the main global concerns, and tourism accounts for about 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions (Lenzen et al., 2018), strengthening more sustainable ways of travelling is a world-recognized priority (Tourism for Sustainable Development Goals). Slow tourism is deemed to be a sustainable form of tourism and territorial fruition. Its impact is considered positive from the environmental point of view since it has implications on issues such as the correct use of resources and the reduction of pollutants produced by vehicles (La Rocca and Fistola, 2018).

Pioneering international projects such as EuroVelo, a network of 17 long distance cross-national cycling routes, for a total of 90,000 kilometres, 64% of them currently ready to cycle (European Cyclists' Federation 2022), are a tangible proof of the commitment of European countries to cooperate in order to co-create a solid infrastructure for slow tourism.

Existing slow tourism means include several alternatives such as walking, cycling, horseback riding, canoeing and kayaking, mountain climbing, skiing, and the use of non-motorised vehicles (Godtman Kling et al., 2017).

Undoubtedly, the most common means among them are walking -including hiking and trekking- and cycling -including mountain biking.

For the purpose of this paper, long distance walking and cycling routes (LDWCR) are treated together under the concept of slow tourism without taking into account their specific issues. Indeed, although the features of both typologies of mobility and their different kinds of users, infrastructures, needs and their possible conflict are certainly recognized (Bell et al., 2007), in this paper a simplification is adopted as it addresses the global slow tourism phenomenon as a whole. The main reason behind this choice is the recognition of similar values shared by long-distance walkers and cyclists. Both can be considered as a particular profile of tourists, with a keen environmental awareness, that undertake a multiple-day journey in natural environments, generally with a certain interest towards local culture.

Moreover, existing cycling and walking paths are often not intended to be exclusively used by cyclists or walkers, and these two users (together with those less common, as horse riders for instance) often coexist on the same paths.

Among the main key concepts of slow tourism there is a shift in the experience of travelling: the trip along a route, also called 'route-tourism' (Lourens, 2007), is the very purpose of the journey rather than the reaching of a final destination. Moving slowly allows a completely different perception of the crossed landscapes, a deeper observation and interpretation of the surrounding environment while walking or cycling (Pileri, 2021). Moreover, cyclists and especially walkers, have the opportunity to stop whenever they feel like and, if the road infrastructure allows them to do so, to discover unmapped spots and extremely customise their travel experience.

For its stronger connection with crossed territories, slow

tourism is often associated with experiential tourism. Cycling or walking in the outdoors surrounded by natural and rural environments is one of the key features that define a memorable experience in travellers (Smith, 2006). Another typology of tourism that shares many features with slow tourism is rural tourism, defined by the UNWTO as 'a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle/culture, angling and sightseeing'. Rural tourism is also very much connected with what the rural environment has to offer to visitors as well as to local residents. The touristic ambition of rural areas triggers dynamics that aim at including other activities in agricultural lands, pushing rurality towards multifunctionality and bonding urban, peri-urban and rural areas (Donadieu, 2012).

In the last decades an increasing interest towards slow, experiential, and rural tourism is becoming popular in scientific literature as well as in travellers' preferences. According to the available data it seems that, at the global scale, the demand for sustainable tourism - that encompasses within itself the slow tourism concept - is increasing all around the world (ENICBCMED, 2020). As a result, slow tourism is experiencing great success in recent years with an important rise after the COVID crisis (Mini, 2021). Long distance walking routes are considered a way of seeking relaxation and escapism in a different manner to the sun, sand and sea holidays (den Breejen, 2007), and a similar consideration can be made for cycling routes.

Moreover, the reconnection with the natural landscapes through walking or cycling is a growing phenomenon affecting not only long holidays, but also short trips taking place in the surroundings of cities and urban areas. After the pandemic crisis, proximity tourism though slow mobility also experienced a growing success (Romagosa, 2020).

In this framework, over the last decade, a wide array of new slow mobility routes have been planned, designed or built, especially in the European context. Many walking and cycling routes derive from ancient mobility, often following the existing tracks of Roman roads; others retrace the tracks of pilgrimage routes, as shown by the most consolidated example of the Saint James Way in Spain; others simply connect points of interest (old towns, heritage areas, parks or natural areas) crossing pleasant landscapes and rural areas. While walking tracks have a long history of popularity in Europe, as the French *Grand Randonnée* proves, cycle trails are a more recent phenomenon, grew in the last 40 years (Weston and Mota, 2012).

In Italy, a milestone in the recognition of walking routes as cultural, environmental and touristic itineraries is represented by the Directive of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Activity and Tourism that has proclaimed 2016 as the 'year of the paths'. The Directive pursued the double aim of promoting slow tourism as a form of sustainable tourism, and to identify clearer criteria to map the existing walking routes on the national territory in order to create the national 'atlas of paths' (Cammini d'Italia; La Rocca and Fistola, 2018).

Key features of attractive routes for slow tourism

The first and obvious requirement for LDWCR for slow tourism purposes is the existence of an efficient, safe and accessible slow mobility infrastructure (Pileri, 2021). This is the indispensable criterion for the safety of walkers and cyclists. Moreover, as a mandatory requirement, the route has to be reachable from urban areas, preferably through public transportation. Furthermore, some facilities are

required along the routes in order to satisfy the needs of their users: signage and wayfinding systems, equipped resting areas, catering and accommodations along the paths, or close enough to be easily accessible with short deviations [1]. Additional features including landscape art installations, panoramic observation points or recognitions for the route travelled such as certificates and *stamps* [2], may increase the route appeal. Additionally, the route should cross some pleasant landscapes or interesting areas that justify the choice of the route itself.

