

Intercommunal pastoral pact in Cévennes: From the co-construction of social resilience

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Pastoral Pact: qu'es aquo ? per que ? consi ? (what ? why ? how ?)

The Pastoral Pact is a social, legal and political agreement within the territory, a socio-ecological contract, a resolution on the meaning of territory and the links between actors around the living culture of pastoralism that affects the landscape and the relation with the environment.

The pact is the expression of a territorial consciousness through a collective process that goes far beyond a corporation. The objective is to support and contribute to public policies in order to allow "local organization to be able to continue our activities."

The interest of the pastoral Pact is of a cultural and ecological nature that leads to the adoption of a given socio-ecological paradigm: the relationship among men and between men and the environment it creates. The objectives of the Pact are based on the following foundations:

- Provide a common meaning of territory: a heritage of all and for all, the past, the present and the future generations;
- Re-form the link between all members and players in the territory around the dynamics of the relations between men and nature expressed in the landscapes;
- Formalize a pastoral identity of the area to sustain the practices and representations that socialize the space.

The challenge for pastoral pact is to maintain and develop extensive farming within the territory in order to set a legal and political tool developed and legitimized by all stakeholders (co-construction) in order to contribute to territorial public policies and guide the actions and behaviors of each.

1. How did we get to the Pastoral Pact?

a) The place of livestock production in the territory: a history of representations
Let's situate ourselves in time: agricultural abandonment in our area until the 70's, followed by a wave of youth settling in, making a choice against the current. This "backward flow" forces to innovate practices in order to subsist, establish farming and work.

In the mid 80's, the political choice focuses on vertical agricultural development by specialized sectors (industrial farming, increased herd size, fattening, etc.). The territorial scale is rejected facing the productivist system in which the link to the territory disappears. Then in the 1990's (1992 & c) local dynamics and endogenous practices are

reconsidered: maintaining and introducing environmental practices with art.19¹ (since 1985), protecting forests from fires (DFCI, art.L134-2 forest Code), the CAP reform in 1993 followed by the development of agro-environmental measures, the increased interest in landscape and biodiversity conservation.

The local problems of farmers (local slaughterhouse, access to pastoral land, recognition of breeds (e.g. Raïole) and local production (e.g. Pélardon cheese) ...) were not taken into consideration by the productivist model. Consequently, farmers organized themselves collectively: direct sales, farmers' markets... gatherings in the summer pastures, etc. developing another paradigm, other solutions of existence. The regulations change and evolve but pastoralism practices remains and the herds keep grazing in the same pastures...

b) Ceasing activities, transmission and abandoned pastures for years: a collective awareness

The favorable response of the chosen ones and the institutions allow the formalization of work in a pact of pastoral recognition of the territory. This context is more favorable since the agro-pastoral landscapes of Causes-Cevennes are considered as world heritage in its cultural dimension. How to maintain and carry this "label" without acknowledging pastoralism?

The agricultural models, favored by institutions with competence in agriculture development, are too often completely unsuitable for Cevennes, which requires installing more small flocks (simple shelters, environmental impacts ...) in an economic logic based more on social ties. Therefore, it would be necessary for us to avoid the imposed model.

2. The strength of the collective: adapt the land tenure system to maintain the pastoral specificity of the territory; this is the challenge of the pastoral Pact!

The triggers of the current collective drive are mainly caused by the fact that the shepherds are growing old, that the pastures are being abandoned and turned into fallow, and that pastoralism is not acknowledged in urban planning. The needs are caused by fundamental challenges such as social links, the full recognition of the territorialized pastoralism, sustaining and developing pastoralism, rural life, maintaining and shaping the landscape...

The management tools of the existing territories are the following: the management plan of the Interdepartmental Agreement of Causses-Cevennes listed site (under validation) making the agro-pastoral landscape heritage sites, the charter of the National Park of Cevennes (which gives great consideration to pastoralism), and the charter of the regional Park of Grands Causses. What is missing from these main schemes of public policy is the effective involvement of the farmers and the main stakeholders in the territory. The Pastoral Pact meets this need by being part of a real process of co-construction giving it a genuine legitimacy of participative democracy, thus overstepping the consultative status of the population. The top-down ration becomes bottom-up. The challenge of the

¹ Article 19 of the former Regulation 797/85 EEC (12 March 1985) forecasted the payment of premiums to farmers in return for environmentally friendly practices related to habitats and species conservation.

collective action is just to make a (legal and political) tool from the base, the starting point to establish decision-making at the different levels of management.

The system of land ownership imposes the will of the owner against the public interest. The territory is part of a whole that should not remain under the control of a logic of capitalism (land is a commodity) or of technocrats, which themselves work for a system. That is why the formulation of a territorial pact by the involved stakeholders is to say “if it is not us who take charge of tis, nobody will do it for us!”. The collective construction of a territory begins from the place that is given to the private property in order to develop the status of common heritage to the territory. Thus, we should identify and operate innovations as adequate adaptations to a socio-ecological resilience (which is the core of the pastoral pact):

- Recognition of the pastoral values as tangible and intangible common heritage defined by the spaces, practices and knowledge
- Compilation of local pastoral practices
- Promotion of a (non-exclusive) territorial pastoral destination, by the means of the following techniques:
 - o Pastoral slavery (negotiated) across the territory
 - o Pastoral priority in conveying properties
 - o Pastoral sub-zoning in the urban planning (Ap and Np)
 - o Conservation of transhumance routes (through regulations)
 - o Reclamation, by the community, of abandoned or ownerless lands in favor of pastoralism

3. Rebuilding the links between people around a pastoral identity, origin of the territory and its landscapes: by establishing internal regulations and local development policies based on shared values

Re-establishing the social (and socio-ecological) link is done through a process of patrimonial transmission and the building of a territorial future. In that, the viability of men depends on the viability of the environment shaped by the societies depending on their relationship to the biosphere. This shaping results from the production systems and the use of the resources and the natural elements. The only way to achieve this joint viability, this co-viability, is through a regulation negotiated in a collective and co-constructed way by the first involved stakeholders, and through up-scaling the local legitimacy to the regional, national and international levels.