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Abstract: There has recently been discussion regarding how heritage rural areas are culturally affected by recent urban – rural migration. However, little research has been done into the form this process takes in post-communist contexts. Taking a geography approach to some Romanian heritage sites, this study foregrounds narratives based on interviews with local people in two villages in southern Transylvania that were formerly inhabited by different ethnicities. The results point to quite different perceptions of cultural landscape change in the two villages. Although both communities consciously seek to preserve and maintain a sense of place that is rooted in history, those who migrate from urban areas to these rural heritage places represent a catalyst for community resilience and development in areas such as acquisition of buildings, development of facilities, modern social services, and seeking new funding for landscape transformation. As NGOs function as a link between government, local people, newcomers to the community, and investors, we contend that more attention could be paid to channelling their funds towards investment in rural heritage. The greatest challenges to heritage are those posed by tourism, while NGOs and small investors are the driving force that helps to preserve and save cultural heritage.

Keywords: rural heritage; urban-rural migration; cultural rural changes; NGOs; Transylvania; Romania

1. Introduction

Rural decline and ways to combat it have been the subject of much debate and study in European academia over the years, with less attention being paid to rural areas in which the dynamics have recently begun to change. Rural depopulation is having a significant impact at both national and regional levels in developed and developing countries alike [1,2] as well as in post-communist states [3–5].The end of a period of transition brings changes in the perception of the countryside and a tendency among certain categories of individuals to return to their original values. A better understanding of the problem can lead to more effective interventions, in the context of a renewed long-term vision for Europe's countryside that needs to recognise the increasing range of opportunities that rural areas are benefiting from as changes and transformations accelerate in people's working behaviour (including in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic), in the geography of economic activities, and, gradually, in technology and markets. The present time could represent a turning point for the rural landscape.

In Romania, the topic of urban-rural migration is less addressed in academia, the phenomenon more intensively researched being that of migration to urban areas [6]. It is precisely in this context that we believe there is an opportunity to analyse how this new trend of migration to rural areas can be exploited for the benefit of rural communities and of the cultural heritage and landscape of these destinations.

Our aim in this piece of research is to analyse the impact of urban newcomers on heritage and existing local communities in two rural localities in Sibiu county (Transylvania, Romania). We seek to better understand the degree of receptiveness of local government towards this phenomenon, the potential for revitalisation of these areas brought by the different types of newcomers identified, and the interaction of newcomers with host communities.

Our research questions are:

1) What challenges face cultural heritage in this period of paradigm shifts that are dictating a "back to the village" trend?
2) What contrasting features appear in Transylvania in the case of urban to rural migration of population, first to a locality with an old Saxon tradition and then to a locality with a majority Romanian population?

Our paper is structured as follows. First, we introduce the conceptual background. Next, we present the study area and the methodology. Finally, there is discussion of the urban-rural migration issues and conclusions are drawn.

2. Theoretical Framework: Globalization, Rural Depopulation and Urban-Rural Migration

Globalization has both positive and negative effects on rural development [7]. It has opened up new opportunities for the development of rural markets, but in other contexts it has been identified as something that can marginalize rural economies, so that the rural poor risk being left behind due to a lack of skills. Globalization creates the premise of unfair competition. Woods [7] assesses that "the impact of globalization on rural localities reveals itself not as domination or subordination, but as negotiation, manipulation and hybridization, driven through but not contained by local micropolitics." In Woods' terms, globalization is defined as "a dynamic and multifactorial process of integration and interaction that inscribes localities in networks of interconnectivity organized on a global scale and that facilitates the global circulation of people, goods, ideas and representations" [7]. Globalization as 'modernisation', as 'standardisation' of local farming systems, is thus positioned as an intruder acting in opposition to authentic rural ways of being. Movements of 'peasant resistance' and a return to the 'peasant principle' in the organisation of rural production are seen as a valid and appropriate response to globalization [8]. As David Harvey [9] postulated, capital accumulation is a typical neoliberal feature.

Rural depopulation too is an important dimension at both whole-country and regional levels [1,2,10]. Studies in rural depopulation in post-communist spaces [3,4] highlighted that an absence of government policies has led to mass depopulation in some rural areas. The concept of rural cultural heritage refers to the tangible and intangible heritage left behind by these communities, which bridges the gap between the past and the future. Certain valuable features are viewed as belonging to this heritage, be they buildings, artefacts, works of art, or landscapes. They belong to 'humanity' and the awareness of their destruction or permanent loss has led to the use of expressions such as 'outstanding universal value' and 'irreplaceable'. Hence the felt need to protect or preserve these features and objects, from the first 'collections' in the late medieval period to the creation of the first national museums and the emergence of international organisations such as the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. NGOs too have an important role to play in promoting local heritage [11–13].