However, according to Pileri (2021), the design of a slow tourism route should not be understood as the design of *spaces* -often standard, impersonal, and trivial- but is rather about building *places* to be lived slowly with their stories to be heard, signs to be interpreted, and landscapes to be perceived. Besides the physical effort required by cycling or walking, experiencing interactions between tourists and context (i.e. economic benefits to the host, and cultural benefits to the tourist) is the distinguishing feature of slow tourism from mainstream tourism (UNWTO, 2012).

The emotional, perceptive and recreational aspects of LDWCR also distinguish them from ordinary walking or cycling itineraries. Kay & Moxham (1996) say that the total experience of walking is placed in 'wider temporal, social and geographical contexts than the simple practice of pedestrian activity', and this can be affirmed for cycling experience too. In order to better highlight the key features that make slow tourism routes attractive, well-known international case studies have been analysed by reviewing other research conducted by using questionnaires and perception-based approaches. The considered cases are: the Way of Saint James (Xunta de Galicia, 2019), the West Highland Way in Scotland (den Breejen, 2007), and the Alpine area of Valle di Ledro (Scolozzi et al., 2015).

The Way of Saint James (in Spanish Camino de Santiago) is

an historical walking route across the North of Spain allowing to reach the city of Santiago de Compostela, in the Galicia Region, from the Pyrenees, in France. It is the most famous pilgrimage route in the world and, every year, its 781 kilometres are crossed by more than 300.000 people. Although the route was historically created for and used by walkers, nowadays it's possible to traverse it also by bike or on horseback.

The West Highland Way in Scotland is a 154 kilometres route in a mountain area, starting from the outskirts of Glasgow toward North-West. It was created in 1980 and it is considered as one of the most popular routes in the UK, as an estimated 17,000 people complete the Way each year (Den Breejen, 2007). The route was originally created as a walking route, but over the time it was used also by cyclists and horse riders. However, some sections of the way are narrow paths suitable for walkers only.

The Valle di Ledro is located in the central Southern Alps in the Province of Trento in Italy, covering an area of 152 km² featuring a lake and forest cover. Rather than a route, the area offers several mountain trails suitable for year-round activities, including hiking, climbing, roller skiing, snowshoeing, ski touring, and mountain biking. The area is mainly a summer destination and received increasing visits in recent years. During the summer of 2011, more than 86.000 tourists were recorded (Scolozzi et al., 2015). Although this case differs from the other two in terms of physical features and type of use, the analysed literature regarding this site offers an interesting point of view about the perception of visitors and users of the destination.

From the analysis of these case studies and the related researches conducted, three crucial considerations emerge:

a) landscape is the main value. Enjoying nature and the beauty of landscape [3] usually are among the main

motivations for walkers and cyclists to choose one route over the others. Experiencing nature can also have a therapeutic purpose as argued by Zhang et al. (2015), since walking in a natural landscape can relieve personal stress. Moreover, even in those cases where other reasons motivate walkers to embark on the route, notably along religious routes, one of the most valued aspects is the landscape, as this contributes to experiencing spirituality (Lopez and Lois, 2021). Among the landscape values, not only the natural features are perceived as attractive but also the overall aesthetic of places, including typical buildings and man-made sites (Scolozzi et al., 2015). Historical value is an additional asset to motivate cyclists and walkers;

b) a comprehensive strategic vision is needed. The planning, design, building, management and promotion of slow tourism routes require different policies, projects, tools and expertise at different levels and scales, pursuing a shared strategic vision to be implemented through complex long-term processes. As the case of the Saint James Way clearly shows [4], agreements on political will to pursue the enhancement and equipment of long distance routes at international, national, regional and local level are crucial. A key asset in making this task easier is the public property of land and facilities along the route. Again, the Saint James Way is an interesting case-study, as ‘the route was developed partly through a network of government owned *paradores* (hotels), which are well supported by intermediaries in the tourism sector’ (Lourens, 2007);

c) local community is key. An important role in shaping the experience of walking or cycling along slow routes is played by the local community, including: local administrations that support projects at local level; private landowners and entrepreneurs that conduct their activities in rural areas; associations that organise initiatives to promote their territories, and many others. From analysed experiences, it is

possible to affirm that the more the local community is engaged in preserving, enhancing, and even storytelling its territory, establishing ‘virtuous relations between people, place and cultural and economic activities’ (Barbanente and Grassini, 2021), the more the slow route will be attractive and pleasant for both tourists and residents.

Slow tourism as an opportunity for local economic, especially in inner areas

As argued in the previous paragraph, successful slow tourism routes arise in highly valuable landscapes, often following historic tracks, where the combined activities of natural and human components give rise to contexts that are generally recognized as beautiful and attractive.

However, recently, the great success of slow tourism together with other reasons, are pushing public administrations to evaluate the possibility to create LDWCR even if the landscape surrounding the route is not entirely responding to high standards of preservation or attractiveness. One of the most significant cases is the initiative of the Italian Ministry of Culture that is promoting a walking path following the traces of the ancient *Via Appia*, also known as *Regina Viarum*, the first route built during the Roman Empire to connect the cities of Rome and Brindisi. Along its approximately 600 km, as highlighted by the journalist Paolo Rumiz in his book *Appia* (Rumiz, 2015) the landscapes that the walkers could find are extremely varied: from suggestive natural areas, historic evidences and rural contexts, to degraded urban and peri-urban environments and heavy industrial settlements. The main reason behind the political will to transform this route into a long distance walking route is certainly the enhancement and promotion

of a unique historical heritage. Nevertheless, the development prospects that slow tourism draws, especially in such inner areas of the country, are also very desirable.

