



Universiteit Utrecht

Helping to Adapt?

NGOs Influence on the Resilience of a Cultural Landscape from Transylvania, Romania

- A Comparative Analysis-

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"Nothing endures, but change"

Heraclitus

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Abstract

Within the recent years interest in rural cultural landscapes have been rising, given the many public benefits associated with their governance. This is prompted by a growing awareness of the human dependence on ecosystem services and the dangers posed by increasing resource consumption, pollution and urbanization. Cultural landscapes are the expression of the dynamic interaction between natural and cultural forces in the environment. In Europe, after centuries of agricultural practice, there are virtually no pristine areas left and much of biodiversity depends on the functioning of a particular type of socio-ecological systems where mutuality between human and ecosystem components is high in systems of low-intensity agriculture. External actors work to conserve the benefits deriving from these systems of traditional agriculture that have created High Nature Value landscapes. Conducting cross-scale institutional analysis through comparative case study research, this study examines the influence of NGOs on the adaptive capacity of two rural communities located in the Saxon cultural landscape of Southern Transylvania, Romania, which is both a High Nature Value area and a Natura 2000 site. The focus is laid on the socio-cultural element considered determinant for the state of the biophysical environment. Theoretical argument is formulated on a systems-oriented literature that regards environmental governance as the institutional interface between ecological and human systems. The IAD framework was adapted to study the conservation of the Saxon cultural landscape due to its conceptual clarity and applicability to studies across various institutional levels, as it is the current case. The comparative analysis of two selected communities has identified a number of correlations between independent and outcome variables, allowing for possible causal relations to be determined.

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iii. List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
AES	Agri-Environmental Schemes
ADEPT	Agriculture Development and Environmental Protection in Transylvania
APIA	Agency for Payments and Interventions In Agriculture
ASD	Association for Sustainable Development
CAP	Common Agriculture Policy
CEE	Central Eastern European Countries
ENGO	Environmental Non-Governmental Organization
EU	European Union
GAEC	Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition
GFP	Good Farming Practice
GRO	Grass-Root Organization
HNV	High Nature Value
IBA	Important Bird Area
ICA	Inter Communitarian Association
ICDP	Integrated Conservation and Development Projects
LFA	Least Favoured Area
LAG	Local Action Group
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MET	Mihai Eminescu Trust
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MoC	Ministry of Culture and Patrimony
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SAC	Special Areas of Conservation
SF	Subsistence Farming
SSF	Semi-Subsistence Farming
SPA	Special Protection Area
SES	Socio-Ecological Systems
UN	United Nations
US	United States
WCS	World Conservation Strategy
ULB	University Lucian Blaga, Sibiu, Romania
UBB	University Babes Bolyai, Cluj Napoca, Romania

1. Introduction

1.1 Cultural Landscapes: Between Conservation and Development

With the recognition of relative or perhaps absolute¹ lack of pristine biomes, traditionally managed landscapes have received special attention and are currently highly valued (Selman, 2004). Studies have found that traditional (having developed for generations, as such) knowledge for natural resources management has created propitious circumstances for efficient self-organization in many subsistence societies (Ostrom, 1990) which resulted in sustainable livelihoods (Berkes et al., 2000a; Dietz et al., 2003). Very often this special and distinctive countryside is referred to as “cultural landscapes”, albeit virtually almost all landscapes are “cultural”, in the sense that human action has transformed them to one degree or another (Selman, 2004). There are several possible understandings of the term. On one hand it generates complex reflections on the interactions between humans and natural environments (c.f. Jones & Cloke, 2002) or the social construction and representation of geographies (e.g. Matless, 1998; Brace, 2003). On the other hand, practitioners and policy-makers use the term to refer to economic land managed for centuries in a sustainable way, resulting in particular qualities and characteristics (Selman, 2004).

Interest in cultural landscapes is motivated by a number of important public benefits associated with their functioning: biodiversity, food diversity, watershed management, cultural heritage or climate change mitigation (Redman, 2010, Hartel & Moga, 2010). However, society’s rapidly shifting and diversified demands for new utilities in rural landscapes force the disappearance or alteration in a short period of time of highly valued landscapes that formed during millennia (Dietz et al., 2003; Vos & Meeke, 1999). Among the factors triggering this evolution are trends in modern agriculture (intensification, the use of petrochemicals and heavily mechanized work), urbanization or commodification of recreation, prompted by the thrust of tourism industry. In Europe, for example, the Common Agricultural Policy is criticized for its heavy focus on industrialization and discrimination towards the true contributors to quality of life, i.e. the farmers that maintain the functions of the valuable landscapes; a situation that has resulted in high rates of family-farm loss and degradation of rural life (Pedroli et al., 2007, Cooper, 2009, Proposal, 2010).

These findings have led not only to a reconsideration of urban-rural planning, but also the approach to nature conservation has undergone a major paradigm shift. From “fortress conservation” expelling the human perturbing element it developed to allowing and purposefully nurturing its presence in coupled human-nature systems in an integrative manner. The landscape approach is an emerging way of bringing development and conservation together (Sayer et al., 2005). “Landscapes are considered as mosaics of land cover types that provide environmental services and development opportunities for the multiple needs of diverse stakeholders. A landscape approach seeks to understand landscape dynamics and the desired changes from different viewpoints, the aim being to identify interventions and policies that will achieve the stated goals of stakeholders” (Sandker et al., 2010). The landscape approach offers a tool to observe temporal and spatial scales in parallel.

The aforementioned paradigm shift is interestingly exemplified in Europe as much of its biodiversity and deriving services depend on the functioning of certain socio-ecological systems formed during centuries of agricultural practices (Cooper, 2009). These practices have almost entirely transformed the natural landscape and shaped particular social institutions (Paraccini et al, 2007). In the European policy aimed at their preservation they are currently termed as “High Nature Value (HNV) farmland” (Baldock et al., 1993; Beaufoy et al., 1994). It is estimated that more than 30% of farmland (see map 1, Annex B) across EU-27 can fall within one of these types of HNV areas characterized by low-intensity agriculture and semi-natural habitats (EU Review, 2009). The ecosystem services provided by these semi-natural habitats are numerous and crucial: clean water, air, and soil. Enlisted under the broader environmental governance framework of the European Union, composed by Habitats and Birds Directives and Natura 2000 Network, High Nature Value farmland is a conservation mechanism overlapping or confounding with cultural landscapes. The typical agricultural institutions that have

¹ See the discussion about entering into the Anthropocene (man-dominated geological era), where virtually the entire Earth becomes a social-ecological system (Garry Peterson 2011) at <http://www.stockholmresilience.org/education/educationalnews/allyouneedtoknowaboutournewmastersprogramm e.5.53ee94ff132ea995528800015439.html>, Accessed January 2012

generated the precious biodiversity the first term refers to have also created distinct cultural artefacts (material and immaterial) encompassed in the latter.

Acknowledging the aforementioned public benefits associated with low-intensity agriculture, the strategy of European Union in mitigating climate change, sustainable land planning, ensuring food security and public health is formulated around protecting and preserving the HNV areas. Nature and culture conservation principles are incorporated in development actions, all along the economic spectrum. There is growing understanding in both epistemic and policy-making communities about the fact that not just ecosystems services themselves but also the capacity of ecosystems shaped by human action and governance arrangements to deliver these services supply the basis for social and economic development (Folke, 2006; Folke et al., 2007). It is believed that local people, who become the primary targets of preservation policies, are key actors in meeting the sustainability objectives. However, due to global and regional economic and political integration pressures, grassroots will not be successful in maintaining and transmitting their knowledge unless they partner with higher level actors, like non-governmental organizations or/and public authorities (Folke et al., 2007; Selman, 2004, Agrawal & Gibson, 1999). It is now largely believed that the complexity of environmental protection is better addressed through multi-level governance, as with each institutional level problems are defined and reverberate differently (Paavola et al., 2009).

Within development literature, one line of reasoning presumes that local communities' capacity to deal with the threat of cultural landscape degradation to be related to their resilience, which defines the capacity to adapt to change while retaining the same functions (Berkes et al., 2003), i.e. providing the valuable public benefits. In SESs scholarship, resilience is defined by two aspects: livelihood security of inhabitants (collective and individual strategies to ensure daily living) and capability to self-govern (power and autonomy to act) (Folke, 2006, Anderies et al., 2004). The degree of success of cultural landscapes' inhabitants to adapt to new socio-economic realities was found to correlate with non-governmental actors' involvement, among others, which work to strengthen these two features. Much of the biodiversity conservation is now organized through integrated projects, combining human welfare objectives with environmental ones, where non-governmental actors hold a central position in their implementation (Levine, 2002; Sandker et al., 2010). Also, these projects aim to incorporate different types of knowledge, considering the resource users may know better the resource dynamics, while external structures may have better understanding of larger-scale processes (Anderies et al., 2004) and delivery of public services (Şerban, 2002). NGOs are considered relevant partners in knowledge provision (Paavola et al., 2009) as is the case of World Wildlife Fund, or capacity building (Eade, 1997) and economic development (Kindness, 2001) with Oxfam as an example. They are positively contributing, viewed as a sign of a democratic society (Bădescu & Sum, 2005) representing citizens' interests in front of the state and the market but also negatively, disempowering local populations by perturbing informal institutional arrangements (Nyamugasira, 1998).

1.2 Problem Definition

To understand the variation of rural communities' capacities to adapt to change in relation with non-governmental actors' involvement in their development, one case from a recently EU - adhered country, was selected. In the South of Transylvania, a historical region of Romania, lays a rural cultural landscape of high natural and cultural value facing unprecedented changes generated by external and internal shocks and shifts to its underlying functional structures. Called after its founders, a German-speaking ethnic group, originally from today's Rhineland, Flanders or Luxemburg area, the Saxon landscape is a place of century-old multiculturalism where ethnicity has played a selective role in attaining social position (Veres, 2006). Today it is considered the last remaining non-alpine extensive hay-meadows of Europe, retaining a medieval character due to a mosaic of harvested small parcels belonging to numerous subsistence farmers which sustain outstanding levels of biodiversity (ADEPT, 2012). The ingenious rural system built by Saxon ethnics over more than 7 centuries based on authentic environmentally friendly practices has largely dismantled in the last 70 years. Political unrest has generated ethnic tensions and led to Saxon depopulation while creating more room for co-habitant ethnic groups- Romanians and Roma, to take over (Verdery, 1983). There are few Saxons still living in their historic villages. Romanians are also slowly reducing their numbers while the Roma have become a majority in an appreciably short period of time, after the fall of Communist regime in late 1989. Dealing with chronic poverty and discrimination, the Roma people have limited access to proximate resources but their impact is expected to rise due to dynamic demographic growth (25% between 1992- 2002 according to Kocsis, 2007). As an immediate consequence of these social

changes, the traditional management of land is under threat, with small-farming shrinking rapidly (Page et al., 2009). The environmental and social public benefits associated with subsistence agriculture in Southern Transylvania, as found by Redman (2010) are the following: mitigating climate change, conserving biodiversity, maintaining cultural landscape and social welfare and household security, and rural heritage (economic potential of traditional agricultural landscape). Without traditional management, the outstanding biological diversity of the area together with the public goods related to this type of knowledge will be lost to the disadvantage of both local and distant society.

Two NGOs were identified as being the most active in attempting to counteract these tendencies by strengthening the social capacity of local communities to adapt to the new setting through cultural reconstruction and rural development measures. Their activities are equally overlapping and complementing, both engaging in extensive stakeholder dialogues for meeting the preservation objectives. Conservation policies of the now widely recognized valuable natural and cultural heritage these NGOs pursue have to gain legitimacy and support among local inhabitants. They have to provide equitable development for the newly installed ethnic configuration in order to secure sustainable development. To preserve the landscape, actors involved in conservation have to reverse traditional knowledge loss in a setting connected to the new economic realities, reconstructing vibrant rural communities. Above all, a vision of unitary agreement on conservation objectives has to be spread and shared across different institutional levels.

The strategies for cultural landscape conservation the two NGOs employ are: "conscious" tourism (ecological, educational, etc.) and agri-environmental measures (compensation payments for environmentally friendly land use practices). They are complemented with secondary measures targeting rural entrepreneurship in delivering artisan products. They aim at developing local economy in a sustainable manner, drawing as much as possible on the local specificity, a central position being given to food ("foodscapes") and local customs. A sense of place-specific "traditional-ness" is created through regional branding capitalizing on the Saxon character of the area and using the market to earn the attention of wider, generally urban and more affluent society. As long as the traditional flavor is supported by local culture and there are real benefits all along the societal spectrum, the sustainability of these efforts will be ensured.

1.3 Research objective

The choice for the particular subject discussed in this paper is driven by the growing uncertainties related to global scale pressures (trade, urbanization, and growing population) on the small scale resource systems. Finding ways of measuring the outcomes of these pressures is of major informational challenge for environmental governance (Dietz et al., 2003). As such, this research aims to develop greater understanding about NGOs' influence on the capacity to adapt to socio-economic change of rural communities from Saxon cultural landscapes in Southern Transylvania, Romania. More specifically, it seeks to determine whether the involvement of non-governmental actors in the conservation of the Saxon cultural landscape from Central Romania has direct influences on 1) the livelihood security and 2) capability to self-organize of the local communities. Under scrutiny is the nature of this influence for assessing the capacity to adapt to multiple changes that Transylvanian self-sufficient communities are facing due to European economic integration, globalization and urbanization but also internal social transformations. Theoretically, it seeks to bring a contribution to the study of the management and governance for resilience in socio-ecological systems of High Nature Value. In broader terms, the paper aims to expand the knowledge on the cross-scale institutional interactions in socio-ecological governance and the modalities by which modern societies re-contextualize traditional knowledge for the purpose of managing the proximate natural environment.

In order to better understand the NGOs involvement, as their mission is related to both cultural reconstruction and biodiversity conservation, the presence or reminiscence of the Saxon element in present-days rural communities is taken as an explanatory variable. The objective is to determine how much of the Saxon traditional knowledge was transferred to the other ethnic groups now a majority and, if still present, how much does Saxonness count for landscape conservation in general and NGOs' strategies in particular.

1.4 Research Issue

In line with the aforementioned research objective and problem description, this paper addresses the following question:

How do the NGOs influence the capacity of the communities located in the Saxon cultural landscape from Transylvania, Romania to adapt to unprecedented socio-economic change so as to retain the same functions of providing the valuable environmental and social public benefits?

Two sub-questions support the problem raised by the current study and help guide the answer to the main research question:

1. What conditions does a community need to fulfill to overcome unprecedented shocks and shifts perturbing its socio-ecological system?
2. What type of external involvement would enhance the capacity to adapt to change of a rural community? What functions, attributions and needs do the external actors need to tackle in order to support community resilience?

Landscape conservation pursued by external non-governmental actors is represented by safeguarding the built cultural patrimony, the introduction of agri-environmental schemes, the inclusion of Saxon landscape under Natura 2000 network and the support given to local craftsmen and entrepreneurs. The capacity to adapt of the local community is represented by the access to resources and means, knowledge and skills to valorize them. The figure below presents the situation described in the research questions, pointing to the relation between dependent and independent variable and intervention of external actors, effects of this intervention and impact.

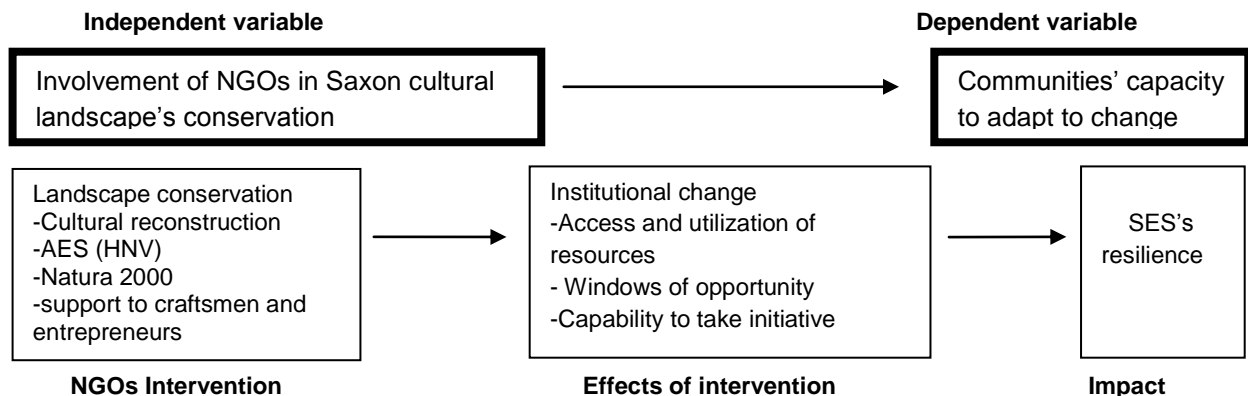


Figure 1 Relation between dependent and independent variables

1.5. Research Framework

To assess the influence of NGOs on the adaptive capacity of the Saxon cultural this study builds on the theory of socio-ecological systems also known as human ecology or the "second environmental science" (Becker & Ostrom, 1995; Stern, 1993). The theory was chosen due to its growing suitability for clarifying aspects of institutions facilitating or undermining sustainable utilization of natural resources under specific circumstances (Ostrom et al., 1999). It was also found appropriate to the study of larger-scale systems, amending a landscape approach, as such (Dietz et al., 2003).

Consulting the literature on HNV landscape conservation, socio-ecological systems' governance and the role of external and internal actors in landscape preservation (this encompassed capacity building and community based natural resource management (CBNRM) literature), criteria for evaluating the influence of exogenous stakeholders were drawn. These criteria were applied to two case studies. Comparing the findings on the two sites, assertions on the influence of NGOs in what concerns the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage were advanced. Results provide a more complete picture on what impacts, positive and negative, does extraneous interference have on self-sufficient communities from the Saxon cultural landscape and a basis for drawing recommendations for policy and management change. Figure 2. summarizes the explanations above in a research framework.

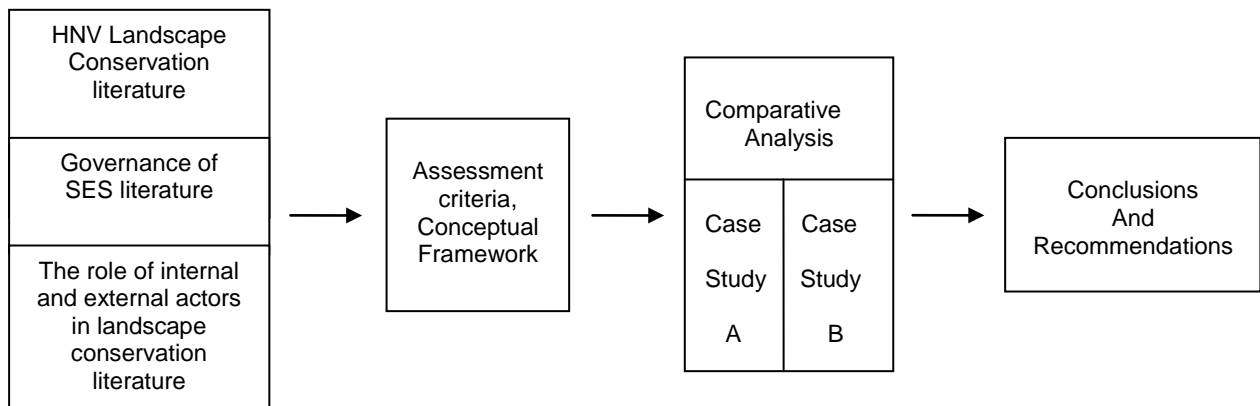


Figure 2 Research Framework

1.6. Relevance of the research

In order to contribute to the body of science related to the governance of socio-ecological systems and adding to the society's progress, this paper will explore the influence of the non-governmental organizations on the socio-economic resilience of Saxon's cultural landscape High Nature Value area. Two reasons motivate this choice:

1.6.1 Scientific Relevance

Reviewing the literature, I have identified a limited empirical work on the institutional context of SESs, knowledge gap also highlighted by Anderies et al. (2004). As the authors illustrate, this lack of understanding hampers a clear policy analysis as empirically supported theories represent the actual foundation for any assessment rather than presumptions about the best ways of solving problems derived strictly from idealized models. There is consistent work on "simple" socio-ecological systems, depicting the dependence of coastal or agro-pastoral communities on natural resources forming their livelihoods but these studies are mainly targeting the behavior of resource users (in constant conditions, meaning the resource base is static) or the economic optimization of resource utilization. It is assumed that the necessary institutional infrastructure is already in place. Gunderson & Holling (2002) affirm this finding highlighting that people's response to change and human societies reorganization following change is one of the most neglected and least understood aspects in resource management and science in general.

Also, within the European regional economic geography, the concept of resilience is gaining momentum in policy discourses on environmental management and sustainable development (Hudson, 2008). This is largely due to disenchantment with the "place-less" competitiveness development model that leads to standardization and loss of specificity, thus reducing future generations' development opportunities. As a consequence, "there is growing interest in the search for a more holistic approach that emphasizes and seeks to understand the broader, more qualitative character of regional 'development' as opposed to simply economic performance or growth" (Bristow, 2010). Analytically, resilience is an attractive concept for social scientists as it is "developing widespread appeal around localities and regions owing to the peculiarly powerful combination of transformative pressures from below, and various catalytic, crisis-induced imperatives for change from above" (ibid:154).

This study aims to redress the lack of empirical knowledge on the institutional context of SESs by focusing on the process of re-constructing Saxon's cultural landscape socio-economic resilience contributing as such to the theory of management and governance for resilience in socio-ecological systems of High Nature Value.

1.6.2 Societal Relevance

In a paper analyzing the conflict between biodiversity conservation and agricultural activities within European Union, Henle et al. (2008) found that little if any attention is given to the intensity of disagreement between stakeholders in identifying or monitoring for biodiversity-related conflicts in

agricultural landscapes. In what regards the case of Romania, the study on the contribution of the conservation NGOs to the social capacity of rural communities was found not being satisfactorily explored. This country holds a special position within the debate about SESs of High Nature Value. Much of its farmland is still traditionally cultivated and has attracted conservationists' interest due to world-rare species of flora and fauna (Turnock, 2002). Among the EU members, Romania holds the second agricultural potential after France as 87% of its territory is rural and populated by 47% of its inhabitants. The actual land allocated to agriculture is 61, 8% of the total country's surface. The share of agriculture in the national GDP amounts of 6%, while the available workforce numbers about 29%, of the total labor making this country the most rural-dense member of the EU². This study is a case of sustainable rural development as it will bring valuable insights to the rehabilitation of rural life with expected benefits like social cohesion, food security and especially preservation of the ecosystem services relevant for a broader public. It will also serve as a model for other projects of HNV preservation and underline new aspects for the social integration of Roma communities, a minority that is well represented in the countryside³ – in Romania but also in other Central Eastern European countries where this ethnic group lives.

From a practical point of view, it will shed light on the economic viability of rural development which is crucial for Romania as it holds a large work force engaged in agriculture. This can be turned into a competitive advantage given the regionalization tendencies of agriculture formulated at Bruxelles-level prompted by the economic crisis and the rise in the oil prices.

1.7 Organization of the thesis

After the problem treated will have been described in the introduction, chapter 2 places this thesis in the current debate on socio-ecological systems governance by presenting an extensive review of the literature on rural cultural landscapes' conservation (with a focus on European cases), the institutional analysis of coupled human-nature structures and the role of external non-governmental actors in landscape management. Chapter 2 closes with a conceptual framework and a hypothesis that will further guide the analysis. Chapter 3 outlines the research design of this project, including the operationalization of dependent and independent variables, site selection criteria and methods and materials to conduct a comparative case study analysis expected to illuminate on the knowledge gaps previously outlined. Chapter 4 offers a background of relevant information on the concepts used and introduces the study location. In Chapters 5 and 6 the data collected for each of the two case studies are presented. Chapter 7 comparatively analyzes the two case studies closing with answering to the research question and verification of hypothesis. The final chapter presents concluding remarks on the topic raised by this the study, as well as recommendations for future research.

² The second country in terms of population engaged with agriculture is Greece with 11% and the media for Western countries is approximately 3% ; Source: Agriculture in the European Union - Statistical and economic information 2009, http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/agrista/2009/table_en/index.htm, Retrieved February 27, 2012

³ According to the national Census from 2002, 60% of Roma ethnics live in rural communities

2. Conceptual Model

This research is supported by the current academic discussions on socio-ecological systems (SESs) and cross-scale institutional analysis. In addition, empirical research on the role of NGOs in cultural landscape management will be drawn upon. Two questions guided the following literature review in amassing what was already known and what is still left unknown about the influence of external actors on the adaptive capacity of SESs in general and of the Saxon landscape's SES in particular, at both theoretical and empirical levels: *Which are the social sources for resilience management? And which are the organizational capacities most likely to lead to resilience?*

2.1 Adapting to change - Governing Socio-Ecological Systems

The upscaling of institutions dealing with trade, competition and transportation at higher (national, regional and global) levels (Malhotra, 2000), magnified by the unprecedented levels of human population, consumption and deployment of advanced technologies for resource use (Berkes et al., 2003; Dietz et al., 2003; Vos & Meekes, 1999), have had a significant impact on the environment and local communities (Zimmet, 2000). In order to deal with the pressure these institutions are exerting, the present day natural resource management is increasingly relying upon complex approaches, which seek to integrate different types of variables and knowledge systems. Currently, efforts are made to strengthen the social capacity for understanding and to respond to environmental feedbacks over both spatial and temporal scales, as it was acknowledged that ecosystem resilience is a function of successful ecosystem management (Berkes & Folke, 1998). The governance of social-ecological systems (SESs) mixes between social and natural sciences and draws inspiration from the knowledge on common-pool resources and adaptive management based on the work of Elinor Ostrom (1990) and Crawford Stanley Holling (1978). A socio-ecological system integrates a common-pool resource (like a pasture, fishery, lake, forest, or the atmosphere), its users (local or distant actors) and an associated governance system (Janssen & Anderies, 2007). The capacity to adapt and to shape change which is an important component of a socio-ecological system's resilience (Berkes et al., 2003) represents the inter-disciplinary link between the two schools of thought, i.e. ecological responses to behavioral inputs and viceversa. Where adaptability is high, the actors forming a SES manage to reorganize within desired parameters in response to various perturbations (Walker et al., 2004). Understanding the process of governance of and for change rises, thus, as necessary for ensuring sustainability of resource utilization and societal wellbeing. Folke et al. (2002) provide a good review on the progress done in documenting the social dimension of ecosystem management, including organizational and institutional flexibility for dealing with uncertainty, change and social capital.

Until recently, a steady state view based on scientifically-determined "panacea" and blueprints has dominated the theory and approach to environment and resource management (Dietz et al., 2003; Folke et al., 2005; Ostrom, 2007). Within this framework, change is incremental and interactions across scales are disregarded (Folke et al., 2005). Action is taken in command-and-control structures, after outcomes are rigorously estimated beforehand (Holling & Meffe, 1996). Particularly top-down initiatives are employed and numerous constraints placed, thus initiative is suffocated and stalemate induced. This type of management gives little power to managers and actors for experimentation and innovation forcing what Gunderson & Holling (2002) call a "management trap" which is ultimately a "social trap" describing low level of social capital and trust prompted by institutional power imbalances (Gunderson & Light, 2006; Rothstein, 2005). The policies based on this linear culture do not accept failures under the concern of conflict generation and incapacity to comprehend the added value of learning as compared to inaction. Crises are addressed symptomatically, with single issue measures (Folke et al., 2005). This ultimately weakens the system up to its possible collapse (see, for example, Ostrom et al., 2007 and for a narrative account, Diamond, 2006).

Adaptive governance is recommended as the solution for correcting top-down control-related problems due to its structural capacity to accommodate various opinions while not excluding governmental participation (Brunner, 2005; Ostrom, 2007). Adaptive governance is an emergent framework for the management of complex environmental issues (Gunderson & Light, 2006). By governance we understand the processes and structures by which human societies share power and make decisions. It is about creating conditions or/and institutions for ordered rule and collective action

(Stoker, 1998). It is fundamentally the act of governing where multiple stakeholders negotiate at various spatial and temporal scales, through vertical and horizontal communication channels. Given its pluri-dimensionality, it matches the multifaceted character of SESs, becoming a favorite decision-making philosophy in the European Union on matters related to environmental protection and the alike (Paavola et al., 2009).

Within an adaptive governance framework, information is incomplete, measures taken are experimental and various forms of knowledge coalesce. For example, traditional or indigenous knowledge is considered a form of adaptive management (Berkes et al., 2000a). Decisions are made by various stakeholders that engage in an active process of social learning to overcome uncertainty. More than aiming for the perfect institutional design to reduce imbalances, timing to address temporary symptoms is crucial. According to Dietz et al. (2003) the adaptive governance structures have to 1) provide necessary information, 2) find means for dealing with change, 3) induce compliance with rules, 4) provide physical, technical, and institutional infrastructure and 5) encourage adaptation and change. According to this ranking, knowledge occupies the first position given the fact that environmental decisions require trade-offs. Nevertheless, the author warns knowledge brokers not to overload the users' assimilative capacity.

The operationalization of this vision of governance is represented by adaptive management (Folke et al., 2002), which is based on the work of Buzz Holling (1978) on ecological theories of resilience. This new type of resource administration starts by acknowledging that gradual, predictable phases can be preceded by moments of "abrupt, disorganizing or turbulent" change (Folke et al., 2005) and considers the uncertainties derived from the utilization process so it resorts to experiments in order to test policy (Walters, 1986). Its core principles gravitate toward greater flexibility and openness through stimulation and encouragement of participation in the decision making process thus providing a mechanism to facilitate feedback and social learning (Stringer et al., 2006). It also stresses sustainability when choosing among alternatives to address a particular disturbance. Although still essentially science-based (Gunderson & Light, 2006), adaptive management is seen as a more realistic approach for dealing with ecosystem complexity (Holling & Meffe, 1996) given that it mixes different social, economic and governance factors for implementing decisions (Gunderson, 1999).

An application of adaptive management is seen in integrated conservation and development projects (ICDP), a framework for action developed to address human well-being (poverty alleviation) and ecosystem-services (biodiversity conservation) simultaneously (Assessment, 2005). They are called integrated approaches due to the fact that they explicitly have more goals to tackle, being less widespread than one-objective propositions (Sandker et al., 2010). "Integrated responses occur at different scales and across scales. They tend to use a range of instruments, including multi-stakeholder processes, decentralization and devolution policies, partnerships and networks, and multiple institutions and actors, including various levels of government, private sector and civil society" (Berkes et al., 2004). Due to these particularities ICDP may be seen as a way of moving from problem-solving in simple systems to problem-solving in complex adaptive systems (ibid.). As a consequence, in order to achieve a balance between conservation and development goals, conservation organizations are increasingly turning to landscape approaches (Sandker et al., 2010), that allow for holistic solutions, linking nature, culture and community (Brown et al., 2005).

Lebel et al. (2006) explored three different hypotheses in order to determine the attributes of governance that enhance society's capacity to manage resilience for regional socio-ecological systems: 1) participation is expected to build trust, and together with deliberation will foster the understanding of common objectives and muster self-organization; 2) "polycentric and multi-layered institutions will improve the fit between knowledge, action, and social-ecological contexts in ways that allow societies to respond more adaptively at appropriate levels; and 3) accountable authorities that also pursue just distributions of benefits and involuntary risks will enhance the adaptive capacity of vulnerable groups and society as a whole" (ibid: 1). The three propositions were confirmed by case studies drawn from the Resilience Alliance database, and the authors emphasize the aspect of legitimacy which is of prior importance to the act of governance. Not just the resilience of what to what but also for whom. If adaptive management is structurally a scientific endeavor (Gunderson & Light, 2006), it will have to gain wide acceptance from non-specialized actors in order for the environmental objectives to be pursued. SESs governance also relies on participatory approaches for solving the difficult problems of reconciling conservation and development at landscape scales but these are neither a panacea (Sandker et al., 2010). Communication becomes, thus, a crucial part of the governance process as it builds consensus on objectives, increases the understanding and dialogue

among stakeholders improving decision-making and investments in natural resource management and facilitates implementation of projects and sharing of power (Konijnendijk, 2000; Luz, 2000; Sandker et al., 2010). The relationship between theory and practice of SESs management is represented in the figure below. Sustainability is at the core of this approach.

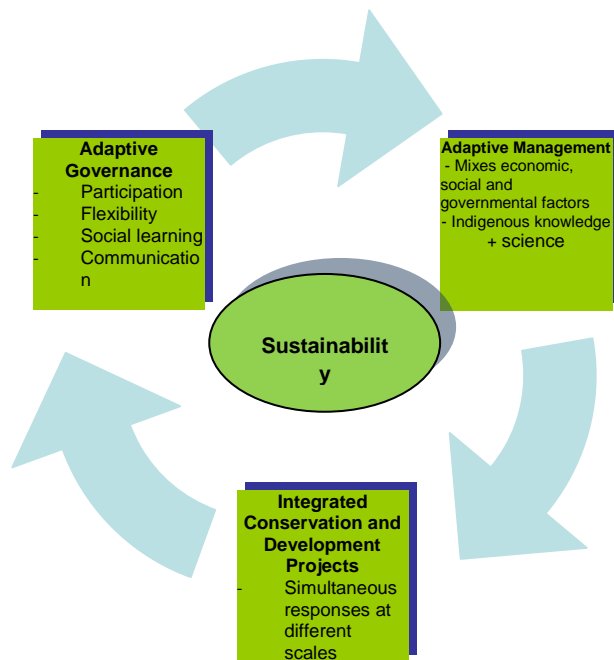


Figure 3 Relationship between adaptive governance, adaptive management and integrated conservation and development projects and their core principles

2.2. Resilience and Social Capital

“The study of complex adaptive systems attempts to explain how complex structures and patterns of interaction can arise from disorder through simple but powerful rules that guide change” (Folke, 2006:257). In this sense, efforts were made to define resilience in relation with social change. Adger (2000) conceptualizes social resilience as the ability of human communities to resist environmental change or social and economic turmoil. (Anderies et al., 2004) uses “robustness” to refer to the maintenance of system performance despite oscillations in the behavior of its component parts and environment, although the two terms – resilience and robustness usually overlap in meaning in the extant literature. Besides being resistant and robust to perturbations, Folke (2006) also draws the attention to the opportunities for renewal that the concept of resilience entails, through reconfiguration of structures and processes that disturbances may open up.

Referring to the work of Walker et al. (2004), Folke et al (2002) detail the properties of adaptability and transformability of heterogeneous adaptive systems. “Adaptability describes the capacity of people in a social–ecological system to build resilience through collective action whereas transformability is the capacity of people to create a fundamentally new social–ecological system when ecological, political, social, or economic conditions make the existing system untenable”(Folke, 2006). The emphasis is on the second property – transformability, given that almost all SESs have experienced profound alteration (Assessment, 2005). In other words, from a system-approach point of view, efforts are channeled in two directions:

1. to reduce the massive impact of urban lifestyles through a better planning
2. to put a halt on the degradation of rural areas (which is the focus of this paper)

There are three phases of transformation in a SES, according to Olsson et al. (2004):

1. Preparing for the change
2. Moving to a new social context for ecosystem management
3. Building resilience to support the new direction

The first two phases are linked by a window of opportunity, which represents a crucial moment in time that needs to be harnessed in order to set the system on a new desired functional path. By comparing

five case studies from the Resilience Alliance database, Olsson et al. (2004) focused on the first two phases and sought to learn from past attempts to move vulnerable and unsustainable SESs to new adaptive governance trajectories. They identified two critical social determinants for the transformation of SESs, which are leadership and shadow networks. Both influence the system to move successfully through the transformation phases. The process however, is highly unpredictable and difficult to instill. Motivated individuals, like knowledge brokers or policy entrepreneurs have an essential role to play as they lead for change, build trust, provide a vision and mission and enhance social memory (Folke, 2006). The shadow networks are epistemic communities that work to prepare the system for change, interpret the transition and set directions for management.

In ecology, flexibility and on-going adaptability to change are central when dealing with ecosystem shifts (Gunderson, 2001). Recent research done by social scientists has brought substantial contribution to the understanding of the uncertainty in governing natural resource and ecosystem dynamics. To be mentioned here are the works of Armitage (2005), Lee (1993) or Ostrom (2005) on organizational and institutional flexibility and Ostrom & Ahn (2003) on social capital and conflict. The literature on ecosystem management and assessment is also increasingly focusing on social capacity to enhance ecosystem resilience (Hahn et al., 2006). *Social capacity* which refers to organizational flexibility, participatory approaches to learning and knowledge generation in order to adequately respond to environmental change (ibid.) is considered one of the main social sources of resilience. It is composed by *social capital* (including social networks and trust) and *social memory* (including experience in dealing with change) (Folke et al., 2005).

Social capital is the level of social connectedness among individuals within a community. It refers to features in social organization such as networks and core values, including the inclinations that facilitate information flows, collective action and community identity (Coleman, 1990: 300). It was used specifically to study social group effectiveness in attaining goals (Leonard, 2004). Both social capital and memory are crucial for the capacity of a SES to adapt and shape change (Folke, 2006). An adaptive governance framework relies critically on the collaboration of a diverse set of stakeholders operating at different social and ecological scales in multi-level institutions and organizations (Olsson et al., 2004). Social networks form thus, a web that ties together the adaptive governance system.

In other words, resilience of a social system depends on its members' collective or individual actions, positioned at different institutional scales. The seminal work of Elinor Ostrom (1990) on common pool resource management exposes the shortcomings of rational choice theory. She puts forward a behavioural approach to collective action which argues that human beings have found the means to set up norms of cooperation and cultivate the capacity to learn and abide by the rules, thus enhancing the outcomes of the whole group. To develop *social capital* – defined here as “dense networks of relationships between actors based on trust, mutuality (...) and reciprocity” (Rydin & Falleth, 2006) – is critical in order to facilitate collective action and to thwart resource deterioration which in this paper is understood as landscape degradation.

The social capital Elinor Ostrom is referring to was termed as *bonding capital* by Putnam (2001), which is a specific kind of social capital that operates “within an identifiable and delimited network and seeks to create strong ties between the actors of that network” (ibid: 22). However, this type of capital can sometimes prove inhibitory and preclude change. For development outcomes to result, the embedded social networks within communities have to allow for autonomous ties (Schafft & Brown, 2000). “Weak” ties as opposed to “strong” ties define a second type of capital – *bridging capital*, which seeks to establish relations with unlike members and different networks (Rydin & Falleth, 2006). The two types of capital can both prove inadequate in governance situations where participation is comprised of actors with a mixed local, regional and national background. Rydin and Holman (2004) have thus suggested the concept of *bracing capital* that would “operate within a delimited set of actors, allowing for strong bonds to be built between at least some of these actors” (Rydin & Falleth, 2006).

The more wide-ranging theory of *institutional capacity* includes several types of capital, namely: intellectual (knowledge resources), social (relational resources) and political (mobilization capacity). The studies of Provan and Kennis (2008) and Ansell and Gash (2008) focus on the interplay of these various kinds of capital, with the intention to determine the factors of successful networks. The first study identifies four structural and relational contingencies that can determine the successful adoption of a certain type of network governance. These four factors are: 1) *Trust* among network participants; 2) *Size* of the network; 3) *Consensus on the goal of the network*; 4) *The need for network-level*

competencies (or knowledge resources in the terms of institutional theory). Provan and Kennis (2008) identify three types of tensions that can impact the network evolution: 1) Efficiency versus inclusiveness; 2) Internal legitimacy versus external legitimacy; 3) Flexibility versus stability, pointing to the critical importance of *leadership* and *management* for network effectiveness.

2.3. Social Capital and Rural Poverty

Social capital proves relevant in relation to biodiversity conservation as shown in Pretty & Smith (2004) where the efforts to educate rural people on agro-ecological interdependencies were catalyzed by relations of trust and connectedness in the target community. Building social capital is a conscious policy objective which has to be harmonized with the general governing paradigm. Empowered communities resulting from this process of social learning will find their place of dialogue along with other, higher-ranked actors. Also, social capital is deemed to have an important influence in poverty eradication issues, as it has the potential to convert, under certain conditions, into economic capital (money, or institutionalized through property rights). Through a relation of transitivity, it can convert into cultural capital as well. Cultural capital, in turn, becomes economic capital through the institutionalization of educational qualifications (Bourdieu, 1986). This aspect has been emphasized in policy regarding disadvantaged areas. For example, Leonard (2004) quotes the UK Commission for Social Justice (1994: 308): "Social capital can encourage new investment as well as making existing investment go further; it is the glue that bonds the benefits of economic and physical capital into marginalized communities". Under this perspective, it has a significant implication on the livelihood security especially for poor rural populations. However, with economic development, a society's social capital consisting of tacit knowledge, aggregation of reputations, networks and organizational capital, must find ways to adapt. Replacing interpersonal networks with market-based institutions may initially reduce this capital, but it will eventually be recreated as relations are embedded in the economic system (Stiglitz, 2000).

Following Chambers & Conway (1992) cited in Lindenberg (2002), in this paper a livelihood will be understood as a cumulus of "capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living; a livelihood is sustainable when people can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance their capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation". Livelihood strategy combines all the capabilities, assets and activities to reach a certain security or status of living. The strategy is to a large extent influenced by the existing proximate resources and cultural norms while access to these resources is mediated through different institutional arrangements. Indicators used to measure quality of life in rural communities include: access to food, shelter, natural resources or social services, level of education and economic opportunities, transfer between generations, positive birth index (Assessment, 2005), among others. Social capital is generated by the mesh of social linkages within a community, which are based on kinship and other personal relations, being thus of high relevance for rural livelihood security. In Tengö & Hammer (2003), for example, it is shown how local informal institutions of food exchange and cattle loans secure households' critical resource necessities in a Northern Tanzania community.

2.4. Institutional Analysis of Socio-Ecological Systems

2.4.1 Institutions

Being an emergent field of wide-ranging studies, scholars have investigated whether and to what extent social and ecological systems influence each other (Adger, 2000), how social mechanisms match the ecological functions of ecosystems (Folke et al., 2007), the benefits ecology can provide to the social study of SESs (Folke, 2006), the ways SESs could be governed (Berkes et al., 2003; Folke et al., 2005) or the potential of SES science to be put at use for sustainable development (Berkes et al., 2000b, Ostrom, 2007) to name just a few. Central to these endeavors are social institutions which affect the resilience of the environment (Dietz et al., 2003).

Understanding of how development alternatives are traded (*sensu* Janssen & Anderies, 2007) in socio-ecological systems is realized through an analytical framework where institutions hold a central position. According to Agrawal & Gibson (1999) they are more "fruitful" for the study of community-based natural resource management than a focus on "community" due to their enhanced conceptual clarity and generosity. Institutions are structures and mechanisms of social configuration and cooperation that concentrate sets of rules, regulations, norms or traditions and are shaped through

human interaction in different patterns of organizational structure (Olson, 1974). They are the product of social construction, relics of a specific time, culture and society and they emerge and develop in a process of self-organization that is not necessarily conscious. For the rural space, and thus applicable to this paper, institutions are expected to solve coordination problems and foster cooperation between local and distant actors: “they can consist of legal frameworks that allocate specific rights to a certain actor or they can consist of values that, to a certain extent, regulate the actions of organizations/actors” (van der Ploeg & Marsden, 2008).

Leach et al (1999) distinguish between formal and informal institutions. While the former require third-party enforcement (for example: rules, laws, schools, etc), the latter are developed endogenously through relations of power, authority or mutual agreement among part-takers (example: responsibilities’ division, friendship). Creating a mix between formal and informal institutions plays a key role development although this is not an easy task given the difficulties in articulating formal organizational realities with the rules and norms embedded in informally constructed social structures (High et al, 2005). In SES literature, informal institutions are often equated with indigenous or traditional knowledge. In many traditional landscapes, the elders have held important custodian positions, as they would have had the experience to deal with disturbances and interpret ecological feedbacks, like climate variability (Berkes & Folke, 1998). They represent an institutional memory that maintains and archives the ecological information about its surrounding biophysical environment (ibid.) which is handed down from one generation to another, as a means of critical education for securing livelihoods. The elders also provide necessary information in times of change and crisis. If elder’s authority is fading away together with the ecological knowledge, the capacity of the socio-ecological system to face upcoming disturbances may be seriously undermined. Other informal institutions are related to religion-based rituals and relations, food exchange, bartering or exchange of services.