For the purposes of this study, we will also be referring to the concept of authenticity, which is defined as "those characteristics that most truly reflect and embody the cultural heritage values of a place" [14]. Three different types of authenticity have been identified in the literature: "objective, constructive and existential. The objective refers to the authenticity of physical objects, such as historic buildings, traditional costumes or cultural artefacts, while existential and constructive authenticity are subjective concepts, perceived differently by different groups of people" [15], such as "personal feelings" or "tourist experiences" [16]. By contrast, constructive authenticity refers to something that receives social recognition as authentic: "things seem authentic not because they are inherently authentic, but because they are constructed as such in terms of views, beliefs, perspectives, or powers" [15]. Furthermore, Iorio & Corsale [17] believe that rural tourism is a key element in preserving authentic, existential values in Transylvania.

Turning now to our study area, Opincaru&Voinea [18] raise questions about the legitimacy of protecting the physical heritage of an almost extinct ethnic group - the Transylvanian Saxons - and the consequences for new settlers (Romanian and Roma/Gypsies) in terms of their identity-making needs. She argues that these "external actors" did not sufficiently appreciate the unusual and sensitive

nature of a culture that did not belong to them, with the result that these villages became "battlegrounds between several sets of identities and value systems: those of the old Saxon ethnic group (embodied in the villages themselves), those of the new Romanian and Roma inhabitants and those of the new ethnic and identity groups as well as those of the conservation organisations that arrived in the Saxon villages to save them from destruction".

We cannot talk about recent urban-rural migration without alluding to the phenomenon of rural gentrification. This relates to the changing dynamics of local decline as a consequence of an influx of middle-class or wealthy 'gentrifiers', or 'productive capital' as Smith [19] called them in his landmark article, who are increasingly affecting contemporary rural settlements around the world [20]. Smith [19] emphasised the crucial role of gentrifiers in 'transforming and consuming the built environment'. The mention of a change in class structure is a reference to a demographic shift in the rural population, to 'the displacement of working-class rural residents as a result of rising local land and house prices' [21]. Similarly, 'change in rural capital accumulation' describes a shift in occupation from industrial or agricultural production to service-oriented occupations [21].

3. Materials and Methods

In this paper, a case study approach was used, focusing on a locality in central Transylvania with an old Saxon tradition (Hosman) and another at the foot of the mountains in southern Transylvania which has a majority Romanian population and traditionally specialized in sheep rearing (Râu Sadului). Both villages lie approximately 35 km from Sibiu, the main city in the county and a European Capital of Culture in 2007.

We have tried to describe the challenges recently faced by the two localities, in order to understand how this migration to the countryside can bring beneficial changes to the cultural heritage we have inherited in rural Romania. Bearing in mind that not all the categories of newcomers we will be referring to are currently identified in the official statistics as migrants, we have taken as the object of our study all those typologies of individuals who are in one way or another leaving their mark on the cultural heritage within these destinations and within the communities concerned.

In order to explore the kinds of migrants whose presence is being felt in these localities, we have identified relatively recent newcomers to these areas as well as people who have lived there longer (defined as permanent residents). To collect data from them, interviews were conducted in Romanian and English, with questions to be answered both physically and online that would help us to identify types of newcomers, the degree of receptivity of the local communities to them and their interaction with newcomers, and transformations that have occurred in the development of the villages, their households (houses, farmhouses, outbuildings), a nd their natural landscapes.

The interviews used a purposive sampling approach to focus on those who have arrived in the communities in the past 10 years. Questions were of four kinds: about the choice of destination; on interactions with the local community (community spirit, traditional products, gastronomic experiences); about the heritage of the locality (importance of preserving the heritage); and on the need for heritage protection measures (including proposals addressed to local government).

The questions targeted the importance given to local heritage by each category of interviewees, as we were trying to collect a wide range of opinions on how this is perceived by each category.