As a matter of fact, economic development is one of the main objectives of the creation of new slow tourism routes. As an example, it is estimated that the 320 km cycling route along the Danube river generates 100 million euros per year (Pileri et al., 2015). Another known case is the Saint James Way: along the route, since its official inauguration -with the only exception of the years of the pandemic emergency- the number of annual pilgrims has increased every year, notably in the last decade from 145.877 in 2009 to 347.578 in 2019 (Lopez and Lois, 2021). The economic development of these successful walking and cycling routes affects the entire territory touched by them, including those areas that traditionally were not concerned by mainstream touristic routes such as inner areas, small towns, and villages.

Slow and rural tourism is an opportunity for the economic development of inner areas since it often acts as a catalyst for rural development processes, allowing the diversification of economic activities, ensuring new employment opportunities, and improving the resilience of rural areas (Belligiano et al., 2020).

In Italy, inner areas are identified by the National Strategies for Inner Areas (SNAI - Strategia nazionale per le aree interne), developed in 2013 by the Agency for Territorial Cohesion (Materiali UVAL, 2014). It classifies the entire territory according to the level of accessibility to three citizenship rights: mobility, education, and health. Following this criteria, more than 60% of the national territory and 52% of municipalities are considered inner areas. On the basis of the same parameters, they are classified as intermediate, peripheral, and ultra-peripheral areas. Marginal areas are usually characterised by increasing depopulation, high rates of demographic ageing, geographic marginality, and various

degrees and forms of inequalities in the provision of services and infrastructure (Vendemmia et al., 2021). Although inner areas are facing challenges that place them among the most disadvantaged areas of the country, good policies and practices showed that they also have a high development potential (Materiali Uval, 2014).

Albeit the SNAI classification has some limits, as argued by Vendemmia, Pucci and Beria, for the purpose of this paper it is a useful reference to identify those areas classified as marginal in the case study area that will be presented in the next chapter.

Apulia: a region moving towards slow tourism?

Apulia Region is situated at the Southeast of Italy and it features a heterogeneous landscape that makes it very attractive for different types of tourism. As stated in the periodical reports of the Regional Tourism Department, despite the pandemic emergency and the international reduction of global mobility in 2020-21, Apulia is experiencing a positive moment for the tourism sector in almost all segments, with significant growth trends in international attractiveness (Report Tourism in Apulia, 2022).

The extensive coastal areas bordering the region for more than 800 km have been the main tourist attraction since its touristic development. Critical effects of this phenomenon are the anthropic pressure on delicate coastal ecosystems, heavy concentration along the seaside, and extreme unbalance between seasonal fluxes. However, recent data show that among new preferred destinations, internal rural areas are gaining appeal. This trend is supported also by a recent survey of the Regional Tourism Department, that

revealed that 10% of tourists and visitors decided to spend their holidays in Apulia for its cycling and walking routes (Regional Tourism Observatory, 2021). Although this is still an emerging sector, especially in inner areas of Apulia, 'rural tourism can represent a strategic means for the tourist offer diversification, through an action centred on protection and increase in value of the rural heritage, in particular of typical agricultural and local craft products' (Tatsios, 2016).

The opportunities that rural and slow tourism offers for sustainable development of Apulian inner areas have been detected by the Regional Government that in the last years has been implementing a series of initiatives to support this sector. Among them, there is the promotion by the Tourism Department of cycling itineraries and, more recently, of long distance walking routes. The latter will undergo an important development process with public funds in the next few years. Among the existing walking routes in Apulia region, some virtuous examples are noteworthy such as the *Via Francigena del Sud* and the *Cammino Materano*, a cultural itinerary built on the model of the Cultural Routes defined by the European Council (camminomaterano.it) that now includes different routes along Apulia, Basilicata, Campania and Molise to reach the city of Matera. Among the existing plans that contribute to build a clear strategic vision of slow mobility in Apulia, a central role is played by the Territorial Landscape Plan (TLP). The TLP develops 5 territorial projects for the enhancement of the regional landscape. One of them is the infrastructural system for the regional slow mobility (Fig. 1).

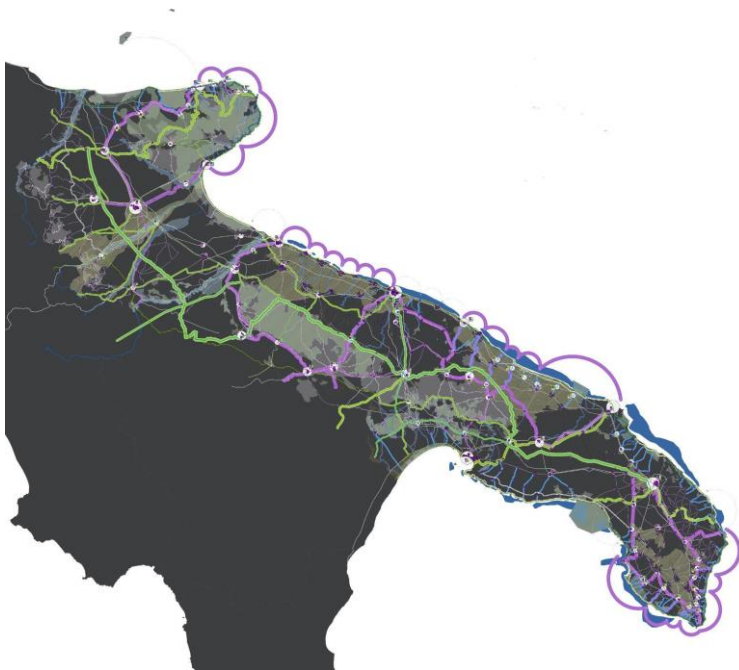


Figure 1 - The infrastructural system for the regional slow mobility (Territorial Landscape Plan of Apulian Region, 2015)