An important aspect of institutions is their evolving nature. While formal structures are more dynamic, as political regimes or macroeconomic policies may shift rapidly, informal ones are characterized by certain inertia, a “path-dependency” that treats novel elements with more reticence. They are contested, changed, forgotten or reinterpreted by social actors⁴. Repeated practices over a certain time-span eventually result in institutions. Some practices get “formalized”, which generally means being written down in regulatory documents (the best example is the formulation of land-property rights that were initially done based on the boundaries of effective use of resources). However, formalization does not always imply recognition by the targeted social groups and vice-versa. Generally, modern and traditional worldviews of formal and informal institutions co-exist and are intertwined. There is potential for the former to integrate the latter, and the degree to which this is done depends on the openness and the capacity of leaders from both spheres (Tengö & Hammer, 2003).

Douglass North in Ostrom (2005: 179) makes a clear distinction between institutions and organizations. While institutions are “groups of individuals bound by some common purpose to achieve objectives”, organizations generally follow political, economic, environmental or educational agendas, influencing institutional change through their activity and as such, are part of the social group abiding by particular rules but are not themselves institutions. Organizations can however, influence rules and practices of an institution. One leading role in the reduction of transaction costs associated with incomplete information is given to “bridging organizations” (Folke et al., 2005:445) which “have the ability to strengthen social capital and the capacity for effective governance of multilevel organizations involved with ecosystem management”. They provide a platform for sharing knowledge, resources and incentives for ecosystem management while filtering exogenous influences.

Institutions have an effect on ecological change, as they guide people’s behavior regarding natural resources management – access, use and well-being (Leach et al, 1999). On the other hand, institutional change modifies rule-making capacity and access, with a direct impact on the livelihood strategies of individuals involved. In this sense, institutions are a good tool in determining the Saxon

⁴ Social actors are understood either as groups which share certain sets of characteristics (class, gender, age) or as individual persons – a distinction made by (Leach et al., 1999) important for the mapping of resource entitlements

landscape's capacity to adapt to socio-economic change as there are various actors holding distinct vested interests, each trying to influence the way development unfolds. Institutions help reveal how the individual strategies for ensuring livelihood security (preferences and behaviors towards a project over another, one resource utilization or another, codes of conduct, etc) aggregate or overlap in a collective initiative that secures public goods associated with subsistence agriculture. Also, different institutional configurations can diminish the uncertainties and conflicts generated by the impossibility of making the benefits associated with the goal –in this case, landscape conservation, exclusive (Olson, 1974).

2.4.2 Designing for Robust Socio-Ecological Systems

In the previous sections, we acknowledged that there has been a continuous preoccupation within the resilience community to define principles for well-functioning SESs. Inspired by the work of (Ostrom, 1990) and considering common-pool resources as contained within the broader structure of a SES, Anderies et al (2003) suggest 8 design principles for the governance of a SES (see table 1). The authors focused on complex SESs where humans have built some physical and institutional infrastructure (where social capital is determinant) to manage natural resources, a process that might have happened in the past or continues as the feedback mechanisms developed. Having studied an impressive list of differently evolving SESs, Anderies et al (2003) hypothesize that, over time and under various disturbances, the two types of infrastructure (physical and institutional), influence the durability of a combined human-nature system. Different mixes between the two do not guarantee their ability to withstand all perturbations either. Also, timing is an important issue in the governance process. Some resources within the system may collapse inducing a crisis which the social infrastructure will presumably be able to handle or, if not, augment or deepen the degradation. Environmental or socio-economic short-term collapses actually enhance long-term robustness and crises can be treated by the decision-making agents as “windows of opportunities” (Holling, 1978) for moving to a new desired state.

Table 1 Design Principles Derived from Studies of Long-Enduring Institutions for Governing Sustainable Resources
(source: Anderies et al., 2003)

<p>1. <i>Clearly Defined Boundaries</i> The boundaries of the resource system (e.g., irrigation system or fishery) and the individuals or households with rights to harvest resource units are clearly defined.</p> <p>2. <i>Proportional Equivalence between Benefits and Costs</i> Rules specifying the amount of resource products that a user is allocated are related to local conditions and to rules requiring labor, materials, and/or money inputs.</p> <p>3. <i>Collective-Choice Arrangements</i> Most individuals affected by harvesting and protection rules are included in the group who can modify these rules.</p> <p>4. <i>Monitoring</i> Monitors, who actively audit biophysical conditions and user behavior, are at least partially accountable to the users or are the users themselves.</p> <p>5. <i>Graduated Sanctions</i> Users who violate rules-in-use are likely to receive graduated sanctions (depending on the seriousness and context of the offense) from other users, from officials accountable to these users, or from both.</p> <p>6. <i>Conflict-Resolution Mechanisms</i> Users and their officials have rapid access to low-cost, local arenas to resolve conflict among users or between users and officials.</p> <p>7. <i>Minimal Recognition of Rights to Organize</i> The rights of users to devise their own institutions are not challenged by external governmental authorities, and users have long-term tenure rights to the resource. <i>For resources that are parts of larger systems:</i></p> <p>8. <i>Nested Enterprises</i> Appropriation, provision, monitoring, enforcement, conflict resolution, and governance activities are organized in multiple layers of nested enterprises.</p>
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The authors express confidence in the validity of their design principles for robust SESs based on independent research undertaken by various scholars on systems sustainably managing resources over time, and thus, proving these principles' relevance. They however, acknowledge that “potential additional design principles need to be defined for the ability of resource users to express their demand to public infrastructure, knowledge transfer between resource users and public infrastructure providers, accountability of investments by public infrastructure, and effects of public infrastructure on resource” (op. cit:15).

The fact that Elinor Ostrom's principles are generally suitable for small scale common-pool resources, led Dietz et al (2003) to add three new principles in order to meet the requirements of adaptive governance detailed in a previous section. These principles are appropriate for larger scales and are as follows:

- 1) To involve interested parties in informed discussions on rules (analytic deliberation)
- 2) To allocate authority to allow for adaptive governance at multiple levels from local to global (nesting)
- 3) To employ mixtures of institutional types (institutional variety).

What these principles ultimately aim for is to synchronize the levels of decision-making and implementation with actual requirements of target-actors. This is especially relevant for rural communities, as very often their lives are determined in capital cities or by donor agencies that quite rarely pay the necessary heed to the local situation.

2.5 Cross-Scale Institutional Linkages in Landscape Management

2.5.1 Theoretical Considerations

Sustainable development is mediated through three spheres of institutional action: the state, the market and the civil society. Although managing for resilience is easier to trace in simple, rather close socio-ecological systems (Anderies et al., 2003), globalization challenges long-enduring traditional configurations of natural resources utilization (Young et al., 2006). After years of enthusiastic support for either a state or grass-roots governance approach (before the 1990s), a more integrative vision has surfaced in the literature on both SESs (see (Folke et al., 2007) and cultural landscape management (Selman, 2004). This new vision is based on the idea of scaled-specialized responses and takes equal note of all types of actors.

Community participation, where "community" embraces all the three spheres – state, market and civil society, is considered crucial for securing public services provision, as expressed by Constantin (1999): "While issues of financing, and adequate communication, information, and education are important, the entire society's participation is the cornerstone for carrying out proposed objectives. It is also acknowledged that "successful strategies are participatory" (Carrew-Reid et al., 1994). Participation must be conceived in terms of both governmental and non-governmental actors. In order to carry out their specific functions, these actors must rely on appropriate legal framework, economic instruments, and mechanisms for mediation and conflict resolution".

Participation usually resonates with de-centralization and democracy (Bădescu & Sum, 2005; Ostrom, 2007). It unveils two aspects of governance that are of particular importance for the topic of this paper: legitimacy (already discussed in section 2.1.) and the capability and perception of capability for different actors to take part in the decision process. The autonomy (*sensu* Sen, 1999) of choosing over one's own future and the belief of having an impact over the course of things enhances the livelihood security of households which is an important target for rural development policies. Both autonomy and legitimacy are linked to the endowments and entitlements over natural resources of various participants. Depending on the way the governance process accommodates the two characteristics, different predictions on systems performance can be asserted. The proponents of traditional environmental knowledge Berkes et al, (2000a0, R. Chambers (1987) will demand more authority for rural members, whereas other authors (like Kapoor (2001), Singleton (2000) will show reluctance regarding the capacity of these actors to deliver on public benefits requirements. Solely relying on local knowledge for the adaptive management of SESs can reduce the preparedness for novelty, with possible subsequent negative outcomes (Tengö & Hammer, 2003). On the other hand, the negative consequences regarding the impact of higher ranked actors are also widely documented. Sometimes viewed as "intruders" (Pérez et al., 2011) or "roving bandits"(Olson, 1993), governmental or non-governmental bodies can irreversibly undermine the functionality of local institutions. These actors may fall into the applying blueprints trap when solving sensitive local problems (Anderies et al., 2003; Ostrom et al., 2007) or through elite capture, extracting wealth with little consideration for the future. The middle way is to act at multiple levels simultaneously acknowledging that environmental problems run across scales (Holling et al., 1998). As such, prerogatives of centralized agencies should be reallocated to local-level institutions and not eliminated; it should be aimed for sharing management power and responsibility across the whole hierarchy of decision-making institutions, matching the cross-scale nature of the management issues (Folke et al., 2007). The knowledge or

technical expertise that higher ranked actors possess may empower the local population with critical competencies necessary to offset negative impacts of modern socio-economic transformation.

The way interaction takes place across scales can predict or determine the state of the socio-ecological system. Conflicting or consensual, the relationships between various actors are sometimes marked by certain inertia. As mentioned earlier, informal institutions change slowly. Agrawal & Gibson (1999) found for example, that citizens do not always adopt conservationist norms introduced by external actors. The rate at which behavioral change will be induced is directly proportional to the extent at which objectives are widely shared and if a resource is to be managed effectively, local participants have to be entrusted with authority and control over:

- a. the establishment of rules regarding use, management, and conservation of resources,
- b. The implementation of the rules that are created
- c. The evolution of disputes that arise during the interpretation and application of rules (ibid: 638). ‘

2.5.2 Empirical Aspects

Bottom-up initiative is repeatedly identified as a success factor in some High Nature Value landscape management projects from older member states (EU 15) coordinated through European Leader network. This program aims to revitalize rural communities by improving their quality of life and economic prosperity (European Commission, 2009). Almost all projects initiated under this program targeted tourism development, in an attempt to link the landscape's amenities with business opportunities. However, different experiences are recorded in Central Eastern European member states. System performance is closely connected to the political context of SESs though it is not always carefully scrutinized. Successful functionality is partially determined by elements like institutional trust and bureaucratic organization, irrespective of the amount and type of resources invested in the project management. The former communist regimes have strived for the destruction of collective memory and action (Kranenberg, 1994), discouraging association and entrepreneurship. Moreover, little emphasis was placed on environmental protection, as these regimes main concerns were industrialization and urbanization. This predicts to a certain extent the current low representation of environmental NGOs (ENGOS) on the social scene of ex-communist states. In the case of Romania, Szabo et al. (2008:187) note: "in line with other former communist countries, [it] does not have a tradition of participation in decision making with respect to natural resources. Since the collapse of the communist regime, participation has been encouraged, especially through national legislation and to fulfill commitments under international treaties". Also, Nistor (2009) demonstrates the laggard position held by Romania regarding membership in environmental NGOs and Bădescu & Sum (2005) bring valid arguments to the causal relation between low involvement and the former political establishment. Besides the communist legacy (no ENGOS during the communist period) Nistor (2009) identifies other macro-determinants explaining Romanian environmental participation patterns: lack of (institutional) trust, low popularity of the environmental agenda after the regime change, in spite of the rising number of ENGOS, lack of interest from the part of the ENGOS, and lower socio-economical development.

Stringer et al. (2006) argue that that participation needs to be further institutionalized within the Romanian context and in doing so, should emphasize empowerment, equity, trust and learning, integrating different knowledge bases to allow the development of sustainable and synergistic solutions. As Central Eastern European countries become more democratic they move beyond their reminiscence of state-controlled administrations (Klunov-Oravsk et al. , 2009) and manage to make rapid qualitative jumps in aspects related to transposing huge bodies of law, like the Environmental Aquis (Jordan, 2005). Following the path opened by their Western counterparts, the responsibility of governance was gradually lent to markets (Mihăilescu, 2000) which caused some problems in the distribution of social services. This situation opened the space for NGO action which is becoming ever more specialized despite having seriously decreased in numbers from the first years of 1990s (Nistor, 2009).

In Transylvania, the openness of people towards civil societies' organizations in general was found to be slightly higher in comparison with other regions of Romania, both in terms of donations and membership in NGOs or various associations (Bădescu & Sum, 2005). To explain the variation, the authors were interested to what extent social capital has had an impact on civil society development. For this purposes, they measured four components of social capital: social trust (a generalized form of interpersonal individual trust), trust in people of other ethnicities, efficacy and trust in NGOs. For all

the four components, positive results were recorded. Transylvanian people have generally higher trust in other people, irrespective of ethnicity and historical ethnic diversity is proven as not inhibitory to this pro-democratic attitude. Related to efficacy, which is the degree to which an individual feels empowered, the data proves that Transylvanians are more likely to feel they can have an impact on their community as compared to their fellows from other regions. "Efficacious individuals recognize the value of collective action and how joining with others with a common purpose leads to empowerment" (ibid: pg124). The same higher score was found for trust in NGOs which is an important measurement for institutional trust and thus an element of social capital.

A recently published study of Gallup (2012) details the attitudes of the population from the Saxon landscape to environmental issues like the local protected area and their availability to participate in conservation-related activities. The findings confirm to a certain extent the aforementioned study, although a normative nuance is also captured: the respondents consider environmental issues of high significance but their actual willingness to get involved is relatively low. Environmental NGOs are not very well known, compared to other organizations but, as much as they are known, they receive positive consideration. Constructive attitude towards environmental protection is positively correlated to the respondents' level of education which is a point of high importance given the socio-economic layout of this region. It is one of the most deprived in Europe by macroeconomic indicators of poor infrastructure – both physical and informational (Littrell et al., 2006), low quality of sanitation and medication, unemployment and very low levels of education. The correlation between attitude and education provides insights into the understanding of rural population and its role in impacting the protected area. While flawed waste management or illegal logging is criticized, intensive grazing or the use of agro-chemicals is perceived not as damaging. This is not to suggest that the first ones are negligible compared to the latter, but it points out that the capacity of local people to resonate with and comprehend more complex issues that impact the environment in long-term or indirectly, can be limited. This may be attributed to lack of information and/or to the level of complexity in discourses of ecologists (Norton, 1998).

From the problem description in the introductory chapter data suggests that the agro-pastoral communities of the Saxon cultural landscape are unable to deal by themselves with the external and internal challenges undermining their resilience. Stemming from the on-going conflict between more dominant drive to agricultural industrialization and environmental agro-development embodied in the Common Agriculture Policy, various forms of interventions are mobilized in order to rebalance these communities. Following the experience of other European countries - extensively documented in the rural sociology literature on European rural development (see, for example, Horlings & Marsden, 2010; Marsden, 2009; van der Ploeg & Marsden, 2008), regional, national agencies, NGOs, local authorities, community action groups are collaborating with the goal of re-strengthening the SESs' adaptive capacity, a growing number of interested and concerned agents. In the next three sections, I will present the influence of NGOs on the adaptive capacity of the SES under study and in general, the linkages between NGOs and villagers and with state bodies and donors.

2.5.3 NGO Influence on Adaptive Capacity

The role of civil society has become particularly visible in the realm of environmental governance. Within the European Union, environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS) have an increasingly important role in the governance of complex issues related to biodiversity conservation (Paavola et al., 2009; Turnock, 2004). They serve as "bridging organizations" (*sensu* Folke et al., 2007) complementing the work of state bodies by ordering and conducting research, advocating for particular matters while maintaining the dialogue with the citizens. They take an effective role in the process of governing, and their presence is deemed as a symbol of a democratic society (Bădescu & Sum, 2005). They also act as specialized agents, setting an agenda around a few topics that they advocate to stakeholders. In short, the "challenge facing environmental NGOs is to develop effective mechanisms for influencing administrative policies and decisions, while at the same time maintaining linkages with civil society groups operating at all levels" (O'Brien, 2009:146). Literature suggests NGOs are increasingly involved in rural development with objectives of environmental protection but also cultural enhancement. The contributions of the NGOs to the functionality of the governance system generally refer to: facilitating communication, providing valuable information, mobilizing the community with regards to landscape conservation or building/strengthening, developing associative capacity and assisting local administration in meeting new requirements related to transposing the EU body of law (Agrawal & Gibson, 1999; Selman, 2004; Hahn et al., 2006). Effectiveness of their activity

is conditioned by the relation developed with governmental-agencies that grant access to timely information (O'Brien, 2009), attraction of donors and moral followers among their beneficiaries or the public at large. In the case of Romanian NGOs, Constantin (1999) postulates that establishing real and deep engagement with local community and individuals which are currently less contoured would significantly improve their activity.

Besides the many gaps that these structures usefully fill in, their rapid multiplication and intensification of activity in recent years has generated an "NGO bubble", in connection with the growth in the availability of funds: for pre-EU accession, structural or international aid. Monetary influxes can have an overwhelming influence on the resilience of a management system, sometimes maintaining it despite evidence of malfunctioning (Gunderson & Light, 2006). Often, their activity is not relevant for the segment represented given the reduced social dialogue they spawn and the mimicking of foreign models that are not always applicable - a situation that enfeebles the movement as a whole and the target, as found, for example, by Grunberg (2000) in the case of Romanian women NGOs.

The NGO philosophy builds on a paradox: while working to address the crisis that generated its founding, NGOs are also dependent on crises to motivate their existence as found by Marushiakova & Popov (2004) in the case of some NGOs engaged in Roma activism. This state of affairs can have detrimental effects on target-audience, which instead of becoming more empowered becomes more dependent on the support of external actors. This is especially relevant when leaders have overlapping backgrounds: they are both part of communities and part of NGOs implementing projects in the area (ibid.). Also, NGOs are a preferred channel for aid strategies of Northern donors' the result, in Jon Bennet's (1995) opinion, being the disempowerment of Southern governments. They are "the acceptable face of a regrettable trend" towards welfare (ibid: xvi). Moreover, as Edwards & Hulme (1996) points out "greater dependence on official founding may compromise NGO/GRO (grass-root organizations) performance in key areas, distort accountability, and weaken legitimacy".

In Romania, the number of civil society actors, associations and foundations especially, grew rapidly after communism fell mainly due to Western aid influxes, which intensified in mid 1990s for the purpose of "country reconstruction". Years of economic crises, the lack of professionalism and truthful embeddedness of many of these structures has led to a drop in their numbers, paralleled with the specialization of some NGOs that grew in recognition. Currently, NGOs are slowly gathering momentum but growth remains modest given the surface and the potential of the country (Nistor, 2009). The central development region of Romania, covering much of Transylvania, holds the largest number of specialized NGOs, also concentrating a third of the total workforce in the social economy. The majority of the environmental NGOs are located in this area (Constantinescu, 2011).

According to O'Brien (2009:153) "the environmental NGO sector has been able to exert some influence, but the perception is that their involvement is tolerated rather than genuinely welcomed". The legacy of non-democratic rule is, according to the author, the chief reason for this situation, favoring economic development while marginalizing environmental concerns, discouraging the citizens to challenge the administration on various topics and nurturing reluctance among state functionaries towards allowing more deliberation in the decision-making process. The benefits of the partnerships between different social actors are not readily understandable to state institutions or to the citizens albeit "Europeanization" has pushed Romania towards greater levels of participation. From the research undertaken by the Romanian Institute of Social Economy, positive contributions by NGOs were identified in tourism development of rural areas highlighting the benefits in the local economy of these efforts. The successful cases all entail widespread partnerships among various actors (Constantinescu, 2011). NGOs have the potential to partially offset the negative influence of an unstable political environment (Fischer et al., 2012) and to collaborate with and sensitize wealthy donors for the conservation of highly naturally rich areas.

2.5.4 NGOs – Villagers Linkages

Besides the expected positive effects of NGO's involvement in Saxons villagers' lives, some authors draw attention to possible sources of conflict. Mihăilescu (2000) postulates that social conflict within a community is generated by real or perceived mode of redistributing the new resources made available through tourism development mainly. Both Hughes (2008) and Klimaszewski et al.(2010) worry about how "tradition" and "history" are represented in the preservation strategies, often amending only the vision of one group which consists largely of community elites.

Alina Hughes (2008:11) raises questions on the legitimacy of protecting the physical heritage of a nearly vanished ethnic group – the Saxons and the consequences on the new settlers' (Roma and Romanians) needs for identity creation. She also asserts that the strategy of remunerating one ethnic group to maintain another's heritage through tourism-related activities is not tenable on a longer time span. In her study, she found little evidence of external actors "appreciating the unusual and sensitive social context inherent in settings where the majority of the population has recently arrived from elsewhere, and belongs to different ethnicities and cultures" and she sees the villages as a "battleground 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 (mostly) European conservation organizations that arrived in the Saxon villages to save them from destruction"(ibid: 1). She provides a literature review on independent studies listing several problems deriving from the new development discourse impinged by conservation organizations.

More recently however, these warnings are infirmed by a study of Fischer et al. (2012) in which the presence of the NGOs in the area was found to positively influence the attitudes towards future of local villagers. According to the authors (pg 6) : "Interviews and focus group exercises carried out in the Saxon landscapes suggest that people from villages with a strong presence of actors such as the ADEPT Foundation or the Mihai Eminescu Trust are typically more optimistic regarding various facets of sustainable development than people from villages without a strong presence of such actors. Moreover, ethnic tensions and social conflicts also appear to be reduced in such communities".

2.5.5 The Role of State Agencies and Donors

The activities of environmental NGOs are shaped to a large degree by the behavior of state institutions and their willingness to constructively engage. Clark (1995: 595) argues that the relationship between the state and NGO sector is complicated by the motivations and objectives of each, and that "a healthy relationship is conceivable only where both parties share common objectives". Where common objectives are not present, there may be pressure within the formal administration to limit access to pursue government objectives and ensure the stability of the democratizing regime (O'Brien, 2009:146).

Although the level of trust in governmental bodies is notably small (Fischer et al., 2012; Nistor, 2009; Sandu, 2002), the Gallup (2012) study found that 54% of people living or possessing properties in the Natura 2000 Târnava Mare site strongly believe that it is the Ministry of Environment that *would be capable* of managing the area, while the ENGOS received only 37 % of trust. At first sight it might seem a paradox but it can also be interpreted in light of the historical state dominance that is still felt especially in rural areas (Magyari et al., 2001). The legacy of a typical socialist welfare state is still visible, as a large part of the population continues to depend – through insurances or employment on the public sector, albeit it is largely deemed ineffective, corrupt and retardant. As such, the above finding it is also a sign of lack of understanding of the new forms of governance and environmental protection issues that makes the ENGOS less visible for local people. The second assumption is tested by a another question in the study regarding who is actually in charge with the management of protected sites, and Town Halls received 37% of the answers while ENGOS only 1%.

Nevertheless, the state does have an important role in the conservation of Saxon cultural landscape: the Ministry of Agriculture, through the National Rural Development Plan, drafts strategies concerning small farmers and distributes financial support (subsidies); the Ministry of Environment, through the Environment Sectoral Operational Programme aims at protecting and improving the environment in Romania in line with the European Environmental Aquis. These governmental bodies, though local authorities (county institutions and village councils) allocate national and European funds to beneficiaries, who are generally NGOs, responsible for the management of projects. Local councils are also the primary providers of social services for the rural communities. On the proactiveness, accountability and transparency of public authorities depends to an appreciable extent the welfare of the citizens (Serban, 2000).

Much of the social transformation in the area is due to one prominent promoter, Prince Charles of Great Britain. His interest⁵ in the rural character of Transylvania and support for the area has been a snowball driving the activity of two leading NGOs: Mihai Eminescu Trust (MET and Agriculture

⁵ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLshFTy7Zq4>, accessed July 7, 2012

Development and Environmental Protection in Transylvania (ADEPT) and a concentration of donors. This has intensified Romanian – British relationships regarding the development in the area. For example, ADEPT foundation is supported by Orange Romania as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility program, by the UK Government Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), and by other charities. MET is a UK registered charity as well, largely funded by The Packard Humanities Institute in California.

2.6 Conclusions

From this literature review it is understood that mobilization of resources for building resilience in landscape approaches holds on to a certain “social logic in which local knowledge, culture, and social networks fundamentally help determine the shape of local institutions” (Schafft & Brown, 2000). The theory on socio-ecological systems advances a new ways of addressing complex issues of environmental protection, based on interdependencies between humans and the biophysical world. A new governance framework accommodates integrative approaches that seek to calibrate multiple and distinct objectives like biodiversity conservation with poverty eradication issues. The operationalization of this vision - adaptive management, starts from uncertain evolution, flexibility, participation and on-going adaptability to change.

The main social source of resilience identified is social capital which encompasses social memory. Collective action for collective benefit is managed through different types of social actors/institutions that can be understood as unique dimensions of social capital, i.e. associational ties based on trust and mutual obligation. These dimensions can be appreciated through the broader macro-level governance structures absorbing local relations, shaping and conditioning local developmental outcomes. Efforts were made in designing appropriate principles for robust socio-ecological systems, bringing together inputs from practice and theory. However, despite the growing body of literature, there are still gaps in understanding how people respond to change or reorganize following change in what regards their access and use of the proximate resources and little attention was paid to the disagreement between stakeholders on biodiversity-related issues in agricultural landscapes. Also, as it derived from literature review knowledge about NGOs involvement in Romanian landscape conservation it is currently limited. This thesis aims to bring clarifications on these theoretical and empirical aspects by using the cross-institutional linkages approach applied to the preservation of Saxon cultural landscape from Transylvania.

As it was found in the literature, opinions are divided between assigning positive or negative outcomes to the involvement of non-governmental actors in the life of the communities where they deploy their activities. The potential beneficial influence it is strongly related to the developing of social capital (fostering trust building and endowing villagers) by ensuring facilitative communication, and the provision of financial and technical support (knowledge) as determined by the particular management approach, skills and competences that the external actors instill. These organizational capacities will be further detailed in the next chapter on conceptual design.

2.7 Hypothesis

As it was shown in the theoretical and empirical literature reviewed in the previous sections of this chapter the influence of NGOs on the Saxon landscape adaptive capacity was not yet made explicit. There are still missing links about the relation between NGOs on one side and villages’ inhabitants on the other. The general assumption in European case studies that local villagers are members of valuable socio-ecological systems but disconnected from modern realities and thus, vulnerable, validates external interference (Palang et al., 2006; Selman, 2004). This leads to a representation of the peasants as passive actors that need to be “activated” towards common causes, like providing valuable public goods for the society or conserving cultural artifacts in their proximity, which are not always congruent with their own cultural background⁶. As it was found however, there are not many studies treating landscape conservation from grass-roots perspective. In other words, it is well documented how broader societies start to reconsider their appreciation for “authentically rural” communities (still maintaining traditional agricultural work, as such), yet it is unknown how much of this mentality is shared at the ground level. In addition, up to the moment of writing this paper, only

⁶ Pimbert and Pretty (1995) in Leach (1999) identify in community-based natural resource management as common the representation of “intended beneficiaries” as “passive recipients” of project activities

few examples of cultural reconstruction in a sensitive ethnic area such as Southern Transylvania, involving one of the most vulnerable minorities of Romania and Europe - the Roma population, were found. The literature, nevertheless, points out the critical importance of external actors in conservation-related projects which combine issues of environmental governance and sustainable rural development. Also, attention is paid to ethnic composition that can influence different configurations of the previously mentioned indicators. This leads to formulating the following hypothesis that will guide the carrying out of the research objective as previously stated:

IF a higher level of NGOs involvement increases the capacity to adapt to change of communities living in the Saxon cultural landscape THEN it is expected that informal loss of social capital to be supplemented by external involvement RESULTING in a revival of the productive character of the area (focus on traditional agriculture).

2.8 Conceptual framework

The kind of societal change that the Saxon cultural landscape is currently facing, is, according to Gunderson et al. (1997) cited in Folke et al. (2007) a type III surprise which consists of true novelty, inhibiting prediction, of which pre-adaptation is impossible. Collective action is needed to address this sort of disturbance. The systems that had previously developed mechanisms for reorganization, learning and renewal (Holling & Sanderson, 1996) are likely to cope with this type of surprise so as to still retain the initial functions and move to a new desired state. However, successful adaptation is more linked to a timely response to change rather than overall societal flexibility (Folke et al., 2007).

The research question of this study is implying an interdisciplinary endeavor, combining elements of social sciences and ecology. To help keep track over the complexity of the issue and further assist the analysis, a framework to represent the theories and subjects identified in the previous chapters is developed. “Conceptual frameworks are neither models nor theories. Models describe how things work, whereas theories explain phenomena. Conceptual frameworks do neither; rather they help to think about phenomena, to order material, revealing patterns – and pattern recognition typically leads to models and theories” (Rapoport, 1985).

Given the multiple elements involved in explaining the dynamics of landscape conservation in Southern Transylvania, the institutional analysis and development (IAD) framework elaborated by Elionor Ostrom (2005) and colleagues was adapted for the purpose of answering the main question of this project. The product of laborious and enduring efforts, the IAD framework aims at integrating scholarly work from various disciplines (sociology, anthropology, law, political studies, psychology, etc) regarding how “institutions affect the incentives confronting individuals and their resultant behavior”(Ostrom 2005:9). An underlying set of universal building blocks has been identified, as shown in Figure 4.

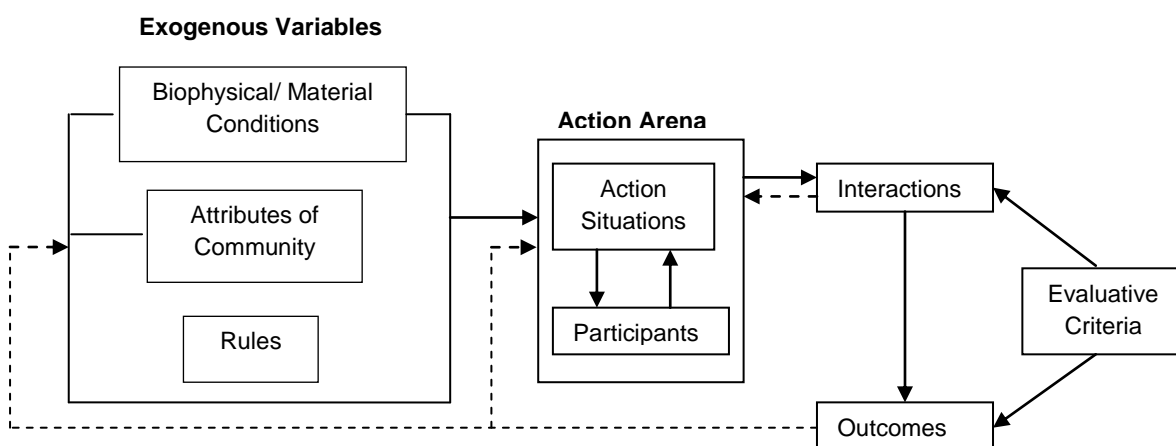


Figure 4 Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework elaborated by Elionor Ostrom (2005:15)

A common challenge for an institutional scientist is to establish the appropriate unit and level of analysis. Scale is important for understanding unit. A “focal” level needs, thus, to be determined, and,

as E. Ostrom advises, flexibility in understanding one or two levels below or above the focal level is to be encouraged. The attention paid to multiple scale is particularly relevant for the study of SESs. Understanding interactions across temporal, spatial and functional scales is fundamental for plummeting the misfit between institutions and ecosystems (Folke et al., 2007) as well as for managing institutional interplay in the line of changing institutional settings such as globalization (Paavola et al., 2009). The *temporal misfit* describes the inappropriate timing of projects. Social and environmental issues change slowly but results are expected according to electoral cycles, for example. The *spatial misfit* arises when the boundaries of the project and natural resource do not match. And thirdly, *functional misfit* or mismatches of scope describes the myopia of users, when blueprint-policies are used to deal with complex system issues. In sum, recognizing that general is influenced by particular or global by local, that they are complementing each other rather than competing, opens up for profundity in analysis. This is particularly important for situations presented by this study: where a broader *community-of-interest* assumes the role of protecting aspects of the functioning process of a *community-of-place*. Fluid and not easily perceivable boundaries are traced between the group of initiative and group of destination, where influences run both ways. However, given the blurring of boundaries and the multiplicity of interests and parties involved in SESs governance, a clear cut determination of the above misfits is difficult to assert as it requires extensive research resources. Also, depending on the phase of the project, the triple inconsistencies can be fully or partially identified.

The above scheme describes an *action arena*, deemed the focal level of analysis, composed by *action situations* and *participants*. *Exogenous variables* treated for the purpose of the analysis as fixed, affect the structure of action arena, generating particular patterns of *interaction* that produce various *outcomes*. The performance of the system is judged through evaluative criteria by examining the patterns and interactions and outcomes. Various dynamics can result. For example, if the interactions produce positive outcomes for participants, they will enhance their commitment for maintaining the situation as it is. If participants perceive the interactions as unfair or inappropriate, they may change their strategies so as to influence the results, even if the outcomes received are positive (Fehr and Gratcher, 2000 in Ostrom 2005:14). The values can have a catalytic role on the choice for a structure situation or another. As such, if certain outcomes are less valued by participants (or others) than other possible outcomes, those involved will try to change the structure of the situation or exogenous variables by moving to a different level. Or if procedures were viewed as unfair, motivations to change the structure may arise (Frey et al, 2004 in Ostrom 2005:14). These examples of interactions and their possible outcomes in relation to those involved in an action arena are typical in development cases, appropriate as such for contentious situations that the management of a cultural landscape can spawn.

2.8.1 Applying IAD to Saxon Cultural Landscape Conservation

For the purpose of this paper, I have adapted the IAD framework to the Saxon landscape's conservation case, allowing for an analysis of the influence of the independent variable "NGOs involvement" on the action arena as the dependent variable, in this case "local level collective action undertaken by landscape users to counteract socio-economic disturbances" with subsequent modified (due to policy impact) patterns of interaction. The exogenous variables of the IAD framework are limited to biophysical/ material conditions (in this case, the landscape resources, and the outstanding cultural and natural heritage) the attributes of the community and rules. What defines a community it is not, however, commonly accepted. The classical view of a community stressed the bonds of kinship (blood), geographica bonds (place) and the sentiment of belonging to a group (mind) which were „broken" in the transition to the modern society (Tonnies, 1988). What results is a society composed by multiple actors interacting according to his or her own interest within a preset form of institutional arrangements that structure his or her interactions (Agrawal & Gibson, 1999). Referring specifically to what defines a community in cultural landscape management, Selman (2004:381) acknowledges that the "nature of 'community' has proved to be quite variable, but typically has involved: stakeholding communities, such as businesses and NGOs, engaged at a relatively strategic level; specialist communities, such as farmers, often collaborating on projects related to environment and tourism; general communities-of-place, especially when pursuing a project of visible local relevance; and interest-driven communities of motivated individuals who stimulate action on issues such as sustainable food or timber production. Lay interests may occasionally take the lead either through membership organizations or spontaneous local action, but more commonly are enrolled through externally facilitated co-management or partnership initiatives."

In the case of Southern Transylvania, conservation policies are targeting the individual small farmer to influence her behavior primarily not to abandon the area and continue working the land in a traditional manner. These policies lie at cross-roads between rural development and biodiversity conservation, leading to a high diversity of institutional arrangements responsible with the implementation, monitoring and coordination. While there is an opening for more participatory approach heightened by the new principles transposed from EU legislation into the national, there is not yet a widespread culture of participation among the stakeholders, given the former socialist past of Romania of administrative centralization, as shown in the previous chapter. This generates high variability in expectations of each party involved and in their resulting inter-connections. The controversial case of conserving a cultural landscape in a multi-ethnic set it is expected to generate a range of patterns of interactions.

Non-governmental actors have a role in implementing conservation policies that aim at eco-tourism development, distribution of agri-environmental payments for traditional management of landscape and support for artisans. They address a certain *context*, composed by landscape resources (outstanding natural and cultural heritage), socio-economic conditions (widespread semi- and subsistence agriculture in multi-ethnic villages) and specific informal – formal institutional arrangements based on kinship, friendship, trust and reciprocity. The policies impact the *action arena* - the villagers engaged in landscape use. The response of *action participants* results in different patterns of inclusion or exclusion regarding livelihood strategies and capacity for self-organization of local communities, which can be understood as winners and losers of conservation benefits (the outcomes). The interest of this study is to determine the balance between these two categories, which is ultimately the sign of reconstruction of communities' ability to address the socio-economic change they are facing. Evaluative criteria to assess these patterns are drawn from the interpretation of design principles for robust SESs from Anderies et al. (2003).

In order to represent as clear and coherent as possible the above situation and the connection between the building blocks, I have made the following modifications to the IAD Framework (Figure 5). The red-dotted parts represent the research focus of this project.

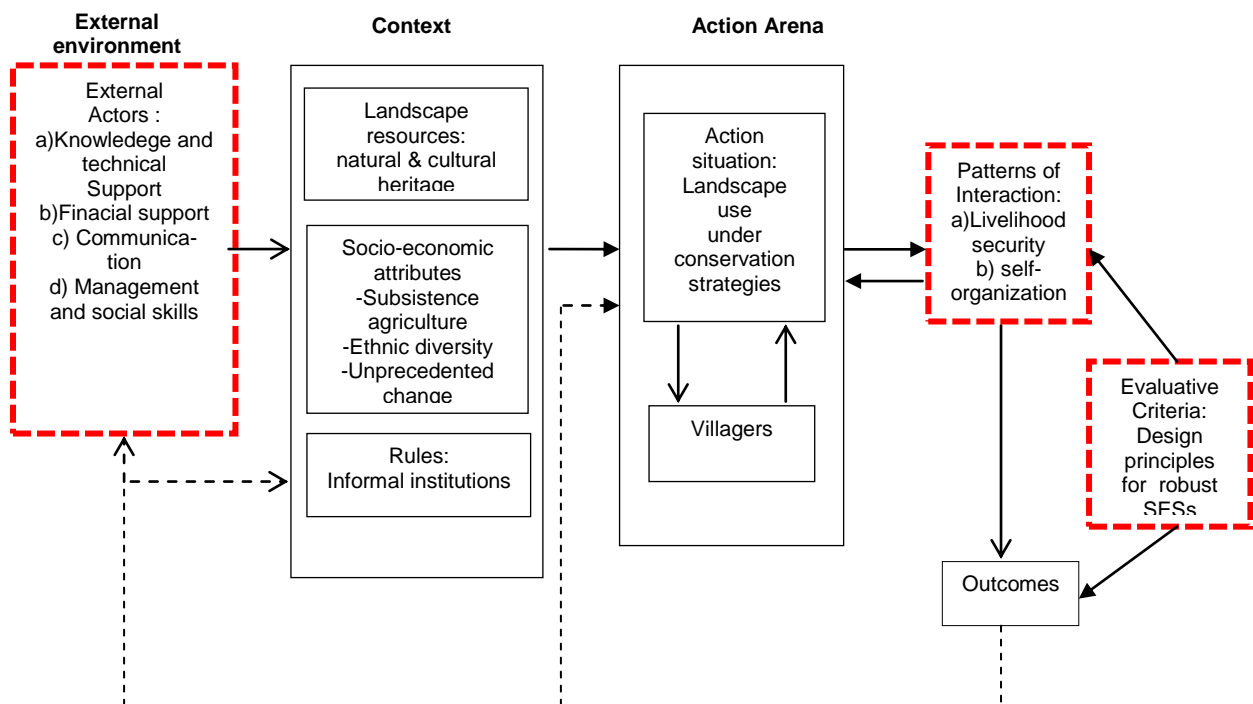


Figure 5 Conceptual Framework and Research Interest Areas (Red-dotted)

3. Research Design

This chapter puts together the elements to answer the research question and test the hypothesis of the current research. It starts with the operationalization of the variables, outlining the measurables that will be applied to case studies selected. Besides the indicators, the instruments chosen to fulfill the necessary measurement will be detailed. A subsequent section explains the chosen approach to guide data collection. The chapter closes with explanations on data analysis.

3.1 Operationalization of Variables

From the literature review it was found that non-governmental actors can exercise both positive and negative stimulus over local rural communities. Going through similar theoretical and empirical cases on the topic of socio-ecological resilience proved useful for identifying the necessary indicators to determine the evolution of the dependent and independent variables. As pointed in the introduction, the *influencing* variable is assessed through the concept of adaptive governance, which is a cumulus of various elements that contribute to the functioning of institutional structures with various degree of efficiency, depending on their arrangement. The *influenced* variable is unpacked with the help of the concept of social resilience that cumulates features belonging to social capital and cultural relations with biophysical environment.

3.1.1 The Independent Variable – NGOs Involvement

The involvement of NGO can manifest directly or indirectly, as shown in the literature. For the independent variable, the indicators that will be applied to the analysis of this study are represented in the conceptual framework in the “external environment” building block and are the following:

- a. Provision of knowledge and technical expertise
- b. Financial support
- c. Communication
- d. Management and social skills

The first two indicators fall in the category of direct applications of conservation strategies and the latter are indirect tools of social change. The four indicators are not excluding but may overlap, complement or cancel each other out. The way they are operationalised in this reseach is presented below.

- a. Provision of technical expertise or of knowledge in general is one key role of external actors as the studies have found. The types of knowledge the NGOs staff were interviewed about covered: landscape protection and monitoring techniques and expertise on the applicability of European or national law. Although local people may have better knowledge on the resource dynamics ((Berkes et al., 2000a), external actors can have a better oversight on larger-scale processes to which the community is more and more integrated (Anderies et al., 2004; Folke et al., 2005; Folke et al., 2007; Selman, 2004) and can reduce transaction costs that the new situation poses disadvantaging the less endowed individuals (Anderies et al., 2004; Folke et al., 2005). A critical aspect about external actors’ provision of cognitive support is the substitution or counteraction of the dwindling levels of indigenous knowledge (Anderies et al., 2003) that the recent dismantling of traditional communities has generated. The NGOs need to work for the recuperation of valuable traditional knowledge and find means to make it relevant for the present-days communities (traditional materials, local products – foodstuff, old methods). They have to assist local people in understanding the new political and economic setting to be able to benefit from the new possibilities related to EU integration (like agri-environmental schemes (AES), LEADER programme, good agricultural and environmental conditions (GAEC). Also, technical and knowledge support should work for the strengthening of non-farm activities and economic diversification (like tourism). Last but not least, the value of the area needs to be communicated so that people identify economic potential but also regain ownership and pride for their native places.
- b. In both theory (Folke et al., 2007) and practice (Selman, 2004) financial support is an indicator of external support. It refers to direct investments infused by different actors into the communities-of-place to counteract the impact of capitalist economic integration. It translates into rebuilding village infrastructure, supplying for materials or tools necessary for traditional agriculture or opening markets for the villages’ products. It also refers to indirect investments, which third

parties decide to make inspired by the character of the area or the activity and results of the conservation-related projects, like for example, to use of the new tourism facilities and services. The indirect flows go into building human capital, through professional courses aimed at gaining new skills and enhance the spirit of entrepreneurship. While the first category of investments which includes donations, competing for structural funds or corporate social responsibility-related incomes are easier to trace, the latter category requires more exercise.

The data for this indicator relies a great deal on secondary sources which limits a holistic appreciation of the total monetary influxes. Also, much of the donor's funding is confidential. However, this was not an objective when choosing for this indicator. The interest is laid on the perception of the inhabitants of the money flowing into their community, most importantly on the redistribution of these funds, the particular need addressed by the funding and the feel of increased quality of life as a consequence of investments.

- c. Scholars agree on the pivotal role of communication for effective operating as it fosters social capital and facilitates knowledge transfers between stakeholders, both critical for building resilience. Together with participation is deemed as a crucial element for environmental protection strategy (Constantin, 1999) or landscape planning (Luz, 2000). A good communication can raise the awareness among the target group, can coopt it, can win followers and has as such a great role in building the legitimacy and accountability of the project and the project holders (Hahn et al., 2006). Managers are required to continuously explicate their message to target users for gaining support, acceptance or constructive criticism. It is as such an activity that requires disciplined and transparent dissemination of information. Communication confers the flexibility of the decision and implementation process (Luz, 2006), necessary for preventing exclusion of relevant subjects and interested parties, contributes to conflict resolution and builds feedback mechanisms. These are important aspects for a strategy that is based on close interactions between NGOs and landscape users.