We interviewed 19 persons - 11 people from the village of Hosman and eight from the village of Râu Sadului. In each community we selected respondents in such a way as to reach all the categories involved (Table 1). All interviews were transcribed and thematically coded in accordance with Bryman's [22] methodology. The interviews and the entire methodology of this study were approved by the Scientific Council of University Research and Creation Commisions of our university (No. 33286).

Table 1. Characteristics of interviewees.

No.	Age	Gender	Educational level	Category	Locality
1	45	M	University degree	Newcomer/NGO	Hosman
2	39	M	University degree	NGO	Hosman
3	41	F	University degree	Newcomer/NGO	Hosman
4	64	M	University degree	Public administration/ Town planning officer	Hosman
5	29	F	University degree	Local	Hosman
6	30	F	High school	Local	Hosman
7	54	M	University degree	Newcomer/entrepreneur	Hosman
8	56	F	High school	Local	Hosman
9	52	F	Post-secondary education	Local / Town hall official	Hosman
10	36	M	University degree	Newcomer/Contractor/Blacksmith	Hosman
11	39	M	University degree	Newcomer/NGO	Hosman
12	36	M	University degree	Newcomer	Râu Sadului
13	48	M	University degree	NGO	Râu Sadului
14	38	F	University degree	Agro-tourism entrepreneur	Râu Sadului
15	38	M	University degree	Public administration/Mayor	Râu Sadului
16	40	M	Postgraduate qualification	Newcomer	Râu Sadului
17	40	F	University degree	Newcomer	Râu Sadului
18	38	M	University degree	Local	Râu Sadului
19	54	F	University degree	Local	Râu Sadului

4. Study Area

The two villages examined are in Sibiu county, Transylvania, Romania, and are demographically comparable (817 inhabitants in Hosman and 514 in Râu Sadului in the 2021 census) [23].

The village of Hosman is located in the foothills and was founded by German (Saxon) settlers who arrived in Transylvania eight centuries ago. In the 1930 census it had 571 Germans, 309 Romanians and 220 Roma, but after the fall of communism there were only 42 Germans still living there, with 565 Romanians and 113 Roma [23]. There was large-scale emigration of the ethnic German population to Germany during the communist period and this accelerated steeply after 1989. With the exception of some 20th century extensions, the original structure and layout of the village has been preserved, with household units remaining within the village limits.

At Hosman the traditional Franconian farm, as favoured by the Transylvanian Saxons, predominates. This involves a series of elongated rectangular plots, each with one short side facing on to the village street, so that their compact fronts (house, gate, fence) form an unbroken chain lining it. In this type of plot organisation, the house, with its main facade looking onto the street, has a relatively narrow courtyard, at the rear of which we find a characteristic building that divides the courtyard into two. This consists of a barn, a stable, and a central shelter for the cart, with the cart passage leading to the back garden. These are all characteristic features of Saxon settler villages in Transylvania. Over the last two decades the number of farmers has decreased and there has been a reorganisation of the agricultural land that has led to an increase in area (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Hosman village showing its setting on the plateau (lleft, Google Earth Pro 2023 capture), traditional Saxon house (right, authors' photo), changes in the layout of the agricultural land (bottom, source www.turnulsfatului.ro [24].

The village of Râu Sadului lies in a mountain area along the Sadului valley. Unlike in Hosman, the permanent population of Râu Sadului was and is composed entirely of ethnic Romanians, and the main occupations are sheep farming and timber exploitation. Lately,   tourism too has developed.

The houses in Râu Sadului are attached to each other in some places, while elsewhere they are strung out along the road or the river Sadu. Some are located on slopes, following the natural shape of the terrain (Figure 2). As a spinoff of sheep farming, the village also has an area of wooden huts situated in the pasture and hayfield area on the 900 - 1400 m floor. These huts were the shepherds' summer dwellings.
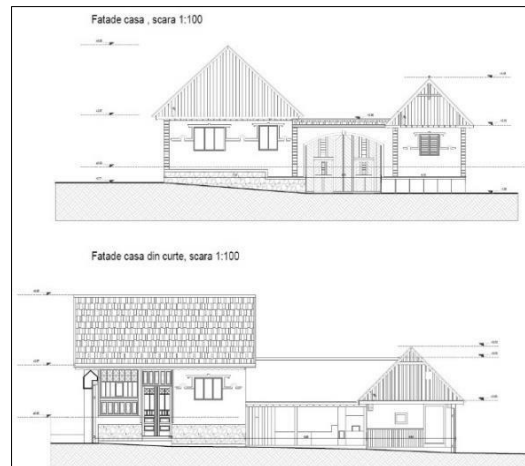
Figure 2. Intra- and extra-village of Râu Sadului village in its mountain setting (left, Google Earth Pro 2023 capture), traditional house (right, authors' photo), plan of a traditional family farm (bottom, personal project archive).