This project identifies a multimodal network connected to the regional infrastructure system, that guarantees accessibility to the regional territory by linking nodes of natural, cultural and landscape interest, and connecting the Apulian landscapes by scenic routes (PPTR, 2015). Among the cycling and pedestrian routes identified in the TLP there are: a) routes part of the ‘Cyclable network of the Mediterranean’, a project that envisions to adapt the existing low traffic road infrastructures into walking and cycling routes; b) the Apulian Aqueduct greenway, a cycling itinerary on the existing service infrastructure of the aqueduct; c)

cycling and pedestrian paths along the ancient transhumance routes among those that are suited for this purpose and still have a high landscape value; d) low traffic service roads that run parallel to main roadways, very often built on ancient transhumance routes, especially in the Tavoliere area. Moreover, the interaction between the slow mobility territorial project and the other projects included in the TLP has the potential to transversally improve the regional landscape, actively contributing to making the slow routes more attractive for landscape values, but also more sustainable from the ecological, social and economic point of view. Among the territorial projects that present a wider overlap with the slow mobility network in intervention areas and strategic goals, there are the City-Country Pact and the Regional Ecological Network.

Another key pillar in the regional slow mobility planning is the Regional Plan of cycling itineraries, redacted in 2020 by an internal department of Apulia Region (ASSET). The plan identifies 16 routes, partially corresponding to the regional portions of national and international routes (Bicitalia and Eurovelo). Its implementation is currently under development, and it is estimated that the completion of the planned cycling routes will require several years.

The transhumance routes as an opportunity for slow tourism. A heritage with great identity value.

In this national and regional framework, the existence of an extensive network of ancient routes with landscape, historical and environmental values, is a great opportunity for the development of new LDWCR. The transhumance routes (in Italian called *tratturi*) are ancient tracks that since pre-Roman times were used for transhumance, a practice declared Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2019

and today almost completely extinct. This practice was extended all over the world, and especially in the Mediterranean area (Braudel, 1987) and Western Asia.

In Italy, the network of transhumance routes is extensive; in Center-Southern Italy it extends along about 3000 km, covering 5 regions: Abruzzo, Molise, Apulia, Campania, Basilicata (Fig. 2). The Italian network of transhumance routes is distinguished into *tratturi*, 60 Neapolitan passes (111.11 metres) wide (Gaudiani, 1981), *tratturelli*, usually 27 metres wide (Marino, 1992), and *bracci*, that usually connected *tratturi* and *tratturelli*.

The network allowed the connection between the summer pastures of the Abruzzi highlands, where herds of sheep spend summertime, with the sunny pastures of the plains and low hills of Apulia and Basilicata, where animals could find mild climate and food availability (Russo, 2022).

Historically, the management of the transhumance routes was based on a sophisticated government under the jurisdiction of the *Dogana della Mena delle Pecore di Puglia* (Sheep Customs House of Apulia), a special administration, instituted in 1447 and suppressed in 1806. Under the jurisdiction of the *Dogana*, as well as after its suppression, punctual recognitions of the network were carried out, mapping not only the consistency of the routes, but also the historical and environmental landmarks of the territory. The last census carried out in 1959 recorded a total of 98 tracks divided into 14 *tratturi*, 71 *tratturelli* and 13 *bracci*. Similarly to what happens in other European countries, such as Spain, Italian transhumance routes are public land managed by the Regional Governments. One of the regions with the highest number of sheep tracks is Apulia, with 91 tracks across 90 municipalities. (Quadro di Assetto, 2019) (Fig. 3). Most of these transhumance tracks are in the zone of the so-called Tavoliere delle Puglie, a flat area located in the North of the

region, whose main city is Foggia, an urban centre that historically had a central role in the transhumance history.

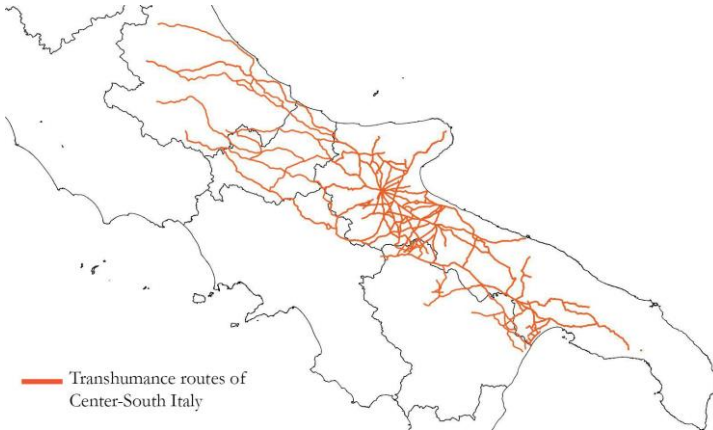


Figure 2 - The transhumance routes network in Center-South Italy (Author's elaboration)

Over the last centuries, pastoralism experienced a general decrease. Transhumance is almost no longer practised (Bindi, 2022), and the majority of zootechnical companies still operating prefer to practise transhumance by trucks. When the pastoralism crisis arose, part of the public property of transhumance routes was sold to private owners, as it was assumed that they had no more public utility. On the majority of transhumance routes, asphalt roads were built. Most of those parts of the routes that were not occupied by mobility infrastructures were rented to the private sector, mainly for agricultural uses. Transhumance routes underwent a transformation process that changed their historical land use, physical configurations, ecological values, relations with local communities and dialogue with surrounding landscape.