Not just the message is important but also the channels of spreading the knowledge. Studies have proven the efficiency of face-to-face communication (see Dietz et al., 2003; Ostrom, 2005). Key individuals are an important component in disseminating the information (Folke, 2006) given their position in the community and the respect and trustworthiness they are granted with by their peers. To determine the role of the communication in the relation between NGOs and local people, the research targeted the frequency of the dialogues, the method (how was the message disseminated –directly, through meetings, personal discussions or indirectly through ICT), direction (who initiated the discussion) and objective (why and what was communicated). These researches proved necessary in determining the relations primarily between NGOs and villagers, between NGOs and other external actors and villagers and other stakeholders that are involved in the subject of Saxon cultural landscape conservation that counted up for assessing the domination positions among these crossed interactions. Actors in power may tilt the information flow or may block other opinions.

- d. Studying various cases of integrated management methods (see, for example, Seixas & Berkes, 2009), which are similar to what ecosystem approach proposed in a previous decade, it becomes apparent that besides financial inputs and technical expertise wrought to the communities, the manner in which these are delivered is as important. Barnes (2010) proposes as indicator for studying the influence of external actors on the sustainability of collective action in joint forestry management in a province of India the management and social skills of project holders.

Management skills refer to concrete capacities of external actors in coordinating conservation strategies, which range from accounting, fund administering or banking to the ability of identifying the technical needs and co-opt the necessary expertise. They also encompass the manner of providing the necessary knowledge about the human-environment interactions so that it matches the needs of landscape users without overloading their capacity to assimilate it (Dietz et al., 2003). The social skills envisage participative approaches, the conflict resolution abilities and the equitable redistribution of resources.

3.1.2 The Dependent Variable – Capacity to Adapt to Change

To assess the impact of NGOs initiatives on the capacity of local communities to undergo structural socio-economic change, indicators were determined based on the literature review. The 8 design principles for robust SESs outlaid in the previous chapter, section 2.4.2, were interpreted and

adjusted with considerations regarding the associations between selected attributes of governance systems and the capacity to manage resilience as developed in Lebel et al.(2006) (see Annex A). The indicators that will be applied to the analysis are represented in the “evaluative criteria” building block of the conceptual framework and are the following:

1. Degree of awareness and understanding of conservation strategies among landscape users (Norton, 1998) by which the attitudes of the local people regarding the new developments can be determined. Farmers standpoints are of chief importance in predicting positive or negative outcomes of rural development policies and is a frequent indicator in measuring the effectiveness of agri-environmental schemes (G. A. Wilson & Hart, 2001). These are strongly connected to the values and world views that the villagers hold further discussed with point 3. Measuring the attitudes regarding landscape conservation allows for the appreciation of the presence or absence of responsibility and ownership of local people for their village and area they live in may be appreciated, necessary especially for initiatives targeting cultural reconstruction.
2. Degree to which local people from all ethnic groups participate in the landscape conservation (Brown et al., 2005; Seixas & Berkes, 2009). Focus is laid on involvement in traditional agriculture and secondly, to other cultural-related conservation activities, including tourism. Attention is given to both people involved directly and indirectly in NGOs projects, how are the benefits and costs of landscape conservation shared among different categories of villagers, which is the available human capital.

This indicator also relates to the connections of local people with NGOs that allow for transferring the knowledge but also to the inclusion of local people into the projects and their autonomy in the landscape conservation process.

3. Degree of confidence among landscape users that their livelihood strategies will benefit them in the future (Ostrom, 1990, Barnes, 2010). To measure this indicator, a mapping of local appreciation for current social-well being was undertaken, following the criteria most often mentioned by the participants in areas covered by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (Fig. 6). As depicted, the criteria on the left all feed into freedom of choice and action, an important element of human well-being (Sen, 1999).

Material well-being Money income, access to goods and services; assets such as house, cattle and fields; quantity and quality of food	Freedom of choice and action Enlargement of choices
Physical well-being Health, leisure, youth, capacity to work	
Social well-being Loneliness, mutual help, conviviality, joy	
Security security from retirement pensions, safe environment, air and water quality, tranquility	

Table 2 Criteria for human well-being; Source: Pereira et al., (2005)

4. Degree of perceived capability for self-organization in sustainably harvesting landscape resources without the knowledge and skills of NGOs (Sen, 1999, Ostrom, 2005, Barnes, 2010)). This behavioral indicator requires an analysis of the internal fabric of the community, of the informal institutions, the rule and values and interpersonal trust that the villagers exhibit. It is also very much determined by the existing human capital discussed with the previous indicator.

The self-organizing capacity of the local communities is particularly determined by the existing level of social capital. The capacity to self-govern may be envisaged with a dual meaning: to be either induced (by exterior suppliers) or may be intrinsic (there is a certain degree of inventiveness and entrepreneurship). Entrepreneurship is considered as an important feature in understanding innovation effectiveness in conservation and development (Juma & Timmer, 2003). The border between the two instances is not clear cut, as insiders may have strong ties with outsiders which results in ideas surging from the within but implemented from the outside. Community based management systems have spontaneously emerged through self-organization in various parts of the

world (Berkes et al., 2003) and as it was previously shown, a SES is made up by both designed and self-organizing components that are interacting (Anderies et al., 2004). The ability of a community to organize on its internal social resources is determined, among others, by the “prevalence of collective-choice rules, local leadership, existing norms, social capital, adaptability of decision making, and knowledge of the social–ecological system. At the same time, some conditions are harmful to self-organization, including external circumstances such as political instability, poverty, and a culture of mistrust (Anderies *et al.* 2004; Ostrom 2009), but also local factors such as pronounced social inequalities or ethnic tensions” (Fischer et al, 2012:6).

This indicator relates to the empowering or disempowering of local people through the action of NGOs which is a common theme in the development literature. Capacity to adapt to change will not be present unless the projects are sustainable and work intensively together with the local human capital.

Like the independent variable's indicators, the aforementioned markers may also overlap and reinforce each other. They both represent the internal (i.e. villagers') reaction and response to the transformations pushed by inside and outside forces. This reaction is aggregated at the level of collective action where the landscape conservation targets can be pursued. The analysis of these indicators helps to make the distinction between external impact and internal driving forces of change. They all seek to determine the livelihood security and capability of self-organization of the studied communities, features identified as underlying the capacity to adapt to change that forms the interest of this paper. Livelihood security refers to the strategies undertaken by local people to ensure daily living which are pursued through social interaction, through relations of reciprocity or trust. It has, as such, an equally economic and cultural character and it is in tight connection with the available resources (endowments) and accessible resources (entitlements). The difference between the two is usually cultural, and empirically determined. Generally the first ones include formal or informal rights over resources (like land, labour, skills, etc.) and the latter sets of utilities derivable in practice (Jenkins 1997) or legitimate effective command over alternative commodity bundles Gasper (1993).

3.2 Control Variables

Discerning for the impact caused by an actor's action requires excluding all the possible interferences that are not directly related with its activity. This is a complicated exercise given the sophisticated web that a project generates and the many secondary influences spread out but it is particularly important for community development like the present case study brings forth. The exercise is necessary for drawing less doubtful conclusions on the impact analyzed. As such, in order to isolate the influence of external actors on the adaptive capacity of the Saxon landscape's communities, some other possible interference need to be held constant. In the literature review it was shown that socio-ecological system is composed by a common-pool resource, its users and respective governance system (Janssen & Anderies, 2007) and the landscape has grown as a commons. As such, to fulfill this task the four clusters of variables relevant for successful governance of the commons as developed by Agrawal (2001, 2007) are used as shown in the table below borrowed from Barnes (2010:27):

Cluster of variables	Interpretation	Action taken to control influence
Characteristics of the resource system (landscapes)	Size, boundaries, the extent to which resource units can be stored, the rate and predictability of flow of benefits from the resource system and ease of monitoring resource conditions	Cases were selected from small geographical area (Natura 2000 Sigisoara-Tarnava Mare site, a HNV landscape); Data on cultural and natural patrimony uses obtained
Characteristics of the user group	Size of the group, clarity of boundaries of the group, heterogeneity, extent of interdependence in the user group, dependence on the resource, whether the user group has sufficient resources for initiating and maintaining collective action (Poteete and Ostrom, 2004).	Cases were selected based on the following socio-economic criteria: proportion depending on natural resources (subsistence farmers), villages were formed by Saxons (presence of significant cultural patrimony), multi-culturality (presence of 3 ethnic groups), access to infrastructure and medication, education level, experience with external involvement
Characteristics of Institutional arrangements	Rules that are easy to understand and enforce, locally devised, take into account differences in types of violations, help deal with conflicts and help hold users and officials accountable are most likely to lead to effective governance. (Agrawal, 2007: p123)	The two villages selected are under the same local administrative legislation, albeit the councils are different and located in different counties ⁷ . Also, the 2 major NGOs (MET and ADEPT) are active in the both communities with similar integrated conservation and development projects (ICDP). Given their positioning, elements of Saxon informal institutions are still present. Also, the rules of dealing with resources are similar as the characteristics of the resource system were held constant across cases.
Nature of external environment	Demographic, cultural, technological, market-related factors, nature of state agencies	Both cases are from the same region –Southern Transylvania. The specific characteristics are depopulation, low technological equipment and low preparedness for economic diversification. There are no significant markets close to any of the cases. The state administration is similarly organized in both locations under different national and regional (European) requirements. Policy on rural development and biodiversity conservation (LFA, HNV, Natura 2000) are constant.

Table 3 Control Variables

3.3 Data Collection

Different types of data collection methods were employed to study the influence of NGOs onto adaptive capacity of communities living in the Saxon Landscape. Data sources include a literature review, in-depth semi-structured interviews, field observations, published secondary materials and participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools. The PRA tools are based on the behavioral and epistemological principles as outlined in Chambers (1992); these include a reversal of learning, accepting appropriate imprecision, learning rapidly and progressively with flexible use of methods, seeking diversity, facilitating, being self-critical, and sharing information and ideas). Triangulation of methods and sources was used to enhance external validity. Collection of data was done from general to particular. As such, the regional development context was studied and interviews with experts from various fields like agriculture, environmental policy or rural development were carried out with the objective of getting a better grip on the villages' broader situation. Also, similar experiences outlined in published studies were used as inspiration for the present analysis. In addition, these

⁷ Counties are an administrative unit of Romania equivalent to NUTS III (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics); a county numbers several cities and communes. Communes are compounded by villages which are the smallest administrative unit.

direct discussions were complemented with short incursions⁸ to other former Saxon settlements close to the target-communities where similarities and differences were identified.

Prior to embarking for the field work, web searches on the activities of the two main NGOs active in the area: Mihai Eminescu Trust (MET) and ADEPT Foundation, on central and regional governments' development strategies and on the history of the Saxon villages were undertaken. To complement this basic knowledge necessary for the preliminary phases, sources of unscientific mass-media documents, personal blogs, and various statistical data about the area's present-day situation were consulted to form the basis of the themes and topics to research upon. The existing literature relevant to the area in question is rather scarce and addresses larger scale perspectives. Few studies dedicated to specific communities within the Saxon landscape were identified.

Field work took place between June to October 2011, with two months and a half being allotted to each village. This community study focused on uncovering the interior resorts that hold the new communities together, what is left from the old informal institutional arrangements, which are the new socio-economic dynamics under the influence of the new and various external institutional arrangements that are drawing various paths of development for them. These data is necessary to isolate the possible external influences from internal determinants of resilience.

Key-individuals selected from each community helped with obtaining relevant contacts and overview perspectives. The people interviewed cover both categories: permanent dwellers, seasonal inhabitants, short-term inhabitants (here are the former Saxon ethnics who come to spend holidays in their home-villages and tourists, researchers, etc). The focus of this paper is on the individuals directly making their living out of the nearby resources but the opinions of the latter are relevant to the extent they influence the former. There were members of the community identified beforehand as possible informants (like the priest, teachers or public authorities) but the rest of the interviewees were selected through non-probability sampling, which is especially appropriate to understanding qualitative and relational issues (Narayan 1996). The size of the sample was not determined prior to field work. Interviews in both localities were organized sequentially, using snowball technique, i.e. asking key informants to name other people that could be interviewed. Also, much of the information was obtained through accidental sampling, i.e. people of groups of people met randomly or when accompanied by key individuals that were willing to participate in the discussion. Using common sense sampling (ibid), care was taken to approach both men and women of different ages, ethnicity, material status and engaged in different activities. This technique was chosen as it helps lowering sample errors and biases related to wealth, age, gender, and leadership (ibid).

Qualitative data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews using a flexible interview guide focused on before and after evolutions of the following four topics: family and community life, agricultural practices, income sources, relation with the NGOs, and macro-events (landscape conservation, EU integration, etc). Notes of the discussion were taken and when permission was granted, interviews were recorded. To protect informants, their names or positions will not be exposed in this paper or other material. Key expressions like cultural reconstruction, AES, craftsmen support, HNV, Natura 2000, landscape preservation were introduced in the questions to test the awareness and understanding of local people on the general subject of landscape conservation. Efforts were laid for tailoring the discussion as per each respondent and situation. With almost all the local people approached, more than one conversation was organized. This counted considerably for building the interpersonal trust. Many of the valuable information collected were obtained when engaging in informal conversations which allowed maximum freedom to interlocutors. Several group deliberations have provided clarifications on individual discussions. Substantial information was gathered by participating in people's activities. Field notes were taken to document what was heard during unplanned discussions as well as to write down observations of the village's daily life. Significant aspects of the community were captured in still photos and videos.

In parallel with interviewing the villagers, extensive discussions with representative members of the two NGOs, with local authorities and with other researchers present in the field were arranged. They were questioned on their mission and vision, specific projects and objectives concerning the villages, their modus operandi, and provision of technical and financial support, connection and interaction with the communities at stake, past and future of their activity. Questions were formulated in a way that

⁸ Case studies are not immaculately conceived; additional units always loom in the background (Gerring, 2004)

would match the information obtained from the villagers in what regards NGOs objectives and impacts.

All interviews were conducted in Romanian. Being a native speaker has helped for understanding different nuances, stresses and pauses in the dialogues with the subjects. Language is the essential barrier or tool in conducting this type of research, largely anthropological, on such particular matters. To understand issues on social capital to a satisfying degree, good account and comprehension of local culture proved necessary.

In each community, several PRA tools were applied to complement the data obtained through direct talks about the history of the village, cultural customs and current socio-economic situation. They were employed as it follows: walks inside and outside the villages with local guides were undertaken which were together with sketching seasonal calendars of economic activities useful to understand how local people use the landscape; culturally important places in the villages were mapped where existing and wealth was determined through ranking exercises. Also, elements of personal nature disclosed by the villagers helped to understand the prehistory of current conservation projects and relationships between ethnic groups. These can provide insights about opposition or support to external actors' intentions.

Documentation about the villages' socio-economic situation is rather scarce and dispersed. The development programmes of the communes served as primary basis for drawing the picture on the local situation, but they had different sections of information and considerable efforts were necessary to complement the missing links to be able to draw confident comparisons. Secondary data available on NGOs websites, policy documents, national research institutes and public authorities were used to verify information obtained in the interviews.

3.3.1 Case Study Approach

As a means to the end stated in the research objective, a critical evaluation of the conservation related projects initiated by NGOs upon two local communities of the Saxon cultural landscapes was undertaken. To test the hypothesis and indentify whether there is co-variation between NGOs involvement in the Saxon cultural landscape conservation and its respective SES's resilience, the comparative case-study strategy was chosen. Within the framework of cross-scale institutional analysis, the case study method is used as a data collection strategy and analysis. The idiom "case study" will be employed here under Gerring's (2004:342) characterization as "an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units. A unit connotes a spatially bounded phenomenon observed at a single point in time or over some delimited period of time". The case is the Saxon's cultural landscape conservation and a village community represents, thus, the unit of analysis. This approach allows for deeper understanding of the subject in an attempt "to gain an *overall* picture of the object as a *whole*" (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2005). Additionally, according to Gray (2009) and Yin (2003) it permits the exploration of more themes and subjects within specific real-life context serving the purpose of the current cross-institutional endeavor.

The choice for case study approach is motivated by the necessity of obtaining depth into the subject of Saxon landscape conservation rather than breadth. It is expected that a qualitative assessment to be more appropriate in capturing the cross-scale institutional interactions than by using quantitative techniques. The interest is on *how intensive* and of *what nature the interactions are* rather than how many times do they take place, tilting the balance towards a qualitative type of inquiry. Quantitative appraisal on the dependent and independent variables' indicators it is believed to provide less pertinent information for the research question proposed by this study given the intricate nature of the governance of the Saxon landscape where several development discourses clash or collaborate. To be able to draw recommendations on the landscape conservation strategy, it is necessary to understand not just whether internal and external actors are interacting but the type of linkages they develop, if objectives are met or not and what conditions determine these outcomes.

3.4 Research Approach

In order to determine NGOs involvement, this research addressed the subject of Saxon landscape's conservation at both institutional and temporal scales. As such, a cross-scale institutional analysis framework was chosen for understanding the possible transformations generated by NGOs interventions onto the capacity to adapt to change of two rural communities of different multi-ethnic composition located in the Saxon cultural landscape. A cross-scale model for each case study

governance situation depicts the inter-relations between differently positioned actors, helping to better grasp on the functionality of their relations. The interpretation of this model is complemented with an analysis of before and after the intervention that helps determining whether there is variation on the dependent variable (local communities' adaptive capacity) engaged by the interventions of external actors.

3.5 Site Selection

Although generous in untangling the research issue of this paper, the method of case study raises problems of generalizability, given the fact that conclusions are based on a small number of cases analyzed. Extrapolating from single cases is confined to a small number of analogous cases (Gerring, 2004). This drawback can be partially tackled though careful selection of cases and cross-comparison (Seawright & Gerring, 2008). As such, in the first phase of the preliminary research, criteria for site selection were elaborated that would ensure maximum variation on variables to be measured. The criteria covered the following aspects: former Saxon Villages, positioned in the Natura 2000 site and HNV area, variation on the involvement of NGOs and variation on ethnic composition. Two communities were consequently identified. They were both established by Saxons in the XII century and since 2007 they are part of Natura 2000 Park Sighișoara-Târnava Mare (map 2, Annex B) and since 2009 the area was also declared a HNV landscape. In the first one three ethnic groups of the region (Saxons, Romanians and Roma) cohabit and the external participation manifests to a lower extent. In the second one, Roma are majoritarian with few Romanians and Saxons left and external actors showing greater implication (table 3).

The particular choice on the villages' cultural composition was made in order to determine whether the Saxon element still influences the other groups, how is the vision of Saxon cultural reconstruction shared by the whole community and each group in particular and how does it impact the collective organization of the agricultural activity. Based on the data collected, the two communities will be compared, measuring the influence of NGOs involvement and whether this involvement manifests differently depending on the cultural composition.

Study location	Ethnic composition	NGO Involvement
A - Mălâncrav	Mixed (Romanians ≈ 50%, Roma ≈ 46%, Saxons ≈ 14%)	Lower
B - Viscri	Roma ≈ 80%; few Romanians and Saxons	Higher

Table 4 Site Selection Based on Variation on Dependent and Independent Variables

3.6 Data Analysis

As exposed in the previous sections, qualitative methods for data collection were found more suitable to research a reduced number of units (here understood as communities from the Saxon cultural landscape). This implies an interpretation of the data gathered also in a qualitative manner.

After field work was finished, the interviews were transcribed and some of the expressions of the respondents will be used in the analysis using quotations. However, to protect the identity of the interviewees, no mentions will be made to her/his age, occupation or gender. Together with the participation observations, the data from the interviews was coded into the themes discussed in this paper. Secondary data complemented the primary one and ensured its triangulation. The appraisal of the manifestation of variables' indicators is done through ratings "low", "moderate" and "high", pointing to the nature -positive or negative, of the observed evolution, when applicable. These ratings express either the efficacy of the indicator, i.e. whether the funds infused had generated wide participation or reached as many villagers as possible.

4. Landscape Conservation - Theory and Context

This chapter provides useful information for understanding the context of the study itself and the communities under research. Romania is a member of the European Union since 2007 and, as such, it functions under the laws and principles in effect within the Union. Much of the current landscape conservation precepts in place in this country follow the ones promoted by the Council of Europe. In the first section of this chapter, general considerations regarding trends in landscape conservation, of both natural and cultural aspects, together with the framework of the High Nature Value policy will be outlined. Then, in a subsequent section, it goes to specifics, introducing the Saxon cultural landscape with its ecological and social value and a stakeholders' presentation. This overview includes historical data on the evolution of local communities. As we are dealing with multi-ethnic villages, it is important to trace back the developments that could prove revelatory explanations for the current situation but also solutions to various problems. The last section consists of a mapping of external actors active in the selected communities, marking the common organizations and the distinct ones. This proves as a necessary exercise for understanding the attributions of the NGOs in comparison with other actors, and thus, extent they get involved in the lives of the villages' societies. Based on this identification, the cross-scale institutional linkages model will be determined in the analysis of each case.

4.1 Whose Landscapes? – Identity and Ownership

Cultural landscapes retain memories from the past more visible than in other parts. Time was imprinted in their shape but they are not static entities (Antrop, 2005). Denis Cosgrove (1984) describes how every socio-economic formation creates its own typical surroundings, by major transformations of the land, sometimes completely wiping previous designs. Questions of continuity and knowledge transfer become particularly important in the case of Eastern Europe, where the cavalcade of political and social changes of the 20th century has led to patterns of alienation and unpredictable ethnic rearrangements (Palang et al., 2006). These rearrangements have rendered obsolete the former generation's cultural references, means and knowledge in using the proximate resources but they also created new windows of opportunity for the current generation living in or outside the landscape.

When identifying a cultural landscape Birnbaum (1994) calls for circumspection. The authors ask for attention to former historical context when deciding for an intervention/conservation plan. This is particularly important in areas where the human element is still present and actively engaged in landscape utilization. What we currently face is a blurring of ownership boundaries between distant actors and actual in-site inhabitants. As the mobility of human capital has majorly increased, the consequence is that individuals feel attached to places where they do not live anymore. Or, certain features of landscapes raise the interest of more distant actors to actively engage in landscape management with direct impact on its modeling. This stimulates new reflections on spatial planning.

Place prioritization stands as directory principle in environmental governance where landscape has evolved from an externality (unintended consequence of economy) to public good (intended consequence). This shift is enshrined in the European Landscape Convention signed by 50 countries where it is affirmed: "The sustainable and democratic management of Europe's landscape is essential for shaping the future setting of peoples' lives, as well as for passing on the landscape that we have inherited. Landscape management is about finding ways to negotiate the transition from yesterday's world to tomorrow's landscape. This transition needs to create a well-managed, thriving landscape that people need for social, cultural and economic health whilst at the same time sustaining the rich palimpsest of landscape history and nature that helps to explain our history, culture and identity" (Naturopa, 2002:5). These interventions need to strive for greater social justice "and what landscape study needs even more is a concept of landscape that will assist the development of the very idea of social justice" (ibid.). Under this view, landscapes override administrative units, like regions, districts or villages. Their boundaries are set under different criteria – not just geographical, but combining aspects of cultural identity, natural diversity and particular polity. "Landscape policy" reflects the public authorities' awareness of the need to frame and implement a policy on landscape (COE, 2012). The people are at the heart of this policy, encouraged to take active part in deciding over the shape of landscapes particularly in areas most affected by change, like the rural, industrial or coastal areas. With the new challenges of sustainability, the governance of cultural landscape of High Nature Value, for example lies in synchronizing different cultural backgrounds in a common over-arching objective

where each individual, irrespective of ethnicity finds a vision to subscribe to in securing means to fulfill its needs and expectations.

4.2 Conserving Nature: The Importance of Biodiversity

In the definition enshrined in the Convention on Biological Diversity signed by 192 countries it is not easily understandable the interaction, interdependence and cross-determination between the living organisms, humans included. It does not suggest as such, how species influence each other. Humans have used the surrounding natural environment to build suitable habitats. This caused the disappearance of some organisms and emergence or/and evolution of others in an attempt to eliminate and push away the menacing species and foster the beneficial ones. Centuries of agricultural practices have majorly transformed the natural landscape – the previously “intact”, untouched by humans, shaping particular social institutions (Paracchini et al, 2007) with norms and rules differing on bio-geographic criteria and historic context. These communities have built distinct cultures which represented materially and spiritually the use of the contiguous biological diversity of which they were part of. Some societies were successful in building functional habitats that would ensure covering their needs and thrived, others didn't, disappearing together with the resources they have put under risk (Diamond, 2006). The higher the mutuality between humans and environment, the more durable their cohabitation proved (Berkes et al., 2000a).

This relationship of reciprocity has best been captured by the concept of social-ecological systems (SESSs) also known as coupled human-biophysical systems. An *ecological* system is broadly understood as an inter-reliant set of organisms or biological entities while *social* refers to the tendency of cooperation and forming interdependent relationships with the others (Anderies et al 2004). In this sense, both ecological and social systems may contain subsystems that may interact on different dynamics and levels. Anderies et al. (2004) define a SES as a “subset of social systems in which some of the interdependent relationships among humans are mediated through interactions with biophysical and non-human biological units”. A first-hand representation of social-ecological systems is of a rural community largely using the natural capital nearby to construct its economic and cultural life. More recently, the interactions between city dwellers with their proximate “green” environment have come to be conceptualized also as coupled urban social-ecological systems (Bolund & Hunhammar, 1999).

An outcome of various types of land management is biodiversity. Biodiversity depends on ecosystems functioning, which are biotic and abiotic elements affecting each other in complex exchanges of energy, nutrients and wastes. Disturbances stimulate ecosystems to change and if they become regular, they will be incorporated into the ecosystem's self-regulating mechanisms. This capacity of internalizing change describes another important feature of ecosystem: their adaptive capacity which “may either provide protection against the disruption (e.g. fire resistant bark) or rely on the disturbance to maintain itself (eg. fire induced bursting of pods to release seeds)” (SCP, 2003). The extent to which ecological systems adapts to various disturbances expresses their degree of resilience, i.e. the ability of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change, so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure and feedbacks (Walker et al., 2004). Ecosystems evolving over long periods of time have developed adaptive mechanisms to overcome disruptions (which are inherent in nature), to provide them with resilience to move between different equilibrium states and maintain their structures and functions. Pushing an ecosystem beyond its resilience capacity induces a state of chaos. This is, nevertheless, just another phase of the evolution; a new equilibrium will ultimately emerge. The latter will be much more difficult to determine, due to the complexities involved and the current unawareness about how ecosystems work. People's interventions upon natural life inevitably lead to surprises that can jeopardize human welfare or open windows of opportunity in environmental governance (Kates & Clark, 1996). Ecological and social resilience are linked co-evolutionarily and synergistically by the dependence on ecosystems' functioning (Adger, 2000).

Protecting biodiversity is what we *ought* to do in order to ensure the provision of vital services. Other species are creating the life-supporting system for humans, providing irreplaceable resources of food, energy and shelter (Costanza et al., 1997; Daily, 1997; Limburg et al., 2002). However, to conserve biodiversity means setting targets, choosing among priorities and designing proper mechanisms. All these are not an easy thing to do. Two features of biodiversity make it especially challenging for policy-making: the fact that a large part of it remains unknown (Wilson, 1992) and its borderless, interconnected character. On the other hand, biodiversity is related to specific bio-geographic

characteristics of a certain location. A place represents the very first unit of analysis in conservation, as it retains the heterogeneity counting up for biological diversity (Sarkar & Margules, 2002). Biodiversity is embedded in place – a principle clearly represented in environmental legislation like Natura 2000, as habitats are special places of particular bio-geographic features. We will not be able to conserve all types of places, as this would virtually entail the whole planet Earth but to conserve biodiversity, some places have to be prioritized over another, given resource constraints and other demands raised on places (competing land use options) (ibid.). Policy needs to ensure interdependence of ecosystems to avoid concentration of efforts for one place over another. To focus intensively on protecting one area might actually not end up saving it since its surrounding support continues being altered. This is best represented by the fortress metaphor: no matter how well built, how well organized and defended, it cannot survive once the connection to provision sources, water and food is being cut. Biodiversity cannot be fenced.

4.3 Conserving Culture: The Importance of Traditional Agriculture

One of the collective goods associated with farming is cultural heritage, which covers objects, sites and areas influenced by agricultural activity, together with experience-based knowledge of work, resource utilization and management (Daugstad et al., 2006). In direct connection with biological diversity are the non-tangible elements of traditional agriculture, the human knowledge of using the natural resources in a non-destructive, regenerative manner. As it was described with the concept of resilience, disruption within ecosystem functioning opens windows of opportunities for new developments, either positive or negative. Human intervention can generate one of the two outcomes.

Interest in traditional agricultural knowledge has been raising the last decades due to the recognition of its potential for conserving biodiversity (Gadgil et al., 1993). Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) is an attribute of communities with historical continuity in resources use practice (Dei, 1994) cited in (Berkes et al., 2000a). It is similar to Western environmental science, also based on accumulating knowledge but it differs in propagation: the first one is abstractized (based on observation and selective dissemination) and the latter is concretized (transmitted orally to future generations and by trial-and error experiences). Berkes et al. (2000a) surveyed the international literature on local or indigenous environmental knowledge with the objective to learn from different management systems for improving current ecosystem management. Valuable insights were derived from both modern and traditional cases proving their strengths and weaknesses. A special focus in their research was given to ecological resilience and the role of ecological knowledge in monitoring, responding to, and managing ecosystem processes and functions. One important aspect is that not all indigenous groups are necessary benefitting the environment (as exemplified in Diamond, 2006) whereas some modern societies can prove successful in meeting conservation objectives (as in Acheson et al. 1998). However, the latter situation is more of a singularly example, as it is proved in the study of Rockstrom et al (2009) where planetary boundaries of man-nature interference suggested for maintaining the Earth in a functional and predictable, Holocene-like state, were exceeded. According to their calculations, biodiversity loss has already dramatically gone beyond the borderline.

There are various local and traditional practices of managing ecosystems, like species, succession or landscape patchiness management or resource rotations (Berkes et al., 2000a). These are tailored on the landscape specificity for addressing ecological surprises. The social mechanisms behind these practices, under perpetual refinement, aim at generating, accumulating, and transmitting knowledge: "the use of local institutions to provide leaders/stewards and rules for social regulation; mechanisms for cultural internalization of traditional practices; and the development of appropriate world views and cultural values. Some traditional knowledge and management systems were characterized by the use of local ecological knowledge to interpret and respond to feedbacks from the environment to guide the direction of resource management. These traditional systems had certain similarities to adaptive management with its emphasis on feedback learning, and its treatment of uncertainty and unpredictability intrinsic to all ecosystems" (Berkes et al., 2000a:1251).

4.4 Changing Policy: Integrating Conservation Precepts

4.4.1 Managing HNV Areas: Policy Framework

The interest for traditional knowledge is currently represented in conservation strategies, as policies aim to maintain the human element on the ground (Jones, 2007) for its crucial services of maintaining the functionality of ecosystems with benefits in delivering valuable public goods like biodiversity, clean water, soil and air. As a consequence, we face an internalization of conservation principles into rural development strategies, a telling example being the High Nature Value landscapes mechanism. There is an implicit link between areas of High Natural Value and traditional agricultural landscapes, though the two concepts are not fully overlapping (Paracchini et al., 2007). Conserving and protecting these areas requires special attention given to human specific agricultural practices. This has brought modifications to the European Agricultural Policy. Coining of the HNV concept can be understood as an effort of “greening” the current Common Agriculture Policy. It was the European Environment Agency that lobbied for the protection of these areas as important sources for the continents’ agrobiodiversity (Paracchini et al., 2007). What resulted is a commitment of the Environment Ministers to find favorable management plans for HNV farmland. “In the Communication on ‘Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010’ (COM (2006) 216) the key actions identified include optimizing the available resources under the reformed Common Agricultural Policy to, *inter alia*, prevent intensification and abandonment of High Nature Value farmland. The Community Strategic Guidelines for Rural Development (Axis 2) emphasizes the preservation and development of high nature value farmland and forestry and traditional agricultural landscapes as one of the priority areas of Rural Development. Furthermore, HNV farmland is one of the agri-environmental indicators identified within the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) for Rural Development, as well as in COM (2000)20: Indicators for the Integration of Environmental Concerns into the Common Agricultural Policy; and COM (2006)508: Development of agri-environmental indicators for monitoring the integration of environmental concerns into the common agricultural policy”(Paracchini et al., 2007).

Within Europe, the largest proportion HNV is covered by semi-natural grasslands which are complex ecosystems supporting various agricultural practices and corresponding social institutions. These are often used as reference habitats for monitoring the HNV farmland (Paracchini et al., 2007) . Beaufoy et al. (1994) found that more than half of low intensity agriculture is actually covered by grazing systems, in some countries like France holding an even larger percentage. The challenge of protecting these biodiversity-rich landscapes consists in sufficiently rewarding owners through both national and European policies to voluntarily acquiesce to enter an agri-environmental scheme (Jones, 2007) . These schemes are largely based on traditional methods of managing the land and they refer to natural fertilization with manure, reduced livestock intensity per hectare and controlled hand or mechanical mowing after the second half of June to protect nesting birds. Agri-environmental schemes (AES) are now implemented under the Rural Development Regulations introduced with Agenda 2000 (EC/1257/1999 and EC/1750/1999) in all Member States. The HNV concept links regional policies for nature conservation, countryside development and public health. Referring explicitly to agricultural practices that generate higher levels of natural diversity, they overlap with cultural landscapes. There is a common understanding widely shared that maintaining these landscapes is a chance for future sustainable development through retaining identity as a counter-reaction to globalization.

4.4.2 National Perspective: Landscape Conservation in Romania

Romania has signed and ratified the European Landscape Convention (law nr 451/2002), and is also a member of other international conservation pacts like, among others, the World Heritage Convention (1972), the Bern Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats (1979), the European Convention on the Protection of the Archeological Heritage (1992) and Convention on Biological Diversity (1992). Despite this formal adherence to preservation principles, the state of both built and natural landscapes has worryingly degraded in the last 20 years (Presidential Report, 2008). Also, the preoccupation for landscape in Romania is currently just beginning

(Schreiber & Baci, 2008). Only recently it has come to be discussed and treated as a collective result of communities⁹.

The misuse of natural protected areas has intensified the years after communism fell, despite their legal protection. The lack of funds and motivation of the responsible personnel together with a lack of clear legislation are among the most common causes of negative impact (Presidential Report, 2008). Nevertheless, Romania still holds a good natural capital (SNDD, 2008). A vast country, it covers 5 out of 9 bio-geographical regions of the continent when the average is 3 for the other 26 Member states. Besides still large wilderness areas of the Carpathians or the Danube Delta, Romania also brings important and unique agro-biodiversity to the European network, species strictly protected under Habitats and Birds directives. The percentage of Natura 2000 sites (SCI+SPA) represents 17, 84% from the total territory. A large part of these sites overlap the national protected areas (national parks, nature reserves and wilderness areas).

The existence of the valuable fund is explained partially by the political history of the country, Romania being a mosaic of ethnic groups that have created distinct rural cultural landscapes responsible for the outstanding species variety partially responsible for the current socio-economic situation. Almost a third of the population is directly engaged in food production through subsistence and semi-subsistence farming (INS 2011). The subsistence (SF) and semi-subsistence farms (SSF) are defined as small, family run agricultural holdings, associated with production for own food needs and a low degree of market participation (Davidova, 2010). From 4.2 million farms, less than 0.5% are extensive commercial units (occupying 29% of the total agricultural surface, with an average of 269 ha/exploitation) the rest of 99, 5% are small-scale holdings, with an average of 2.15 ha and a coverage of 65, 6% of total agricultural land (NPRD 2011). From the 3.8m subsistence farms functioning in Romania, it is estimated that almost half of them have less than 1 ha which excludes them from direct payments (allotted through the 1st Pillar of the Common Agriculture Policy). Like in other European countries, the irregular relief of a mountainous area was not suitable for intensified agriculture. Particularly for the case of Romania, this region escaped communist collectivization to various degrees as compared to the South of the country, for example, which is covered by ample plains.

About a quarter of the country is covered by HNV farmland (see map 3, Annex B). A proof of the environmental quality of these landscapes is the overlap with Natura 2000 sites. The HNV farmland generally concentrates in the central part of Romania (see map 4, Annex B), along the chain of the Carpathian Mountains. The mountainous areas are also considered Least Favoured Areas (LFAs) and receive special support, i.e. additional payments to compensate for the inclination of the land and other weather patterns that reduce productivity. The various subsidies for HNV and LFAs are afforded to subsistence or semi-subsistence farmers through the National Plan for Rural Development. There is an overlap between LFAs, HNV and IBA (important birds areas) (see map 5, Annex B) attesting the importance of small-holdings, underlining the paradox currently comprised by policies: on one side viewing the subsistence farmers as retarding elements for the national economy and on the other as important providers of public goods: cultural landscape, food diversity, water management, etc. Agri-environmental subsidies are allocated to both land owners and non-land owners, i.e. livestock owners that use communal pasturelands. A correlation between subsidies and the number of animals is necessary only in the second case, while in the first case, it is necessary only to make the proof of bi-annual mowing. This is a loop-hole in the legislation that allows for people that do not own livestock to benefit from or even capture the subsidies, a situation also found by this study.

⁹ <http://www.ziarulunirea.ro/peisajul-cultural-intra-in-atenia-arhitectilor-si-urbanistilor/>, accessed May 2, 2012
http://www.natura2000.ro/news/view.php?news_id=510, accessed November 15, 2011

4.5 Study Area: The Natural and Cultural Value of The Saxon Landscape

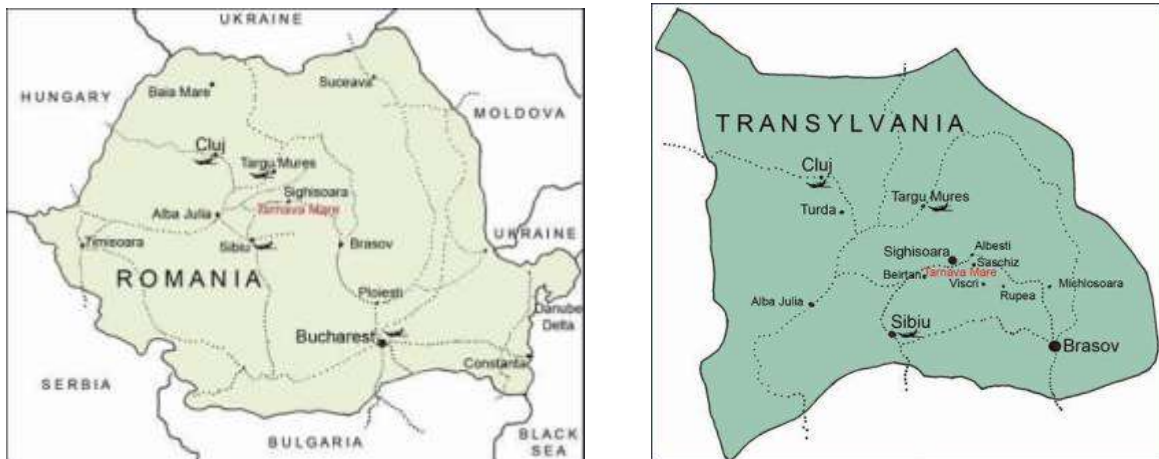


Figure 6. Positioning of the Saxon Landscape (also known as Tárnava Mare area) on Romania's map (left) and Transylvania's map (right)

4.5.1 Socio-Cultural Context¹⁰

The Saxon cultural landscape lies in the South-Eastern side of Transylvania (see map above), which is one of the 9 historical regions of Romania characterized by alpine and semi-alpine habitats, rich in forests and pastures. Administratively, the Saxon landscape is located in the Centre Development Region NUTS II. According to Eurstat¹¹, this region is the wealthiest in Romania, after the capital city Bucharest and its surroundings, but still holding the 19th place in a top of the 20th poorest regions in EU. This is the place where the largest part of the Saxons resided (hence the name) and which presents typical features, some comparable with other parts of Transylvania or Romania, or completely unique. The area was declared a HNV farmland in 2009 when previously in 2007 a Site of Community Interest of 85000 ha (ROSCI0227 Sighisoara-Tárnava Mare) protecting key habitats under the Habitats Directive was encompassed in the broader 246.000 ha "Podisul Hartibaciului" Special Protection Area created to preserve key bird species under the European Birds Directive (see map 2, Annex B). Grasslands cover 12% of the total surface of Natura 2000 Sighisoara-Tárnava Mare site (ADEPT 2012). While for the HNV farmland there is already monetary compensation in place for the local people, for Natura 2000 site they will be afforded starting when management plans will be approved.

The area also known as the Saxon Villages forms a triangle in Southern Transylvania, covering approximately 300,000 ha, with a population of around 100,000 scattered in about 150 small villages. It stretches on 3 different counties: Braşov, Sibiu and Mures – sharing a certain cultural homogeneity but each retaining typical particularities. The first two number among Romania's most better-off counties and are characterized by: i) relatively little forced agricultural collectivization having taken place during the 1950s; ii) a large proportion of the agricultural land being private property owned or rented by individual households (*gospodarie*); iii) a high degree of ethnic diversity: Romanian, Hungarian, German and ethnic Roma (Redman, 2010).

An area of genuine multicultural composition, it was the settlement of German colonists (the Saxons) invited by Hungarian kings in the 12th and 13th century to defend the Eastern borders of Christian Europe due to the fact that native population, Romanians were relatively few in numbers at that time. In more than 8 centuries of cohabitation, the Saxons created typical rural communities based on cattle rearing and harvests respecting 3 allotments rotation. With few exceptions, all the Saxon settlements received special privileges from the Hungarian rulers of the time like economic and religious autonomy, property over land but also political rights to a certain extent in exchange of participation to the defense of the territory. These privileges gave the Saxon community the freedom to develop

¹⁰ Historical data are obtained from Verdery (1983), Potra (2002) and Dobre et al. (2011)

¹¹ <http://www.doingbusiness.ro/en/business-news/21447/eurostat-romania-among-poorest-regions-in-eu>, accessed April 28, 2012

which resulted in egalitarian rural societies of medium-income peasants. These societies were rigorously organized through strong informal institutions and united around the Lutheran Church. The villages were divided in “neighborhoods” belonging to each street of the settlement. These neighborhoods were organizing all aspects of every-day life, eminently relying on collective action from agricultural work to building private houses and settling disputes among villagers. They were also known as relatively closed communities, with each village holding distinctive elements, from language to clothing.

Situation started changing with the 20th century when Romania gained its independence from the Habsburg Empire and Romanian administration started being introduced in historical Saxon or Hungarian communities. The moment of dramatic change for this ethnic group came with the Second World War when many Saxons enrolled in the German army. The two countries were allies at the beginning of hostilities but later changed fronts. The Romanian citizens of German nationality were caught in the middle of political will. Many of the Saxons women included, were killed or deported to forced-labour camps by the Soviets. Some remained in Germany and the ones who returned to their houses were dispossessed by their goods and properties by the Communist regime recently installed. Their belongings were initially handed to citizens from other ethnic groups, Romanians or Roma, and few years later, nationalized. Given this rapid loss of 800-years privileges, doubled by the desire to reunite with the family established in Germany during the war and also by the active policies of the German government in need of labour-force, the fall of the communist regime opened the door for unprecedented depopulation of the Saxon villages.

In what regards the Romanians, these did not share the same privileges as the Saxons for a long period of time. They were prevented holding decision-making positions. However, some gave up their Romanian names for the Hungarian ones to take part in the ruling elites. They were serfs for the Hungarian or Habsburg nobleman or if free, they were shepherds or worked for Saxons. With the 20th century and the coagulation of the multi-ethnic state Romania, they started entering the local administration.

The Roma people are present in the Romanian space since the XV century but in Transylvania they started settling especially in the XVIII century, as the social situation here was not as difficult as in other regions of Romania. Moreover, the empress Maria Theresa has granted them the freedom to move around freely in the principality of Transylvania and practice their traditional crafts in exchange of taxes. They slowly integrated in Saxons communities as hinds or as craftsmen. They grew in numbers in the communist period as they were brought to work on the new state farms adjoining the villages.

Until late 20th century, villages were organized around distinct specializations held by each ethnic group. Also, the exogenous marriages were not common. Each ethnic group borrowed from its neighbors but sought to differentiate itself through language, customs, religion and garments. Reflecting on the cohabitation between Saxons, Hungarians, Romanians and Roma in Transylvania, the historian Nicolae Tescula (2011) concludes: “They lived together but separately”. The current social situation is markedly different. The Saxons – the historical founders of this rural system – have largely left the area; the last major depopulation having occurred at the beginning of 1990s, when the German state had led very active policies of re-integrating the diaspora to the “fatherland” (MET 2011). At the moment, the Saxon Villages are inhabited by 5% Germans, 35% Romanians and 60% Roma ethnics.