In both villages studied, there were major changes in population in the decades after the fall of communism. According to the National Institute of Statistics [23], in the period 1990-2022, 364 people left the village of Râu Sadului and 202 moved in, while in the commune of Nochrich (to which Hosman belongs) 2214 people left and 1725 came. This demographic dynamic did not require a corresponding number of new constructions, as a significant proportion of the newcomers moved into existing dwellings. The statistics show that only 32 homes were built in Râu Sadului between 2002 and 2022 (with a starting point of 281 in 2002) and 51 in Nochrich as a whole (which had 1122 in 2002) [23].

5. Results

Several main themes emerged from the data gathered from the interviews. These major themes are presented below.

5.1. The Importance of Newcomers and the Role of NGOs

Most of the newcomers we interviewed in Hosman are involved in one or other of the NGO projects functioning in the area: "(...) what made me stay were the people I met, the relationships I built and the projects I saw I could get involved in. I love the culture and way of life in Romania. There is so much more freedom." (E, 39, newcomer, NGO). Locals, however, do not necessarily feel that newcomers are becoming deeply involved   in the community: "(...) people like that, who bought earlier on, I don't know them. There are strangers, but they don't get involved, for example someone bought on that street (...). Then they don't get involved, they renovate their houses, but they don't have much to do with the rest of us" (P, 56, local resident/employee).

While the newcomers to Râu Sadului do not yet consider themselves integrated into the community although they want this to happen, the locals tend to be "sceptical" and to need a period of time to feel that they are fully integrated: *"It is quite difficult for an outsider to integrate when he comes to the village. I mean, it takes quite long time for a local to get used to him, i.e. who is he, what is he, what is he interested in, and then after a while he begins to accept him. Our people in the community are more sceptical, especially here at home. At first they seem, if you come for the first time, quite helpful and hospitable, but that's also with the idea of taking you apart, to see what's wrong with you..." (D, 38, administration/local).*

One of the most relevant categories of newcomers identified in the villages studied is that created by the desire for a lifestyle that focuses on the consumption of nature and rurality and the search for identity, belonging and status. It is this category   that tends to mobilize to preserve the status quo and to resist any further development in rural areas. The actions of this category of newcomers lead to 'micro-geographies' and micro-communities of rural gentrification. When newcomers have higher

incomes than the pre-existing population, a locality can undergo a process of rural 'super-gentrification'. Smith & Phillips [25] observed two distinct socio-spatial patterns in the 'consumption' of representations of rurality. One is the pattern of socio-spatial isolation, involving detachment from the urban environment and a space for self-discovery, while still allowing for the possibility of commuting to urban areas. The second model relates to a sense of community, the ability to work from home, and a bucolic environment. Based on this typological division, an internal micro-geography can be identified that divides individual newcomers into more affluent 'sunny side' and less affluent 'dark side' professionals in accordance with their perceived wealth [26]. Whether these rural 'micro-geographies' occur in 'certain' places or are more related to proximity to urban locations remains to be studied [20]. Both "selectivity" in the choice of migration destination and the impact of the receiving context differ by gender [27–29]. In terms of family behaviour and gender roles, many aspects may be especially important among women. It is clear that as far as this category of newcomers is concerned, the use of traditional homes changes in accordance with the new way of life.