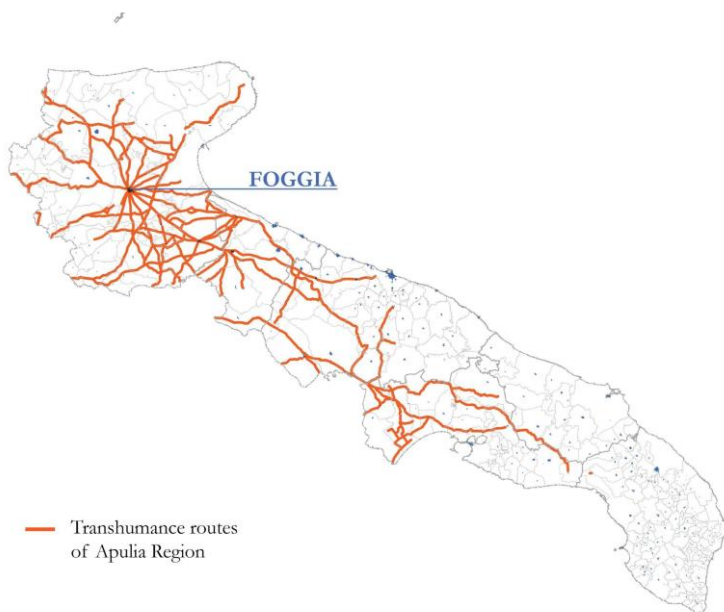


Figure 3 - The Apulian transhumance routes network (Author's elaboration)

In Apulia, as a result of this transformation process, many transhumance routes are not clearly recognizable, and, as a consequence, the perception that the local community has of the *tratturi* is often confused, fragmented and uncertain [5].

Planning framework of the protection and enhancement of Apulian *tratturi*

From the 2000s a new awareness of the historical and cultural values of transhumance routes spread at different levels. The recognition of transhumance among the

intangible heritage list of UNESCO in 2019, through a long process started two decades before, represented a further incentive to preserve and enhance the physical infrastructure as well as the cultural values linked to the transhumance.

In Apulia Region the transhumance routes were defined by the Regional Law n. 29/2003 as a 'monument of the economic and social history of the Apulian territory affected by the seasonal migration of herds and archaeological evidence of settlements of various periods. An important update in the regional legislation on the subject arrived with the new Regional Law n. 4/2013, that defined a new set of planning tools. The first tool to be approved is the Complete Recognition (Quadro d'Assetto) that reconstructs the extent of the *tratturi* and classifies them according to their state of conservation. The second tool is the Document for the Enhancement of the *Tratturi* (DET), currently under development by a multidisciplinary team composed by the Land Property Department of the Apulia Region, and researchers of the Department of Civil, Environmental, Land, Building Engineering and Chemistry (DICATECh) of Polytechnic University of Bari, the Department of Humanities, Cultural Heritage, Education Sciences, and the Department of Agricultural Sciences, Food, Natural Resources and Engineering of the University of Foggia, together with the Province of Foggia [6]. The following step of the planning process is demanded to the local municipalities that will develop municipal or intermunicipal planning tools, called Local Documents for the Enhancement of the *Tratturi*.

The DET includes some guidelines for the enhancement of the transhumance routes that cover different topics, such as: the creation of a soft mobility network along the existing routes, interventions to improve the ecological behaviour through the introduction of new vegetation; the preservation, restoration and reactivation of the historical

buildings and architectural traces along the routes; the creation of equipped multifunctional areas aimed at providing service to slow mobility users and enriching the social and cultural life of local communities; and an innovative wayfinding system that includes physical and digital components. The DET is currently under development and its approval is estimated to take place in 2023.

Defining the potential of transhumance routes as slow tourism routes

Except for certain very limited sections, currently the Apulian network of *tratturi* is not provided with an efficient, safe and accessible slow mobility infrastructure, that, as previously argued, is the essential requirement for LDCWR. However, despite this main constraint, the transhumance routes present some qualities that make them potentially suitable to host LDWCR. By reintroducing the three key factors that enable success in the analysed case studies, the specific context of the Apulian *tratturi* is treated as follows:

a) Landscape is the main value. As remarked in previous studies (Cammerino et al, 2015; Russo, 2002; Bindi, 2022), some key features make the *tratturi* unique landscapes traces that include a wide array of environmental, historical, anthropological and cultural values. Transhumance routes perfectly embody the definition of landscape provided by the European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe, 2000), i.e. an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. In particular, the transhumance routes have been generating a high value landscape, shaped as a result of mutual interaction of natural components and millenary

human activities, i.e. pastoralism. The typical landscape produced by transhumance in Centre-South Italy is quite unique and has been described by Cammerino *et al.* as ‘large open fields, lean (steppic) pastures, *maquis* and *garrigue* shrubland, animal resting places, woods and glades, single or clustered trees with broad and shadowing canopies, dry stone walls serving as land ownership boundaries, etc.’ . In spite of their very own specific landscape features, the transhumance routes may also be attractive for the landscape they cross along the Region. Indeed, the network covers ten sub-regions out of the eleven identified by the TLP, ensuring an almost total coverage of the diversity of the regional landscape (Fig. 4).