4.5.2 Ecological Value of Saxon Landscape

Land-use patterns¹² dating back from several hundred years are still present in the Saxon villages (see figure 11, Annex B), which is why they are considered one of Europe’s last remaining medieval landscapes (ADEPT 2011). It is the continent’s most extensive non-alpine hay-meadows, characterized by low-intensity agriculture based on grazing systems. It is also home to an abundance of flora and fauna, including many endangered species like the lowland bears and wolves, which are now strictly protected under EU legislation - Natura 2000 or EU Habitats Directive (see map 2, Annex B for some of the sites of special interest). The public benefits associated with the traditional

¹² Forested ridges and gullies pasture and hay meadows on gentler slopes and terraces, and arable land and smaller meadows on the flat valley bottoms near villages.

pastoralism still present in this area, as identified by Redman (2010) are: conserving biodiversity, maintaining cultural landscapes, mitigating climate change, social welfare and household food security, economic potential of traditional agricultural landscape/rural heritage.

What makes this region unique is the fact that the type of landscape in Southern Transylvania has almost completely disappeared in lowland Europe. There are still important HNV pastoral areas in the Alps or the Carpathians but not at such low altitudes. Following this acknowledgement, it was declared a High Nature Value landscape a few years ago as a strategy to counteract the rising threats, like intensification of grassland management and abandonment of land or of traditional farming of the land.

“It is now seen in Romania and in Europe as a high priority area for the conservation of its still-working ecology, and for studies to understand how such areas can be preserved or (much more difficult) restored elsewhere in Europe” (ADEPT 2011). Also, the existence of a built patrimony still well preserved makes this area one of the most extensive areal of vernacular architecture from Romania and Central Eastern Europe (UNESCO report 2011). Under the HNV policy, Southern Transylvania is amenable to economic support through agri-environmental schemes, and due to its biological and cultural uniqueness has attracted the outmost attention of conservationists.

Despite the valuable natural and cultural patrimony, the socio-political events that Romania has undergone in a short period of time have generated unprecedented change in what regards the field of environmental protection. The modifications of properties rights and of the general political setting that followed the fall of the communist regime, complemented by the opening of the borders to the global economy and recently to EU integration have created a paradox for biodiversity conservationists: on one side the means to redress ecological problems of the former regime were made available but on the other, threats to the natural capital have intensified due to higher economic competition, pressure on the resources and particular social evolutions. The table below summarizes these socio-economic perturbations at each institutional level.

		Socio-economic Perturbations	
		Shocks	Shifts
Institutional level	External	Fall of the Communist Regime EU accession Natura 2000	Democratization, Private property Market economy Multi-level governance, new environmental legislation
	Internal	Saxon massive outmigration Roma colonization	Land abandonment Loss of traditional knowledge of land management and the alike Shrinking of common property institutions of land tenure

Table 5 The socio-economic perturbations (shocks and shifts) that the Saxon cultural landscape’s SES is facing from external and internal influences

4.5.3. Study Locations

The two villages selected for research are located in the South-Central part of Transylvania, in the Natura 2000 Sighisoara-Târnava Mare SCI. This is a naturally coherent area, with a network of interlaced narrow valleys. It is a dense cultural landscape with a large number of small Saxon villages in which the World Heritage sites of Sighisoara and of the Saxon Villages with Fortified Churches lie (MET 2012). They are represented in the map on the next page. For a more comprehensive map, where both natural and cultural signposts are marked, see map 2, Annex B.

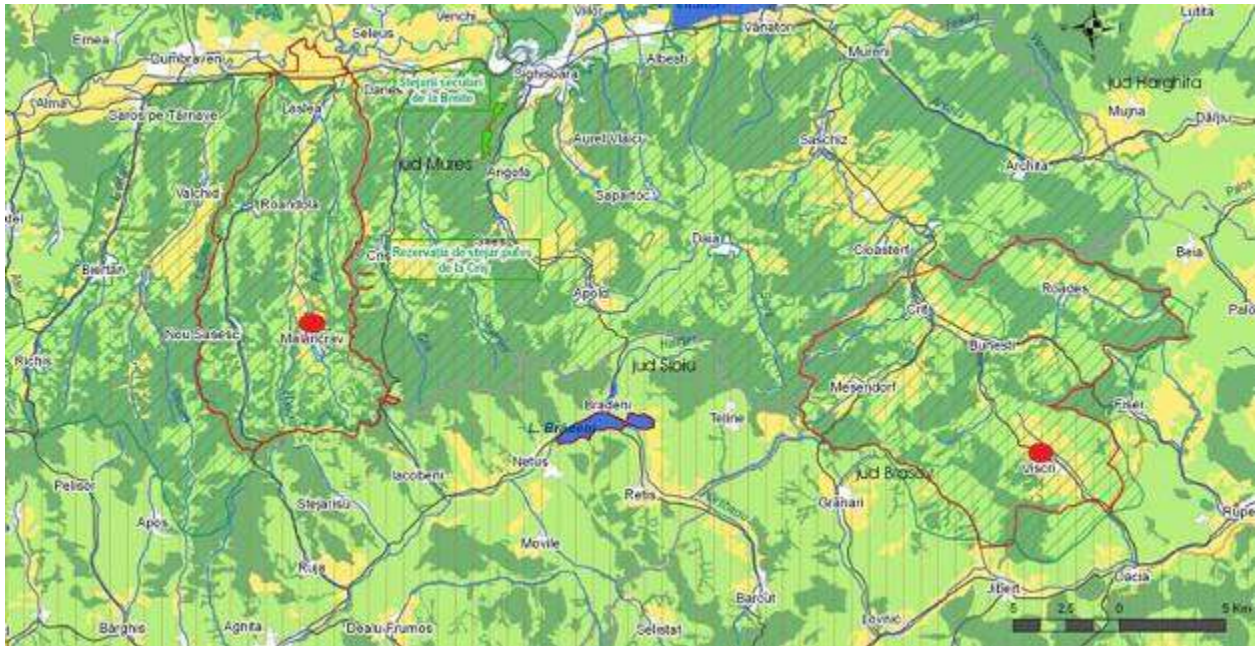


Figure 7 The positioning of Study Locations A (Mălâncrav) and B (Viscri) on the map of Târnava Mare – Sighișoara SCI. The red lines mark the borders of the communes of which the two villages are part of: Laslea for Mălâncrav and Bunești for Viscri. © Mihai Eminescu Trust: <http://www.mihaieminescutrust.ro>

4.6 Mapping of Stakeholders Involved in The Conservation of The Saxon Cultural Landscape

Conducting group and individual interviews with the villagers, NGOs staff and public functionaries, to which secondary data analysis was added, several parties directly involved at various levels and with different intensities in landscape management of the study location were identified. According to their positioning on the spectrum of institutional organization, they are of following types: regional intra-communitary associations, non-governmental units, local councils and grass-roots organizations. They will be divided in two categories – actors involved in both communities and actors who belong to one or the either community. Their implication in the governance of villages' SESs is presented briefly in the next paragraphs, and the analysis on their activity will be detailed in the respective sections of this chapter. Below their functions and responsibilities are listed. This is not an exhaustive inventory as the purpose of this exercise was to identify the active structures directly involved according to the stakeholders' identifications. In the cross-institutional model belonging to each of the studied location, the linkages with other relevant actors (like donor, universities, etc) will be illustrated.

4.6.1 External Actors involved in both communities

Before going further into description, it is necessary to make some clarifications regarding the spectrum of external actors involved in the communities of the study locations. While some civil society organizations implement their philosophies in both cases, the public administration bodies, like the national and local agencies or city councils maintain the same structure and organization throughout the villages and, although they are mentioned in this section, they are distinct entities, formed by different individuals who are partially elected as candidates of various parties and partially public servants without political affiliations. This generates variations in the relation patterns with local people.

A. Public Authorities: Local Councils

The Town Hall is the representative of the Romanian Government in the territory. It is the most important actor in the area in what regards different social services, like collecting taxes, funding the education and cultural activities, infrastructure, distribution of pensions and other state allowances for vulnerable categories but also drafting development strategies to increase the welfare of the citizens

under its circumscription (Law 215/2001¹³). Its responsibility for agricultural subsidies distribution is limited as this is the attribution of the local Agency of Payments and Interventions for Agriculture (APIA) situated in nearby cities (15 km away for study location A and 25 km away for study location B). This agency is responsible also for verifying the farmers who had applied for agri-environmental schemes. Neither of the two studied villages had the office of the city council located in their premises, the inhabitants having to commute to a neighboring village, which is the administrative center of the commune. What also falls within the responsibility of this structure is the approval of investments and charitable actions pursued by other entities, holding, at least theoretically, a central position in monitoring and decision-making. It is common that the resources and administrative capacity for accommodating initiatives of new forms of governance and extensive EU-induced legislation to be limited (Dragoș & Neamțu, 2007).

The role of the Town Halls is significant in the process of landscape conservation, as much of the grassland is under public ownership albeit this is slowly changing due to the dismantling of informal arrangements that used to support this system. Grazing associations of semi-subsistence farmers are renting the land from the Town Hall to use it for their livestock herds being conditioned to maintain it in a proper state.

B. Public-Private Partnerships: LAG Dealurile Târnavei and LAG Asociația Transilvană Brașov Nord

Under the Axis 4 of the Common Agriculture Policy that deals with rural development, LEADER Programme is dedicated to assisting rural actors in drafting long-term sustainable development for their regions, by fostering partnerships and networks of exchange of experience. Through the funding allotted for this programme, local action groups (LAG) were encouraged to form, a condition being co-optation of various types of actors, public and private, in their structure. Different actors like economic agents, public authorities, cultural associations and experts in agriculture or biodiversity conservation work for common objectives. For the LAGs to gather both formal and informal recognition, care was put in the representation of ethnic groups and women. LAGs would work for the betterment of their territory though different strategies aimed at cultural and economic expansion.

Since 2007 both study locations were integrated in the LAG “Dealurile Târnavei” (Târnavă Hills) which embraced the motto: “It is *us* who know best how the place we live in should look like”. Viscri, as part of Bunști commune switched in 2011 and entered the LAG “Asociația Transilvană Brașov Nord” (North Brașov Transylvanian Association). Recently, the North Brașov Transylvanian Association LAG has received a grant of 572.000 euro through the National Plan for Rural Development, Leader Axis for the project “The functioning of the Local Action Group, gaining skills and enliven the territory” that points toward the development of the rural area where Viscri is located¹⁴. The project will last for a period of 4 years, and each sub-project under this umbrella will be targeted at increasing the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry and the diversification of local economy, improving the environment, the rural space and the quality of life of the inhabitants.

C. NGOs

In the preliminary research phase, two main non-governmental organizations that have taken the lead in reconstructing and preserving this area were identified: ADEPT Foundation (ADEPT) and Mihai Eminescu Trust (MET). They are complementing and influencing the regional (European) and national governmental strategies concerning the protection of this area through tourism development, implementation of HNV scheme of agri-environmental payments and support to craftsmanship and entrepreneurship. While the first NGO is mainly focused on promoting agricultural development and environmental protection the latter is oriented on Saxon culture reconstruction.

¹³ [LEGE nr. 215 din 23 aprilie 2001 PUBLICAT IN: MONITORUL OFICIAL nr. 204 din 23 aprilie 2001](#)

¹⁴ http://www.bzb.ro/index.php?page_name=stire_detalii&id_stire=70107 , accessed May 19, 2012

Mihai Eminescu Trust (MET) is committed to the preservation of traditional Saxon architecture and local crafts, by reviving local knowledge and passing it on to younger generations through active education and training. They started fulfilling these objectives in 1999 and work in villages spread all over the Saxon landscape but with a focus on Laslea and Bunești commune, where Mălâncrav and Viscri stretch out. Their cause won many illustrious supporters with time, building a strong network of “patrons” like HRH The Prince of Wales or Zac Goldsmith among others. These are able to fund and endorse the present projects that aim at creating self-sufficient villages, an idea supported by the place’s still existing philosophy of producing food as culture rather than as business. This idea was embodied in the “Whole Village” project that worked to reconstruct the self-sufficiency of the locality starting from the capitalization of the cultural patrimony, an activity that became emblematic for the Trust’s work. Then, two other important objectives were to be highlighted: the assistance given to traditional craftsmen and the development of entrepreneurial capacity within the target communities. The ambitious rehabilitation that this project consisted of was largely possible due to Packard Humanities Institute and Horizon Foundation that provided much of the appreciable amounts of funds needed to fulfill the afore-mentioned objectives. Also, the Whole Village gained European attention which concretized into financial support through the Culture 2000 Programme in 2006. Their conservation efforts were recognized in 2007 when the trust received the prestigious Europa Nostra prize.

In reviving the Saxon culture, the Trust sought to teach the existing Roma and Romanian population about the value of the area, endowing them with concrete skills in forgotten building methods, like the use of lime mortar. It also actively encouraged Saxon ethnics to repatriate and get involved in the reconstruction efforts. As the agricultural character of the area favors small-scale initiative, the Trust offers advice, grants and loans to farmers, craftsmen or others to start small ventures and businesses and access the market with their products.

To support the significant reconstruction work of traditional houses but also of public spaces and churches, an intensive marketing activity was undertaken with the purpose of agro-tourism development. The Trust brought travel agents in the area, promoted the landscape at national and international fair, has a tourist officer in both UK and Romania and published numerous guides and informative materials.

With an expressed intention to place the Saxon Villages under a Conservation Zone, studies were funded to document the rich flora and fauna. MET has actively supported the nomination of a Natura 2000 site that would encompass their area of action. It also initiated ecological education for primary-school children in the area led by biologist Tibor Hartel, one of the most prominent rapporteur of the Saxon village’s natural richness. For the area of Bunești , the trust obtained the local council’s agreement for the establishment of a Natural Park, IUCN protected area category V that was not ultimately supported by the central administration but is was later included in the Natura 2000 network.

With the financial contribution and in close cooperation with a broad range of partners (from national governments, business actors to international NGOs), ADEPT Foundation has been working since 2002 to implement integrated programmes of improving local production capacity with the direct objective of preventing land abandonment and educating the community about its key role in preserving such important values that this area contains. Their mission is to “bring together Romanian and wider European expertise to carry out innovative nature conservation and rural development projects that are firmly rooted in local communities” (ADEPT 2011).

ADEPT Foundation has initiated an integrated programme of biodiversity conservation, agri-environment and rural development in the area of the Saxon Villages or Târnava Mare¹⁵ as they popularize it. This project has departed from the worrying observation that the number of cows decreased dramatically from 2008 to 2009 (Page et al 2009). With a grant of 605.000 EUR from the Norwegian Government’s Innovation Norway fund it rehabilitated 8 milk collection centers and endowed them with milk-testing equipment. ADEPT also trained local inhabitants in agro-tourism, milk hygiene, certification and organic agriculture. It facilitated the discussions between milk-collecting companies but without interfering in the negotiation process. To close the loop, it contributed to the development of a few farmers’ markets in the region that function regularly or randomly, depending on

¹⁵ Tarnava Mare is a river crossing the area of the former Saxon Villages and is the name the region had before the second world war

the case where and when products can be commercialized. Given the high quality of the products, some of the farmers supported by the Foundation were subscribed to Slow Food movement.

The Foundation raised the awareness on the high nature value quality of the area. It led the designation process of the Târnava Mare area as a Natura 2000 site in 2008. Under NRDP Measure 213, holdings within Natura 2000 sites will receive additional payments. These payments will not start in Romania until sites have management plans with obligatory measures, and the costs of these obligatory measures can be calculated. More recently, with the contribution of the European Commission (259.515 EUR) and Orange Romania (96.815 EUR) ADEPT began a LIFE Nature project¹⁶, dedicated to the conservation of two dry grasslands habitats, which represent priority habitats under EU Habitats directive. For this 3 years long project, the Foundation will rely on close collaboration with Town Halls and farmers who own these grasslands. ADEPT also highlighted the need of a better application of the support scheme for farmers who maintain traditional landscape management. As the information on agri-environmental subsidies was not readily and understandably available to the local farmers, ADEPT established a Farm Advisory Service while in parallel it restructured and simplified the application process with the help of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. This effort resulted in an accession rate for the agri-environmental subsidies 6.6 higher than the national one (Page 2009).

To increase the awareness of the community regarding the natural and cultural value of their landscape, brochures were printed on the topics and the schools in the area were intensively involved. Local teachers and professors were trained and some schools were supported to introduce permanent ecological courses in their curriculum. To enhance the social capacity, ADEPT recognized LEADER as highly relevant to smallholder communities, and has promoted the establishment of the Târnava Mare Local Action Group (LAG). This is already operational, although Axis 4 funding for LAGs has not yet started. Together with MET, efforts were laid in constituting a Local Action Group that would become a dialogue in the area for the developers and will strengthen the community's capacity to self-manage and individually identify necessary resources for attaining one objective or another. As a result, small-scale farmers are participating in LEADER-type meetings, which helps ADEPT and others understand local concerns and priorities. ADEPT has deliberately proposed the Târnava Mare LAG to cover the same area and include the same communes as the Sighișoara - Târnava Mare Natura 2000 site, since these two measures (one for local involvement in sustainable rural development, and the other for biodiversity conservation) will balance each other in an innovative way. It is expected that LAG will become a useful tool to involve local people in the management of the Natura 2000 site.

The Foundation also actively supports tourism and craftsmen. In partnership with the Town Hall, they opened a Tourism Information Center located in their core community, Saschiz, a neighboring village to study location B. From their records, the number of tourists grew considerably and maintained the ascending trend despite the fall at national (INSEE 2010) and global level due to the financial crisis.

On the next page, the main institutional arrangements targeting the reconstruction and preservation of Southern Transylvania's socio-ecological system of High Nature Value are graphically illustrated, with their main goals and relationships. The 2 NGOs have a leading position in both proposing and implementing landscape conservation strategies.

¹⁶ EU's financial instrument supporting environmental and nature conservation

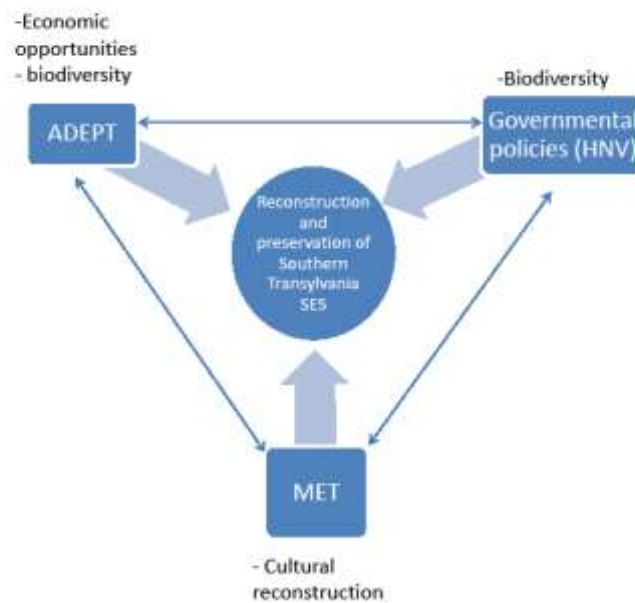


Figure 8 External actors targeting Southern Transilvania's resilience

4.6.2 Actors Active in Just One of The Communities

Each of the studied community has attracted various external actors on different subjects. Among these are various faith-based organizations, philanthropists, donors, economic agents (mainly tourism operators), NGOs. Also, propelled by the recent years' evolution, grass-roots organizations (GRO) came into being. Given their nature, GROs rely to a great deal on the local human resources.

A) Study location A (Manalcrav)

Cattle Owners Association and **Livestock Owners "Unirea" Association** are two distinct structures representing the interests of livestock owners from Mălăncrav . They negotiate the price for milk with processors, maintain the pastureland in good condition and administer the various subsidies that the Association has obtained in the name of its members.

B) Study location B (Viscri)

- a. **Pro Patrimonio** is an international foundation with offices both in Romania and in Great Britain that advocates for the safeguarding of Romanian built patrimony. It is part of Europa Nostra, an NGO hub and also EU's instrument in dealing with heritage issues. Relying on finest expertise, the organization strives for restoration, craftsmen' formation and education of the wider public with regards to the inherited patrimony. In partnership with MET, it has rehabilitated house no 18 from Viscri.
- b. **"Viscri Begins" Association** aims at helping the women of the village, especially the ones with children under 18 years old to complement their incomes by selling woolen socks and felt slippers produced in the community primarily outside Romania or to the many tourists that visit the community. The association pays directly the women for their products and also keeps a share of the profit that is reinvested in a medical care unit or supporting children from impoverished families continuing with high-school.

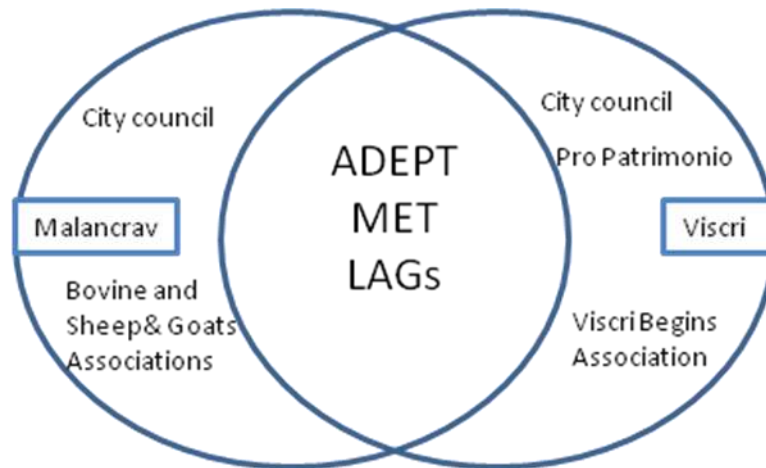


Figure 9 Display of external actors, the common and the distinct ones for the two communities

The following three chapters present the findings of the current study on the Saxon cultural landscape's socio-ecological resilience. Chapter 5 and 6 present the findings for each case: study location A – the ethnic configuration of the community is mixed and the actors' involvement is lower and study location B – there is a majority of Roma ethnics in the total number of inhabitants and the external actors' involvement is higher. Each of the two case study sections starts with a short introduction about the village, tracing the communities' history, cultural particularities, demographics, infrastructural endowment, and the presence of landscape conservation measures. Then the information gathered for the independent and dependent variables will be put in relation and interpreted for understanding the influences of NGOs on the adaptive capacity of the socio-ecological systems. The analysis of the two variables is structured as it follows: first the data gathered for the dependent variable is laid out and then the influence of non-governmental actors is highlighted on each indicator. This order allows for better zooming out the actual influence of these external actors on the communities' adaptive capacity. Chapter 7 compares results and answers to the research question raised by this study, testing the hypothesis.

5. Case Study A - Mălâncrav

NGO Involvement: Lower

Community composition: Mixed (Romanians – 46%, Roma – 40%, Saxons – 14%)

5.1 Data Collection for Case Study A

Triangulation of sources was ensured by the combination of different data collection methods, as it follows:

- a. Large informal discussions and interviews with NGOs representatives and members of Cattle Owners and Livestock Owners "Unirea" Associations
- b. Large informal discussions with local villagers from all ethnic groups (resulted from daily interaction, these discussions were almost all group discussions, as neighbors and kin were always present)
- c. 12 semi-structured individual interviews and 3 semi-structured group discussions with subsistence and semi-subsistence farmers (both AES and non-AES applicants)
- d. 2 informal discussions with guesthouse administrators
- e. 3 semi-structured interviews with local craftsmen
- f. 4 interviews with public authorities
- g. 3 semi-structured interviews with the local school's and kindergarten's staff
- h. 3 interviews with researchers (2 social scientists and 1 natural science specialists)
- i. 3 semi-structured interviews with tourists
- j. 4 semi-structured interviews with villagers from neighboring villages (1 interview was taken in each of the other 4 villages from the commune of Laslea of which Mălâncrav is part)
- k. 2 interviews with agricultural specialists
- l. Review of local agricultural reports (1980 – 2010)
- m. Review of NGOs annual reports (2002 – 2011)
- n. Review of the local development strategy (2008-2013)
- o. Review of conference papers (*Mountain hay meadows - hot spots of biodiversity and traditional culture*, Lunca de Jos, Romania, 7-9 June, 2010; *High Nature Value grasslands: securing the ecosystem services of European farming post 2013*, International conference: 7-9 September, 2010, Sibiu, Romania)
- p. Review of the National Development Plan 2007 -2013
- q. Review of the LAG's "Dealurile Tarnavei" local development plan, 2007- 2012
- r. Archive review of 1944-1945 Saxons' belongings dispossession documents
- s. Observation of interactions between NGOs representatives and local people
- t. Observation of interactions among local people of different ethnic background in various contexts
- u. Guided visit by villagers inside and around the village

From the list above, it can be seen that the data was collected through various methods, combining the direct sources (like interviews, group discussions, observations and visits) with secondary ones (reviews of relevant documentation). Particular for the direct methods in the case of local people was their reluctance of being interviewed alone but showing much more confidence when other villagers were present. Also, much of the interviews were partially structured as they needed to be tailored according the each respondent's knowledge or involvement in landscape conservation.

5.2. Unit of Analysis – Context Background of Study Location A

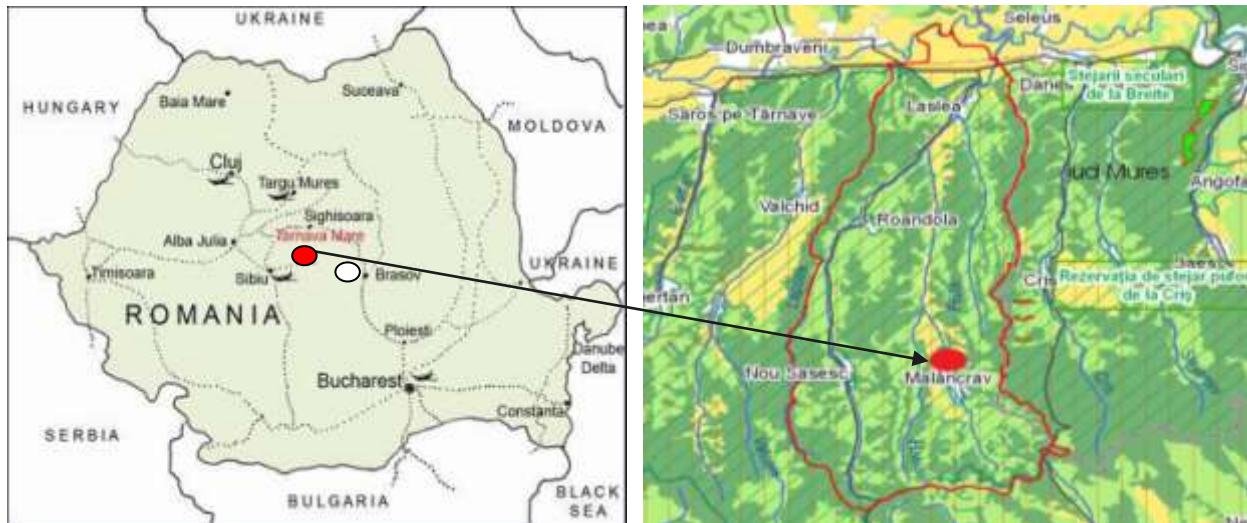


Figure 10 Positioning of the Study Location A (Mălâncrav) on The Map of Romania

As shown in the maps above, study location A - Mălâncrav is positioned in the North Western part of the Saxon Triangle. Included administratively in one of the better off counties in Romania – Sibiu, it is the biggest (in surface) village of the commune of Laslea composed by 5 localities: Laslea, Floresti, Nou Săsesc, Roandola, and Mălâncrav. The Town Hall is located in Laslea, which is the commune headquarters. The village is a clogged settlement, but the 14 km to the national road are easily to make given the good condition of the asphalt. The closest city is Sighisoara, a very well preserved medieval fortified town, enlisted as a UNESCO site. The village was first mentioned in 1305, being a community founded by Saxons. Its original, Saxon name is *Malmkrog*. Together with other villages it was from 1340 to 1848 under the property of the noble Hungarian family Apafi, which gave two rulers to Transylvania in the 17th century. The Hungarian domination is unusual for Saxon villages which were recognized as autonomous settlements and only Mălâncrav and a few other communities were in this situation. The state of serfdom was ceased by a local upheaval against the noble family. Given the layout of its streets, its architecture and the housing allotment, Mălâncrav stands as a typical Saxon settlement. It is a clustered rural community arranged along one main road that ramifies with the crossing of a spring. At the entrance in the village, two adjacent streets are unfolding from the same intersection. There is evidence that the agricultural model introduced by the Saxons based on the three crops rotations of cereals, roots and fallow and animals rearing was maintained functional until the burst of the Second World War. Some elements of this model are still present. The people possess small plots of lands that they use as arable or for hay making. The deciduous forest enshrouding the village is managed by the state.

Mălâncrav is known as one of the wealthiest villages in the area, a reputation that was built before the Second World War due to a few rich families with larger properties. They were stigmatized as kulaks¹⁷ by the communists and dispossessed by their goods. Nowadays, Mălâncrav is the rural community with the largest number of Saxon members in Romania – around 170 from a total of 1200 individuals. Romanians form the majority, with 46 % while the Roma are about 40 %¹⁸. Before the general exodus that followed the fall of the communist regime the Saxon community numbered 900 members.

The village has a school that includes primary and gymnasium and a kindergarten. The teaching is done in both Romanian and German but only up to the 4th grade. The pupils that want to continue the teaching in German have to commute to Sighisoara (25 km away) where they can further follow the German high school if the families can afford to support them. The school numbers around 200

¹⁷ “Kulak” was a term used in the late Russian Empire and early Soviet Union to define enriched peasants that became affluent farmers

¹⁸ Data is approximate

pupils, but the number varies as there are cases of drop-out generally between the 5th and the 7th grade. Not many of the pupils manage to graduate the exam at the end of the 8th grade to further continue to high school and the rate is particularly higher among pupils of Roma origin.

Besides the bus taking the children to Sighisoara, the village does not have public transportation. There are some private operators running but there is no fix program. The people generally rely on hitch-hiking and on schedule of their car-owning neighbors. This makes difficult the access to a number of necessary services: like administrative or medical services as both the city council and the medical cabinet are located in the neighboring village, Laslea. In what concerns the doctor, she or the medical assistant comes once a week to the village.

Regarding the access to utilities, the village is linked to the national grid and recently, optical fiber was introduced and the speed of the internet connection is satisfactory. However, the mobile signal works irregularly and only in some spots in the village. Also, the village does not have a water pipeline and a sewerage system. People rely on underground water and the wastewater goes in the ground or in the local spring. Few of the houses have water flushed toilets. For cooking and heating people rely heavily on wood and charcoal. They pay for the timber they use to the state agency responsible with the surrounding forest's management.

There are three confessions represented in the village: the Christian Orthodox, the Lutheran Evangelic and Pentecostalism. The first two each have a church, the Lutheran one being built in the 14th century while the Orthodox was inaugurated much recently, in 1980. The priests serving within the two places of worship live permanently in the community. Pentecostals are divided in three groups reunited around three preachers. They gather in special prayers' houses or at member's house.

5.3 Landscape Conservation Strategies present in Study Location A

Besides authentic vernacular Saxon architecture still relatively well preserved due to its geographical isolation (MET 2012), Mălâncrav possesses two important landmarks: the Lutheran church built in the XIV century and Apafi Manor. They are both positioned up on the left hill which allows for a wide panorama over the village. The Church is unique in Transylvania due to its 14th and 15th century frescoes considered among the finest in Europe and a 16th century altarpiece which is the oldest entire piece of its sort still in its original location. As recognition of these particular features, the Lutheran church is now a UNESCO-protected site. The manor' tumultuous history dates back to the 15th century. Within the village, on the Main Street, there is also a small 18th century Hungarian Catholic Church with harmonious architecture, which is no longer functional given the absence of parishioners.

Much of the cultural restoration in Mălâncrav was achieved through The "Whole Village" project of Mihai Eminescu Trust which began around 2003. Prior to the effective start of the work, the Trust has intensively trained the local workforce in old methods of carpentry, masonry or metalwork and it included the construction of a wood-fired tile kiln as well. Together with the newly trained local people, the Trust has restored the Apafi Manor previously bought by the Trust in a precarious condition. Now it became a luxurious guesthouse with an elegant library and work place for researchers. The original garden of the manor was re-created by a landscape architect following old pictures found in the community. The Trust also bought the ancient orchard next to the manor which shelters old Saxon Transylvanian varieties and invested in a small processing unit. The apple juice obtained received organic certification and is now sold around Romania.

Important reparations were brought to both Lutheran and Catholic churches. Many of the local houses' facades but also barns, courtyards and gates including the building of the old German school were refurbished and rehabilitated to their original appearance, depending on the state of their degradation. There are now 5 guesthouses (including the manor) that the Trust owns and administers with the help of the local people. More recently, MET implemented a project called "Trees Against Poverty" to help 12 families improve their economic status and nutrition by providing them with fruit-tree saplings.

Mălâncrav is one of the focus communities for ADEPT, given the high number of still active self-sufficient farmers and of the remaining livestock number in comparison to other communities in the area. Through their project funded by Innovation Norway, ADEPT has rehabilitated Mălâncrav's milk collection point that it is now independently run by local people through the coordination of the Cattle Owners Association which is also responsible for the management of the common pastureland according to agri-environmental requirements. They have also helped the farmers apply for agri-

environment subsidies and trained them how to work with the modern equipment from the milk collecting point. Consistent with their objectives, ADEPT actively supported two wavers from Mălâncrav to gain access to markets. Also, the village was intensively promoted through the Foundation's channels.

Both NGOs have funded extensive studies to document the valuable biological diversity of the Mălâncrav area. Recognition came in 2007 when Natura 2000 Sighisoara-Târnavă Mare site was created encompassing the village and its surroundings. Ninety-two percent of the commune of Laslea is included in this site. Later, the area was classified as a High Nature Value landscape based on the borders of the Natura 2000 site. HNV is an important conservation tool which continues and improves pre-European Union accession financial support schemes for biodiversity conservation and ecological agriculture development (i.e. SAPARD programme, measure 3.3). Mălâncrav and its surroundings were included in the Pilot project for 2 agri-environment measures: conserving biodiversity through traditional agricultural procedures and ecological agriculture (see map 6 Annex B). Currently, subsidies to support subsistence and semi-subsistence households are directed through the National Plan on Rural Development (NPRD), coordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and regional and local agencies, some of the most important measures are: 141 (Supporting semi-subsistence agricultural holdings), 214 (Agri-environment payments) or 313 (encouragement of tourism activities), together with others addressing local administration or associative forms of organization. There are also direct payments for land owners, as Mălâncrav is subscribed on the Least-Favored Areas list¹⁹.

5.4 Cross-Scale Linkages

Landscape strategies are differently implemented by different actors. The intensity of interactions, the interconnectedness of actors and the various partnerships they engage in all have a role in building the resilience of the community in discussion. Figure 5.4. provides a map of the cross-scale institutional Linkages in the governance of Mălâncrav's socio-ecological system. The relations formed are expressed in the figure as "strong", "medium" and "weak", based on the frequency, intensity, and availability of data and to a lesser extent, the quality. These appraisals were established based on interviews, secondary data and direct observation of interaction between the different actors. The nature of the linkage was more difficult to assert as not all the members of these structures were questioned.

The most prominent structure that resulted from this mapping exercise is Mihai Eminescu Trust. The second most involved actor is ADEPT Foundation. Both NGOs are influenced by the availability of funds and willingness of donors to support their causes. As it is graphically depicted, MET holds strong ties with researchers and tourism operators and medium ties with the villagers. With less intensity, the Trust collaborates with other NGOs for case-specific projects, with Ministry of Culture and Evangelic church for the architectural patrimony of Mălâncrav. With all the other actors as shown in the figure below, contacts are sporadic. ADEPT also is well connected to tourist agencies but also to the local action group Târnavă Mare for the strengthening of associative capacities. However, although formally included in this structure, Mălâncrav does not participate through its lay people, only through Town Hall representation. Also, ADEPT maintains a targeted relationship with the members of this community, through the members of the Cattle Owners Association

¹⁹ http://www.apia.org.ro/buget/zone_defavorizate.pdf

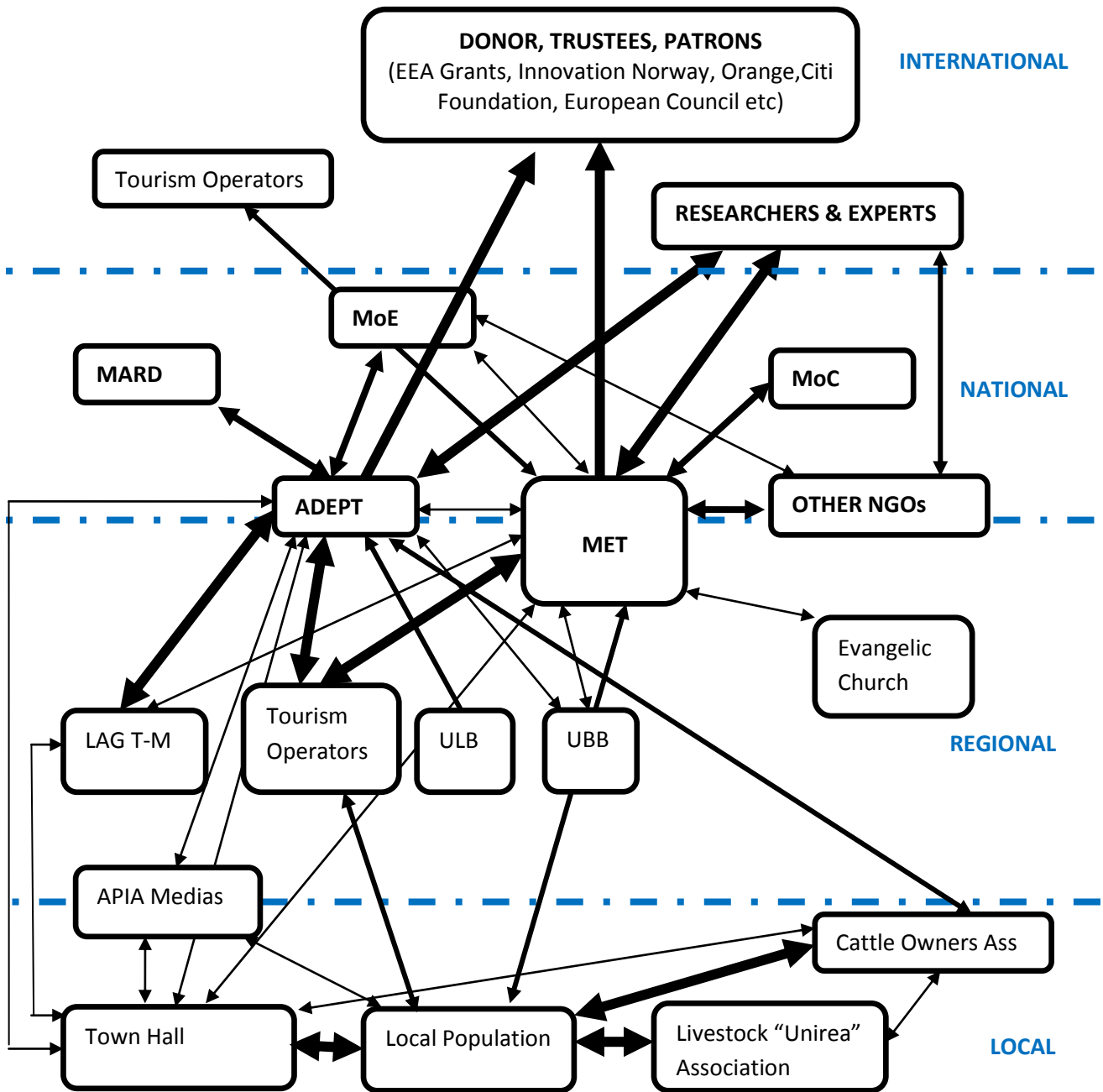






Figure 11 Representation of Cross-Scale Institutional Linkages in Community A

Two ways strong links 
 Two ways medium links 
 Two ways weak link 
 One way strong link 

<p>MARD – Ministry of Agriculture and Rural development MoE- Ministry of Environment MoC – Ministry of Culture and Patrimony ADEPT – Agriculture development and environmental protection in Transylvania Foundation MET – Mihai Eminescu Trust Other NGOs – WWF, Milvus, RFP, AER, Green Cross, etc</p>	<p>LAG T-M – Local Action Group Târnava Mare ULB – University Lucian Blaga, Sibiu, Romania UBB - University Babes Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca, Romania APIA Medias – Agency for Payments and Interventions in Agriculture Medias, Sibiu county, Romania Ass - Association</p>
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5.5 The Dependent Variable: Capacity to Adapt to Change

The following paragraphs address the dependent variable – capacity to adapt to unprecedented change of the study location A. The data gathered for each indicator of the dependent variable, as explained in Chapter 3, section 3.1.2., will be laid out. Then, in section 5.6. the influence of the NGOs on the study location A's degree of livelihood security and capability of self-organization is untangled by aggregately assessing the impact of the independent variable's indicators on each indicator of the dependent variable.

5.5.1 Awareness and Understanding of Conservation Strategies

Members of the study location's A community expressed a low awareness regarding landscape conservation strategies currently targeting their village and the surroundings. However, as it was determined from direct discussions with members of all ethnic groups, both men and women and of different ages and income levels, the understanding on these topics proved to be in general low in what concerns cultural aspects and moderate on environmental issues. It is necessary to point out that this observation is derived from comparing the answers to direct and indirect questions. As such, almost none of the respondents used the key words of "cultural reconstruction", "Natura 2000", "agri-environmental schemes", "entrepreneurship" or "craftsmen support" but some synonyms surfaced, like "initiative", "support for traditional practices", "tradition" or "agro-tourism". Conversely, if asked directly about the landscape conservation strategies other than agri-environmental subsidies, they expressed confusion or lack of information. When concepts were explained they could engage in the conversation and give pertinent opinions.

For example, respondents demonstrated lack of information on the Natura 2000 subject but they were not complete strangers to biodiversity protection measures and concepts. As far as it is known, Natura 2000 is not a topic positively viewed by villagers. The process of site designation for Natura 2000 reverberated negatively at grass-roots level as an interdiction-generator mechanism. People were worried due to the supposed expected restrictions onto their entitlements over possessions. In what regards environmental issues, they were generally connecting this topic to climate variability and various changes they observed in crops and plant species around them of which they claim were not habitual a few years ago. Explanations for this fact pointed to pollution and to deforestation. Some people were obviously concerned about abuses being done in the forests around their village, considered important for protection against heat and storms. Specifically, they talked about the blurring of seasons, that spring and autumn are not clearly defined anymore and summers and winters are starker. Another example refers to the growingly unpredictability of their crops' evolution, provided they apply the same treatments and practices as usually. Some are very careful and apply only bio-control, i.e. traditional methods but others easily resort to pesticides. Less frequently, other concerns targeted the increase of hunting, groundwater contamination, and increasing waste levels due to diet change towards more processed food. A few villagers indicated plants and fruits that used to be common in their plates and now are disregarded, like, for example, forest fruits or some roots. When stimulated on the topic of traditional farming, many of the people remembered old practices of their forerunners that were given up with time. Nonetheless, in what regards information on available agricultural subsidies, villagers were relatively well informed, they were accurate about the sums afforded and the terms and conditions of the application, even if they were not applicants themselves.

Villagers proved to have lower understanding regarding the rehabilitation of the Saxon buildings without displaying an attitude of opposition towards the initiative. In general, they manifest pride and ownership for their locality and according to them, the village is well cared for by its inhabitants and the rehabilitations, with few notable exceptions, did not bring significant difference. They were however, impressed by the financial magnitude of the project as much as they could derive and understand it from neighbors involved directly. If in a decision-making position, they would have chosen to allocate the funds to other needs of the community but they understood that this was the will of the *investors* as they are the ones with the money.