Viewed through the lens of cultural heritage, the concept of resilience is a means towards the building of resilient communities. NGO- and volunteer-led activities in rural areas with a rich cultural heritage produce a range of geographies, politics, micropolitics, and representations of place and space. In many rural communities, cultural heritage is coming to be managed by various volunteer groups or non-profit associations working to this end. These have different raisons d'étre for their existence, as can be seen in Hosman: "*Our village is full in the summertime, like in the old days. (...) Yes, so you can't say it's a deserted village...it's not deserted at all, even with quite emancipated people, just how many NGOs there are...*" (A, 52, local woman). A number of NGOs are working here, involved in a range of activities, some of a social nature (the Elijah Association, an Austrian social initiative functioning here since 2011), some with the role of protecting the built heritage or crafts (Hosman Durabil [Sustainable Hosman], Moara Veche [The Old Mill], and the Friends of the Mocăniţa Association, which is working to revive a narrow-gauge railway of over 100 km in length that operated until the 1960s), and others with the role of protecting the natural landscape, flora and fauna (Forum Peisaj Deschis [Open Landscape]). The Elijah Association, which provide social services such as social day centre, family house, socially oriented dental practice, carpentry workshop, music school, multipurpose centre, and canteen, started its work in Hosman to help neglected Roma children and their families. The Sustainable Hosman Association is an independent and self-managed NGO based in Hosman. It runs the Old Mill complex and the regional brand "From Hârtibaciu, with love" and operates as a civil society actor. The Mill team is part of the European Longo maï cooperative: "*...there are many activities in Hosman (...) they are also involved in the Old Mill, (...) they have created some jobs. A lot of people who used to commute have stopped doing so and now they have jobs in the village.*" (P, 56, local resident/employee).

Where Râu Sadului is concerned, the Țara Colibelor [Land of shepherds' huts] project, promoted by the My Transylvania association and centred on this village, is attempting to protect the traditional landscape of the shearing huts by preparing an application for UNESCO classification. They have identified 70 huts, of which 35 are functional, 20 partly collapsed and 15 completely collapsed. Ten are used for traditional activities in the summer and only two in the winter. By comparison, in the 19th century, according to the Râu Sadului monograph, there were 214 functioning huts [30]. UNESCO listing would give recognition to the huts and would be a confirmation of authenticity; it could even become a brand for this destination. A positive effect of this would be much stricter legislation to help preserve and rehabilitate this landscape. On the other hand, global recognition could lead to an increase in the number of tourists seeking authentic experiences, leading to an over-commercialising of local culture. The NGOs' mission to create change is also moving in the direction of digital practices (social networking, web technologies, data interlinking, platforms that help volunteers maintain a digital presence over time). The use of technology is a way to push communities to grow, offsetting the problems created by geographical distance; communities are also finding new ways to collaborate, which is increasingly becoming a means of survival. Digitisation is therefore seen as 'a step forward in resilience', with technologies becoming channels through which relationships can be built between local and global communities.

The creation of digital archives or websites by heritage volunteers is slowly replacing traditional methods of 'word of mouth' transfer of community cultural knowledge. The pace of change, with the younger generations moving to cities or even abroad is leading to fractures in the potential for the transmission of community cultural knowledge. Therefore, the need for 'post-memory' arises and finds expression in archives, museums, historical societies) [31,32]. The virtual representation of place through archives and social media therefore becomes an example of how community heritage and culture can be used to help build more resilient communities [3]. In the context of rapidly increasing availability of European funding for rural environments in recent years, NGOs can intensify and accelerate uptake in interest in cultural heritage and also resist possible misuse that would damage it.

The vast majority of those interviewed in Râu Sadului, newcomers and local investors as well as the local authorities, know and support the involvement of My Transylvania in promoting the cultural heritage of Râu Sadului. The association has been active in the locality for seven years, during which time it has carried out several projects. They are well known for the gastronomic events they hold, their involvement in saving the shepherds' huts, including the preparation of a UNESCO file for this purpose, the creation of a prototype Tiny House and, more recently, for their involvement in accessing European funding for the "Cultivating Beauty in the Land of Huts" project, which involves the renovation of some traditional houses in the village. But the My Transylvania representatives are not only trying to preserve and save the existing heritage; they are also aiming to introduce innovative elements, new concepts: *"we are also trying to introduce tastings of local culinary products, with a dash of innovation in the traditional, not that we want to change it, but just to try out different concepts (...). The things we learned when we were renovating the huts led us to develop a prototype of a new cottage, where we are applying these things, materials produced from various substances and from hay, which we tried out via workshops held around the village (...) We wanted to build, from scratch, a cottage inspired by traditional architecture, which would become a model for locals."* (C, 48, NGO).

However, some locals have reservations about the work being encouraged by the NGOs. Their sense of property is sometimes stronger than their pride at being the owners of valuable cultural assets, which means that in-depth involvement on the part of the NGOs is needed before the local population can understand the role of heritage and participate whole-heartedly in saving it: *"and with UNESCO we thought, some were enthusiastic, UNESCO is coming, we are protecting the area... But people, when they hear about it, they are so... What do you mean? Am I not allowed to do what I want on my land? It's my land..."* (D, 38, administration).