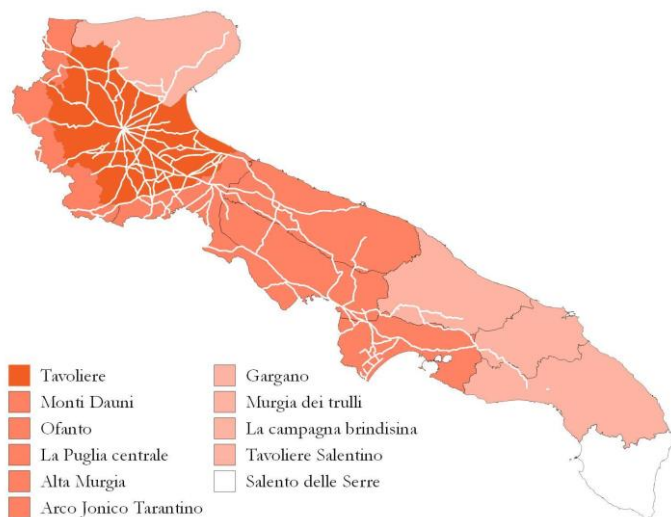


Figure 4 - The Apulian transhumance routes and the landscape sub-regions as identified by the Territorial Landscape Plan. Darker areas show sub-regions with a higher number of transhumance routes (Author's elaboration)

In addition, the practice of transhumance had a key role in

social, cultural, anthropological, and political structures of the involved communities generating a sense of identity and belonging (Bindi 2022) that is strictly connected with the landscape itself. Such a socio-cultural identity linked to the practice of transhumance allowed exchanges among communities that were not physically close to each other. According to UNESCO, transhumance is a bearer of the cultural importance of a tradition that has shaped the relationships between communities, animals and ecosystems, giving rise to rituals, festivals and social practices that mark the seasons as a recurring sign of a practice that has been repeated world widely for centuries.

b) a comprehensive strategic vision is needed. Although many initiatives were carried out at different levels engaging multiple stakeholders i.e. institutional entities, universities, associations and citizens, the construction of a shared vision for the enhancement of the Apulian transhumance routes is still an ongoing task. Certainly, the development of the DET is an important step towards this direction, as the interventions included in its guidelines foresee a sustainable development of the network and the territories that it crosses. This process will need to be further carried out in the next phases of the planning process, maintaining an overall coordination among the local plans and initiatives that will take place. At the same time, cooperation between the Land Property Department and the Tourism Department will be crucial to coordinate efforts towards the same goal. Figure 5 shows an overlap between the long distance walking routes recently identified by the Tourism Department and the transhumance routes network, highlighting that there is space for interaction between the two networks. Moreover, interregional cooperation is fundamental for a coherent enhancement strategy independently to the administrative limits they cross.

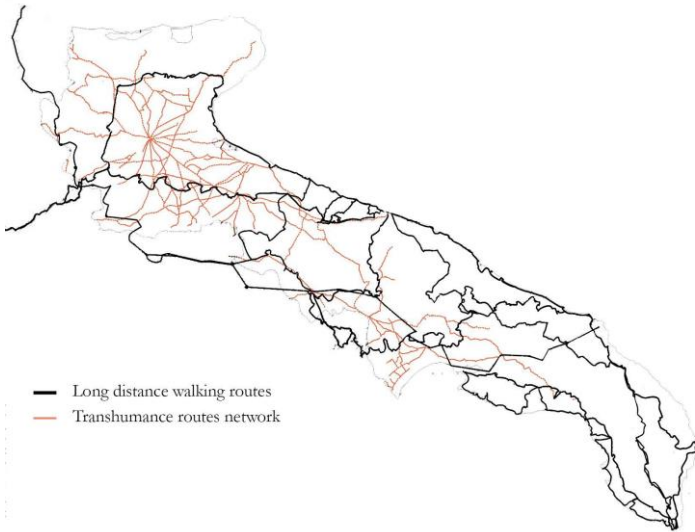


Figure 5 - The long distance walking routes identified by the Apulia Tourism Department (including “ready to walk” routes, and routes that will be completed for their safe accessibility in the next future) and the transhumance routes network (Author’s elaboration)

c) local community is key. At present, the engagement of local communities in the enhancement of the transhumance routes, and consequently in their potential equipment as slow tourism routes, is discordant depending on the contexts. In certain inner areas, especially small towns that still have recognizable signs of their past linked to the grazing economy, the memories of the transhumance are still tangible and active citizenship organises initiatives to preserve its heritage, playing an active role also in reclaiming a sustainable development connected to slow tourism perspectives [7]. On the other hand, in many other contexts, a

scarce awareness of the value that the transhumance routes embody and the opportunities they represent for future development, are the causes of a certain disinterest and detachment towards the topic. However, the scarce community engagement detected nowadays in certain zones of the region does not prove that the community will not be engaged in the future, if proper raising awareness and capacity building processes will take place.