Varying degrees of comprehension were found to correlate with economic status and education level while ethnicity did not seem to play a role. Few of the respondents are aware about NGOs activity or understand the nature of these external actors and their possible contribution to the current governance of their community. Very rarely the names of NGOs or their representatives came out in the discussions. Only the people directly engaged in the projects and few of their kin could give the names of those responsible. Since they do not understand the role of the non-governmental actors,

they do not have a well-established opinion in what regards landscape conservation albeit from extensive informal discussion it became apparent that they are open to any development opportunity that would complement already existing livelihood strategies.

5.5.2 Participation in Landscape Conservation

From data collected during the field work, there is evidence that semi-subsistence agriculture is still an activity much present among the members of the community of the study location A. The interviews and field observations allowed for determining the interrelationships of farming activities including their nutritional and economic contribution to the family budget. However, although a principal supplier of foodstuff and other resources for the majority of the families, it is generally regarded as a secondary activity complementing other sources of incomes. Some of the members of the community managed to move beyond semi-subsistence by increasing their livestock, diversifying activities, investing in mechanization or buying more land. Leasing the land to other contractors was found not to be a common practice in Mălâncrav compared to neighboring villages as people still work their land individually, i.e. with their families and close acquaintances. This gives clues on the human capital's presence. As it became apparent from the interviews, the village is organized in four social classes: A) a few wealthy families with large livestock herds and large plots of land – these are mainly Saxons and Romanians. They live from agriculture, trade and exceptionally, craftsmanship or all these combined. B) a middle class of landowners with fewer livestock managed by the family with little external employment. They complement their incomes through family support, administrative positions or economic migration; C) The lower middle class – which forms the majority, they possess few land and few livestock; they rely heavily on economic migration to Germany and retirement pensions (members of all ethnic groups are found here including the “indigenous” Roma); and D) the poor – they possess at best 0,15 acres of garden, they rely on the employment given by other villagers and daily and seasonal work in the area, low paid – these are mainly the “new” Roma that came to the village in the communist period and worked in state farms; they rely heavily on social services and retirement pensions albeit these are meager earnings.

Many of the local people rear animals although their numbers have decreased with, most recently due to the accession of Romania to the European Union. The private companies stopped from collecting the milk as they have reoriented for cheaper, easier to monitor suppliers from large-scale farms in the neighboring member states. The village herd currently numbers about 430 head (Town Hall 2010)²⁰. Some villagers still keep buffalos. These animals used to be common in the area given the quality of their milk and physical robustness. Their milk is now used only for personal consumption and to be served to tourists. There is no separate collecting facility for buffalo milk and people are discouraged to deliver it together with the cow's milk as it is not correctly valorized²¹. The number of sheep and goats has increased in the last years. Local cattle owners and sheep and goats' owners joined and founded two distinct associations to better represent their interest and administer their activity. The Cattle Owners Association is currently administering 250 ha from the common pastureland that used to have 700 ha in 1990. The Association receives the agri-environmental subsidies from which it pays the members, a fee to the city council for the usage of the pasture and the work for pastureland maintenance. With the introduction of agri-environmental subsidies, the Association organized the clean-up of the allotted hectares, removing the clumps of thistles, making paths for cows, repairing bridges and surrounding the corn harvests with barbed wire so that animals will not trespass and produce damages anymore. The Association is now responsible for maintaining the pasture in good condition, respecting traditional management requirements, like fertilizing only with organic manure, mowing only after 1st of July, maintaining livestock density and the alike. The Livestock Owners “Unirea” Association where sheep and goat possessors reunited pays a fee to the Cattle Association for the right to use the pastureland and it does not receive agri-environmental payments.

As it was found, other activities related to self-sufficiency besides livestock rearing were present in the community. The villagers are accustomed to keep a vegetable garden and plant corn for the animals in the surrounding fields. The ones not involved in this activity, are generally the ones that do not possess land, as it is the case of the majority of the Roma or those that do not live permanently in the village. Moreover, the gardens of the departed Saxons are garnered by neighbors entrusted to care

²⁰ <http://www.primarialaslea.ro/situatia-economica.html>, accessed July 13th, 2012

²¹ Milk is paid according to its fat level. Buffalo milk is around two times fatter than cow's milk and should be paid accordingly, the villagers claim.

after their houses. While the work in the garden is exclusively manual, in the fields people appeal more and more to mechanization even for hay-making. Mowing the grass with the tractor is cheaper than with the scythes. However, as the hay-meadows are generally positioned on hills; hand-mowing is still largely used. What is currently almost completely missing from the fields is wheat. Local people do not plant it anymore as there is just one combine harvester in the village that is not always functioning and wheat is more difficult to hand-reap than corn. Consequently, an important part of the budget is allocated to paying for the daily bread. Some people still produce their own wine and other alcoholic drinks as they regularly work their vineyards and orchards, if they have one.

From the above information, it is deduced that the community is still actively engaged with traditional agriculture. However, there are very few families still preserving a high degree of self-sufficiency and in the best case they manage to cover more than half of their needs from their own work. On the shelves of the four local stores, besides basic foodstuff that they cannot produce like salt, sugar, flour or oil, there is a various display of processed meat, dairy products and vegetables usually sold at considerably higher prices than in surrounding cities. This fact partially gives insights on the purchasing power of the villagers, changes of preferences and partially on the economic opening of the village that will be discussed in the further paragraphs.

One dominant livelihood strategy of villagers from Mălâncrav is circular economic migration. With few exceptions, all the individuals interviewed had already been at least once or had at least one family member going abroad for work. They mainly toil in agriculture (production and sales in farmers' markets) but also in constructions, housekeeping or elderly assistance. By far the most common destination is Germany, as there are already several networks well established of middlemen, transport companies and employers. These networks were generally initiated by Saxons that left for Germany but maintained their relationships or still had families in their native village. The periods of work are short, from one to three months, in early spring for the sowing and in autumn for the harvest. Some of the villagers that had worked for the same employers for several years are going to Germany even more often, if called. Both men and women are involved in this migration. To keep up with the rhythm of agricultural duties at home but also for maintaining a good relation with the German employers, they rely on kin and personal relations. For example, in agreement with their employers, some return home for a few days to prepare the hay for their animals for wintertime or to participate at their children' beginning of the school year or other family responsibilities. They organize their schedule with their neighbors, close acquaintances or other members of the family, working in rotation so that the period away may not to be too long.

Involvement of villagers in the touristic development of their locality is mainly indirect. There are four women that administer MET guesthouses only in housekeeping and cooking. They are not engaged in the management or marketing of the guesthouses. For them tourism represents a complimentary activity, confessing that they had three good years (2008 – 2010) when earnings were good. 2011 however, was not a good year (also confirmed by from participant observation), the number of tourists has decreased. Regarding the incomes they derive from this activity, they were satisfied as it came as a plus to their family budget but they pointed that given the many taxes they need to pay to the state, there is not much left at the end of the year. As well related to the touristic activity is the organization of several village men into a working team that was employed for the buildings' rehabilitation started in 2003. The local craftsmen and women' competences were integrated as well in these projects. Some of the people work for the juice-processing unit for the whole year or only during the harvests period. However, according to former orchard's workers, not more than a handful of people are called (and paid) for the harvest which is very little in their opinion compared to former, i.e. when it was state owned, production results.

Local people participate differently in landscape conservation depending on their age, gender and ethnic background and some clear categories can be traced. While Romanians and Saxons have more endowments and entitlements, the Roma are necessary for much of the physical labor. There are a few Roma families that are well regarded in the village and that are solicited for all sort of tasks inside the village but also in neighboring communities. During the interviews they gave several examples of neighboring areas where they were called for the cleaning of the pastureland that followed with introduction of the agri-environmental subsidies. However, not all are as solicited and as the mechanization is expanding and incomes are generally low, the most affected are the least endowed Roma. As such, much of the work is being done through bartering between people that have developed reciprocal relations. If the interpersonal trust is low, a financial remuneration of the work is favored, but only if money is available.

5.5.3 Confidence in Current Livelihood Strategies

Close interactions with villagers, complemented by long informal discussions, participation in various situations concerning their everyday living and opinions gathered from people of neighboring villages all gave important clues that the confidence of inhabitants of study location A in their current livelihood strategies varies significantly among the members of the community. Although many divergent opinions were collected from members representing the social classes of study location A regarding the future of current livelihood strategies, if distilling between victimization and actual material situation and economic prospects, the confidence of people in their activities appears relatively high. This is due to the fact that they generally have more than one source of income, or the possibility to substitute or switch between them when one is declining or stagnating.

The main elements (or the absence of these) constructing this state of mind, as they were pointed by the respondents, enter in the category of social wellbeing and security. These are related to the presence of younger family members in the community, their support given to elderly, closeness to formal or informal leaders and the establishment of the work migration networks that are viewed as a (temporary) safety net. Only randomly, they mentioned the interest of the foreigners and other external actors for their village that they expect will bring benefits and investments. The interviewees acknowledge that the new opportunities brought by the landscape conservation strategies are generally complementing already existing livelihoods strategies, i.e. self-sufficiency and economic migration. Also, as it was found, confidence is strongly correlated to current economic status, education level and position held in the community.

With the fall of the communist regime and the dismantling of industrious companies from neighboring cities, agriculture was the only local economic prospect for the people that decided not to leave their village. Very few people still commute to nearby cities to work. Although disregarded in comparison to other lucrative activities as it does not produce clear remuneration, i.e. a salary that the people were used to receive from the state farms, agriculture is more than a reflex of survival in community A; it is also a cultural act binding the inhabitants. Many of the relationships that the villagers grow with each other are centered on this activity. Clues for this situation are both quantitative and qualitative in nature, such as the care for their animals and pride for a good crop or a beautiful garden but also the size of the herd or of the plots of land. To be among the upper class and be respected, the latter are preconditions to be fulfilled. Working abroad has contributed to the improvement of the attitude towards this activity. As a consequence of these experiences, local people reconsider their competences while also reflecting on the situation at home. Some of the Saxons but also Romanians that left to Germany in the 1990s returned and concentrated on investing in agriculture. This has reverberated onto the other villagers. There is a belief shared by the people who migrate for job opportunities that Romania compared to Germany and Western Europe in general, offers more possibilities and more freedom for agricultural development. Their background argument for this position is supported by a belief in a likely world food crisis. The sources of this supposition are the lack of naturalness and taste of the vegetables or fruits they harvest at the place of their work abroad and the frequent pest infestations they see within these crops. The generous appreciations of foreigners coming to their village and eat the local food make them even more confident about their assumptions. As such, it is common that they take food from home and even water when they go abroad. In their opinion, this crisis would manifest more acute in Western countries where the infrastructure for small-scale agriculture has been completely dismantled, increasing the dependency of the people on the conventional large-scale system which is, in their opinion, vulnerable in many ways. Interestingly, this idea was found especially among the Saxons also from other neighboring villages.

The earnings the villagers make abroad are considerably higher than what they could make locally, but they are unsatisfied due to the fact they work without contracts and without social services paid. They are conscious that these are highly important especially with growing older. On the other hand, they claim they cannot save anything when returning home as there are many urgent investments to be done: in modernizing their houses, technical endowments, paying for medication and their children education. On the other hand, they are pragmatically assessing their work over the border as temporary, given the increasing competition from people of other nationalities, from Asia or Africa that accept lower remunerations. From the discussions it is not clear how are they preparing for this moment other than continuing their small-scale agriculture at home.

The fact that young university-graduates come back to their village generally because they cannot find work in the cities confirm local assumptions about the reliability of agriculture and uncertainty of the wider economy. Also, as previously said, the presence of the family weighs significantly on the people's attitude towards the future and the fact that youth returns home contributes to their morale. However, the large presence of young people may as well connect to the low level of the quality of the education they receive at the local school preventing them to continue their studies. This is a worrying subject for some of the respondents. They link this situation with the lack of order that will worsen in the future and claim that it will hamper the quality of life in the community and reduce initiatives and local possibilities.

Not everybody is positive about their family's future. This is an attitude frequently expressed among the least endowed villagers who deplore the closing of the state farms. In their opinion, the retrocession of lands was to the benefit of the wealthy while in their case they were left worse off as there are no more employment opportunities in the area and daily living is very hard for their numerous families. Earnings are low, mainly gained on the black market. Social assistance is for many of them the primary source of income. People from this category repeatedly complain that they cannot access the migration networks, that the other better-off members of the community are very secretive and do not give them the contacts of the middlemen. Also, there are clear differences of worldviews between generations. The elders stress the necessity of physical, regular work and point to the lack of interest and solicitude of younger fellow villagers for agriculture. The latter are more open to mechanization and in general, to any type of easier achieved incomes not displaying particular attachment to the work ethic of their elders.

5.5.4 Perceived Capability for Self-Organization

Strong affection to family ties and their village way of life are key elements in determining the people from Mălâncrav to return and invest in their community. Also, the large presence of young people and children imprints dynamism and a spirit of optimism. Returning home of the university-graduates corroborated with the availability of relatively cheap and well-trained local workforce both set the premises for development. However, the community is facing serious problems regarding alcoholism, teen-age pregnancy and the reduction of official marriages. These phenomena are generally common among the poorest members of the community but have significantly reverberated onto upper classes. To the dwindling importance of the family institution and aspects related to it like the respect for parents, knowledge transfer and the alike it is added the Churches' rapid loss of influence in the last fifteen to twenty years. Few people participate in Sunday's religious services. A higher presence is seen though, among Pentecostals. All of these details reveal a community that has lost at least partially, its internal informal organization.

Modest collective action is taking place although many of the respondents – especially the semi-subsistence farmers acknowledge that it would be in everybody's favor. They are aware they need to add value to their products. Minimally processed foodstuffs like cheese would bring them higher revenues but this implies marketing, packaging and distribution, activities that are too difficult to organize individually. The elders deplore the times when everything was well ordered and everybody knew their place. Public and common spaces are not respected anymore. Complaints point to the fact that there is not the same care for the space outside the courtyard, and children destroy the flowers in front of the houses or neighbors leave their animals to graze them. When asked about developments that they consider the most urgent, few managed to provide an answer. Some pointed the lack of public transportation, of a public library, of permanent medical service and a candy-shop for the children. They postulated that all these should be tackled by the city council. There is however, a voluntary firemen-service that resulted from the cooperation between villagers that agreed to enter the program and local authorities that provided the necessary equipment. As further researched, this service is not common in the area partially due to depopulation in some settlements but also due to the disinterest of inhabitants.

People are generally reluctant to associate beyond kinship or few close relationships mainly due to the lack of interpersonal trust, low incomes, understanding of the current politico-economic setting and a general risk averse attitude. Even modest initiatives organized by school teachers involved with maintaining the tidiness in classrooms and schoolyard were disregarded by the children with the supported of their parents. A Saxons' Agricultural Association that was founded in early 1990s did not last as many of its members left the village but also due to the problems with regaining the former

collectivized lands, among others which was not yet fully settled. The establishment of the currently livestock owners associations was generated by top-down requirements in relation with affording the new available subsidies. However, as it is the case of the Cattle Owners Association, some measures of monitoring the members were taken. Members were asked to sign an agreement for respecting the rules of the Association. Control is ensured through peer pressure methods of public naming and shaming of the individuals that spoil the quality of the milk by adding water or margarine to increase the quantity they bring to the collecting point. The one found guilty has their name put on the notice board in the center of the village consequently everybody would know him or her.

Former informal structures of mutual help have reduced their attributions. The Saxon institutions of “neighborhood” have been borrowed by the other ethnic groups. The “neighborhood”, complemented by secondary structures dedicated to groups of boys and girls (*Bruderschaft* and *Schwesterschaft*) was organizing almost all aspects of life – from the work in the fields, fire wood felling or building houses to disputes settling or arranging religious and other mundane events. Nowadays, it has only a function in wedding and funerals organization. There is a fund of chairs and tableware that are held in common and used by the members. Also, in exchange of a small fee paid during lifetime, the neighborhood arranges all necessary for the memorial service. A coffin is always prepared, being kept at the home of the neighborhood “mother” and “father”. Currently there are 3 neighborhoods active, one for each of the village’s street, although people indicated that one of them is going to be attached to the other two as its founders are gone for work in Spain. Despite the lessening of importance of the former collective action institutions, unwritten rules of conduct organizing the attitude towards material goods were maintained. There are few cases of conflicts between neighbors implying the violation or prejudice brought to properties and goods. With the exception of isolate cases of minor pilfering from people’s gardens, there is no criminality recorded.

Villagers manifest a certain sense of ownership and pride for their village. They are attached to its landscape, its architecture, its people. They however avoid talking openly about their village’s history, given the tumultuous events of the last 50 years. The village still holds living proofs of profound ethnic conflict. As a consequence of the political decisions generated by the Second World War, the whole community was torn apart for more than a couple of decades. Villagers remember open conflicts between Saxons and Romanians or Roma who have took over their parents or grandparents’ belongings in the years following the war but also more delicate issues. The situation looks as if it has been settled with the advent of mixed marriages which intensified in the last 20 years. Without completely moving beyond personal/family history reasons, the conflicts now simmering in the community have more economic grounds, as the village is divided into cliques around various informal leaders. Some of these leaders also hold official positions in the public administration of the commune – both the vice-mayor and two councilors are from Mălâncrav.

As it was found, political involvement brings harsher critiques to these leaders. In the eyes of the villagers they are more representing their own interest than that of the community. Regarding some of these figures but not exclusively, allegations of elite capture and other abuses were collected in informal discussions. Much of this new conflict was instigated by the recent opportunities with agri-environmental subsidies. The most vehement are the sheep and goat herders that did not obtain pastureland from the Town Hall, and were not able as such to apply for agri-environmental subsidies. It now pays a tax to the Cattle Association for using the pastureland. Their suspicion and resentment grew due to the modernizations that the cow milk collecting point has undergone while their own center is in a poorer condition due to lack of funds. Given these misunderstandings, all sorts of conflicts or misunderstanding are taking place.

Going beyond the initial level of welcoming hospitality, various degrees of low interpersonal trust and respect towards fellow members of the community surfaced. At times, people show envy vis-a-vis the achievements of others; they judge their neighbors harshly for various reasons, from the deviant behavior of their offspring to dubious, in their opinion, means of money making. On the other hand, they are protective with their kin and intimate acquaintances. Mălâncrav gives the impression of a relatively closed community manifesting a strong level of bonding social capital which does not become apparent at first sight. This assumption is supported by the comparison between confessions of non-natives having moved to live to Mălâncrav and opinions of the indigenous people about the former. The non-natives are treated with deference and varying economic interest depending on the case. They are never considered fully integrated even if married with a native.

The Roma has a very clear position within the community and, compared to other villages they know it is easier for them to find work given the more dynamic economic situation in Mălâncrav. They are divided in two groups – the native ones and the new comers. The “natives” i.e. at least the fourth generation, are the former hinds of the Saxons. They are integrated, living in Saxon houses that they rent or own. The second category lives at the periphery in shanty houses they have built but which they generally do not own. They were brought by the former regime to work for the local state farms and to be “re-educated”, i.e. lose their cultural roots. As it was found, neither of the two categories hides their ethnicity, they both call themselves “Gypsies”, but, at least in the first case, they do not want to be put in the same category with the latter, as they are of different lineages²². Discrimination against Roma has a more economic than a cultural ground. They are criticized for their laziness which the majority of the people see the source of their poverty. This determines inter-discrimination between them; members of the first community pejoratively name “Gypsies” the ones that are not doing quality work or are unreliable. What becomes apparent from studying both categories is that the closeness (knowledge transfer) and openness (through marriages) to other ethnic groups (Romanians and Saxons) have accelerated the improvements in the quality of life and access to resources of the first category. Some of the “Romanized Gypsies” as they are called are now the most solicited workers in the village. Nevertheless, the second category is also important as the Romanians or Saxons confess, as much of the work in the fields or with animals is done with their support. The same for this group, there are members that are better viewed, that made a reputation of hard-working and serious, and thus receive work easier. Both categories rely heavily on family ties gaining the admiration of other ethnics that deplore their group have lost and forgot this unity.

Using the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment grid, the table below summarizes community’s profile as derived from the answers collected and participant observation presented in the previous four sections. The column on the left interprets the data to assess the freedom of choice of the villagers, necessary for development.

<p>Material well-being</p> <p>Variable income (among different social classes), available workforce; moderate access to goods and services; no extreme poverty; moderate to high possession of livestock (concentration with few owners); moderate ownership over land (lower in the case of Roma); decreasing diversification of natural food, increasing of processed food</p>	<p>Freedom of choice and action Enlargement of choices</p> <p>Growing economic diversification and possibilities in agriculture (livestock intensification by some families).</p> <p>High dependence on economic migration</p> <p>Tourism has not yet become an alternative.</p>
<p>Physical well-being</p> <p>Low access to medical care, elderly complain of bad health</p>	
<p>Social well-being</p> <p>Conviviality, mutual help, lower interpersonal trust, youth complains about lack of leisure facilities;</p>	
<p>Security</p> <p>Low security from retirement pensions for the elderly, youth complains about uncertainty of future and low access to social security services, safe environment (no criminality),air and water quality, tranquility</p>	

Table 6 Human Well-Being and Freedom of Choice in Community A

5.6 The Independent Variable: Involvement of NGOs

The following paragraphs discuss the influence of non-governmental actors outlined in the previous section, on the dependent variable - the capacity to adapt to change of the socio-ecological system of study location A - Mălâncrav. Given the inherently overlapping and complementing nature of the independent variable’s indicators, not all of them are applicable for each indicator of the dependent variable, the solution being to treat their impact in an aggregated manner, and pointing to one indicator

²² The first are *bayesh* and the second *rudari* (wood-carvers)

or another when this shows effect. Attention is paid to the situation and engagement in landscape conservation of the community A before the NGOs involvement.

5.6.1 NGOs influence on Understanding and Awareness

There is evidence that communication efforts, direct investments and the management approach of the NGOs have both directly and indirectly influenced the awareness and understanding of the local community regarding landscape conservation strategies, generating both positive and negative reactions. Also, the way the message on the protection and value of the cultural and natural heritage was transmitted mainly through informal channels, through key individuals has shaped the people's understanding and attitudes towards the current development taking place in their village. The degree of the influence exerted is deemed as moderate due to the fact that the people showed low awareness regarding the projects being implemented but a higher understanding on the topics covered by these projects as shown in section 5.5.1. As it was found, the degree of awareness but not necessarily that of the understanding positively correlates with the direct involvement of the local people into the NGOs' projects or closeness to people being involved in these projects, proving the concentration of information and possible deriving power relations. Local respondents did not indicate prior consultations on any of the objectives pursued by non-governmental actors. Moreover, meetings between NGOs and the villagers are not organized regularly but case specific.

The message behind the efforts of cultural heritage rehabilitation was not fully understood. This is partially explained by the fact that much of the positive characteristics by which the Saxons are appreciated in general like seriousness, good neighbors or diligence have been internalized by the other ethnic groups. As such, Saxon respondents did not manifest enthusiasm for the cultural reconstruction per se, nor did the Romanians or Roma express concern or feel discriminated. Discussions with members of the rehabilitation working teams revealed a paradox: on one side, they believe that the competences they have gained and the projects they have been involved into are genuinely valued by their beneficiaries, but they do not, however, consistently apply the rules and principles for their own or try to convince their direct clients. Principles of sustainability behind these techniques were not internalized and people are more tributary to the mainstream culture which validates modern additions of cement and plastic, confirming their wish for renewal. They consider the rehabilitation "in the old ways" as necessary to attract tourists or a fashion among the foreigners, the *British* as they generically call the initiators of the restoration projects and tourism development. Moreover, one member of the workers' team considers Viscri, the second location studied in this paper where the Whole Village project was implemented more comprehensively as an old-fashioned, backward village mainly due to the lack of asphalt. And despite the fact that 2011 did not bring too many tourists into the village, several sources confirmed intentions to build a private guesthouse, i.e. outside MET's network. The new guesthouse will be, in the villagers' words a "modern" one, in the sense that they will not respect entirely the traditional Saxon architecture and new materials like cement and PVC will be used.

The same situation with regards to biodiversity related issues that the rural development projects (ADEPT's rehabilitation of the milk collecting center, MET's investments in the apple-tree orchard and the juice facility) have targeted. According to the local people questioned, they are aware of the negative consequences of conventional agriculture and avoid as much as possible pesticides, especially if it is for their *own* consumption. Also, some farmers confessed that the requirements of the agri-environmental subsidies are not different from what they were already used to do. Deliberately or not, the people directly involved in the NGOs' projects do not use the name of either of the two structures. This is both a sign of the nature of NGOs-villagers relations being less strong but may also highlight local people' low understanding of the role of these new institutional arrangements or an attempt of arrogating the achievements of the new initiatives by local leaders. Exceptionally, craftsmen and women of the village were among the few that gave direct references to the two NGOs.

Given the low visibility of the NGOs among local people and low awareness of landscape strategies, there are no outspoken attitudes of opposition against the conservation projects per se. There is however, a growing dissatisfaction among some of the villagers due to the escalating prices of the houses prompted by the new investments as these became unaffordable for their children. There is also a certain suspicion regarding the frequent presence of foreigners into the village. Some expressed curiosity about the "British's" intentions.

5.6.2 NGOs influence on Participation in Landscape Conservation

NGOs' provision of knowledge and technical expertise, corroborated with the large investments they directed to the community and a management approach focused on supporting local workforce have increased some of the villagers' participation in landscape conservation. In general, the investments carried out have created relatively stable opportunities for a few villagers to work inside their community: in the newly opened guesthouses, in traditional building rehabilitation, at the apple-orchard (in the processing unit or during harvest season) and to benefit from the new milk collecting point and agri-environmental subsidies. Both NGOs used bottom-up approaches to involve the people in landscape conservation, based on voluntary enrollment and other villagers' recommendations. However measures for addressing possible related conflicts and ensure a fair distribution of resources were not identified.

Capitalizing on the local human capital possessing important craftsmen skills and experience, MET has organized numerous trainings regarding old building techniques in masonry, carpentry or metal-work. Reliable teams of workers were established, able to successfully fulfill complex and enduring projects such as the rehabilitation of the Apafi manor. They now form the specialized workers for other complicated projects that the Trust initiates in other former Saxon villages. The newly trained workers are increasingly solicited outside Trust's projects. Also, several women of the community were taught how to become guesthouse administrators and how to welcome tourists. They now work in the Saxon houses which MET bought and rehabilitated but as 2011 did not bring too many tourists, their participation was reduced.

Both ADEPT and MET have helped the local craftsmen and women to restart or increase their activity, as per the case. Their products were primarily valorized in the new rehabilitation projects and, as in the case of the wavers, also in the interior decoration of the newly restored houses. Through a Community Fund where tourists visiting the Saxon landscape can donate, ADEPT helped the wavers from Mălâncrav to form a Tarnava Mare Wavers Association. This triggered the increase in interest from the community side that resulted in organizing a 3-year professional weaving class in collaboration with the Town Hall of Laslea and the Museum of Ethnography from Sibiu. Participant in this class were girls from the village who received authorized diplomas upon graduation.

As it derives from the people's appreciations, the most wide-ranging NGO impact is granted to the rehabilitation of the milk collecting point, organized by ADEPT. The center was endowed with latest generation milk tanks, provided by the partnering governmental agency – Innovation Norway. Their involvement also facilitated the discussions between villagers represented by the Cattle Owners Association and private companies interested in buying the milk. Besides the milk tanks, villagers received special equipment to test the quality of the milk. They are now able to influence negotiation and obtain a fair price for their product, which is now two to three times higher than that which they used to receive when the tank belonged to the collecting company. ADEPT trained the people not only how to use the equipment but also about hygiene conditions. Establishing direct communication with the local farmers, they advised them about the agri-environmental subsidies and assisted them in understanding the process of application and what their involvement implies, by bringing the information to the beneficiaries and simplifying it from the one already available on Ministry of Agriculture's website.

Generally speaking, people remember the period before the involvement of the NGOs as one of fewer large-scale development initiatives. Now they perceive that more concerted action is taking place and the rhythm of change has increased. The dismantling of the pre-1990 social fabric has generated many changes and confusion at individual level. The years following the change of the regime brought much uncertainty into the village. In contrast to other neighboring communities, the Saxons' depopulation of the village after communism fell was not as rapid and occurred progressively, and fewer families than in other communities sold their houses upon departure. There was an attempt to form a Saxon Association to work the newly returned land but it did not manage to coagulate. The temporary work migration to Germany started quite early and this has been a major support for some of the villagers but it also discouraged agricultural initiatives as people were gone for longer periods of time. Other source of income was from the family who was already established abroad. Around the accession of Romania in the EU in 2007, generally unfounded suspicions regarding the new measures for small-holders disheartened people even more. Invoking the ban on hand-milking of the new European regulations, the processing companies stopped from acquiring milk from the peasants. This was the moment that many gave up rearing animals. With ADEPT's farm advisory service

introduced in 2009 and more importantly, with the funds raised for opening of the milk collecting center there is evidence that some of the farmers decided to re-grow their livestock size but it is not clear whether other people were convinced to re-start activity.

5.6.3 NGOs' Influence on Confidence in Current Livelihood Strategies

As the data collected suggests, there is modest evidence that the involvement of NGOs have contributed to strengthening community's confidence at large in future benefits from current livelihood strategies. Only a fraction of the villagers benefit from all NGOs' initiatives, the majority accessing the new opportunities indirectly and intermittently. Concretely, the significant rehabilitations that took place in the village relied almost exclusively on local workforce. The involvement of these local people increased their ownership for the existing patrimony and confirmed, in general, their pre-existing competences and knowledge. In Mălâncrav, MET found the necessary human capital to form one of its most reliable rehabilitation team of workers. As a result of the highly qualitative work done under the guidance of experts the Trust brought into the village, the workers receive orders from outside the Trust's projects. The magnitude of the projects and especially the attention from well-renowned personalities like the Prince Charles of Great Britain and several national and regional public authorities inspired confidence among these craftsmen regarding their new competences and pride for their work. Also, the support of ADEPT for the main activity of the villagers—livestock rearing through the rehabilitation of the milk collection center and to a lesser extent through the reviving of the apple-orchard and the concrete support to craftsman and women has, as deduced from villagers confessions and attitudes, increased their trust in future development of their community.

In what regards the women designated to administer the guesthouses, their confidence decreased with time after the first two or three years of good touristic seasons. They confessed that if they have clients, tourism is a moderately profitable activity given the many taxes they need to pay but it is still an occupation that can prove relevant for boosting their families' budgets. The guesthouse ladies indicated the fact that with the tourist activity they can better valorize the foodstuffs produced in own husbandries, as all of them were also engaged in semi-subsistence farming. Creating a suitable infrastructure for tourism and the example of fellow villagers interacting with a category of people that was until recently completely inexistent from their village – the tourists, has inspired other villagers and there are intentions to build a guesthouse of their own. However, certain suspicious attitude towards foreigners complemented by arguments related to the lack of suitable conditions impending development of ad-hoc agro-tourism and the capitalization of the new opportunities despite the existing requests. The interest manifested by the new guests in peasant's every-day life made grew their confidence or reinforced pre-existing opinions. Other people who do not travel much outside the village were more surprised by the guests' interest.

Indirectly, the face-lifting of many of the village houses, the investment in infrastructure (MET donated for the rehabilitation of the road connecting Mălâncrav with Laslea), community support (MET and HRH Prince of Wales have provided a minibus for the local children to commute to Sighisoara to continue their studies, MET's repairing to the local school) has broadened the confidence outside direct receivers of NGOs support. With the intermediation of a MET representative, an old Saxon custom was revived after a pause of 14 years, bringing together the Saxons of the village but also from the area. "Attention" received created the impression among villagers of being taken into account and not forgotten by the outer world. The asphaltting of the access road to Laslea appears to have had a very positive impact among most of the villagers, determining the progress of various businesses in trade or transportation for example. However, irregular or unsuitable tailoring of the message communicated has also generated suspicion among local people. Several indicated that with the interventions of the NGOs the prices of the houses are going up and the competition and implicitly envy between local inhabitants are also increasing with negative consequences. They consider that easily made profits destabilize internal equilibrium of the community and see NGOs interventions as one of the sources for the situation. Opinions are divergent and a clear improvement generated by these actors' efforts cannot be traced for the whole community. There are many external factors that influence people's opinions, like Romania accession to the EU and the changing of the economic climate for agriculture. Also, distilling among various interest and conflicts between local leaders and their affiliates also hampers a clear observation.

Inquiring ex-ante NGO's involvement period, the data gathered does not allow conclusive interpretation regarding a clear positive impact of the NGOs. As shown in previous sections, the

people do not fully understand or resonate with objectives related to cultural reconstruction nor do they necessarily cling to explanations related to their role as traditional knowledge custodians. Possibly a consequence of generally erratic interactions, villagers perceive NGOs' involvement as an exterior initiative and they treat it accordingly. In their opinion it is just another source of income and they are not yet convinced about its durability. Some people even expressed confidence in their development capacities provided NGOs had not got involved. They recognize however, the NGOs have hastened the pace of things especially given financial resources engaged.

5.6.4 NGOs influence on Perceived Self-Organizing Capability

As explained in the theoretical part, the capacity to self-govern is determined by the entitlements and endowments of the local community, by the presence of local leadership, of collective-choice rules and social capital. The two NGOs, MET and ADEPT have worked for instructing the human capital, endowing it with professional and entrepreneurial skills and preparing it for the market economy. Several villagers were trained in old building methods and the newly established blacksmith, carpentry and lime workshops as well as the brick and tile kilns were transferred to the local craftsmen that can manage them independently. Also a few women attended courses to become guesthouses tenders. MET helped the people to learn keeping basic book keeping and how to pay their taxes. With the newly gained qualifications and skills, it became easier for these villagers to find employment both inside and outside the area. NGOs brought new expertise in the community of study location A while building on the existing traditional knowledge. Craftsmen and women' competences were sought to be valorized and their knowledge and products were integrated in the projects. The craftsmen are also helped with marketing as both NGOs promote them through numerous websites. Small-farmers were helped with handling the new information on AES scheme. Also, there are clues that the dedication of some of the NGOs representatives to the increase of community's well-being also manifest outside the projects' objectives, facilitating different developments like the introduction of the optical fiber or the re-introduction of Saxon traditional celebrations. Giving the means to the local community to access information increases its capacity to later decide for its future.

In what regards entitlements over cultural capital, there is no observable modification to have been provoked by the new external involvement as community's unwritten rules arrange behaviors and pretensions between existing social classes. Without necessarily displaying a fatalistic attitude, it is well understood that decisions and opportunities are divided firstly among the upper classes and the best connected and only afterwards to the others. Involvement in either of the NGOs projects depends on the positioning into a certain network, of which leaders are closer to a subject or another. Villagers actually sometimes show irritation by the gains the "British" derive from the touristic activity developed with their assets that, as they claim, are not reinvested in the community. Concern is raised regarding future possibilities within the village, giving the example of rising prices to estates. These are both indicative for the level and type of communication between the actors in discussions but also the low participatory approach towards meeting objectives.

With regards to entitlements over natural capital, there is little evidence that the NGOs' actions have influenced the existing situation. Conflict over land and other resources and competition between the villagers dates before their actual involvement. The rehabilitation of the cow milk collecting point has only reinforced the status quo. The same situation is discovered in connection with strengthening community spirit or facilitation of informal structures' development. The NGOs did not bring an observable contribution to any of the two elements.

5.7 Conclusions: The Influence of External Actors on The Adaptive Capacity

The analysis of the correlations between dependent and independent variables' indicators allows for the observation that the NGOs did not greatly influenced study location A' capacity to adapt to change. As it is shown in the above sections, all indicators of the dependent variable score positively although this is not necessarily determined by the manifestation of independent variable's indicators. This situation is supported by the presence of considerable bonding social capital within the community that may either foster or preclude new development initiative as shown in the theoretical part. The table below illustrates a qualitative assessment of Mălâncrav's resilience and the relative positive influence of NGOs' action on each indicators capacity to adapt to change. It also summarizes the two objectives of landscape conservation strategies: conserving Mălâncrav's cultural and natural capital.

		Influence of Indicators independent variable				
Indicators dependent variable	Level of presence of indicators	Knowledge	Financial support	Communication	Management & social skills	General presence of indicators
Awareness & Understanding	low & moderate	low	n/a	low	low	low
Participation	moderate to high	moderate	high	low	moderate	moderate
Confidence	moderate	moderate	low/mixed	low	moderate	low/moderate
Self-organization	moderate to high	moderate	moderate	low	low	moderate
Aggregated presence and influence	moderate	Case A - lower NGO involvement, ethnic mix (14% Saxons, 50% Romanians, 36% Roma)				low to moderate
Conserving Culture	Rehabilitation of important landmarks of the village (Evangelic Church, Apafi Manor, Catholic Church). An important Saxon custom revived (Kronenfest). Restoring the Saxon culture is generally accomplished through tourism institutionalization and support given to craftsmanship. Transfer of traditional knowledge is indirectly fostered by the investment in architectural rehabilitation and attraction to agri-environmental schemes. Elderly do not hold the same influence.					
Conserving Nature	Rehabilitation of the milk-collecting point; Farm Advisory service; Rehabilitation of apple orchard, juice processing unit; facilitation of fruit sampling donations towards suitable local beneficiaries; Studies on the local flora and fauna					

Table 7 Analysis Outline of Case Study A

6. Case Study B - Viscri

NGO Involvement: Higher

Community Composition: Roma Majority, Few Saxons and Romanians

6.1 Data Collection for Case Study B

To ensure triangulation of sources, a broad range of data collection methods were used, as it follows:

- a. Large informal discussions and interviews with NGOs representatives and members of the “Viscri Begins” Association
- b. Large informal discussions with local villagers from all ethnic groups (resulted from daily interaction, these discussions were almost all group discussions, as neighbors and kin were always present)
- c. 7 semi-structured individual interviews and 4 semi-structured group discussions with subsistence and semi-subsistence farmers (both AES and non-AES applicants)
- d. 2 semi-structured interviews with local craftsmen
- e. 3 interviews and informal discussions with public authorities
- f. 3 interviews with researchers (1 social scientists and 2 natural science specialist)
- g. 3 informal discussions with guesthouse owners
- h. 2 individual semi-structured interviews and 3 group discussions with Saxons that left the village
- i. 6 semi-structured interviews and informal discussions with tourists
- j. 5 informal discussions with villagers from 2 neighboring communities
- k. 1 interview with agricultural specialists
- l. 1 semi-structured interview with the orthodox priest
- m. 2 semi-structured interviews with the Bunești school’s staff
- n. Review of local agricultural reports (2009 – 2010)
- o. Review of NGOs annual reports (2002 – 2011)
- p. Review of the local development strategy, 2009
- q. Review of conference papers (*Mountain hay meadows - hot spots of biodiversity and traditional culture*, Lunca de Jos Romania, 7-9 June, 2010; *High Nature Value grasslands: securing the ecosystem services of European farming post 2013*, International conference: 7-9 September, Sibiu, Romania)
- r. Review of the National Development Plan 2007 -2013
- s. Review of the LAG’s “Dealurile Tarnavei” local development plan, 2007- 2012
- t. Observation of interactions between NGOs representatives, public officials and local people
- u. Observation of interactions among local people of different ethnic background in various contexts
- v. Participant observation as a guesthouse part-time volunteer and as a production responsible for a movie-making team
- w. Guided visit in and around the village

From the list above, it can be seen that the data was collected through various methods, combining the direct sources (like interviews, group discussions, informal discussions, participant observations and visits) with secondary ones (reviews of relevant documentation). Particular for the direct methods in the case of local people was their reluctance of being interviewed alone but showing much more confidence when other villagers or kin were present. A lot of valuable information was gathered in informal discussions when respondents acted more relaxed. During the field stay, I have voluntarily worked in a guesthouse that allowed getting close to the employees and permitted direct interaction with tourists. Also, at the end of my stay, a movie was shot in Viscri and I got minimally involved in the production process. As it represented an exceptional event for the villagers, it allowed collecting interesting impressions on intimate issues, leaders and general level of trust in the community but also related to things villagers value.

6.2 Unit of Analysis – Context Background of Study Location B

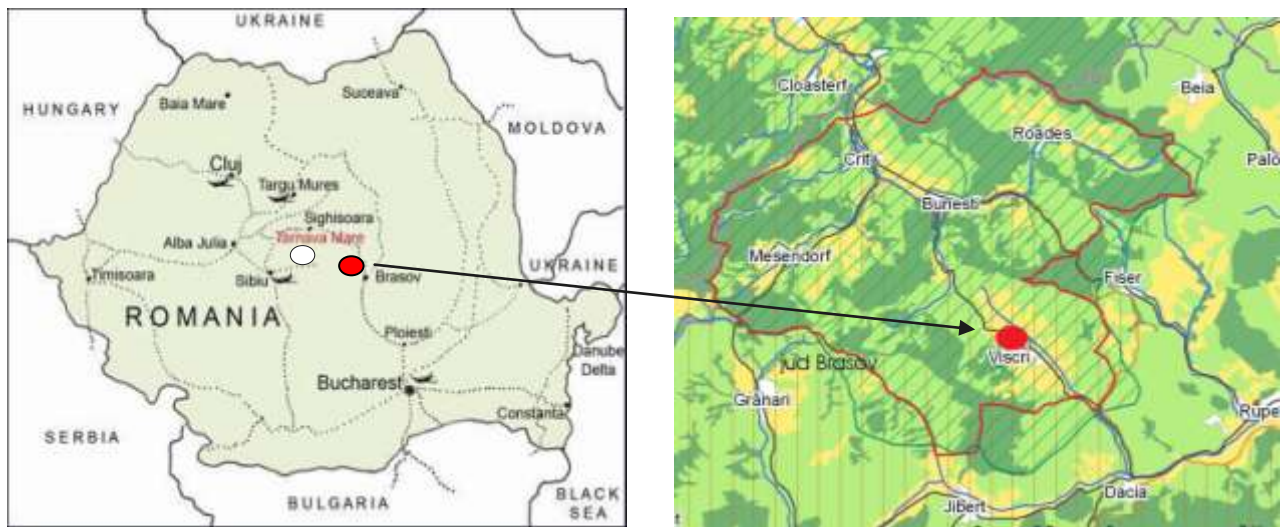


Figure 12 Positioning of study location B (Viscri) on the map of Romania and within the commune of Bunești.

Viscri is situated at the lower right extremity of the Saxon Triangle, in the North-Western side of Brașov county, being part of the Bunești commune together with 4 other villages. It is a village rather isolated, not directly connected to national roads while the access routes are in a precarious state. Its Saxon name is *Deutsch Weisskirch* (The German White Church) and it was first mentioned in historical documents in the year of 1400 although the fortified evangelic church, now a UNESCO protected site, is attested since the XII century (Groza 2009). The village is representative for a medieval Saxon settlement maintaining unaltered the original pattern of the buildings, from XVII-XIX centuries (Fulga, 2008). The houses are large with tall fences, built close to one another for better defense in case of attacks. "It was recorded that until 1970 when the Saxon exodus started growing, the majority of the Saxon houses preserved their interiors intact, with open hearts fire and painted furniture. Nowadays, only one dwelling still holds its original character" (ibid: 26). It is a clustered rural community arranged along one main wide road, which is crossed by a spring and 5 adjacent streets are unfolding. During the many historical vicissitudes, Viscri has vigilantly kept its status as a free village and traces of its development are still visible, also in what concerns co-habitation of other ethnic groups (Fulga 2008).

Historical sources and personal memoirs of the elderly members of the community confirm the fact that the early medieval agricultural revolution the Saxons brought in Central and Eastern Europe in the 12-13th centuries of migrations, consisting of the three crop rotation of cereals, roots and fallow lands have lasted until the Second World War. At its first historical mentioning, Viscri's population consisted of 51 farmers, one school teacher, three shepherds and two paupers (MET 2012). It is presumed that the 2 shepherds were Romanians, a traditional occupation of this ethnic group and possibly the poor was a Gipsy²³. The population of Romanians grew slowly, providing for the Saxons various services: from cattle rearing to housekeeping. With the changes at macro-levels, Romanians become economically independent and more politically engaged. Before the war, in 1939 the village had 699 inhabitants of Saxon origin and after, in 1943, the ethnic composition of the village was the following: 586 Saxons, 141 Romanians and 139 Roma according to a hand-drawn map that a villager has kept (see Figure 10, Annex B).

²³ The term *Gypsy* was commonly used to refer to this ethnic group until the 20th century when political representatives have pressured for the utilization of the term *Roma* (which means *man* in Romani language) evoking the pejorative connotation of the former denomination that they wanted to move away from. However, both terms coexist in either official or unofficial records due to the self-identification of the members of this group. The ones who identify as Roma are the ones who still talk *Romani* and preserve some traditional customs. They make around 20% of the total population of Gypsy and Roma (Q). The others are considered Romanized Gypsies as they have largely lost their cultural roots due to successive assimilation attempts of the last three centuries. In this paper, the second term will be favored as the current practice in academic realm amends this one as the most suitable and politically correct although, as per specific occasions – when a subject identifies herself as Gypsy, I will use the first one as well.