In conclusion, the mechanisms of integration of newcomers in the analyzed villages reflect the hallmarks of rural gentrification. Newcomers, often with higher incomes than the locals and a different set of aspirations, tend to become involved in various projects in the villages. However, there is either skepticism or misunderstanding of those types of projects among the locals.

5.2. Small Entrepreneurs and Tourism

We identified that we have a vicious circle involving a contradiction between the tourist promotion of the area, thanks to its built heritage, and the emergence of a tourism infrastructure that works to its detriment. Landscapes and cultural heritage are attractive to tourists and small entrepreneurs, but at the same time the landscape changes as a result of tourist and entrepreneur activity. Insufficient funding leads to a failure to consult specialists and this, together with the need to 'get rich quick', leads to haphazardly constructed tourist developments that devalue the area. Some investors are beginning to realise the mistakes they have made when they see tourists opting to stay in places where more thought has gone into planning, and there has also been a recent shift in tourist perceptions of the value of appropriately designed accommodation as the range of facilities available to tourists has developed.

The development of tourism and the implications for heritage and the built environment were the subject of a study carried out by the Romanian Order of Architects together with the Heritage Association [33], of changes in the built environment and the loss of traditional houses in Bucovina (north-eastern Romania). In the context of accessing European funds for infrastructure and tourism, such studies, which provide justification for measures to protect and enhance the landscape and

cultural heritage, could reduce the negative impact of new developments. Drawing a parallel between the mountain landscape of Bucovina and the mountain landscape of the sheep huts in the mountains near Râu Sadului, both can be said to be landscapes "sensitive to human intervention", and the appearance of new buildings can alter them irreparably.

On the other hand, the nomination of some areas or objectives as having heritage value has created around them a preferential zone of proximity in which a densification has been artificially created, so that it is precisely in these areas that the most inappropriate interventions into the appearance of the built space are to be found, such as entirely unsuitable colours, materials, and dimensions. Local people may still opt for cultural and ecological tourism (as recommended by sociologists) rather than mass tourism. In parallel with this, Li [34] observes the existence of "inherent contradictions" between conservation objectives and the changes brought about by tourist development in heritage destinations, leading to a number of conflicts. Of these, commercialization-authenticity and modernity-tradition clashes are particularly relevant to World Heritage Sites, as their natural and cultural resources are often subject to commercialization and transformation because of the desire to house increasing numbers of international visitors [35].

Leaving tourism aside, technogenic landscapes are linked to crafts and to small workshops and production facilities. These landscapes in turn attract small investors looking for something specific to their field of activity: *"I've been here for seven months, I'm basically blacksmithing [...] on my own here. I've been a journeyman for five and a half years and I've travelled the world a lot. I want to combine old smithing techniques, about 1,500 years old, with modern designs [...] especially in Romania, where there are not many blacksmiths and you can show people what you can do." (F, 36, investor).* Indeed, some buildings not formally being used for community needs offer potential for the development of heritage resources*"(...) and there is an association called Hosman Durabil, there was an old mill there and they rebuilt it"* (P, 56, local resident/employee).

In conclusion, it is crucial to highlight the inherent contradiction between the promotion of a rural area based on its heritage (including both built and cultural aspects) and the potential negative impact of tourism-related infrastructure and practices on the area's original distinctiveness.

5.3. Influences on Built Heritage

The authenticity of the landscape and traditional buildings is one of the main attractions of rural areas, which can attract young people from larger towns or even from other countries. In addition, the slower pace of village life and the 'sense of community' exert a pull on young people in particular. The type of property owned by newcomers also broadly reflects the type of cultural capital desired (targeted) by them. The layout of traditional dwellings, both those in former Saxon villages and those in Romanian rural areas, is renowned for offering privacy, seclusion, and closeness to nature. Perceived desires for privacy and isolation, however, do not necessarily take the form of socio-spatial isolation from the rest of the village.

The purchase of traditional buildings by newcomers as primary or secondary residences or even for tourist purposes brings with it changes in the practice of preserving or renovating old buildings, changes to property prices, and also changes within local communities; it may even generate the development of new areas within traditional settlements. Analysing the dynamics of new housing construction over the last 10 years, we can say that the preference in the two villages studied is for buying old houses rather than building new ones.