Another key aspect concerning the opportunities that the slow tourism along the *tratturi* could offer to the local community of the region is the geographical distribution of the transhumance network in relation to the inner areas identified by the SNAI (Fig. 6). Among the 48 municipalities of the Apulia Region listed as inner areas, 26 are crossed by a transhumance route. Most of them are located in the inner part of the region, in the Monti Dauni area, at the border with Campania and Basilicata. Considering such a scenario, the possibility of economic, cultural and social reactivation that slow tourism could bring to these inner areas should represent an incentive to local communities to actively participate in the process.

Despite the above listed aspects, the transhumance routes present some specific features that make them particularly suitable for slow tourism development. In the next paragraphs key assets will be evaluated

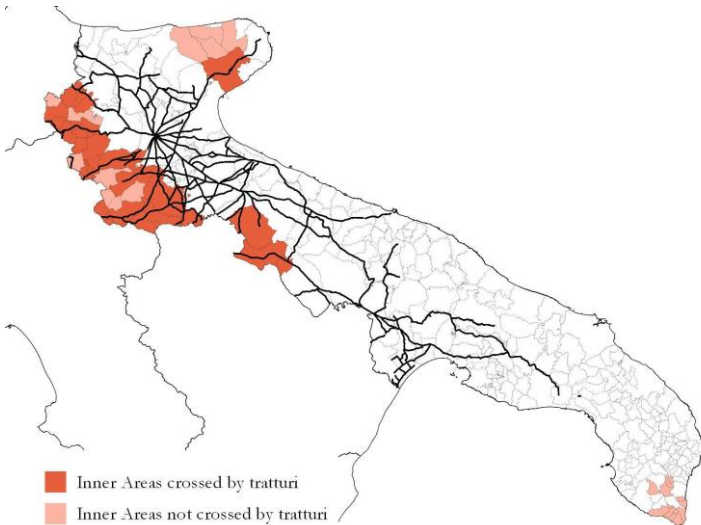


Figure 6 - Inner areas of Apulia identified by SNAI and spatial distribution of the transhumance routes network (Author's elaboration)

Public property

First of all, transhumance routes are public property. This is a key asset, especially considering the size that the main transhumance routes have, reaching more than 100 meters width for dozens and hundreds of kilometres in length. Even in those cases where the route is compromised due to the existence of paved roads, or even highways, the public property of the land offers the opportunity to consider interventions to create new paths for slow mobility. Those interventions could be integrated by other improvements aimed at restoring ecological value, promoting initiatives that support social integration and cultural activation, and experimenting new forms of co-management of public lands.

Spatial configuration

The spatial configuration of the network represents an opportunity at national and regional level. The interregional extent, together with the variety of landscapes, from the high mountains of the Appennini in the Abruzzo Region, to the lowlands smoothly degrading to the coast of the Adriatic and Jonian sea in Apulia, is an important asset for the slow tourism development of the whole network.

Furthermore, the dense reticular configuration of the network, especially in certain areas such as the Tavoliere and the province of Taranto, suggests different ways of developing LDWCR. In fact, if certain routes have their own clear identity and are suitable to host a continuous walking or cycling route all along its path, such as the *Tratturo Magno*, connecting the cities of L'Aquila and Foggia, for others *tratturi* or *tratturelli* a more carefully planning could include different intersecting portions of the network to create *ad hoc* itineraries. This option implies a preliminary evaluation of the parts of the network that have higher values and higher potential for slow tourism development, and a consequent planning of long distance routes that offer the best experience to the tourists relying on the transhumance network or, when needed, to other existing and equipped routes. The overlapping and crossing with other important and historical routes, such as the *Via Appia*, *Via Traiana* or the *Via Francigena del Sud*, is certainly an additional asset for Apulian transhumance routes.

City-country connection

Besides connecting several natural areas and historical landmarks, the transhumance routes also penetrate into the urban centre of 25 cities out of the 90 municipalities at

regional level.

CITIES WITH LESS THAN 15.000 INHABITANTS	CITIES BETWEEN 15.000 AND 50.000 INHABITANTS	CITIES WITH MORE THAN 50.000 INHABITANTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Avetrana ● Carapelle ● Castelluccio dei Sauri ● Motta Montecorvino ● Troia ● Ordona ● Orta Nova ● Roseto Valfortore ● Stornarella ● Trinitapoli ● Zapponeta 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Canosa di Puglia ● Castellaneta Marina ● Corato ● Gravina di Puglia ● Grottaglie ● Laterza ● Palagiano ● Ruvo di Puglia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Andria ● Bari ● Bitonto ● Cerignola ● Foggia ● Taranto

Table 1 – Urban centre crossed by transhumance routes in Apulia classified by number of inhabitants (ISTAT, 2011)

As shown in table 1, the cities crossed by the transhumance routes vary in term of size and number of inhabitants, including: a) small towns, mainly located in the inner area of the Monti Dauni and Tavoliere; b) small and medium size cities, distributed along the regions of the Ofanto Valley, the Central Apulia, the Alta Murgia and the Arco Ionico Tarantino; c) medium and big size cities with more than 50.000 inhabitants, corresponding to four provincial capitals (Andria, Bari, Foggia e Taranto), plus two other important economic centres like Cerignola and Bitonto. A unique case is represented by the city of Foggia, that for centuries constituted the epicentre of the transhumance culture and land management. The twelve *tratturi* and *tratturelli* that cross its urban centre contributed to shape the current footprint

and spatial configuration of the city, and are at the base of the infrastructural network of the province (Fig. 7).