The information on Viscri's demographical evolution is aggregated at commune level. From Bunești Development Strategy (2009-2020) we find that in the last twenty years the population of the 5 villages slightly grew especially due to the positive balance between in-migration and out-migration. However, the youngest population (0-14 years) has decreased with a fifth, accentuating the ageing tendency in the community. The 2011 National Population Census emphasizes that, at county level, the only ethnic group that grew in numbers is the Roma one, also holding an overwhelming percentage of young people among their group compared to elderly representatives. Nowadays, the village has around 400 people, with 15 Saxons left, 4 "indigenous" (living for at least 3 generations in the community) Romanian families and the rest of Roma origin (around 360)²⁴. However, the predominance in numbers of the latter group it is not represented in official statistics, as at least a third of its members declares as Romanians due to cultural reasons (do not speak the native language - Romani), fear of discrimination or mixed marriages. The actual situation is determined through hetero-identification.

The access to the village is difficult. Coming out the main road from Brașov to Sighisoara, the 7 km from Bunești to Viscri are covered at best in 15 minutes with care for the vehicle. Beside the bus taking the pupils to Bunești, there is no public or private transportation. The people without cars (the majority) rely on the schedule of the neighbors who have one.

The village has a public primary school and a kindergarten. The number of children frequenting the two institutions has maintained in the last few years around 50. Cases of dropout are rare and generally the pupils commute the 7 km to Bunești to continue with gymnasium. For the next study cycle – lyceum, they need to commute even farther, to Rupea (25 km away), Fagaras (51 km away) or Brașov (70 km away) depending on their families' possibilities.

In what concerns sanitation, there is no permanent medical service in the village, just a first aid cabinet inside the school. The doctor's office is in Bunești and once a week a medical assistant comes to see the villagers. Regarding access to utilities, there is a water pipeline crossing the village but very few houses are connected. The village is connected to the national grid, has no landlines and mobile signal is low (works only with one provider). Internet was recently introduced in some guesthouses owners but runs with difficulty. Very few people have personal computers or know how to use one. Heating and cooking relies on wood and charcoal.

There are two churches in the village: the Christian Orthodox one beautifully painted representing the confession of the majority of local people; the Evangelical one, UNESCO-recognized fortified church which organized for centuries the lives of the Saxon community. Few villagers still visit either of the churches regularly. The young orthodox priest, who is not from the area, lives permanently in the village with his family. A small number of people are Pentecostals. They gather in one member's house to pray.

Although holding an outstandingly rich cultural and natural patrimony, the area of Viscri and its surroundings is the poorest in Brașov County, according to the Agency for Sustainable Development Brașov (Agency 2012). Only 5% of Bunești commune total available workforce (1573 individuals in 2007) is employed in different economic sectors (Strategy 2009). The number of employees abruptly decreased in the mid 1990s when big industrious companies in the area were closed. The majority of the people are subsistence farmers, some work in the public administration and schools and some rely only on social allowances.

6.3 Landscape Conservation Strategies present in Study Location B

The whole built patrimony of Viscri (48,50 ha) is a UNESCO-protected site, also recognized by the Romanian national legislation, according to the notice of filling 808/E/1998 of the Ministry of Culture. A buffer zone of 216, 75 ha which includes forests, arable land and pastures was traced around the village to support the core protection location (see figure 8, Annex B). Under the legal dispositions, few interventions are allowed and only the necessary ones, like infrastructure improvements or revival of traditional activities are favored, as the objective is to preserve the look and, as much as possible, the feel of the "original" establishment.

²⁴ These numbers were obtained from the villagers appreciations and NGOs representatives or public authorities

Ninety-seven percent of the surface of Bunești commune of which Viscri was included in the Natura 2000 Sighisoara - Tarnava Mare area (see map 2 Annex B), also later classified as a High Nature Value landscape. HNV is an important conservation tool which continues and improves pre-European Union accession financial support schemes for biodiversity conservation and ecological agriculture development (i.e. SAPARD programme, measure 3.3). Viscri and its surroundings were included in the Pilot project for 2 agri-environment measures: conserving biodiversity through traditional agricultural procedures and ecological agriculture (see Map 6 Annex B). Currently, subsidies to support subsistence and semi-subsistence households are directed through the National Plan on Rural Development (NPRD), coordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and regional and local agencies, some of the most important measures are: 141 (Supporting semi-subsistence agricultural holdings), 214 (Agri-environment payments) or 313 (encouragement of tourism activities), together with others addressing local administration or associative forms of organization. There are also direct payments for land owners, as Viscri is subscribed on the Least-Favored Areas list²⁵.

Viscricri is the first location where the “Whole Village” project of Mihai Eminescu Trust was initiated starting 2001. Viscricri in its entirety is the target of this project: the village itself, the community and the built patrimony. The Trust has introduced a statutory heritage and landscape protection at the level of the whole village (area town planning). For Viscricri, MET has collaborated with Pro-Patrimonio, an international NGO also engaged in the safeguarding and lobby for cultural and architectural heritage for the rehabilitation of house number 18. Prince Charles of Great Britain, the patron of MET, has bought a house (number 163) in Viscricri that was thoroughly rebuilt and decorated in its original Saxon spirit. Following the example of the prestigious UK-based Landmark Trust, the building became representative for MET’s activity in the village and an example for other further restorations. It was also built to serve as a model for other guesthouses not owned by MET. Between 2001 and 2008, many of the state or privately-owned houses, barns, courtyards, gates and facades were repaired and restructured - more than 100 buildings out of a total of 200. The restoration done with local workforce focused on the Saxon houses situated on the main and 2 adjoining streets which preserved the Saxon authenticity. Important necessary reconstructions have been undertaken to the UNESCO-protected Lutheran church and the school. The former community barn was rehabilitated with the purpose to lodge a small, artisan jam factory.

To re-enhance the traditional look of the village, the old cobbled pavement was remade on the Main and New Streets. The other secondary roads are covered with dirt and pebbles. Asphalt was not allowed inside the village. Pear trees were replanted along the inner streets of the village while avenues of poplars were planted to margin the roads entering Viscricri. Wooden fences and gates have replaced the metallic or plastic ones for some properties and a poplar through for animals has removed the previous cement-one dominating the center of the village.

Viscricri is the second-focus community for ADEPT after Saschiz, a neighboring village also located in the Saxon Triangle. Through their project funded by Innovation Norway, ADEPT has rehabilitated Viscricri’s milk collection point. They are actively promoting the touristic assets of the village through their channels and support local producers to access the markets. They also fenced a parcel close to the village for experimenting with environmentally friendly mechanized practices for land management.

²⁵ http://www.apia.org.ro/buget/zone_defavorizate.pdf

6.4 Cross-Scale Linkages

Landscape strategies are differently implemented by different actors. The intensity of interactions, the interconnectedness of actors and the various partnerships they engage in, they all play a role in building the resilience of the community in discussion. Figure 7.4. provides a map of the cross-scale institutional Linkages in the governance of Viscri's socio-ecological system. The relations formed are expressed in the figure as "strong", "medium" and "weak", based on the frequency, intensity, and availability of data and to a lesser extent, the quality. These appraisals were established based on interviews, secondary data and direct observation of interaction between different actors. The nature of the linkage it was more difficult to assert as not all the members of these structures were questioned.

The most prominent structure that resulted from this mapping exercise is Mihai Eminescu Trust. The second most involved actor is ADEPT Foundation. Both NGOs are influenced by the availability of funds and willingness of donors to support their causes. As it is graphically depicted, MET holds strong ties with the villagers directly and indirectly, through the grass-root organization ("Viscri Begins" Association), with the local authorities, researchers and tourism operators. With less intensity, the Trust collaborates with other NGOs for case-specific projects, with Ministry of Culture for the architectural patrimony of Viscri, with Pro Patrimonio for on-site rehabilitation work and with LAG North Transylvanian Association for strengthening the associative capacity within the area. With all the other actors as shown in the figure below, contacts are sporadic. Interestingly for this actor is its strong connection with both public authorities and local community that is provided by one key individual, Mihai Eminescu Trust's director. A Saxon ethnic, she is a descendant of an old family from Viscri, has worked as a school teacher in the village and since 1992 has occupied the function of public councilor. She is relatives with ADEPT's director, also a member of the community.

INTERNATIONAL

NATIONAL

REGIONAL

LOCAL

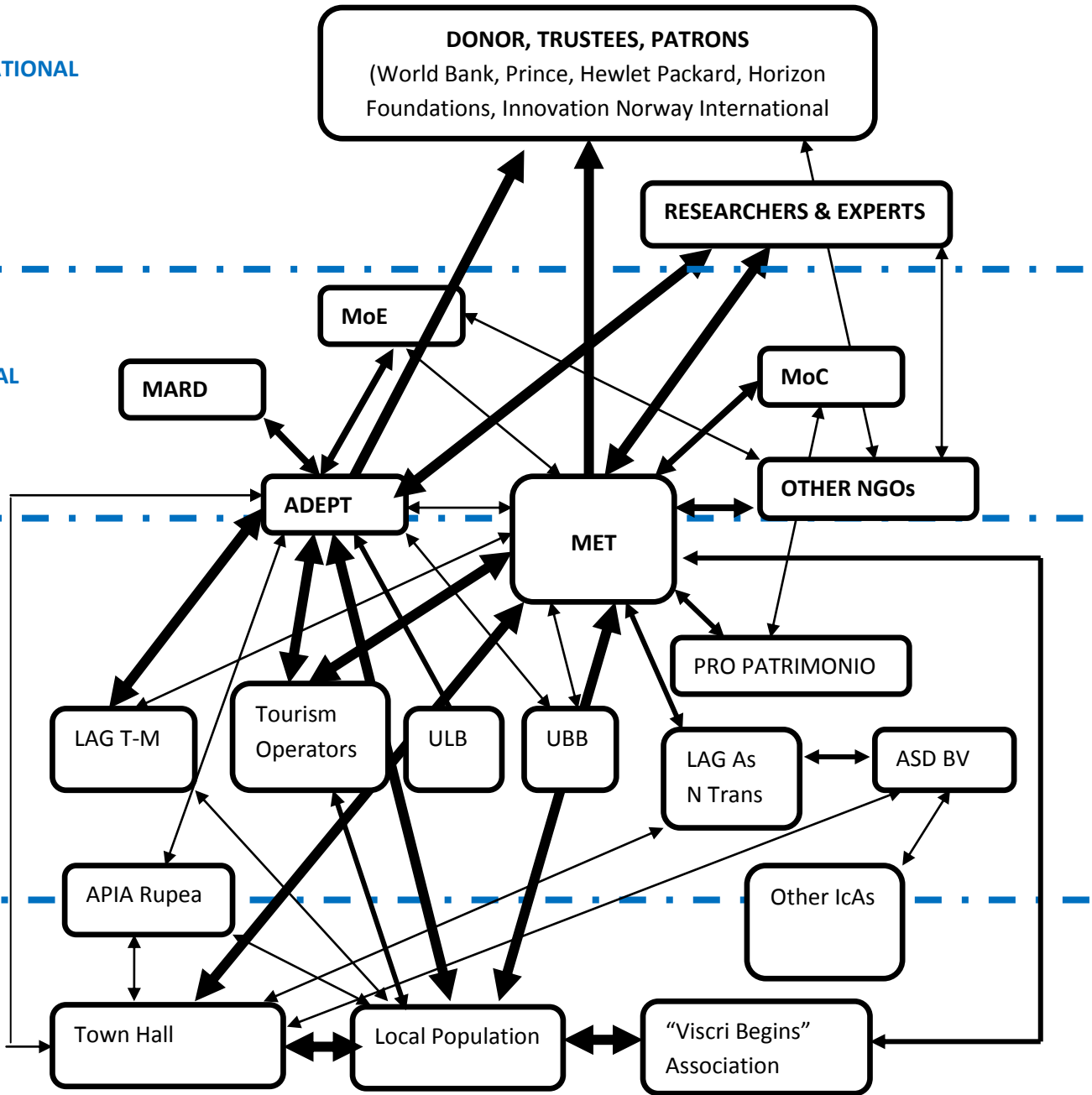






Figure 13 Cross-Scale Institutional Linkages – Community B

Two ways strong links 
 Two ways medium links 
 Two ways weak link 
 One way strong link 

MARD – Ministry of Agriculture and Rural development
 MoE- Ministry of Environment
 MoC – Ministry of Culture and Patrimony
 Other IcAs – other Inter communitarian associations
 ADEPT – Agricure development and environmental protection in Transylvania Foundation
 MET – Mihai Eminescu Trust
 Other NGOs – WWF, Milvus, RFP, AER, Green Cross,etc

LAG T-M – Local Action Group Târnava Mare
 LAG As N Trans – Local Action Group North Transylvanian Association
 ULB – University Lucian Blaga, Sibiu, Romania
 UBB - University Babes Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
 ASD BV – Association for Sustainable Development Brasov, Romania
 APIA Rupea – Agency for Payments and Interventions in Agriculture Rupea, Brasov county, Romania

6.5 The Dependent Variable: Capacity to Adapt to Change

The following paragraphs address the dependent variable – capacity to adapt to unprecedented socio-economic change of the study location B and data gathered for each indicator of the dependent variable, as explained in Chapter 3, section 3.1., will be laid out. Then, in section 6.6 the influence of the NGOs on the study location B degree of livelihood security and capability of self-organization will be untangled by aggregately assessing the impact indicators of independent variables have on each indicator of the dependent variable.

6.5.1 Awareness and Understanding of Conservation Strategies

Following the direct discussion with villagers of different ages, both men and women and belonging to all three ethnic groups, the degree of awareness and understanding of conservation strategies was found to be moderate to low. This finding was further confirmed by discussions with tourists, both Romanian and foreign who pointed out that indigenous people had limited knowledge regarding the uniqueness of their areas. Tourist also complained about the fact that as guides, villagers did not complemented much the information already available in tourist handbooks and the internet. While this did not hamper their attraction and interest for the area, they indicated other cultural landscapes of Romania where they met more informed hosts and local guides.

When indirect questions were asked about livelihood strategies, with some notable exceptions, only a few of the villagers referred to conservation strategies being implemented in their village, while key words such as “cultural reconstruction”, “Natura 2000”, “agri-environmental schemes”, “entrepreneurship” or “craftsmen support” came up very rare. When asked specifically about one of the three conservation strategies, they did show moderate knowledge, and this was based mainly on the experience of kin or neighbors working with NGOs, directly or indirectly. The ones involved in either agriculture or tourism did point to the new opportunities but, at least in the first category, they were not satisfied with the income and the clarity of the process for applying to agri-environmental schemes.

The level of knowledge was found to differ with economic status and level of education of interviewees, while ethnicity did not seem to play a role. Also, few of the respondents were aware of the NGOs’ object of activity. They would name a person in connection with a type of project, as it was the case of MET’s director who is heavily associated with the touristic development of the locality.

Respondents were almost completely unaware of Natura 2000 in particular and biodiversity protection measures in general. The information they had was referring to possible future restrictions onto rights over possessions with the new protection status of the area. Some were also intrigued by the imposition of taxes for waste management services. Neither the cultural heritage is better known. Many of the individuals inquired, considered the rebuilding of traditional Saxon houses as costly and not a priority for the village.

Given the low level of understanding and awareness, which was found to positively correlate with economic position and degree of education, the attitudes towards conservation varies from mistrust to support. Villagers also pointed to changing opinions. Once they get involved in the new “economy”, i.e. engagement in tourism activity, attitude usually changes and become more benevolent in respect to the objectives and methods of the projects. Otherwise, local people do not see themselves as important actors in the conservation process. Their sense of ownership and responsibility for the area is low as well and they do not share the enthusiasm of the NGOs, tourists or researchers regarding the features of their village and surroundings, remaining to good extent passive receivers of external coordination.

People do not understand why the tourists like to come to their village despite the fact that it is more underdeveloped than other localities in the area. No asphalt was allowed and the cement bridges were replaced with wooden ones although in their opinion, these were not as resistant and durable as the former ones. Also, elders pointed out that tradition was not actually respected. For example, the wooden trough in the middle of the village that replaced the previous cement one was made out of poplar instead of oak. Another example of discontent towards ““traditional-ness”” is that of a young woman confessing that she had felt ashamed at her sister’s wedding, when some guests complained that the stony road had damaged their high-heel shoes. They argued this is something long forgotten in their villages.

6.5.2 Participation in Landscape Conservation

Two types of involvement in landscape conservation from the villagers' side were identified: individuals engaged in tourism and subsistence farmers. To be noted that these two categories are not completely distinct. With few notable exceptions, all guesthouse owners maintain subsistence farming as a secondary means to provide the necessary foodstuff outside the touristic season. Given the rising notoriety of the village and intensification of tourism, individuals from the second category consider giving up more of their current activity in order to participate in the new local economy. Also, there are villagers who do not consistently participate in either of the two activities as they migrate for higher paid contracts to countries like Italy, Spain or to a lesser extent, Germany where they work in constructions, housekeeping or agriculture. Other respondents lived from social security or small duties in the area: gathering forest fruits or medicinal plants, logging, shepherding. Compiling the data from the interviews and participant observation, three social classes were identified: A) the wealthy, only a few families –possess land and livestock, are engaged in tourism, new investors that moved to the village add to this category, B) middle-class: elderly relying on retirement pensions and people working for guesthouses; generally do not own livestock and lease their lands to specialized farmers; C) poor – the majority, landless, depend on livestock and seasonal work, many are subscribed in the “Viscri Begins” Association.

According to the Commune of Bunești Strategy of development (2009), the main economic activity that the local workforce occupies is agriculture, which includes animal rearing and, especially, land cultivation. In general, people who are still engaged in agricultural work, do it for their own consumption. Participant observation underscores that agriculture is not a prominent activity for the majority of villagers in the sense that it is not rigorously organized anymore. Few households still maintain a high degree of self-sufficiency. The reasons for this situation are manifold: the lack of access to land (especially true in the case of Roma), the lack of access to human and financial resources, related to age or physical inability. Also, due to a persistent *Limax*-invasion that is affecting the village for more than 2 years, people do not feel motivated to harvest their gardens anymore. To be noted that the neighboring villages do not face this pest problem.

There are very few people who continue to own a cow for personal consumption in their husbandry and there are around 29 individuals who still rear cows in the village. The village herd numbers about 120 heads out of which about a third belong to a sole owner. The number of animals is considered relatively small for the number of inhabitants. The ones who own cattle strive to have more than five in order to earn higher amounts of money by selling the milk through the collecting point located in the village. With 5 cows, they can earn up to 500 EUR per month from selling the milk, but only for 4 months per year, the rest of the year when the cows give little quantities of milk, the revenues are negligible. The villagers claim that this income is indeed useful but would not be sufficient to motivate them if they would not receive some added forms of support - like the agro-environmental subsidies or the subsidy per animal. Some of the villagers buy milk from others who own cows but field observations found that only a few do it. The number of villagers working as shepherds has increased in recent years, pointing to the increase in the numbers of sheep which is in line with the regional trend (see for example, Urushibara-Yoshino & Mori, 2007 in (Buzau et al., 2009). Although awareness of the health benefits of goat milk is raising and tourists appreciate this product, there are only a few villagers rearing goats to be found in the village. Other than the aforementioned, husbandries usually possess poultry, 1 or two pigs and a fruit orchard behind the house. The orchards are less valued and many are neglected. As a consequence, fruits presence in everyday meals is diminishing. Also, the organization of agricultural work is not done at community-level anymore and is increasingly outsourced. The land-owners lease their lands and receive a share of the revenues or of the harvest. The hills surrounding Viscri are leased by a German farmer who cultivates sun-flowers on the majority of the fields, under conventional agricultural principles, using pesticides and herbicides to control the harvests. Although she is not the sole tenant in the region, her use of quality equipment and productive harvests have earned her the respect of the community.

Regarding tourism, there are around 10 families directly involved, either as guesthouse owners or employees. Out of these, three are not natives and only one moved to live permanently in the village to manage the business²⁶. Depending on their craft, the small number of craftsmen benefits from the

²⁶ Families who own their own guesthouses are counted here. There are, of course, some people who work for the guesthouse owners. They generally deploy seasonal work (the touristic season: April-November, highest July-August) and they are, based

touristic development and the rehabilitation works, although some disagree with the “return to the old methods”. The village has 7 guesthouses, one museum, three bars, and one coffee-shop and recently, a meeting place for youngsters is being arranged in the place of the former wool-spinning facility. Three active businesses are registered with an address in Viscri. They do not employ more than one or two persons per business. Tensions sometimes burst from the lack of synchronization between the expectations of the employers and employees. Some representatives of the first category claim that the pretensions of the latter are occasionally absurd and that they should be *grateful* that they are given work opportunities on a local market with very little perspective. The latter category considers the first one as unjust payers and *greedy* and it attributes unrealistic earnings.

The members of the village community participate differently to the local economy and cultural life, as determined by their ethnic origin, income and age. They possess distinctive endowments and entitlements that are commonly arranged at informal levels. Historically, it is the Saxon community that is entitled to claim ownership over the built heritage and the natural patrimony. The Saxons still possess arable land and forests around the village. But with very little members left to contribute to its maintenance, there are the co-habitant ethnic groups that are the *de facto* heirs. The Saxon community of Viscri numbers only a few members. These are the relatives of MET and ADEPT's leaders and a few other individuals. Strolling down on the Main Road in Viscri, one can acknowledge that few of the imposing Saxon houses are still inhabited. A fact attested also by the small number of cows coming up this road in the evenings after grazing. The adjacent roads, with smaller houses are more lively, especially the ones where the Gypsies reside. Some of the houses are kept closed by their Saxon owners who sometimes come to the village during summer holidays. Only few of the Saxons departed to Germany come and make reparations to their buildings. Some of them took the advantage of the publicity made with the house Prince Charles bought in their village and sold them advantageously. Despite that “village's sons and daughters” associations that were formed in Germany, striving to support the ones left behind, there is a profound understanding of the irreversibility of the disappearance of their ethnic group as they knew it until recently. In this sense, a certain passive attitude is explicable with the notable exception of MET's director that sees her work as a duty to secure ancestors' achievements. She brings her contribution to the community directly through her work but also indirectly by sending appeals to other co-ethnics to reunite forces and return to their historical villages. However, the few Saxons of Viscri do not always share the same visions on the development directions that are being proposed and initiated and are not as optimistic about the future. They remember the times when the Saxon community was in power, and the shock they felt when community dissipated.

For their neighboring ethnic groups, Saxons do not hold the dominant position as they use to but they are still sympathized as they are seen as “good neighbors”, reliable and diligent. This favorable attitude also has an implicit economic interest, as the Saxons are considered as “rich” because they have assets that they know how to valorize and because they have their wealthy families living in Germany supporting them. The same attitude is also reflected over other individuals of German origin that moved to the village. The few native Romanian families still living in the village participate with less intensity to deciding the future of their village. Comparable in both endowments with the Saxons, they are generally elderly people who do not have the energy and stimulus to get involved. The members of this group deplore the departure of Saxons with whom they had a good cohabitation. The few Romanians who moved to the village are either tourism investors or shepherds.

Much more variation is seen in the Roma group. They are represented in all economic activities. The middle-income Roma feel empowered to claim ownership over the village as they contribute to its economy. From their attitude it is understandable that this is not a Saxon village anymore; it is a *former* Saxon village. However, their pride is not ethnically-grounded, as the ones in this middle-income category do not identify themselves as Roma but as Romanians. The rapid depopulation of the village has reduced the endowments of this group even more acute than for the others, as traditional skills of land management which can be easily acquired through informal interaction and working together are not being transmitted to younger generation of any ethnic origin. The young Roma in power cannot provide quality work, a disadvantage observed by, for example the elderly people who complain that the Roma do not know how to efficiently mow the grass or dig the earth to destroy weeds and their gardens or land are left uncultivated. Also, due to the disaggregation of community life, the younger generation, in majority Roma, does not get models of rural organization.

on the data gathered on the field, around 8-10 people who are involved directly in household activities or as guides. Other people gain from tourism, like the local stores or the ones who produce handcrafted items.

They are not habituated anymore with working the land or rearing livestock; they opt for more urban jobs which are easier to obtain and this implies leaving the community. There are some Roma individuals that are frequently interacting with both Romanian and Saxons as they are seen as trustworthy. Typical for these connectors, they do not reckon their origin, but the others are well aware of it. This is due to a tacit and unconflictual spirit of discrimination against Roma, well known by both parties. This draws to a certain understanding of the socio-cultural situation which is typical for rural communities taking things as given to avoid conflict. Compared with other neighboring villages, Viscri has a stable social situation, with little to any ethnic conflicts.

Participation in activities related to landscape conservation (sustainable tourism, maintaining traditional management of the land and knowledge about crafts) is organized through interactions predominantly based on kinship and personal relations. Socialization was usually taking place among members of the same ethnic group but, as the ethnic boundaries became blurred with the new demographic and socio-economic changes, it switched to social classes. This impelled the formation of cliques. Two clearly outlined in Viscri are one more engaged in tourism and closer to MET leader and one more focused on agricultural production (either of subsistence or semi-subsistence). The first views agriculture as secondary while the latter claims that tourism has taken away people from work and teaches them with easily-made earnings that will not last. The less endowed inhabitants seek to participate in both groups, to diversify their income sources.

Villagers rely much on informal types of exchange. Bartering still holds a weighty position in the local economy, although it has dwindled in the recent years. This is given to the increased availability of monetary resources that tourism has brought. Some villagers, especially elderly complain that they cannot employ younger co-habitants anymore without rewarding them with money. This was not that common before. They used to accept food stuffs, tools or clothes. Bartering is in tight connection with reciprocal trust relations that the villagers develop with each other. And is not always functioning consecutively: work done, recompense made. Villagers also build “stocks”, offering their “help” (services) or products (clothes, potatoes, hay) that will be rewarded in a near future. They keep a good memory on the services they provided, the products they offered and they expect the other will respond when asked for help. As there are growing difficulties in appreciating the counter value of one’s service, frictions occur as some consider others not responding equally. This is partly due to the low inter-personal trust of the villagers and explains why relating to money is more and more favored.

6.5.3 Confidence in Current Livelihood Strategies

Close interactions and repeated meetings with local villagers exposed different perspectives they have regarding their individual future and that of their community. Three typologies could be traced: the optimists, the fatalists, and the opportunists. The first category consists of people who managed to access the new opportunities made available by the touristic development taking place in their village and the agri-environmental schemes. They expect more of the alike to come in the future and are generally open to novelty. However, they do not have a long-term strategy and although tourism is a highly competitive industry, they do not seem to have made a marketing plan to sustain this livelihood strategy for the years to come. These individuals emphasize the importance of ICT in obtaining information and coordinate their touristic activity. The large number of tourists coming to Viscri gives them the confidence this will continue as it is. In their opinion, “specialness” is the reason that has generated the rapid growth in interest in their village of such important people like the Prince Charles of Great Britain. The reference to people like HRH gives them a sense of stability and trust for the future. Different nuances are traced in the attitude of non-indigenous tourism investors. They are generally professionally promoting their guesthouses, composing marketing strategies for attracting tourists. However, they are pragmatically considering the boom of the last years will not go on forever and they view their presence in the village as temporary.

The fatalists are usually confounded with subsistence farmers. They have a passive attitude in what concerns the new opportunities and do not expect their situation to be improved in the future or things to change for the better. They blame their low incomes and low level of education as main reasons impeding them from accessing the new opportunities brought to the communities with the landscape conservation measures. They know about the subsidies made available but they claim they are too unprepared for dealing with such complex matters as an application process presupposes. Also, there is a cost barrier for them in sending candidatures for the available funds because they have to travel several times to the responsible state agencies to get all the papers in order. This implies, in their

view, unacceptable waste of money and precious time. They often point to the capturing of these subsidies by the elites able to easily and rapidly pull the strings in their favor. Some actually criticize the introduction of agri-environmental subsidies that in some cases has led to abuses affecting the most vulnerable. As they put it, people who actually do not work the land but managed to manufacture a credible dossier receive now significant amounts of money only for declaring large surface of land that is actually left unused. They criticize the monitoring system for not functioning adequately.

Another complaint the members of this category have is the repeated undermining of agricultural work. This is one of the reasons that there are not many people seen working in the fields anymore. The general belief is that manual labor is lower, shameful work, a proof of incapacity and poverty while mechanization means efficiency and superior intelligence. For the people involved in agriculture, Viscri has never been a good place, due to the sandy-fields that allow only for modest crops. The geo-morphological situation has held back the economic development of this locality as compared to neighboring villages. They claim that since there is no more reliable workforce, no access to specialized machinery that would ease their work, then they have little chance of making a decent living. For them touristic development also poses some problems as other productive opportunities in the village are being abandoned for dedicating space and time for accommodating tourists. One exemplification of this situation is, in some villagers' opinion, is the closing of the wool-spinning facility that used to valorize the abundant local resource of sheep-wool used to produce felt items through the "Viscri Begins" Association. The facility also employed few women with part-time jobs. When it broke down it was left to degrade, as the better-off villagers that could handle the reparations were busy with tourists. The latter replied that it was not economically feasible anymore and also risky to use. Another negative impact of tourism was indentified in a reduced work labour for agriculture, as both employer and employee acknowledge the greater and easier profits that this new activity is bringing in their community, rapidly contaminating especially the youth.

In what concerns the future of the community, neither the first nor the last category has expressed distinct visions. The second one, the fatalists believe it will be slowly depopulated or at least "the last good" people will go away. Despite these expressed or deduced positions, it is genuinely hard to decel among real problems and victimization. At first contacts, a significant percentage of people, irrespective of their affluence would complain of the lack of something. However, after gaining their trust and after more conversations, some confessed that their life status improved and there are good perspectives for the future.

The opportunists are found among the poorest category of study location B. As they are generally habituated with very little, any earning during the touristic season is already a change in their material condition. As such, they range from optimism to fatalism in what concern their future, their appreciation being much influenced by recent events and opportunities, i.e. whether they were able to earn some money in the last days or not. Some of them have social allowances as a stable source of income but the amounts are generally very low. They live as such, from one day to another, relying heavily on personal relations and family ties. They randomly work for more wealthy neighbors or collect forest fruits, medicinal plants or mushrooms that they sell to the guesthouses and tourists. It was noticed that the services or the products the local people trade are more expensive than in the surrounding villages. For example, the forest fruits or other medicinal plants are sold with 10% to 30% more. If for a Western tourist, the prices are still low, for a Romanian visitor they are inexplicably high. Another concrete example here is that the woolen socks and felt slippers are modestly sold on the domestic (national or regional) market as they being too pricey. This is why they are not present outside the stalls displayed in front of the houses on the main road of Viscri and in Western countries trade channels.

A common theme that appeared in the discussion with the least endowed ones was the fear of deceit. Members of this category are worried about being deprived by the very little they have or of being exploited: they are called for work and not paid after. This creates a vicious circle. They use to over-evaluating their services or products, pretending excessive prices not knowing if tomorrow brings chances to cover their daily needs. Erratically, trade is made as some buyers/employers motivate "being sorry for their poverty". This does not solve their problems however. If the sources of income would be stable, the practice would lose ground with reciprocal benefits for both consumer and producer/provider.

6.5.4 Perceived Capability for Self-Organization

Showing a low sense of ownership and responsibility for the area's value, moderately participating in its conservation and having generally little to moderate confidence in their future conservation-related activities, the local community's capacity to self-govern has few elements to build upon. Local people do not share the same enthusiasm of the NGOs, tourists or researchers regarding the features of their village and surrounding landscape, remaining to good extent reactive receivers of external coordination.

Villagers see little perspective in their locality and do not count on the help of their neighbors or think in terms of collaboration, i.e. beyond kinship boundaries. They make their own calculus for daily living, combining the strategies outlined in the previous sections: economic migration, subsistence agriculture or involvement in the tourism and rehabilitation projects. When asked with whom they would partner to start a business, the majority pointed to persons outside the community, acquaintances or kins from urban areas or from abroad, with greater financial capacity. They sometimes rely on their neighbors for construction buildings or field work but generally pay for this services or offer counterservices in return. Also, when asked about developments in their area which they consider the most urgent, only a few managed to provide an answer. Some mentioned public transportation and a permanent medical service, while others believed that leisure facilities for the youngsters should be developed first. When asked if they managed to make a day by day living, all interviewees complained about their lack of financial resources while mentioning that, if resources were available, they would use them to travel more, commute to find work, buy things for the house, clothes and gadgets. Only a small fraction of them wanted to invest in agriculture, machinery, land or work.

Former informal structures of mutual help have either reduced in numbers or have vanished. The Saxon institutions of "neighborhood" have been borrowed by the other ethnic groups. Out of 4 neighborhoods that were active before 1989 (each structure being composed of neighbors from the same street), only 2 are active, consisting only of Roma people, as the Saxons gave up on this form of organization due lack of members. The Saxon "neighborhoods", complemented by similar groups dedicated to boys and girls used to organize almost every aspect of life – from different labors like the work in the field, wood felling or house-building to the settlement of disputes and the organization of events. Nowadays, mutual help structures can be found mainly in the organization of weddings and funerals where people build a common fund of chairs and tableware that are shared by all members. Also, in exchange for a small fee paid during lifetime, the neighborhood makes all necessary arrangements for the memorial service.

Besides the exceptional figure of MET's director, a member of the community herself, actively present at all institutional levels, initiative is low. She is also the main initiator of community meetings, to which participation has varied across time. Villagers generally act as passive receivers and have a fatalistic approach regarding issues to solve, as it was shown in the previous section. In general, they do not have confidence in their power to impact or initiate the developments around them. Modest collective action is being organized through the "Viscri Begins" Association that relies on the leadership and employment of local women to organize the functionality of the process. Currently, membership is comprised of 70 women with ages between 14 and 80 years, having dropped down from a peak of 140 members in 2007. The decrease in numbers is attributed mainly to the emigration of members to western countries.

The main reasons hampering self-organization are the low incomes and low inter-personal trust. From direct discussions and secondary data analysis (local and regional development strategies), it resulted that the majority of people live at the poverty line. Incomes are low and gained mainly on the black market. As such, social assistance represents an important income source for a considerable fraction of Viscri's population²⁷, with the situation being as follows: few receive unemployment allowance, 14 individuals for family support, 34 receive state pensions. Monthly returns per person ranged from 25 to 250 Euros²⁸, while the minimum guaranteed net income at country level was only 550 RON (around 140 euro, depending on currency fluctuations) in 2011. The sum of 320 EUR per

²⁷ According to the National Institute of Statistics (2011), the urban average income is markedly higher than the rural one, almost double. In rural areas, 38% of total monetary income of a household depends on social assistance whereas in urban areas is 22%. On the other hand, the incidence of extreme poverty is higher in urban areas than in the countryside. Source: www.inse.ro, retrieved May 25, 2012

²⁸ The calculus was made by dividing the average income a family earns in a month to the number of members. The sums differ from seasonally, due to available work possibilities. Returns are higher in warmer seasons.

family with one or two children was agreed to be satisfactory for a decent life, a sum that would add to what they can produce in their husbandries. Villagers stressed the importance of actual monetary incomes apart from own provisions derived from subsistence activities considering them indispensable to pay for services: education, transport, health, etc. It is worthwhile to mention that there are no cases of extreme poverty in the village, all inhabitants having a place to live in, privately owned or rented from the state with a modest rate (around 10 EUR/month).

With the help of the “Viscri Begins” Association, some extra allowances were granted for children of the neediest families, in order for them to continue high school. However, despite all efforts, graduation rates, levels of qualification and the quality of teaching and education in general, remain low and under these circumstances. Integration on the job market for the people of Viscri is expected to be difficult. It is also worth mentioning that there was no single case of a highly educated young person having returned to Viscri, that the villagers could recall.

Resulting from a combination of persistent communist traits and post-regime changes, modest collective action is taking place, expressed in some communitarian activities – like mobilizing school children to collect debris or men volunteering to build the wastewater treatment facility, a MET project for the village. Conflicts arise due to lack of rules and implementation of the law, but villagers do not, however, take action beyond individual level and usually just blame the mayor for not “making order.” Informal pressure on peers is generally the most used method of sanctioning the deviant behaviors.. The authority of the leader is also invoked or used sometimes.

Using the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment grid, the table below summarizes community’s profile as derived from the answers collected and participant’ observation presented in the previous four sections. The column on the left interprets the data used to assess the freedom of choice of the villagers, necessary for development.

<p>Material well-being</p> <p>Low money income, low available workforce; low access to goods and services; no extreme poverty (few exceptions that do not own their houses); low possession of livestock (concentrated with few owners); low ownership over land (in the case of Roma); decreasing diversification of natural food, increasing of processed food</p>	<p>Freedom of choice and action Enlargement of choices</p> <p>Low freedom of choice in the locality due to low level of economic diversification.</p> <p>Little possibilities in agriculture (intensification of livestock by a few families). Tourism have slightly changed the situation.</p>
<p>Physical well-being</p> <p>Low access to medical care, elderly complain of bad health</p>	
<p>Social well-being</p> <p>Loneliness, little mutual help, lack of interpersonal trust, youth complains about lack of leisure facilities;</p>	
<p>Security</p> <p>Low security from retirement pensions, safe environment (no criminality), air and water quality, tranquility</p>	

Table 8 Human Well-Being and Freedom of Choice in Community B

6.6 The Independent Variable - Influence of NGOs

The following paragraphs discuss the influence of non-governmental actors outlined in the previous section, on the dependent variable - the capacity to adapt to change of the socio-ecological system of study location B - Viscri. Given the inherently overlapping and complementing nature of the independent variable’s indicators, not all of them are applicable for each indicator of the dependent variable, the solution being to treat their impact in an aggregated manner, and pointing to one indicator or another when this shows effect. Attention is paid to the situation and engagement in landscape conservation of the community A before the NGOs involvement.

6.6.1 NGOs' Influence on Understanding and Awareness

There is evidence that the communication of the projects implemented in the village and the provision of technical expertise by the NGOs has directly impacted the local people's understanding and awareness regarding conservation strategies to a moderate to high levels, generating both positive and negative reactions. Also, the way the message on the protection and value of the cultural and natural heritage was transmitted, through both formal and informal channels imprinted by particular management and social skills of the NGOs has shaped the people understanding and attitudes towards the current development taking place in their village.

As the people know more about projects but do not connect means with ends, understanding less as such, it is deduced that awareness is greater than understanding. This influences the sustainability of the strategies' implementation. Generally, the ones closer to NGOs representatives are the ones who know more, proving the efficacy of direct channels, but also the direction from which the message has departed and concentration of the message and power within the circles of NGOs' affiliates. One indicator for this situation is that no other villagers besides the relatives of the MET and ADEPT leaders take an active part in the Local Action Group "Târnavă Mare". This should, however, be cautiously interpreted, and as the difficulty of villagers to comprehend in general such novel governance concepts is arguably correlated to the low human capital of the community.

Villagers found out about the new development ideas with the start of the projects, meaning the rehabilitation of the Saxon houses and the acquisition of house number 163 by Prince Charles of Britain. According to the respondents there were no prior consultations but only informal discussions. At the beginning and during the buildings' rehabilitation, MET organized village meetings to explain their objectives. Communication of projects was delivered through presentations that relied primarily on visual exemplification that would make them easily understandable for the villagers. As pointed previously, they do not understand exactly what is it that such an important person like HRH Prince of Wales is interested in their humble, degrading village.

In the case of agri-environmental opportunities, they found from other more informed villagers (for example, the milk collecting point responsible) or directly from the Town Hall. From this category of informed villagers, some are connected with ADEPT's staff that through the farm advisory service has instructed villagers regarding the subsidies. Their direct communication of the application requirements was in general considered as useful by the farmers although, as it derived from the interviews; ADEPT's staff was sometimes confounded with state officials, either from the Ministry of Agriculture or from the local Agency for Payments in Agriculture (APIA).

6.6.2 NGOs' Influence on Participation in Landscape Conservation

Prompted by the substantial investments of the NGOs, especially from MET's, many of the local people got involved, directly or indirectly in the new tourism-related activities. A survey of MET from 2003 claims that half of the local population has benefitted from the Trust's work kaleidoscope, as such, a number of 100 individuals. Some of the villagers followed courses in old masonry or carpentry and tourism. Their new competences were then used especially in the village's economy. Also, the pre-existing craftsmen of the village were integrated in touristic itineraries and their knowledge was used in the rehabilitation of the Saxon houses, like the blacksmith's or the brick master's products. Engagement in the new activity was based on self-proposal from the part of the villagers. With the progress of the activity, possibilities for less resourceful local people were created. Measures specifically addressing possible deriving conflicts and ensure wider involvement along social classes of the community and also a fair distribution of resources were not, however, identified.

The attraction to tourism of the local people is closely connected to NGOs' communication efforts and inspiration provided through their projects and leadership. According to personal accounts regarding the period before MET started their activity, there were no prospects for the development of this type of activity in the community. Moreover, the NGOs ensure the functionality of this activity by intensively promoting the villages on different channels. For example, central to MET's endeavor was to position Viscri on the touristic map. They sought for partnering with Romanian and international parties, they presented the village at numerous industry fairs held nationally and abroad. Many brochures and leaflets were printed and distributed. To avoid the risk of mass-tourism, ecological principles were included in the marketing plan. Equestrian tourism or any other non-intrusive means of enjoying the area is favored.

Establishing direct communication with the local farmers, ADEPT taught them about the agri-environmental subsidies. To support the local farmers, they have rehabilitated the village cow milk collecting point handing it in to the community. Besides the milk tanks, villagers received special equipment to test the quality of the milk. They are now able to influence negotiation and obtain a better price for their products, which is now higher than what they used to receive but remain low (they receive around 0.21 EUR per liter of milk). ADEPT trained the people not only how to use the equipment but also about hygiene conditions, to help them become more competitive on the wider market.

Collective memory recalls in different versions the period before the NGOs started to get involved in community life, as such the period after the fall of the communist regime and before the year 2000. Subsistence farmers confessed that the situation became increasingly difficult, especially when in mid-1990s the state stopped acquiring small-holders' harvests when this was not sold on the free market. It was impossible for them to organize and market their harvests independently. This aggravated the depopulation of the village, as the youth left for better economic opportunities and the interest in agriculture and resources allotted to this activity suffered a rapid depreciation. Around the accession of Romania in the EU in 2007, generally unfounded suspicions regarding the new measures discouraged people even more. Invoking the ban on hand-milking of the new European regulations, the collecting companies stopped from acquiring milk from the peasants. This was the moment that many persons gave up rearing animals. With ADEPT's farm advisory service introduced in 2009 and more importantly, with the funds raised for opening of the milk collecting center there is evidence that some of the farmers decided to re-expand their livestock size. According to people's confessions, the subsidies did not increase the farmers' numbers but improved the incomes of the ones already involved.

6.6.3 NGOs' Influence on Confidence in Current Livelihood Strategies

Analyzing the data collected for this indicator highlighted that the leadership ensured across institutional scales is profoundly concentrated at an individual level in almost all external actors' typologies which did not change but became more pronounced with time. There is one eminent leader and a few key individuals that work at multiple levels as "bridging organizers" (*sensu* Folke et al, 2007) carrying the message between different levels of organizations, as shown in Figure 15. Given this situation which imprints the social interactions with intimate, hard to highlight complex nuances, trust appraisal varies significantly. The fact that NGOs leaders are also community members determine specific patterns of management and social skills, clustering initiatives at informal levels to a larger extent. Leadership is reserved by the non-majoritarian ethnic group's representatives while the operational and executive part relies on Roma members. As much as it was possible to be identified, it was found that there are resources for rapid interventions and the pace of transformations is quite alert. Also, there is a lack of synchronization between official discourse and unofficial support.

MET's manner of approaching the projects' implementation manifested mainly top-down. Recently it embraced more participatory methods. MET's "Whole Village" project was, in the respondents' opinion rapidly and energetically coordinated and implemented in their locality. This triggered generally the admiration among local people, as it face-lifted their demeaning village. Habituated with an environment of authoritative control, some people claim they feel secure with the more firm management style of MET leader. The problem, they claim, after the Saxons left together with a large part of Romanians was that no one was able to take the lead and bring some order. Other people are slightly annoyed by the control imposed and are confused regarding their freedom for self-expression. This situation has created a sort of tension, as some of the ones favoring the leader's approach denounce the latter if they initiate any modification that is not consistent with the conservation criteria MET has established in regards to the built patrimony. Specifically, they claim they cannot paint their houses, or change anything from the original Saxon façades and roofs.

