

Submitted Abstract

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>> SYNTHESIZE MOUNTAINS OF KNOWLEDGE <<

Abstract

Alpine pastures are alpine grazing areas located above permanent settlement areas and below high mountain zones unsuitable for agriculture, i.e. between 1,300 and up to 3,000 meters above sea level (Ringler, 2009; Tasser et al., 2013). Due to their high elevation, alpine pastures are only cultivated in the summer months. They represent a complex cultural landscape comprising alpine pasture land, meadows, scattered wood pastures and alpine forests, as well as a variety of interconnected man-made elements necessary for pastoralism and dairy farming, such as stables, storage facilities, huts, fences, forest roads, a paths-network and energy and water supply (Ringler, 2009; Brugger & Wohlfahrter, 1983).

The success story of Alpine tourism is linked to alpine farming and the cultivation of alpine pastures. Until the 18th century, the mountain ranges in the center of Europe were considered an undesirable, dangerous place, where primitive “barbarians” resided (Bätzing, 2015). A growing interest in nature in the 18th century, as well as the works of the 19th-century inspired travels and expeditions towards this counterworld to the industrialized cities of Europe (Bätzing, 2015). Alpine pastures therefore contributed with both physical and aesthetic as well as cultural assets to the rise of modern alpine tourism.

Until today, mountain tourism is characterized by traditional winter and summer sports activities like skiing and hiking. However, even though these aspects are still the main pull factors in mountain regions (Peters et al., 2011), some research has highlighted how tourists are also looking for culture (Lane & Kastenholz, 2015; Richards, 2018). In this context, Corti (2014 ?) has introduced the term “Alpine-pasture heritage” to outline the tangible, intangible and biologically based cultural heritage related to alpine pastures

Through the model for destination competitiveness and sustainability developed by Ritchie & Crouch (2011), this paper aims at:

evaluating the current tourism products involving alpine pastures

analyzing the future potential impact of the tourism industry to the maintenance of this historical activity

make recommendations for the development of an integrated and sustainable tourism product