Figure 7 - The city of Foggia and the transhumance routes crossing its territory (Author's elaboration)

From the slow tourism perspective, the opportunity that the transhumance routes provide by crossing urban centres is evident: on one hand, it allows to discover historical towns and cities without any deviation, including in the route fully equipped areas where tourists can find facilities, services and accommodations; on the other hand, the connection with strategic urban centres allows an easier accessibility through different transport modes.

In addition, the enhancement of the transhumance routes in urban and periurban areas constitutes a clear opportunity for cities to improve their urban quality by applying the DET guidelines, in accordance to the principles reported in the City-Country Pact of the TLP.

Conclusions

In a favourable context for the development of slow tourism infrastructures and initiatives, the existence of a valuable asset, as the transhumance routes network is, certainly represents a unique opportunity for Apulia, and more in general for the Center-South Italy.

As reported along the paper, the *tratturi* and *tratturelli* have specific features that make them very suitable for their development as LDWCR. However, in the vast majority of cases, the current condition of the routes doesn't allow an immediate fruition for slow tourism purposes, and some material and immaterial interventions are needed in order to, at least, improve their accessibility and raise awareness in the local community.

Following what happened in the analysed international case studies, the enhancement of the transhumance routes could represent a concrete opportunity for the sustainable economic territorial development, especially for inner areas and small towns suffering from abandonment and population ageing, that in Apulia are located in areas widely crossed by transhumance routes.

Although the impact that the touristic development could generate to all the territories covered by the network is estimated to be positive, its notable extent implies that not the totality of the 2000 kilometres of Apulian routes should be transformed into LDWCR. Intervening in the entire regional network to create new touristic routes should not be considered a successful approach for different reasons. Firstly, it would require an excessive effort from the regional and the local administrations, that is not reachable in the short-medium term. Secondly, some issues related to the risk of overtourism, or, on the contrary, of over-supply and internal competition may affect the regional territory.

Hence, an effective strategy to adapt transhumance routes to

slow tourism needs should focus on pilot projects along selected network sectors, at least in a first stage. Such pilot projects should ensure a minimum length of the pilot area, since one of the key factors of slow tourism is the long distance of the routes. To this end, it is suggested that a distinction among the routes should be made, classifying them into two types: a) those that due to their landscape values, conservation degree, and potential attractiveness can be identified as possible slow tourism routes. Overlaps with the slow mobility infrastructure identified by the TLP and the other slow mobility plans should be accurately evaluated. For these pilot areas, *ad hoc* plans, projects and initiatives to engage the local community should be developed. b) those *tratturi* that are less suitable for redevelopment in terms of slow tourism because their tourism offer is estimated to be not very attractive to potential visitors, while retaining all the unique assets of the transhumance routes network previously exposed. The reasons may lie in several aspects: degradation of the landscape due to disordered urbanisation processes; presence of incompatible land uses, such as industrial and productive areas; presence of heavy traffic infrastructures; etc. Even if not properly suitable for tourism development, these types of *tratturi* constitute an excellent opportunity to support slow mobility on a local scale and to improve their ecological and environmental values, which, instead, have reason to apply along the entire transhumance route network. Nevertheless, for the latter type of *tratturi* a possible development as slow tourism routes is not to exclude *a priori*, as the case of the Via Appia demonstrates. The implementation of pilot projects in the first phase of the transhumance routes enhancement season will allow policy makers, planners, researchers, local communities, and users to identify successful aspects that could be replicated along other parts of the network, and mistakes not to be repeated.

This kind of approach proved to be effective in many enhancement plans of a wide extent, and there are reasons to affirm that it could be effectively applied also in the case of the Apulian transhumance routes.

As a conclusion, the in-depth analysis of the transhumance routes that is being carrying out by the Land Property Department of the Apulia Region, firstly with the general recognition of the Quadro d'Assetto, and currently with the Document for the Enhancement of the Tratturi, is a crucial task. Since the way to adapt the transhumance routes network -or part of it- to meet the standards of slow tourism is still long, it seems crucial to ensure continuity to this process over the next planning phases, engaging a wide array of stakeholders from national, regional and local institutions, to active citizens and private sector.

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- [1] According to a German research commissioned by the Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWi, 2009), 38% of cyclists are willing to deviate their path by 1-2 km to reach catering facilities, while 20-25% of cyclists are open to a diversion of up to 5 km for accommodation.
 - [2] In reference to the use of applying stamps on personal diaries that certify the visits of pilgrims along religious routes. This practice was first introduced along the Saint James Way with the so-called Compostela, and is now spread along different routes, not necessarily religious ones.
 - [3] Among pilgrims that walked along the Saint James Way in 2018 the most well evaluated feature was the landscape, with 65,5% of preferences (Xunta de Galicia, 2019)
 - [4] The route was firstly promoted by the Council of Europe as a pilot project of the Cultural Routes Program in 1987. Afterwards, the UNESCO recognition of the Saint James Way in the list of world heritages in 1993, and several programs and plans by the Spanish Government, the regional government (Xunta de Galicia, 2019) and the major cities covered by the route, gradually shaped the route as we know it today.
 - [5] This information emerged from the results of a public survey on the perception of the *tratturi* among Apulian residents, that is still ongoing.
 - [6] The author belongs to the DICATECh research group, coordinated by prof. Angela Barbanente.
 - [7] Among the most active local communities encountered during the participatory activities carried out for the DET, there are those based in the cities of Serracapriola, Chieuti, San Paolo di Civitate, Torremaggiore and San Severo, that constituted the Asso Pro Parco Tratturi (association in favour of the Park of the *tratturi*).