ADEPT, on the other side, has favored approaches relying heavily on informal channels since the beginning of activity. ADEPT puts bottom-up communication at the core of its functioning, discussing directly with farmers, craftsmen and producers through its staff. Their approach is received positively. However, their preference for informal discussions with beneficiaries did not make them too visible within community B. Some of the farmers, craftsmen and guesthouse administrators have regular contacts with ADEPT staff but the rest do not know of this NGO.

The new investments in tourism that has created a suitable infrastructure for this activity together with the leaders' example in welcoming guests have inspired local people. Also, the stress laid on local and traditional that the tourism marketing strategy has marched upon has revamped old knowledge to the satisfaction of the local people. They still largely believe that their competences are not valued or interesting for the broader "urban and modern" society and the new interest give them more confidence. Old skills like bread making or preparing local receipts are invigorated with the new positioning of the village on the tourism market.

With a grant from Citi Foundation received in 2009, the Trust sought to strengthen the entrepreneurial skills of local people to be able to initiate and develop sustainable businesses. It helped the local people developing more entrepreneurial skills by assisting them in learning primary accountability. They also agreed to cover the start-up costs of acquiring legal personality so that local people move their activities from the shadow to the visible market and thus to larger markets.

The new fervor enshrouding the village around 2-3 months per year has brought more confidence among local people together with higher gains for some of them compared to the period before the NGOs started their activity. Some villagers recognize that the new investments changed the face of their village and contributed to rising the local pride for some. In one respondent's words, it changed a bit the atmosphere of „abandoned and ruined” that it used to be. However, for others enthusiasm decreased with time and depending if directly involved in touristic activities. As their level of ownership for the cultural heritage of the area is low, they have not developed a pride for living in an important place rather they say that they are “museum exhibits” for the tourists that come, take a few pictures and go back to their comfortable lives.

6.6.4 NGOs' Influence on Perceived Self-Organizing Capability

The activity of MET and ADEPT as it is currently known in Romania and abroad is closely connected to the study location B. It started from a nucleus family of Saxon origin that decided not to leave the village after the fall of the communist regime. Both leaders of the two structures live or have their family that lives here. Due to their presence, communication among villagers is enriched by informal, close interactions usually governed by kinship or other personal relations.

As explained in the theoretical part, the capacity to self-govern is determined by the entitlements and endowments of the local community. The two NGOs – MET and ADEPT, together with the grass-root organization, the “Viscri Begins” Association have worked together for the education of the human capital, by endowing it with professional and entrepreneurial skills and preparing it for the market economy. Local people received trainings in old crafts like masonry or carpentry with part of the equipment being obtained by the Trust, from UK or German specialists that where specially contracted for the courses.. The craftsmen also received free promotion from the Trust through numerous websites, one of which is specially dedicated to their activity. Other people had the opportunity to attend courses to become guesthouse tenders (about 20 people received their diplomas) while MET offered everybody consultancy on basic book keeping, tax issues while ADEPT provided the people with information on AES schemes. Most individuals participating in these trainings benefitted from them with some being able. to find employment outside the area. As a consequence some of the tourism facilities now run independently.

People who showed interest and involvement in their natural and cultural landscape where encouraged to capitalize on these resources, provided they followed NGOs guidelines . While NGOs brought new expertise to the community of study location B they also sought to renew old traditional knowledge and, in the process, managed to revive a kiln workshop. All these endeavors were backed up with marketing support. A spin off effect of the current development is the introduction of the ICT in the community, especially with the people running guesthouses – the school, for example, does not have connectivity.

Mihai Eminescu Trust has had the biggest impact on study location B through its “Whole Village” project described previously. The Trust has sought to access funding from several sources and engaged in multi-stakeholder partnerships to address the needs of the community. With a grant from the World Bank, it repaired the village kindergarten and inaugurated an info point in the centre of the village, which are actually a place dedicated for meetings and various trainings in traditional architecture, although not permanently open.

Regarding access to utilities, there is a water pipeline crossing the village but very few houses are connected. In 2010, MET in partnership with the local council of Bunești aided by the financial support of The Prince's Charities Foundation and the participation of a multi-national oil company together with the schools from Viscri and Bunești and village volunteers, built the first ecological wastewater treatment facility in Romania, called ECO H2O – Ecological water purification system. The 50.000 Euro investment consisted of three artificial lakes and uses reed to purify the waste water. This reduces the peril of groundwater contamination and increases the hygienic security of the villagers. Although there is no maintenance costs associated with this type of waste water facility, a local inhabitant had to be sent to England for training in order to ensure its seamless operation. While the project relied to a good extent on external expertise, MET managed to involve the local people as well, especially at the operational level and this is not the only project which makes good use of local workforce. Viscri's building rehabilitation program for example relies on teams of workers that were trained in the use of traditional techniques and materials and for the administration guesthouses local women for employed for cooking and cleaning. Local owners of cart and horses have also begun to organize tourist nature walks for to neighboring charcoal makers.

The Women Association relies to a great extent on the local human resources. Although initiated by a German couple that moved to Viscri in the 1990s, the direct local coordination is ensured by two women who effectively manage the association – they buy wool, ensure the redistribution of incomes and control the quality of products before they are dispatched. Other two German couples that settled in Viscri maintain the relation with customers outside Romania, manage the marketing of the products and attract benefactors. Now, the Association has 70 members, all women, who produce about 2000 wool socks and felt slippers yearly. The way the activity of the Association is deployed helps a part of the community to self-organize. A share of the profit is reinvested for the benefit of its members. The financial support that the Viscri "Viscrist Begins" Association has brought to the community is both of direct and indirect nature. In the first case members of the Association earn about 25 EUR per month for the woolen socks and felt slippers that are sold primarily to Germany and other Western countries. The income increases or decreases modestly depending on the season. When tourists come to visit the village, local women have the chance to sell their products directly from the stalls in front of their houses. The women that do not have stalls on the main road have to maintain good relations with the ones well positioned so that their products also are put on sale. The reciprocity in this case is organized economically with the sellers keeping a share of the money. In the second case, a small part of the Association's earnings goes to communities' identified needs, like financially supporting children that continue with high-school or taking the people in need to a doctor.

Besides building concrete professional skills and infrastructural investments, the NGOs, in a lower degree, worked also for strengthening the community spirit. Especially during the winter months, MET's leader organize meetings where various subjects are discussed, like for example, how to set up a local garden to supply the guesthouses with fresh vegetables. Although the initiative did not materialize yet, if implemented, it could generate an increase of other villagers' income. Also, with several occasions, MET managed to mobilize the locals to collect the debris or to volunteer when the wastewater treatment facility was built. In 2007, ADEPT has actively promoted the establishment of LAG Dealurile Tarnavei, which brought together various actors from 9 neighboring communes. Some of the villagers are part of these Local Action Groups. Among these, members of the families of the two leaders are involved. However, the larger community is unaware of these associative structures and does not seem to be interested in them either, as they are considered another bureaucratic initiative without readily perceivable benefits. More recently, MET also supported the LAG North Braşov Transylvanian Association which will work to construct associative capacities of communities in the area, Viscri included. Also, as it was already shown in the previous paragraph, the members of the "Viscrist Begins" Association agree to share a part of the earnings to tackle community problems.

The active involvement of the NGOs has attracted the interest of non-indigenous individuals to move into the community and to make a living there. This is expected to have a positive impact on the life of a community dealing with protracted abandonment. However, not all new-comers show understanding or interest for the local situation and interactions with local people are sporadic and sometimes conflictual. This is also explained by the differences between cultural backgrounds. The new-comers are generally urban people interested in the peacefulness of rural life and less in contributing to the productive character of the village, i.e. involvement in agriculture. As such, their investments are generally directed towards tourism.

There are also less positive aspects related to the management and social skills of the NGOs. Some villagers claim that the control exerted is sometimes cumbersome and suspicions have also been raised regarding the sincerity of intentions of the leaders. They believe that some leaders manage too many aspects of the community development and do not want to delegate or redistribute. Some persons claim that new initiatives are suffocated or undermined so that the profits and power remain in the same few hands. Also, some tourists interviewed indicated that they were surprised by the fact that the Evangelical Church was closed for visiting several days in a row, as the key is kept by only one family not present at that moment in the village.

In order to impel local production, MET has rehabilitated the former community barn planning to lodge a small, artisan-like jam factory which is not yet functional. ADEPT funded the restoring and opening of the milk collecting point, and the “Viscri Begins” Association managed to build a spinning facility for the village that operated for a few years, supplying part-time work for three individuals while capitalizing on the local abundant wool resource. Unfortunately it was closed down because it turned out to be inefficient, generating high maintenance costs.

ADEPT contributed to the tourism expansion in the area as well. With the help of volunteers from Orange, a partner telecom company, walking and biking paths were created connecting the Saxon villages. This Corporate Social Responsibility program managed to raise awareness about the special character of the area, especially among urban dwellers living in Bucharest. This kind of activities is organized every year now.

Tourism has also moderately fostered the commercialization of some local products (milk, eggs, meat and cheese) thus generating an extra income, albeit negligible, for the villagers. This new demand generated a rise in the price of local products and services with both positive and negative implications - positive, as it raised the value of local work which is still considerably low when compared to urban areas and negative because it resulted in opportunistic behavior towards tourists and isolation from local market reality. Romanian investors and employers may avoid the population of Viscri as they made a reputation of being too costly compared with other communities in the area. Although the situation does not apply to all local merchants it affects the poorer categories. Also, despite the local availability and praised quality of local food, some guesthouse owners prefer to buy foodstuff from the supermarkets of neighboring cities, as they claim that it is much cheaper.

In retrospective, the villagers claim that the investments were welcomed as there were not too many opportunities before this period. For the ones that got involved in tourism development, the situation has improved in the last years. The farmers had diverging opinions. Some managed to obtain the new subsidies while others were prevented by cases of elite capture and other abuses. As deduced from the interviews with local people, the timing of the project was not the most propitious, as the village was almost abandoned by its former reliable inhabitants. The return of the Saxons and other more endowed people is not considered as a plausible scenario.

6.7 Conclusions

The analysis of the correlations between dependent and independent variables' indicators allows for the observation that the NGOs have only modestly influenced study location B' capacity to adapt to change. As it is shown in the above sections, all indicators of the dependent variable score negatively (low to moderate) although this is not necessarily determined by the manifestation of independent variable's indicators. This situation is explained by the low presence of social capital within the community. The table below illustrates a qualitative assessment of Viscri's resilience and the relative positive influence of NGOs' action on each indicators capacity to adapt to change. It also summarizes the two objectives of landscape conservation strategies: conserving Saxons landscape's culture and natural capital.

		Influence of Indicators independent variable				
Indicators dependent variable	Presence of indicators	Knowledge	Financial support	Communication	Management & social skills	General presence of indicators
Awareness & Understanding	moderate & low	moderate	n/a	moderate to high	moderate	moderate
Participation	low	high	high/mixed	moderate	moderate	moderate
Confidence	low to moderate	moderate	moderate/mixed	moderate	low to moderate	moderate
Self-organization	low	high	moderate	high	moderate	moderate to high
Aggregated presence and influence	low	Case B - higher NGO involvement, Roma majority (80%), few Saxons and Romanians				moderate
Conserving Culture	Rehabilitation of important landmarks of the village (Evangelic Church) and many old houses. Institutionalization of the Saxon culture into a museum and through tourism. Restoring the Saxon culture is generally accomplished through tourism institutionalization and support given to craftsmanship. Transfer of traditional knowledge is indirectly fostered by the investment in architectural rehabilitation and attraction to agri-environmental schemes. Traditional knowledge still existing but modestly used and only by few individuals that receive tourists and by some elders. Elderly people are only superficially consulted and do not hold a central position anymore.					
Conserving Nature	Extensively funded scientific studies on the flora and fauna. Marketing of scientific-tourism, the village is regularly visited by academics. The transfer of traditional knowledge is realized only indirectly through agri-environment schemes ;Rehabilitation of the milk-collecting point; Farm Advisory service;					

Table 9 Analysis Outline of Case Study B

7. Comparative Analysis Of The Case Studies

7.1 Overview of the results

This chapter comparatively analyzes the independent and dependent variables' interactions outlined in the previous two chapters on case A and case B study locations. First an overview of the results of the research is presented in two tables reuniting the findings for both cases. The first table summarizes the manifestation of the dependent variable's indicators presence or the lack of it in relation with independent variable's indicators influence. This exercise allows for the identification of involvement of the NGOs in the community life of the two studied locations. The second table brings together the short radiographies of the human well-being appraised on local people' confessions. This self-assessment proves relevant for discerning among external support and internal strength. It allows for deductions on future action to be taken by NGOs according to each community profile. In the last section of the chapter, conclusions on this projects' research question and hypothesis are laid out, interpreting the influence of these particular external actors on the two studied communities' capacity to adapt to unprecedented transformations. Finally, the paper will close with a few reflections on the themes raised by this project as well as with a discussion on possible further research. Providing policy recommendations is beyond the scientific scope of this paper. However, based on the data available and the observations gathered on the field, the next chapter will give insights on possible adjustments that external actors may consider for the governance of the Saxon landscape's socio ecological system. These recommendations are not necessarily grounded in social-scientific study but reflect the information, observation and intuition gathered by the author over the course of this study. Nor are they intended to be policy prescriptions but they aim to trigger debate and stimulate further investigation.

Indicators dependent variable	Level of presence of indicators		Influence of Indicators independent variable									
			Knowledge		Financial support		Communication		Management & social skills		General presence of indicators	
	Case A	Case B	Case A	Case B	Case A	Case B	Case A	Case B	Case A	Case B	Case A	Case B
Awareness & Understanding	low & moderate	moderate & low	low	moderate	n/a	n/a	low	moderate to high	low	moderate	low	moderate
Participation	moderate to high	low	moderate	high	high	high/mixed	low	moderate	moderate	moderate	moderate	moderate
Confidence	moderate	low to moderate	moderate	moderate	low/mixed	moderate/mixed	low	moderate	moderate	low to moderate	low to moderate	moderate
Self-organization	moderate to high	low	moderate	high	moderate	moderate	low	high	low	moderate	low to moderate	moderate to high
Aggregated presence and influence	moderate	low	Case A - lower NGO involvement, ethnic mix (14% Saxons, 50% Romanians, 36% Roma) Case B - higher NGO involvement, Roma majority (80%), few Saxons and Romanians								low to moderate	moderate
Conserving Culture	Case A	Rehabilitation of important landmarks of the village (Evangelic Church, Apafi Manor, Catholic Church). An important Saxon custom revived (Kronenfest). Restoring the Saxon culture is generally accomplished through tourism institutionalization and support given to craftsmanship. Transfer of traditional knowledge is indirectly fostered by the investment in architectural rehabilitation and attraction to agri-environmental schemes. Elderly do not hold the same influence.										
	Case B	Rehabilitation of important landmarks of the village (Evangelic Church) and many old houses. Institutionalization of the Saxon culture into a museum and through tourism. Restoring the Saxon culture is generally accomplished through tourism institutionalization and support given to craftsmanship. Transfer of traditional knowledge is indirectly fostered by the investment in architectural rehabilitation and attraction to agri-environmental schemes. Traditional knowledge still existing but modestly used and only by few individuals that receive tourists and by some elders. Elderly people are only superficially consulted and do not hold a central position anymore.										
Conserving Nature	Case A	Rehabilitation of the milk-collecting point; Farm Advisory service; Rehabilitation of apple orchard, juice processing unit; facilitation of fruit sampling donations towards suitable local beneficiaries; Studies on the local flora and fauna										
	Case B	Extensively funded scientific studies on the flora and fauna. Marketing of scientific-tourism, the village is regularly visited by academics. The transfer of traditional knowledge is realized only indirectly through agri-environment schemes ;Rehabilitation of the milk-collecting point; Farm Advisory service;										

Table 10. Summary of dependent and independent variable's cross-determination

	Case A	Case B
Material well being	variable money income (among different social classes), available workforce; moderate access to goods and services; no extreme poverty; moderate to high possession of livestock (concentration with few owners); moderate ownership over land (lower in the case of Roma)	low money income, low available workforce; low access to goods and services; no extreme poverty (few exceptions that do not own their houses); low possession of livestock (concentrated with few owners); low ownership over land (in the case of Roma)
Physical well-being	low access to medical care, elderly complain of bad health; decreasing diversification of natural food, increasing of processed food	low access to medical care, elderly complain of bad health; decreasing diversification of natural food, increasing of processed food
Social well-being	Conviviality, mutual help, lower interpersonal trust, strong family ties, youth complains about lack of leisure facilities although some exist;	Loneliness, low mutual help, lack of interpersonal trust, youth complains about lack of leisure facilities;
Security	low security from retirement pensions for the elderly, youth complains about uncertainty of future and low access to social security services, safe environment (no criminality), air and water quality, tranquility	low security from retirement pensions, safe environment (no criminality), air and water quality, tranquility
Freedom of choice and Enlargement of choices	Growing economic diversification and possibilities in agriculture (livestock intensification by some families). High dependence on economic migration. Tourism has not yet become an alternative.	Low freedom of choice in the locality due to little economic diversification. Little possibilities in agriculture (intensification of livestock by a few families). Tourism have slightly changed the situation.

Table 11 Side by Side Comparison of Well-Being indicators in Case A and B

7.2 Comparison of Indicators

Sections 7.2.1.- 7.2.4 provide the comparison between data collected for each case study. The possible correlations between independent and dependent variables as well as the lack of inter-relations will be laid out.

7.2.1 Awareness and Understanding

Indicators dependent variable	Awareness & Understanding		Influence of indicators independent variable									
			Knowledge		Financial support		Communication		Management & social skills		General presence of indicators	
Cases	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Level of presence of indicator	low & moderate	moderate & low	low	moderate	n/a	n/a	low	moderate to high	low	moderate	moderate	moderate

Table 12. Level of Presence of Dependent Variable’s Indicator “Awareness & Understanding” and the Influence of Independent’s Variables Indicators

The research has identified a low level of awareness in the case of study location A and a moderate level for the locality B on the topic of landscape conservation strategies put into practice by NGOs. In what regards the understanding of the landscape conservation strategies the situation is reversed: lower understanding is recorded in case B and moderate to high in case A. The difference is only partially explained by the variation in degree of involvement from the external actors as comparing the columns “level of presence of indicator” with “general presence of indicator” of NGOs interventions. Villagers’ level of awareness positively confirms the presence and the outcomes of NGOs communication efforts and management approach. While the second community benefits from the continuous presence of the families of the two NGOs’ directors and of the presence of MET’s leader herself, the second one relies on informal leadership and other sources of information. However, the relatively modest level of the awareness in the case B corroborated with the observation on the inverted manifestation of the landscape conservation understanding in the two villages allows for the following reflection: *While there is a correlation between NGOs’ presence and the level of awareness among the villagers this is not sufficient for increasing beneficiaries’ understanding on landscape conservation strategies.* Moreover, through their policy of funds distribution and allocation the NGOs can positively or negatively influence villagers’ opinion regarding the new development opportunities, but: *There is no clear correlation between NGOs’ involvement and the level of ownership and responsibility of the villagers for natural and cultural capital of their village.*

There are three possible explanations for these findings, as revealed by data analysis of the previous two chapters. First, the management approach of the NGOs was found to vary significantly from top-down (more in case B) to bottom-up (more in case A). The projects were decided and implemented without consistent prior consultations and without taking measures for ensuring wide audience but largely based on the their leaders’ and staff’s experience in the area. As a consequence, villagers from the two locations did not have an overview of the present conservation strategies targeting the area they live in, nor did they manifest acknowledgement for the mission and vision of the external actors involving in their communities. The relative isolation of the message is demonstrated by studying the cross-scale institutional linkages schemes (Figure 14 and 15). Carrying the messages across scales presents some typical features. While very intensive at same institutional level, horizontally as such but also vertically between middle and superior levels (national and local to regional and international actors) it is otherwise substantially hierarchically-dominated at grass-roots levels. Fertile contacts occur between NGOs and the shadow networks (donors or epistemic community) and the vast number of projects and initiatives stands as proof. NGOs maintain a generally proactive relation with public officials, occasionally dominating the situation as in case B with MET’ director also in the position of public councilor or causing opposition as in case A when local authorities considered their authority has been overridden when a major event was organized without their knowledge or with regards to the functioning of the new guesthouses. Data collected revealed situations of less efficient communication between these stakeholders, leading to

tensions. Also, as it was found, NGOs propound as community's voices, sometimes with seemingly lesser care for the deep situation which is a frequent bias in NGOs recruiting their leaders from the target communities as shown in the theoretical chapter. Consequence of lacking more direct communication, message at times surfaces distorted. Evidence of local people's initiatives being arrogated by some of the leaders supports the above argument. The reversed situation was also met, as informal leaders or other locals also sought to seize some of the initiatives, with the intention to motivate their involvement and legitimize their share from deriving benefits or to simply put themselves in a good light.

The second possible explanation refers to the significant difference in social capital between the two communities. This allows for understanding why community A displays a better understanding on the landscape conservation development opportunities while in the second only a few members and generally the ones involved directly in NGOs projects managed to comprehend conservation objectives. Community A manifests a strong bonding capital determined by the rich interactions between the villagers and the circulation of ideas inside cliques formed around some families and economic interests. This may prove inhibitory and preclude change as the relative lack of openness towards outsiders but also a certain mores regarding school drop-out among youth, endorses. Community B expresses a growing bridging capital propelled by the new gentrification tendency and the presence of prominent leaders. This is limited to a handful of families that is the most active in the new touristic economy of the village. The rest of the village is only erratically sharing the benefits. In community A, continuity in transfer of knowledge is easier to be observed compared to community B. Irrespective of the level of social capital, understanding of the villagers for the novel actors of governance like NGOs is limited, this partially explaining the absence within the conversations of these actors' names or deeds or confusion with other parties, usually public authorities. Another evidence for this situation is in case B where no other villagers besides the relatives of the MET and ADEPT leaders take an active part in the Local Action Group Tarnava Mare.

The insufficient understanding of landscape conservation strategies is also related to the scale of the subject which proves too distant and too abstract to lay people despite NGOs' attempts to tailor the message as per the villagers' interests and capacity to understand. As the comprehension is lower on cultural issues than on environmental/agriculture-related ones in study location A where the Saxon element is still well represented, it raises questions on the legitimacy and moreover, on the sustainability of the rehabilitation of the Saxon heritage. Villagers do not seem to cling or resonate with Saxon heritage's urgency of preservation, albeit in both locations but more pronounced in A, members of the other ethnic groups maintain a good dose of sympathy towards their village's Saxon origin. In both Mălâncrav and Viscri this also has an economic justification as the Saxons are generally among the better off that may also facilitate employment opportunities abroad.

Strong social capital is also the reason for a higher level of ownership and responsibility for the village's assets as expressed by people from Mălâncrav. Their care for the village is determined by a certain sense of place that they depict as affection to the layout of the village or natural environment elements like mocking birds, neighboring forest or water. In Viscri this sense of place was not as easily detectable among the respondents. Some did indicate their fondness for the tranquility and their sense of belonging is more of a reflex, they would more easily complain about what their village lacks than what it has. For the active individuals, their connection to the village appears more economically related to the current developments taking place. It is not as such, an attitude deriving from intimate care but more dependent on deriving material gains.

7.2.2 Participation in Landscape Conservation

Indicators dependent variable	Level of presence of indicators		Influence of Indicators independent variable									
			Knowledge		Financial support		Communication		Management & social skills		General presence of indicators	
Cases	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Participation	moderate to high	low	moderate	high	high	high/mixed	low	moderate	moderate	moderate	moderate	moderate

Table 13. Level of Presence of Dependent Variable's Indicator "Landscape Conservation" and The Influence of Independent's Variables Indicators

Study location A presents a higher level of engagement in small-scale agriculture than study location B, and many of its characteristics are particular to the traditional management model. Data collected highlights that villagers still possess traditional knowledge and competences and there is a division of labor among social classes allowing more individuals to derive livelihood from this activity. The land around the village belonging to its inhabitants it is still harvested to a large extent. People also grow vegetables in their gardens, hold vineyards and orchards and keep poultry and other livestock. The three crop model (rotation of cereals, roots and fallow) is not used anymore and generally the agricultural work is realized by the family with the help of neighbors and not with the community's mobilization as the Saxons used to do. Given the large participation in agriculture, there is proof that knowledge transfer between generations and ethnic groups has taken and is still taking place. Nevertheless, mechanization is gradually permeating, Mălâncrav being a community with one of the largest fleet of tractors in the area. This does not yet represent a threat of intensification, given the rising price of oils, the low purchasing power of the villagers and the typical allotment of small parcels among many proprietors. Petrochemicals are also modestly used, more as pesticides and herbicides while for the fertilization people rely on organic manure from their livestock.

The situation in study location B regarding participation in traditional agriculture is markedly different. While land owners lease their lands to specialized farmers, there is still an important percentage being left uncultivated as many of the landowners are not in the area anymore. Given the low interaction of villagers in what regards this activity and also due to the fact that the majority of the currently living population does not own land, the interest for agriculture is low. The land that was leased is now covered by monocultures and it is worked under conventional agriculture's methods with the use of chemical substances as fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides. However, traditional knowledge is still genuinely maintained by a few elderly that stick to the self-sufficiency model. Also, younger members of the community make proof of good knowledge on traditional methods that they learned from their parents. Some provided details on former agro-ecology, plants resulting from traditional practices that they used to consume or utilize. However, field data and interactions with villagers advance the assumption that transfer of knowledge between generations is not consistently taking place anymore as the former context of learning has been dismantled and few children remain in the community.

In both villages, the *NGOs' investments targeting rural development* – farm advisory service, rehabilitation of milk collecting center, and the revival of the old apple orchard, *show modest impact in engaging more people in traditional agriculture*. The subsidies for agri-environment were found to be particularly beneficial for people who own land and can ensure their hay for the wintertime. This means that while the new amounts of money from agri-environment subsidies, complemented, if accessed, by other subventions have increased the incomes of the farmers already engaged in agriculture, it did not expand over other inhabitants of the village but to a small extent. Few exceptions were met in the first community

where some of the landless Roma confessed that they were engaged in the cleaning of pasturelands around the area that had been included in the agri-environmental support schemes.

The situation manifests inverted on the topic of tourism, as the villagers from Viscri show an increasing inclination towards this activity and premises for professionalization have been set. *For both communities, there is clear evidence that involvement in tourism is positively correlated with the NGOs activity*, especially MET's who have opened the road to this occupation. This finding is supported by inquiries on the period before the NGOs started their activities. As interviews demonstrated, there were no initiatives regarding touristic development in neither of the villages. Large investments in the rehabilitation of houses' and other village buildings and the modernization of the interior of some Saxon houses designated to become guesthouses, the creation of two museums in both villages inside the fortified Evangelic Churches and intensive marketing and other advertising activities have created the suitable infrastructure for this activity to grow. The Trust also trained local work force in both villages to learn how to receive guests. The new guesthouse administrators completely (in case A) and partially (in case B) depend on the marketing network of the Trust and its coordination for running the business. The rapid pace and the magnitude of the projects have also set the premises for other investors to become attracted with the area and the tourist activities are becoming more specialized in locality B. It also opened the way for gentrification as urban wealthier citizens buy properties in the villages as holiday houses or as investments. A positive outcome of touristic development is that local products can be better and easier valorized. However, in community B contradictory situations were met: from guesthouse administrators that were included in culinary guides as they scrupulously respect the local recipes and products and to others that relied to a large extent on supermarket food.

7.2.3 Confidence in Current Livelihoods Strategies

Indicators dependent variable	Level of presence of indicators		Influence of Indicators independent variable									
			Knowledge		Financial support		Communication		Management & social skills		General presence of indicators	
Case	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Confidence	moderate	low to moderate	moderate	moderate	low/mixed	moderate/mixed	low	moderate	moderate	low to moderate	low to moderate	moderate

Table 14. Level of Presence of Dependent Variable's Indicator "Confidence in Current Livelihood Strategies" and the Influence of Independent's Variables' Indicators

Research on villagers' well being (see table 9) exposed easily perceivable differences in the level of confidence in current livelihood strategies between the two communities under study. While in the first village, optimism for the future was identified with individuals belonging to all social classes and irrespective of their occupation, in the second community there is a wider gap between more affluent villagers and the large majority, with the latter showing a fatalistic attitude. Isolating the particular features of each community and the presence of social capital in the first and the lack of it in the second together with the access to alternative economic opportunities created through work migration, *a correlation between NGOs involvement and villagers' level of confidence is determined*. This is particularly visible in study location B, as the difference between the two groups (optimists and fatalists) is distilled by their engagement or non-engagement in tourism. Also, the analysis of ex-ante and ex-post NGOs intervention supports this finding. After the peak of rehabilitations, people trained in old building techniques and guesthouse administration have lost some of their enthusiasm, especially in case A, when 2011 did not bring too many tourists.

Tourism development has not always generated positive reactions and, at least in case A, it is regarded only as an unpredictable income source, It is true that many tourist buses arrive to their villages but

actually few people spend more than two days here. From the field observation, it was remarked that tourists are generally elderly people and to a smaller extent, families with small children. The ones questioned admired the beautiful landscape of the villages but some pointed that they have a crowded visiting schedule and that, as far as they were informed, rural guesthouses were still uncomfortable and unsuited for accommodating large groups, as they usually travel. While their second assumption it is subjective and not supported by the actual situation, the latter is partially true – houses are best suited for smaller groups.

The rapid evolution of tourism and the increase in exterior attention for Viscri has generated some tensions between villagers that managed to get involved in the activity and the ones who didn't. Despite the fact that there are accusations from the latter category in what regards the undermining of importance of agriculture, as tourism is teaching people with rapid, higher but unsustainable gains, this cannot be related with NGOs activity. It is understood from the villagers' confessions and comparison with the situation in case A that other factors are in charge. Agriculture was already being progressively given up by the locals due to rapid depopulation but also broader economic context and the inability of the people to re-organize in the new setting. Often encountered in small communities it is a tendency of replicating the neighbors' strategies, after a period of testing and if proved successful. The same situation in the communities studied in this project. Participation in tourism is increasingly attracting the villagers in community B, with possible upcoming negative impacts for the traditional land management, while in A the interest in agriculture was formed through repeated interaction at community level and through negative reference to outside models that generated or maintained an interest in small agriculture at home. Economic history may also partially explain the current situation. Mălâncrav has been known as a wealthy community while Viscri was traditionally less affluent. These differences in economic background may have been a cause for the differences in levels of depopulation and current interest in agriculture.

Rural development measures the NGOs have undertaken have also proved beneficial for some of the villagers. Irrespective of the new competences they have acquired with the rehabilitation of the milk collecting center, their satisfaction from agricultural work is still low given the prices they receive for their products. Also, despite the long list of available subsidies, the participation in subvention schemes is low, people fearing bureaucracy or not fulfilling the requirements to apply.

Determinant for the varying degrees of confidence were found to be especially communication and management and social skills of the NGOs. The fact that in community B the power and message is clustered around one leader may explain the stronger contestation that was identified from people's answers compared to community A. Although much of the current transformation in Viscri has been put into being by the passion and dedication of a local inhabitant, she does not always gather the support of the villagers. Many of these do not understand her vision or do not appreciate her more imposing style. Efforts are regarded with suspicion or resentment. However, attitude changes if economic benefits are derived. Paradoxally but consistent with a fatalistic worldview, even though local people do not share the outer world's enthusiasm for the achievements of their leader in opening the village to various opportunities, the general impression is that they will continue to reelect her for the Town Hall as "there is nobody else who would bother". With all the impressive efforts of the NGOs, the majority of the people and especially the ones who are not much involved in tourism see in their village few opportunities to make a decent life. For them, tourists come here for amusement, to spend 2-3 days; it wouldn't be a life they would go for, they *know* tourists would not give up their high living standards in their countries of origin even if they continuously express profound appreciation for their locality. An explanation for the low level of confidence is explained by the disproportionate sharing of benefits and costs: the tourism-involved people gain higher profits than the farmers maintaining traditional land management, while these are virtually the attraction of the area. Tourists come to Saxon villages to embrace "authentic rural life", as presented in available guides, leaflets and websites.

7.2.4 Perceived Capability to Self-Organize

Indicators dependent variable	Level of presence of indicators		Influence of Indicators independent variable									
			Knowledge		Financial support		Communication		Management & social skills		General presence of indicators	
	Case A	Case B	Case A	Case B	Case A	Case B	Case A	Case B	Case A	Case B	Case A	Case B
Self-organization	moderate to high	low	moderate	high	moderate	moderate	low	high	moderate	moderate	low to moderate	moderate to high

Table 15. Level of Presence of Dependent Variable's Indicator "Perceived Capability for Self-Organization" and The Influence of Independent's Variables' Indicators

Analyzing the collective choice rules, local leadership, traceable norms and social capital present in the two communities under study leads to the conclusions presented in the table above: the level of presence of dependent variable's indicator "perceived capability of self-organization" was found to be moderate to high in case A and low in case B. Observing as such, the evolution of independent variable's indicators, we take note that they manifest conversely than the dependent variable's indicators. As such, while the perceived capability to self-organize of community A was found to be moderate to high, the influence of NGOs' involvement only counted for a low to moderate extent. In the case of community B, capability of self-organization is low but the impact of NGOs is moderate to high. This advances the conclusion that *NGOs involvement has recorded impact at ground level* and has managed to actively engage some individuals in their activity *but there is not sufficient proof to show correlation with community's capacity to self-organize*. For this trait to manifest, there are other elements that are required, such as social capital which largely makes the difference between the two communities.

Although both villages have lost much of their informal organization with the departure of the Saxons, and bottom-up collective action is almost virtually inexistent, unwritten rules and codes of conduct still organize villager's interrelations in the case of community A. The capacity of self-organization of community A relies on existing internal entrepreneurship and access to various resources, both human and natural, features that manifest to a lower extent in the second community. In contrast to Mălâncrav, more people from Viscri feel they are "too small" to influence the decision-making, indulging in the belief they do not have the means and resources to take in de vast amount of information and ajust to the rapid transformations. This also explains why so many work without contracts and are reluctant to apply for subsidies. Book keeping, even at a primary level, is a competence they find difficult to learn.

The field notes collected sketches the study location B as a community in formation. It lacks references and self-confidence given the sudden social transformations that have cut many links with the past and the transfers between generations and newcomers were abruptly interrupted. The elderly *would* know how to fix things but younger people do not value their opinions anymore. "There is no more discipline and respect" the former continuously complain. Young members of the community are not habituated with a work programme anymore – either agricultural or urban as they do not learn to work the land or a craft. In Mălâncrav, agricultural work is still a filter for villagers' relationships.

The lack of financial power was identified as critical for the incapacity to take initiative in both communities. Moreover, in Viscri, as people claim, any attempt to increase incomes starts and stops with the same issue: the low degree of technological endowment and the lack of available knowledgeable workforce in agriculture. However, although incomes declared by the villagers are in line with national statistics regarding rural incomes it is difficult to assert that these are the *actual* amounts the people dispose of. There is a reticence, especially in community B to disclose this type of information, a reticence which can be interpreted as a mere livelihood strategy. Some villagers would portray themselves in worse conditions in order to attract material sympathy especially now with the money flowing from the many tourists that fall impressed with the "simplicity" and "poverty" of the locals. There is a sort of a competition

among the villagers to attract a benefactor that would care for their family and when one succeeds, it is begrudged by the others. When trust was established with respondents, some recognized that their material condition is not actually that precarious.

The social situation between the two villages also diverges, providing insights on the internal recognition of certain informal rules that organize a good cohabitation. In community B, the Roma were reluctant to disclose their ethnicity. The hetero-identification is not trustworthy either highlighting a poorer relation between individuals. In Mălâncrav on the other hand, individuals in general showed pride for their multi-cultural community. Here, the inter-marriages between all ethnic groups are common while in Viscri there were examples of family repudiation in cases alike. However, in both villages there is a difference between “indigenous” and new-comers Roma. While the former are well integrated, the latter is relatively isolated, also self-isolated. It is interesting the inner-discrimination of this group which confirms the preconceived ideas that link ethnicity to poverty. The members of the community who work closely with the other ethnic groups do not consider themselves as Roma anymore and even embrace their opinions that it is the “lazy Roma” (poverty is equaled with laziness) that slow down the development of the village or bring.

Viscric more than Mălâncrav exposes less entrepreneurship while collective action is low in both cases. Indicative for this is the contradictory attitude of the local people of Viscric towards their leaders. The people do not necessarily trust, but expect or hope that the leaders would take care of them and show them the way as they are “too poor, needy and isolated” to be able to self-organize or take action. They talk to each other about what they do not agree but rarely do they inform the leader about their actual disagreements. This is indicative of the lack of self-confidence and interpersonal trust and the sometimes inapproachability of leaders, real or fabricated. It is also a sign that a large portion of the population is incapable to resonate with conservation strategies; they find it hard to understand concepts of cultural heritage, public goods or rural quality of life in a community that it’s at cross-roads. However, with the regular meetings that MET’s or at the “Viscric Begins” Association have facilitated, they found more space to speak their minds.

In Viscric, moderate progress has been achieved with the formation of the grass-root organization “Viscric Begins” Association with the help of few German citizens that settled into the village. Its mode of functioning is based on devising responsibilities among local women which has slowly developed a sense of entrepreneurship. However, as responsibilities are not rotating among members, this has attracted the suspicion of other women about the distribution of incomes and other aspects of functioning, claiming the “leaders” were organizing things especially for their benefit. Also, the women in the Association are very attentive to each other, also for quality control on the felt products but also in winning clients. Under the first appearance of functionality, mistrust and resentment characterize the relations between some of the members.

In Mălâncrav, the two livestock Associations have divided responsibilities among members and maintains the relation with the milk processor companies. In both communities, the rehabilitation of the milk collecting centers complemented by the trainings in hygiene, milk quality testing and the advisory service for agri-environmental subsidies application have proved useful for especially the middle-class farmers and to a lower extent for landless or people that do not own animals. As well, people who still have a cow or two in their husbandry can obtain a little income from taking the surplus to the collecting center. But, unrelated to NGOs’ efforts on this topic, the agri-environmental subsidies have generated a spiral of elite capture, causing sometimes profound in the communities. Regarding ADEPT’s interest specifically directed for supporting cattle owners, it was incorrectly interpreted by other villagers, and some of the local leaders have unofficially assumed this project to themselves, with animosities resulting.

7.3 Conclusions on Research Question and Hypothesis

Two observations led to the formulation of this research project. First, the advancements of environmental science has brought to light new information regarding the mutuality and interdependence between humans and the natural world. This further revealed that much of the surrounding biological diversity resulted from socio-ecological interactions, which created typical social institutions imprinting distinctiveness to inhabited landscapes. Particular traditional knowledge of landscape management is ensuring the provision of valuable public benefits like climate control, watershed management, food security or biodiversity. Secondly, large-scale phenomena like globalization of trade and population growth have generated unprecedented change upon rural landscapes with serious consequences on the natural environment and human societies depending on it. Rural dwellers are not always capable to cope with these shocks and shifts by themselves and they need to partner with upper-scale institutional structures to be able to overcome or reduce negative impacts. Depending on the level of cooperation between these differently positioned actors, objectives of environmental protection and social well-being will be fulfilled to various degrees. External actors increasingly involved in joint projects of conservation and poverty alleviation were found to be the non-governmental actors (NGO). These civil society structures have become ubiquitous in the environmental governance process at every institutional level.

Taking the case of the Saxon cultural landscape from Southern Transylvania, Romania which has recently experienced serious alterations to its internal structure (see chapter 4), the objective of this project was to develop greater understanding on non-governmental actors' influence on the capacity to adapt to socio-economic change of rural communities. More specifically, it sought to determine whether the involvement of NGOs in the conservation of the Saxon landscape's natural and cultural heritage has caused direct influences on 1) the livelihood security and 2) capability to self-organize of the local communities. An area valuable and unique in both culture and biodiversity, it bears the fingerprint of a particular ethnic group – the Saxons, who have developed during the centuries environmentally friendly practices that shaped a complex landscape. Recently, two historical cohabiting ethnic groups, Romanians and Roma, became the majority population replacing this landscape's initial founders, the Saxons. As such, to better isolate the influence of NGOs, this study took as explanatory variable the presence of Saxons ethnics. Efforts were made to determine how much of the Saxon traditional knowledge was transferred to the other ethnic groups, now a majority and, if still present, how much does Saxonness count for landscape conservation in general and NGOs' strategies in particular.

The research question supporting this objective was the following:

In what ways do the NGOs influence the capacity of the communities located in the Saxon cultural landscape from Transylvania, Romania to adapt to unprecedented socio-economic change so as to retain the same functions of providing the valuable environmental and social public benefits?

The focus was as such on the effects generated by NGOs involvement (independent variable) on the local capacity to adapt to change (dependent variable) where the villages' communities represented the unit of analysis. The resilience defines the capacity of the Saxon Villages systems to maintain the provisioning of public benefits which are ensured through traditional agriculture.

The hypothesis formulated to test the research question was stated as it follows:

IF a higher level of NGOs involvement increases the capacity to adapt to change of communities living in the Saxon cultural landscape THEN it is expected that informal loss of social capital to be supplemented by external involvement RESULTING in a revival of the productive character of the area (focus on traditional agriculture).

As the mapping exercise from chapter 4, section 4.6. has highlighted, two NGOs have taken the lead over Saxon's cultural landscape conservation. Their missions, objectives and projects were found both complementary and overlapping focusing on cultural reconstruction (more in the case of Mihai Eminescu Trust) and rural development and biodiversity conservation (more in the case of ADEPT Foundation). However, the two NGOs do not collaborate on a regular basis but more in regional projects which engage a large spectrum of stakeholder. In both studied communities there were also identified grass-roots organizations which accompany the two leading NGOs and may feed into the larger conservation

objectives. Although dependent on external financing, the two NGOs successfully manage to connect interested parties in supporting their objectives and they do not appear being driven by externally-imposed agendas. This is indicative for their influence and power in the decision making process.

The comparisons between the findings for each case study previously outlined in this chapter has allowed for the correlations between levels of involvement of NGOs and the extent to which adaptive capacity of communities A and B can be said was positively influenced. Analyzing the NGOs influence on each indicator, some probable causal relations have been identified. Observing in parallel (table 9) the effects on the two communities, it is noticed that a higher level of NGO involvement did count for the difference in the capability to adapt to change between the two communities albeit limited to few specific features, of which evolutions it is not sure will count for the revival of traditional agriculture and thus meeting the conservation objectives. The variations between the levels of presence of dependent variables' indicators on one hand and between the independent variable's indicator on the other for each of the two cases stands as proof. As shown in the table below (10), community A exhibits a moderate capacity to adapt to change not related to the NGOs' efforts while community B's social capital depends on the NGOs initiatives and presence. The following sections pull out the conclusions resulting from the comparison made here.

Case	Aggregated appraisal of level of presence of indicators of dependent variable		Aggregated appraisal of influence of independent variable indicators	
	A	B	A	B
	moderate	low	low to moderate	moderate
A	lower NGO involvement, ethnic mix (46%Romanians,40% Roma, 14%Saxons)			
B	higher NGO involvement, Roma majority (80%), few Saxons and Romanians			

Table 16 Aggregated Appraisal of Level of Presence of Dependent Variable's Indicators and of the Influence of Independent Variable's Indicators

7.3.1 Influence of NGOs on Livelihood Security

Positive albeit limited NGOs influence on the two villages' livelihood security was identified resulting from the new opportunities created especially with the intensive support for the development of touristic infrastructure. Few individuals from each community now have a stable income, and few others derive earnings during touristic season or with specific projects like the rehabilitation of houses. During the peak of these restorations, a higher percentage of local people was involved and thus, increased their earnings. The main sources the villagers depend on are retirement pensions, social allowance and economic migration.