Locals value their built heritage, but when it comes to choosing between a traditional and a modern house they generally opt for the modern one, mainly for practical reasons, as captured in the interview with A, 52, a local woman from Hosman:

> *"I'd like a new house, a traditional house... I don't know what you mean. [...] I liked our old house, but it's harder though. I'll tell you, those windows were harder to wash. [...] Now I wouldn't build a traditional house, if I were to build a house, I think half the walls would be glass. [...] These traditional houses really have small, narrow windows. They're cool like that, but I don't know... [...] Now in this century of speed, what can you do with a traditional house?"*

Newcomers are strongly inclined to buy and value traditional houses:

"I love history, and I think it's worth saving for us and for future generations; if we do it together we might attract visitors who like this kind of village." (D, 54, newcomer) Others even feel that "*if I can create objects that go with the houses and the architecture of the buildings, that's what I enjoy doing the most. You have to combine simple things with modern design, but not everyone does that well.*" (F, 36, investor).

The newcomers try to model, educate and set examples of good practice to the community, as evidenced by their 'advice' on maintaining the character of traditional housing: '*without rules, traditional cultural architecture will become a relic and the few remaining houses will have to become museums. (...). The interventions I would make would be minimal. Restore and stabilize initially and then use the old methods in combination with some modern or eco methods (e.g. photovoltaic) for any interior work. While maintaining the integrity of the building."* (E, 39, newcomer)

In the case of Râu Sadului, we observed a tendency to fill interstitial spaces with new constructions designed either for tourist purposes or for various purposes connected with agricultural activities or services. All the newcomers interviewed expressed their preference for traditional houses and for their preservation and conservation. The need to adapt them to the demands of daily life is obvious, but the intention to preserve as much as possible of their authenticity and spirit shows that their beauty can be regarded as one of the factors that led them to choose this destination, as shown in the interview transcripts : "*I love everything old and rare. Interventions that are as little invasive as possible but offer the minimum of modern comforts (bathroom, toilet)*" (S, 40, newcomer).

Another issue is the careful selection of materials that have been used or are to be used in the renovation of houses, huts, or any other building in the Râu Sadului area. Both NGOs and newcomers are paying particular attention to these, hoping to create a 'model' of good practice for locals and others who are planning to build here. At least they have succeeded in drawing attention to the possibilities of using traditional materials in a practical and modern way: "*For example, in these huts that we were trying to preserve...40 years ago, asbestos cement became available, then galvanised sheeting, then some of those asphalt or corrugated board sheets, and to hell with the traditional wooden roofing shingles. I mean, they've lost the craft of shingling. (...) We brought some specialists and we looked for ways to restore it in good taste (...) We wouldn't have had the idea if someone hadn't come to advise us*" (D, 38, administration).

As in Hosman, both newcomers and NGOs pay great attention to detail: "We used local timber, produced by a local - it's a dying craft that we want to preserve. (...) In terms of insulation, we wanted it to be a traditional cottage, but comfortable and up to date inside. On the outside we have wooden fibreboard, and on the inside a 15 cm thick layer of wool, collected in the Sibiu area." (C, 48, NGO)

On the question of consulting specialists and planning regulations, opinions are unanimous. Consultation with a specialist is regarded as mandatory or at least advisable when dealing with aesthetic or technical problems. Another problem we identified is the authority exercised by people with financial power and by craftsmen and builders when they are engaged to carry out particular projects. Their advice and recommendations take precedence over those of specialists or local authorities. The financial power of those who build houses for themselves is felt in Râu Sadului: "*the richest will have stainless steel gates, balconies at the front...and no one sits on this balcony. You have a yard...get out into the yard! Who lives on the balcony?*" (D, 38, administration). Gates are identified as elements of local identity, part of the history and development of the community, and greater care needs to be taken when it comes to them. The problem regarding gates is expressed by both newcomer and administrative interviewees: '*I've seen some gates being made now, we, you'd say they were cave doors. Terrible! And I haven't seen a single one with a traditional gate newly made, or at least repaired. The old ones were old, and what was new was new! This is no place for iron, and polycarbonate...or stainless steel! That's exactly why they shouldn't be allowed to*." (Z, 36, newcomer).

In conclusion, despite the appreciation of the local population for the region's heritage, the preference for modern housing in terms of practicality remains. In contrast, the rationale for newcomers to relocate to the village is the desire to immerse themselves in the historic built environment, even if this necessitates greater effort and expense.

6. Discussion and Conclusions

Rural depopulation is increasing in many countries around the world [1,2,36–38]. Rural depopulation in post-communist spaces [3,4] has been counterbalanced recently by an urban-rural migration [39–41]. The quality of the rural landscape is a definite contributor to well-being and is one of the main draw factors for newcomers, from both an aesthetic (i.e. visual, olfactory, gustatory, auditory) point of view. The nature and number of properties available in different rural communities, along with the association with them of notions such as 'exclusivity', 'privacy', 'community', 'place', can also shape the types of potential migrants who seek to purchase. The receptiveness of the host community is a key factor that may not be immediately perceived by newcomers [42,43].

Landscape and cultural heritage are seen as strong drivers in attracting tourists to these destinations [44,45]. The transformation of rural areas through heritage also has important implications for the local population, especially in the context of tourism and rural enrichment. According to Lu et al. [46], heritage tourism refers to travel undertaken with the intention of experiencing places, activities and artefacts that reflect history and cultural stories in an authentic manner. However, the development of tourism in heritage destinations also brings with it the need for changes in infrastructure, stimulated by the desire to accommodate as many visitors as possible, and this in turn attracts investment in tourist facilities, accommodation, and so on. Logistical arrangements for accommodating and transporting tourists tend to damage both sites and the landscape. While tourism is a vital mechanism for sustainable development [47] and is seen as providing impetus for revitalising rural settlements confronted with ageing and declining populations, it can also bring about unintended consequences. By definition, the term 'sustainable development' is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" [48]. This concept of sustainable development aims to strike a balance between the needs of society, the development of the economy, and the needs of the environment in which we live, identified with the 'landscape' [49–53]. What we are talking about is its aesthetic component, threatened by the potential appearance of accommodation units that do not identify architecturally with the specificity of the place, do not fit into the cultural landscape, and therefore lead to the area becoming devalued.

In Hosman, while locals focus on social needs, the administration is concerned with infrastructure, and newcomers and NGOs are joining forces to protect cultural heritage and landscape. At the same time, reducing energy consumption and implementing alternative measures are concerns both for locals and for newcomers, as well as for the local administration.

In Râu Sadului, an infusion of EU funds has in recent years led to an improvement in accommodation facilities. Currently, efforts to attract further EU funds are being concentrated on emphasizing the cultural heritage of the locality, through the administration and NGOs working in this field. On the other hand, newcomers to the community are drawing attention to the objectives on which they believe the authorities should be focusing, since they do not look favourably on all the ways in which EU investments grants are being spent. One of the problems is the Sibiu county authorities' plan to asphalt the road that links the settlement of Râu Sadului to the resort of Păltiniș, which is not considered appropriate either by the newcomers or by the representatives of the NGOs.

Analysing the cultural/heritage activity of NGOs and their ongoing resistance to inappropriate development, we can see how they are articulating their own narrative of the history of place. These community groups are deliberately seeking to preserve and maintain a historical sense of place but also to have an impact on the present, thereby representing a catalyst for community resilience and development in rural areas (acquisition of buildings, development of facilities, social services and seeking new funding). NGOs function as a link between government, local people, newcomers to the community, and investors. Collaboration between NGOs and administration can attract funds to meet community needs, but discussion between newcomers and NGOs can ensure that more attention is paid to how these funds can be channelled into investments that protect heritage and do not affect the pull factors available to host localities and communities. The greatest challenges to heritage in the two villages studied arise from tourism and from large-scale agricultural investment,

including profit-oriented farms, while NGOs and small investors constitute the driving force that helps to preserve and save cultural heritage.

Policymakers need to focus on sustainable heritage accessibility and on protection and conservation practices that will bring tourists to these areas, rather than on the economic benefits associated with achieving international recognition. Genuinely sustainable tourist development requires more intensive efforts from all concerned, from local authorities to stakeholders to the local community. Investment in tourism and agriculture should be supported in the sense of constructing new forms of certification, local quality standards, and "local origin marks" that aim to achieve competitive quality advantages rather than new leisure landscapes. Rural 'places' are distinguished from each other precisely by the presence of such features as particular natural landscapes, particular locally grown agricultural crops or farm animals, specific local vernacular architecture, or specific traditionally produced foods. A village that is so unique that it "can't be… anywhere else" (to quote newcomer Z) has an attraction all of its own.

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