Interpreting the data summarized in the table 9, there is evidence demonstrating that the engagement of local people in tourism was generated by NGOs initiatives while there is inconclusive data supporting a possibly resulting higher engagement with traditional agriculture. However, the corollary is only partially true. Information gathered does not indicate a distancing from traditional agriculture spawned by the NGOs involvement. The testimonies collected in Viscri on this subject should be interpreted in their wider context. Agriculture is an activity that was progressively given up by the inhabitants of this locality due to depopulation and there is also a certain disdain for work that is not mechanized. As found, in both communities, diversification through tourism only modestly impacted the local foodstuff production and the farmers who also engaged in tourism asserted that they can manage both activities in parallel. *While in community B complementary activity of "Viscri Begins" Association has facilitated a wider distribution of financial resources flowing in the community with the arrival of tourists, supporting more individuals as such, in Mălâncrav the earnings flow towards few and the same individuals, i.e. women involved in guesthouse administration.*

Farmers in both locations confirm they have benefited from the new milk collecting center and farm advisory service but not enough to motivate other people to join. Specifically, villagers that have given up

their cattle in the critical year of 2007-2008 when Romania EU's accession led to the withdrawal of milk collecting companies from their village, claim that it is still not yet profitable to restart activity. To make a decent income of this activity, one needs more than one cow, land for hay and access to labor resources (kin or neighbors). In people's opinion, this activity is costly for a small-holder while the newly allocated subsidies do make a difference for large scale farmers. Consequently there is a tendency in both villages to intensify and expand livestock to gain higher income as encouraged by the availability of AES.

An important outcome of the recent diversification of local economy through tourism is the increasing possibilities for women to participate in remunerated work. The low representation of rural women on the labor market is a wide-spread problem across rural communities of Romania. The women are preferred for the uprising touristic activities, while men worked in constructions, lumberjacking, or agriculture. The new access to economic power explains the higher support for this activity among women than with men. Regarding the latter, several of them were integrated in the vast rehabilitation programmes that brought a source of income for their family and competences that could be later capitalized.

Modest spin-offs were generated through the development of tourism, more visible in Viscri. The new infrastructure and interest for an area largely undiscovered has brought new settlers into the village that invested in tourism. Also, as it was shown, the grass-root organization "Viscristeni" came into being with the support of German citizens that live in the village. Other spin-offs led to the expansion of trade and services, as Viscri now has two cafes and one souvenir shop where the women's hand-worked products are sold.

7.3.2 Influence of NGOs on The Communities' Self-Organizing Capacity

Although there is evidence the NGOs have set the premises for reconstructing the spirit of entrepreneurship of the local villagers, it is premature to assert a positive outcome has been generated. Data collection supports this assumption, given the difference between the dependent and independent variable's indicators for the 2 cases studies. While in community A the presence of dependent variable's indicators perform relatively well but the influence of independent variable is low to moderate, in the case of community B the situation is reversed. The NGOs efforts managed to sustainably reach only a few villagers. The involvement has had an easily traceable impact on the built patrimony, but for the human capital, the positive contribution is less noticeable and more difficult to assess given also to the inertia of informal institutions that are more resistant to change, as shown in the theoretical chapter.

NGOs have worked for the betterment of both physical and institutional infrastructure. Through their activity, local people were endowed with skills in tourism and traditional crafts that they could later use to find work. The investments in the professional skills of the villagers have increased individual's confidence and were later able to find work. Currently there are many initiatives for site rehabilitation in the Saxon landscape and their competences become useful. NGOs efforts lowered transaction costs in what concerns the new opportunities for small-holders and complemented basic health and education services that the local administration or the community itself could not secure. Funds were directed towards sanitation with building an innovative wastewater treatment (community B) and supplement public authorities' budget for infrastructure (both cases). However, despite the considerable amount of funding, the communities are still very much reliant on external support, as some NGOs representatives have also indicated. It is premature to say, as such, the projects have reached a self-sustaining state especially in what concerns tourism.

Understanding the influence of NGOs on fostering the local collective action is done through the assessment of their management approach and social skills. As the data collected illustrates, only modest progress was observed. For example, in the case of the milk collecting centers, they functioned since the beginning through the local people management. This project has generated at least two positive outcomes regarding the empowerment of farmers: besides the new chance to access the markets, it brought them together to collaborate. The villagers devised rules for its utilization and if respected, a smooth functioning is ensured. Also, certain norms were established in community B regarding the protection of the built patrimony. Some villagers have understood the capital value of their home place and they support each other not to destroy its authenticity by preventing inappropriate initiatives. They

know that village's architecture is the attraction for the tourists (12000 people have come to Viscri in the summer of 2010).

7.3.3 Final Conclusion: Conserving Culture, Conserving Nature

The findings deriving from the comparative analysis invalidate the hypothesis that has guided this research project. Although there is evidence of the influence of NGOs involvement on some of the elements on which social adaptive capacity builds upon, like the confidence and awareness and understanding on landscape conservation in both studied villages, the NGOs projects mobilized low spill-over effects onto the revival of traditional agriculture. This leads to the conclusion that a higher external implication is not conditional for the Saxon communities' resilience. Also, given the modest influence on livelihood security and capacity to self-organize of the two local communities it is not possible to conclude whether NGOs implication has had an impact in averting the risks of land abandonment and intensification that the Saxon landscapes confronts although positive premises have been set.

Researching if cultural element catalyzes in any way external actors' involvement, data collected does not support whether the higher number of Saxons in community A is related to a higher involvement in landscape conservation and vice versa. Agricultural work in Mălâncrav engages all ethnic groups. Nor it supports the existence of more traditional landscape management of community A compared to community B. It is certain though, that resources, both knowledge and human capital, for this type of activity are higher in case A than case B, as in first case lower depopulation has maintained a certain continuity of practices and local customs. Also, it was found that in both cases the Saxon agricultural model is only partially preserved. The growing number of sheep in both case studies confirms the ethnic changes that took place in the last years (see, for example Urushibara-Yoshino & Mori, 2007). However, the easily perceivable distinction between the two villages is related to a higher sense of place and a lower discrimination towards Roma in community A. The high rate of mixed marriages may be a hypothesis for this assumption but it is yet to be uncovered together with other anthropological and sociological aspects that this study did not deal with.

Besides conclusions on the cross-scale institutional influences, this study has allowed gaining insights on different mismatches between temporal, spatial and functional scales (See section 2.8) which are relevant in the governance of the Saxon landscape. According to the local people's perception from community B, the timing of investments is not the most propitious, as there is few reliable locals that would make the most out of the opportunities. Positive evolution on this scale is the fact that both NGO try to favor as much as possible local expertise that can be made more available than expatriate expertise, complementing for the inherent short nature of the projects funded. Spatial scale is more difficult to be determined, at least in what regards the matching of biophysical boundaries and those of the projects as this did not represent the focus of the present study. However, for the cultural boundaries, these seem fairly consistent, following the Saxon element. The third scale is the one most pronounced as found by this study. According to Folke et al (2007, 2010) it describes the myopia of users, when blueprint-policies are used to deal with complex system issues. Evidence collected in this research confirms a mismatch identified between official and unofficial discourse resulting in the creation of *certain* type of landscape that overlooks the reality on the ground to some extent. Also, the over-emphasis on tourism development, discussed in the closing chapter, may also serve as an argument.

Besides the NGOs involvement, this study has looked into the inner capacity of the community to adapt to change. While the first community proves a higher degree of adaptability, i.e. the capacity of people in a social-ecological system to build resilience through collective action (Folke, 2006), in the second one, a transformability i.e. creating a new socio-ecological when the current conditions are untenable, is more present, albeit given the presence of well-connected leaders and not necessarily at group-level. Livelihoods are more sustainable in Malancrav than in Viscri as people show higher capacity to recover from stress, relying on internal structures and creating the opportunities for future generations to develop within but not exclusive in semi-subsistence farming. As well in the case of Viscri, it becomes observable that market-based institutions which are developing with the apparition of tourism are undermining local social capital, but they also show proof of recreating new relations embedded in the new system, as the complementing of activities between NGOs and GRO demonstrate.

8. Conclusions and discussion

8.1. Resilience for whom?

The comparative analysis of the two communities located in the Saxon traditional landscape confirms the theory on social capital, reconfirming once more, its critical importance regarding the chances of a community to self-organize both economically and culturally. NGOs have acted as “bridging organizations” (Folke et al., 2005:445) succeeding to some degree to integrate traditional knowledge in their activity while reducing the costs for local people’s in what regards the information on new opportunities. They need however to stress on knowledge sharing and enhance participation. One possible solution would be to tighten their objectives one in relation with the other and collaborate more, to use the knowledge and expertise from both parts. Also, the present study allows for interesting reflections on types of leadership’s influences. Organic leadership may lose of its authority and support when moving on higher institutional scale. The risk is that the “community’s view” to be taken for granted under the subjective will of people in power and the vision to be disconnected from grass-roots realities. Upon reflecting on the two cases’ distinct situations one can conclude that despite the presence of leading figures having facilitated much of the current development taking place throughout the landscape this cannot substitute for informal guidance that is particularly important for ensuring day-to-day operational efficiency.

Several mismatches are identified when confronting external actors’ discourse on Saxon landscape’s preservation with situation on the ground which raises the questions on the sustainability of the conservation measures. This place is constructed as a “medieval”, “ancient”, “relic of the past” which is understandably attracting a certain public of tourists. However, as shown by Antrop (2005), cultural landscapes retain memories from the past more visible than in other parts but they are not static entities. “Traditional” is not attractive among the local youth while sufficiency, as it was shown, is a sign of poverty and indignity. Moreover, only few members of the studied communities derive their livelihood only from this activity although food autonomy is still important for people’s well-being. Other elements are becoming increasingly important for these rural dwellers. As it was shown, infrastructure counts heavily in the people’s perception of freedom of choice. In Mălâncrav, many of the villagers repeatedly mentioned that with the recently asphalted access road, they believe their chances for development have expanded. This is deeply imprinted in the collective memory as an important progress being achieved, as personal accounts mentioned grave restrictions to critical services, like prevention to continue studies or access to health care. To this improvement, the introduction of optical fiber and rehabilitation of local school were added, increasing the comfort the villagers’ satisfaction. For many of them, these advancements are also a reason of pride, given the general poor connectivity of other communities in the area. Situation in Viscri confirms the above assumption. People often complain about the poor quality of the road that, in their opinion, “keeps them isolated” especially in wintertime when it becomes almost impracticable. This is the cause, in their opinion, that suppliers or possible clients avoid to come to their village. The permeating of urban culture is also fairly visible in both villages from an interest in orientation to urban job markets to clothing for field-work, interior design of the houses and culinary preferences. The city is luring with opportunities and some villagers’ even mentioned the fact that investors (NGOs included) coming to their village are usually affluent urban dwellers.

Traditional land management knowledge is dwindling with fewer transfers taking place between generations and ethnic groups. External support should concentrate to address this situation so that productive character and competences of the local people to be put in a new, functional context.. Although tourism helps diversifying farm-incomes and helped raising the broader society’s interest for this special area, it should not become a panacea. Its contribution to a better capitalization of local products it is yet found to be modest. The risk is to become a management trap that will deepen current threats menacing the Saxon landscape and to run against the initial conservation objectives. Tourism is a fairly competitive activity and has a saturation level quicker to be reached compared to food production which can be wide-ranging and can better serve both internal and external communities. Also, securing cultural reconstruction through economic gains might be a wise strategy, albeit of an uncertain future. As villagers’ comprehension is lower on cultural issues than on environmental/agriculture-related ones in

study location A where the Saxon element is still well represented, it raises questions on the legitimacy and moreover, on the sustainability of the rehabilitation of the Saxon heritage. Only financial reward will not ensure the projects' success. A truly European patrimony, its safeguarding is not easily understandable for the present inhabitants of the villages. A balance between meeting their needs for development and broader interest should be better tuned.

Mapping people's attitudes and values offers some possible directions for action. More efforts from the NGOs and other external actors should be directed towards substituting for the low education and medication services and to increase the access to information technology that will continue the opening of the area with expected positive effects, as indicated by various entrepreneurs from the Saxon landscape. Also, it needs to synchronize with people's understanding of development and create more space for cultural interaction. Conservation should not be applied literally and become restrictive, and change should be allowed, meeting the local people's desire and need for novelty.

More attention needs to be given to the redistribution and reachability of new funds made available, as currently the Roma population is largely left out from the current development, despite forming the majority in the area. With a legitimate desire not to positively discriminate among present inhabitants of the Saxon landscape, NGOs initiatives leave out this vulnerable group. Addressing some of the protracted problems they are facing may positively influence traditional agriculture continuity. As it was found in this study, they are largely engaged in this activity where there exist the opportunity while if isolated from a learning environment, the precarious state deepens.

The two reflections enclosed in the paragraphs above suggest the need for more participatory approaches in implementing landscape conservation in the Saxon cultural landscape. If measures of conservation are to be furthered, a wider support is to be ensured, better devising authority and control across institutional scales. Consequently, communication needs to be strengthened in such ways that local villagers identify economic potential while regaining or cultivating ownership and pride over their native places. Villagers have to be more engaged in projects that target their livelihoods. Strategies need to take in consideration the former history of authoritative control when appealing to people's degree of entrepreneurship and understand that these communities were relatively economically equal until recently and any intervention should look for avoiding conflict generation and to nurture cooperation among the first and foremost implementers of conservationist principles.

8.2 Reflections on Research Design

When choosing for the cases and methods to answer the research questions and advance new ideas on social-ecological systems and their resilience, time was taken to reflect on issues of generalization, of sources' reliability and ethical considerations concerning the informants. Aspiring to highlight aspects on general themes like economic transitions, world systems, communities formation, or social-ecological resilience a Transylvanian village was deemed to be a good unit of analysis. As Katherine Verdery (1983) also found, these communities have for centuries participated, assisted or generated some outstanding events: like feudal, imperialist, capitalist, socialists and recently, European-federalist evolutions. As such, although it all might seem "grandiose", "a Transylvanian village is as good a place as any we could find to examine events such as these. For such events consist not only of abstract sequences occurring far above the ground but of concrete ones with real effects on the lives of small communities of people, which serve among other things as settings within which major social processes play themselves out – and are, sometimes, modified as well" (ibid: 17)

From this stand point, a microscopic, and anthropological in nature research made sense when choosing the approach for treating the research question. Anthropology is an umbrella-science, and cannot exist but interdisciplinary. As a consequence, the present study is compounded with elements from several fields like history, sociology, and economics. Anthropology works with and for the other sciences: it is a "documentation of the specifics that verifies amends or invalidates larger theories about social process" (Ibid.) However, this type of approach has its limits and biases. It also proved very demanding, as it implied gathering a large data in a short time, manufacturing a credible stance in front of the informants,

protecting their anonymity, or talking to different groups, sometimes in opposition. All these required good preparation, oversight, flexibility, and constant reiteration.

Prior to embark in this project, these confines were fully acknowledged. One of the most evocative biases was the validity of the information to be collected from the villagers. One must distill between memoir accounts and personal stories and documentary sources. Respondents are not scientific sources, they are bounded to personal memories and certain discourses manufactured within their communities or individually and the examples of situations, observations or discussion that are given can only come as illustration of theoretical concepts that are to be advanced. As the pool of respondent was large and diverse, it was impossible to conduct interviews in the same manner. To stand as a proof, the data collected from these subjects, apart from inherently subjective topics, had to be confirmed by academic or expert sources and filtered through the chosen theories for this interdisciplinary project.

Another issue came into the way at the moment of interpreting the data. How to maintain neutrality and objectivity? Transylvania's history has always been one of the most "politically explosive" (Verdery, 1983) subjects being the cradle for three competing ethnic groups: Hungarians, Saxons and Romanians. The Roma and Gypsy population appeared much later in the landscape and are not currently counted for the sometimes still tense territorial claims. With virtually no more Saxons left in the area, the claims on it are not that explosive anymore. At first sight. With the renewed interest in the land for agriculture, i.e. for the subsidies (for pastureland but not only), one might discover that interests are rising. Which might not be ethnic-territorial anymore, but fairly economic. Also, because the Romanian state has been very active in supporting local ethnics in this area that has, until the 2nd world war have been a minority, the recent generation have built their own ownership discourse.

To avoid ethnic related biases, the analytic initiative of this project departs from the consideration advanced by the Hungarian historian László Makkai that the individuality of Transylvania lies precisely in the entanglement of the various ethnic groups' existence. In his opinion, parameters set by the geographical variability create different conceptions of the same overall geographic space (Makkai 1946: 13). I, as a Romanian myself subscribe to this opinion and I express the hope for the diversity of this ever interesting land to continue existing.

8.3 Directions for Further Research

1. The typical research design chosen to support the research questions of this paper allowed for explanatory inference from available small N data. To increase the generalizability of the observations resulted from this research; the pool of comparative cases is to be expanded. Although attempts to understand surrounding villages' situations were made, these were only used to confirm answers of the target villagers but due to resource limitations, could not become self-standing cases.
2. As it became apparent from the cross-scale institutional mappings, other external actors exert considerable influence over rural communities' adaptive capacities, like local public authorities or faith-based organizations. To expand the knowledge on external influence but also isolate NGOs contributions, these actors should also be investigated. IAD framework proves supportive for this purpose.
3. This study delved only limited (through human well-being mapping) in understanding local's people deriving benefits from surrounding biodiversity. Understanding the local people linkages with the landscapes ecosystem services (also cultural services) may also expand the knowledge on local factors constricting or fostering external involvement.

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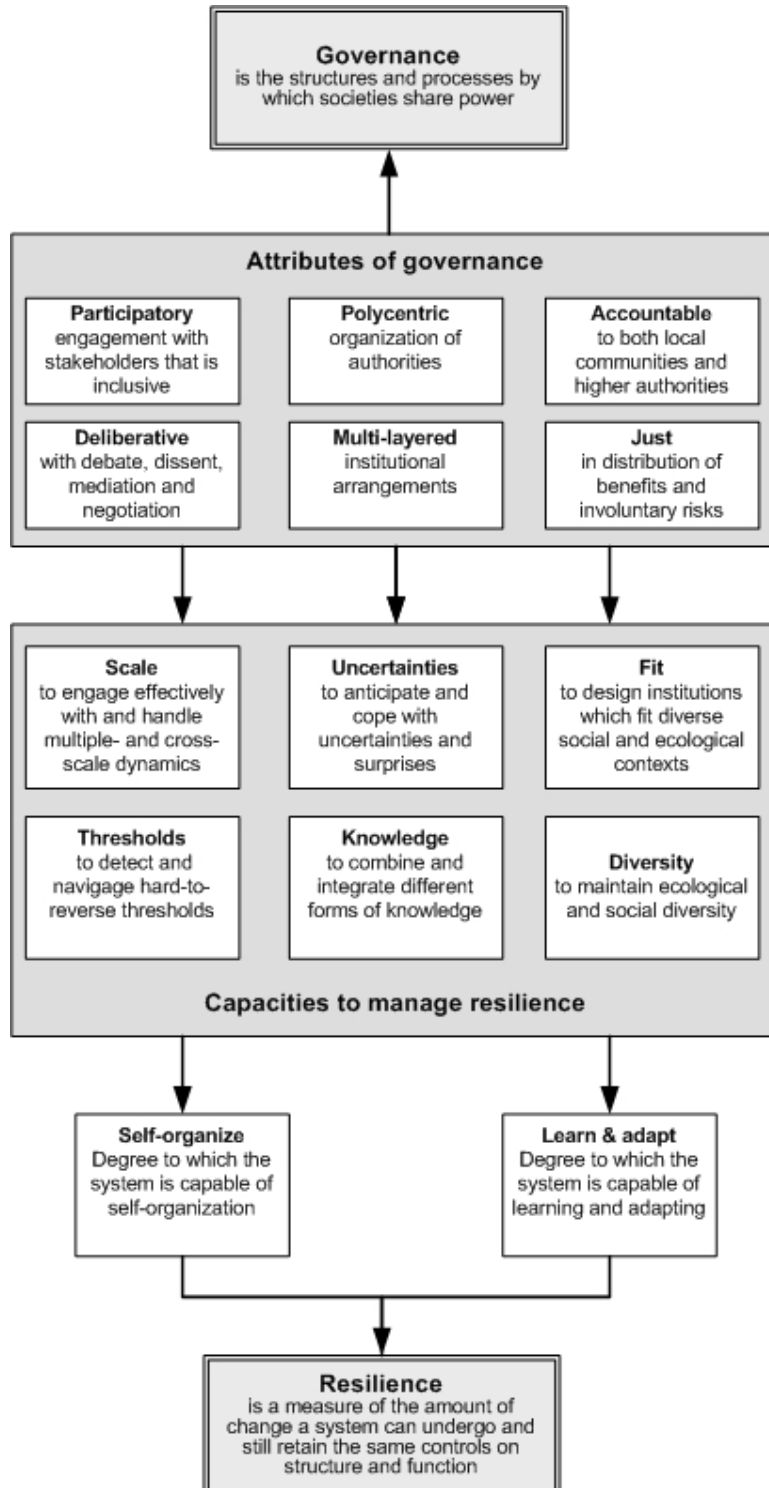
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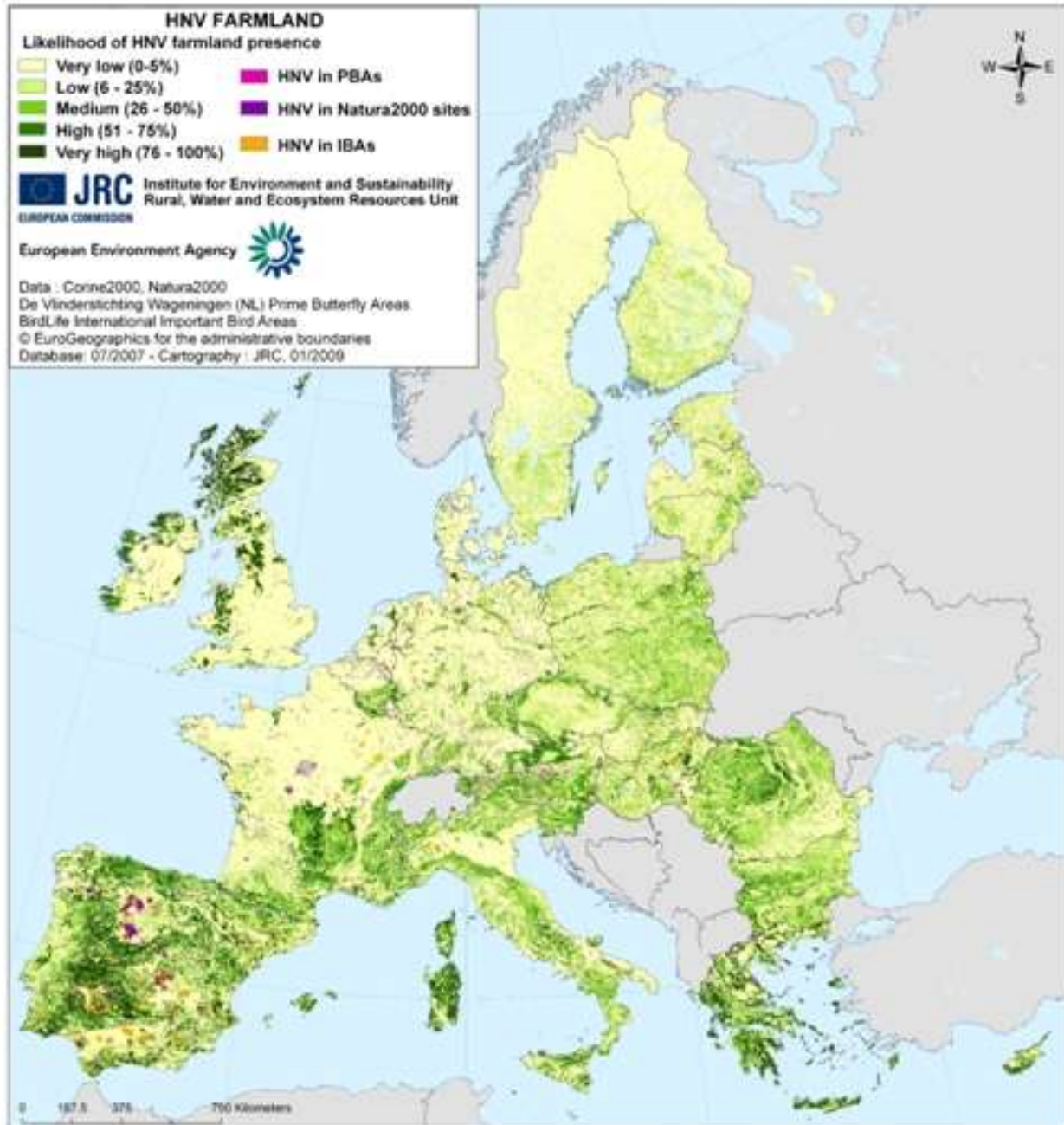
ANNEX A

Associations between selected attributes of governance systems and the capacity to manage resilience
(source: Lebel et al (2006))



ANNEX B – MAPS

Figure 1: Likelihood of HNV farmland presence at EU level



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Figure 2: Map of the area showing sites of special interest

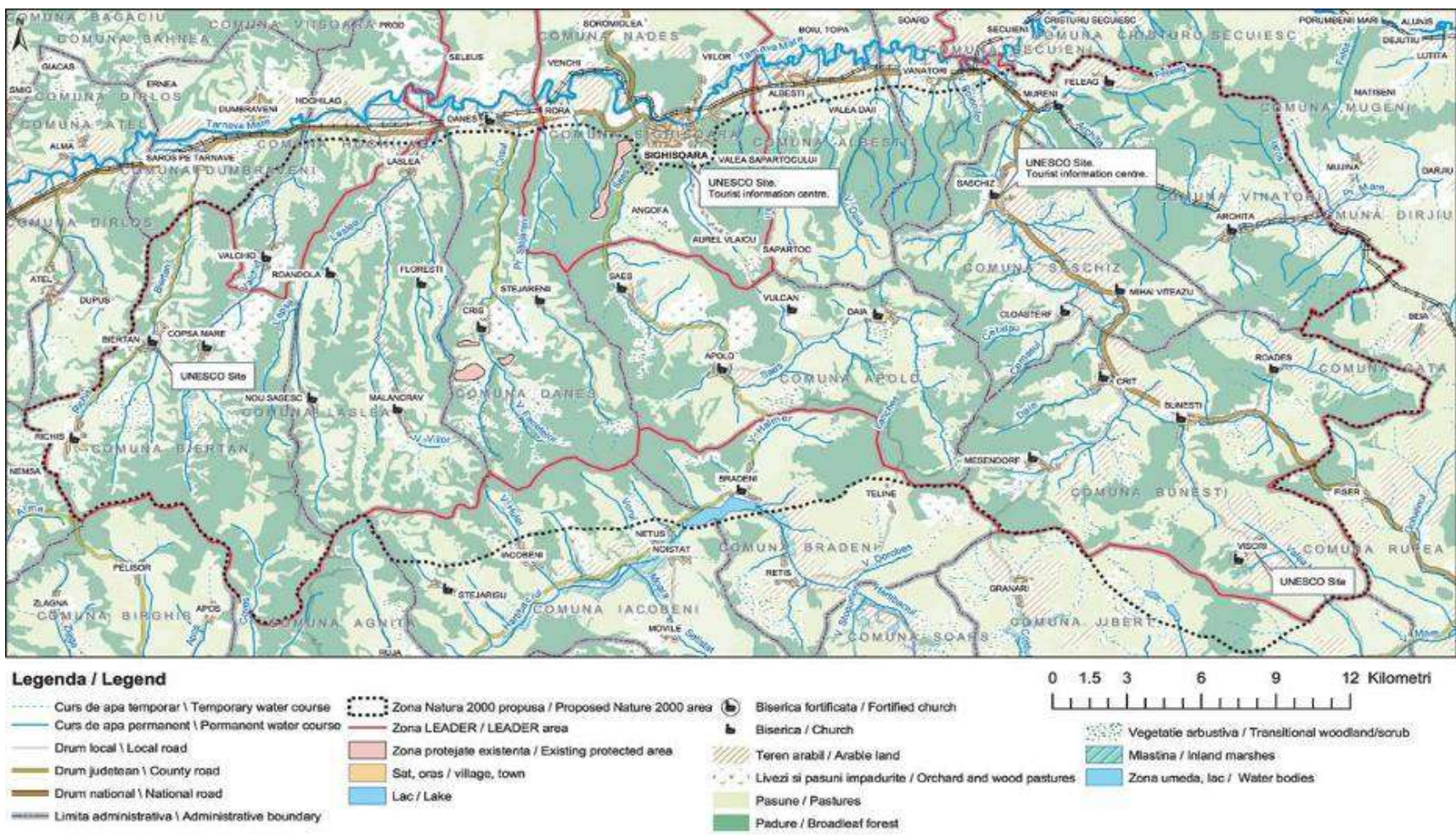


Figure 3. The dispersion of HNV area in Romania – green shaded, (source MADR 2007). The red oval marks the study location of this paper

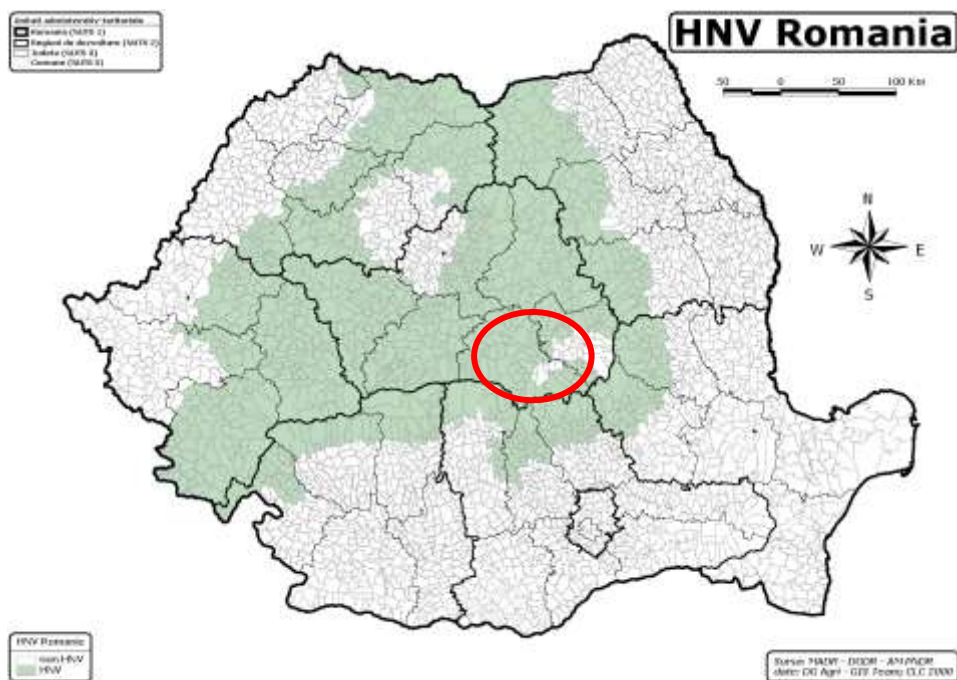
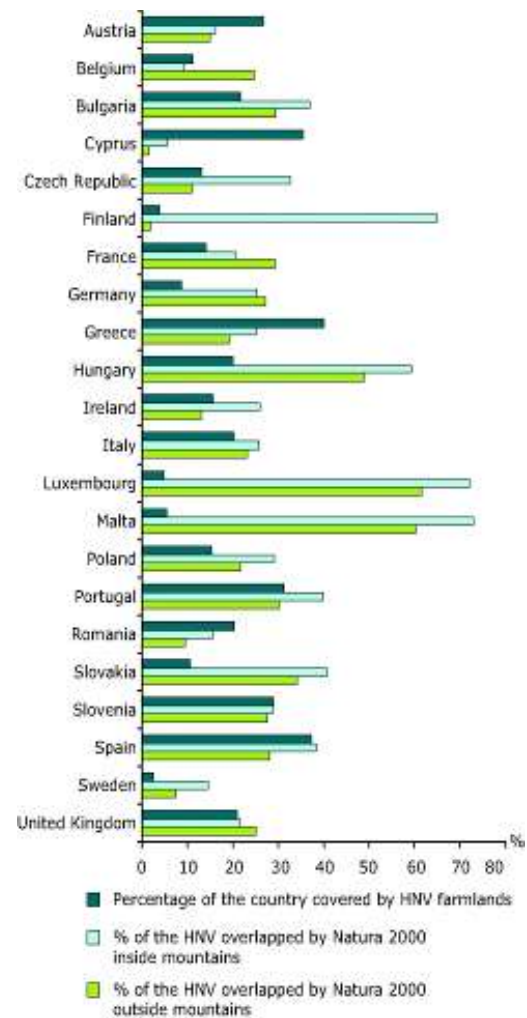


Figure 4 Overlap between HNV and Natura 2000 sites (source EEA 2011)



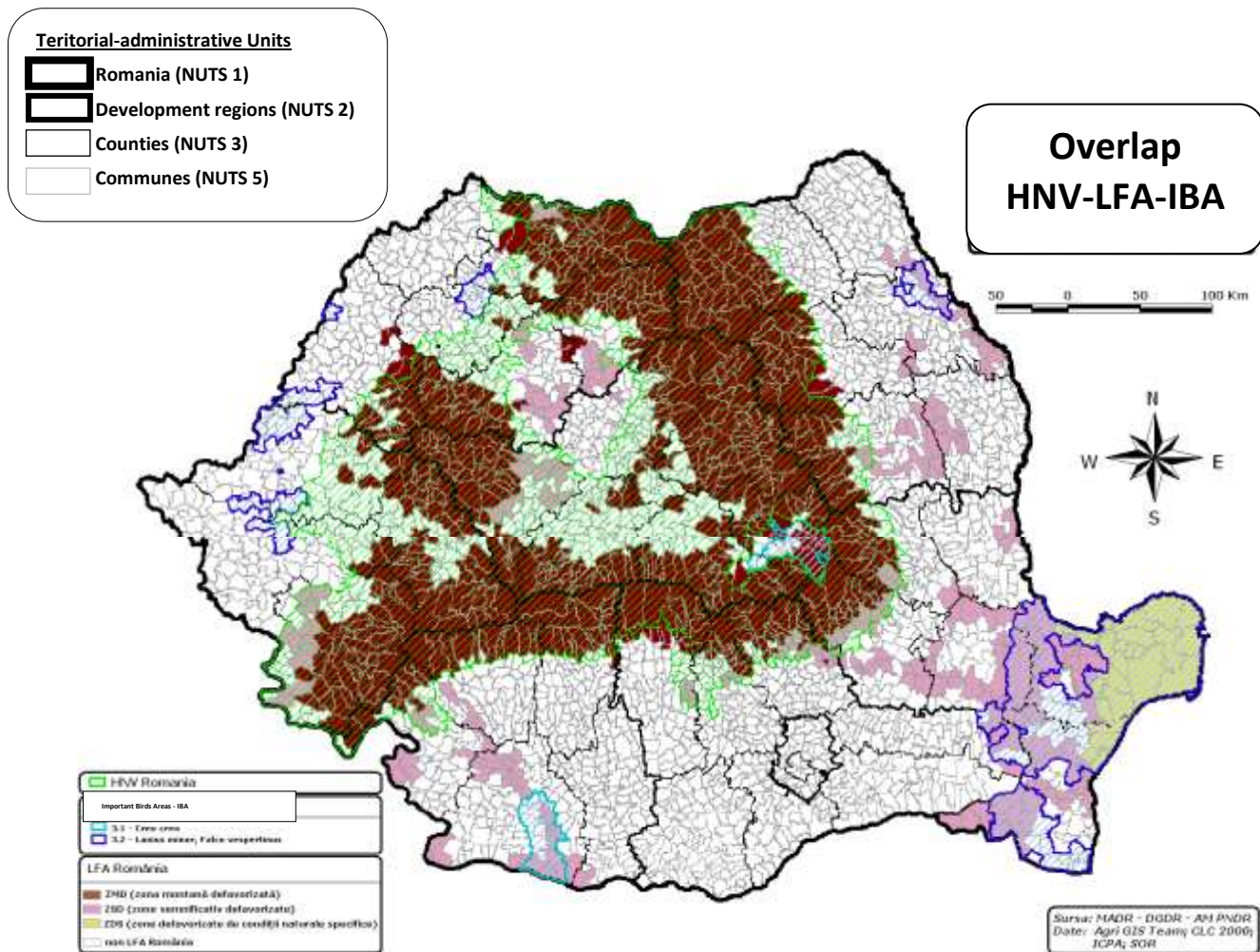
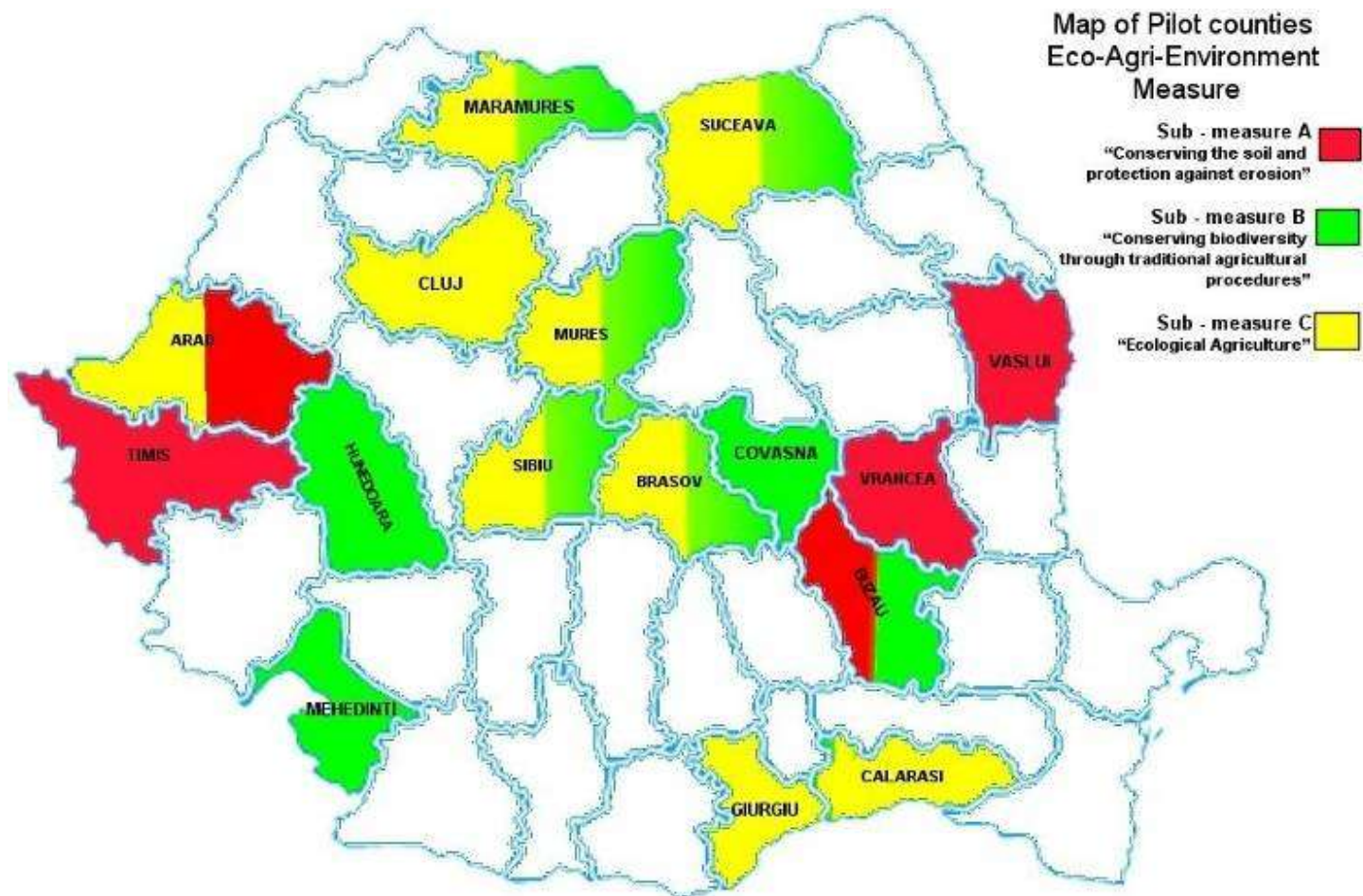


Figure 5. Overlap between High Nature Value landscapes, Least favored Areas and Important Bird Areas (source NPRD 2011)

Figure 6. Map of eco-agri-environment measures pilot counties



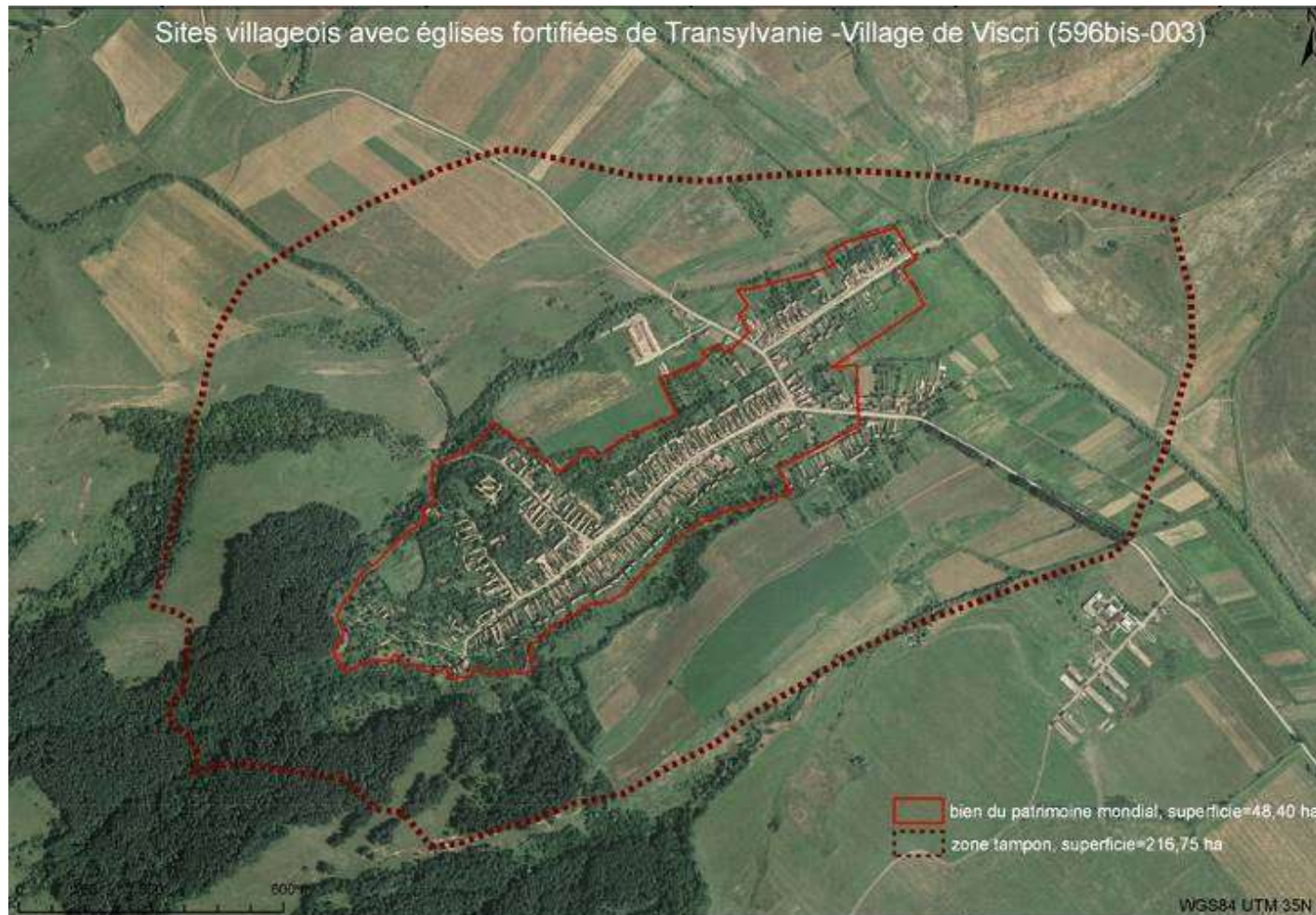
Source MADR (2007): <http://www.madr.ro/pages/page.php?self=03&sub=0304&art=0305&var=030403>, accessed April 14, 201

Figure 7: View of Mălâncrav



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Figure 8. Aerial view of study location B- Viscri. The red line demarcates the borders of the village – with buildings and personal gardens included, enlisted as a world heritage site under UNESCO. The red-dotted line marks the buffer zone around the village.



Source: www.whc.unesco.org

Figure 9. Aerial view of present days study location B - Viscri



Photo source: Weisskirch, Van der Haegen & Niedermaier

Figure 10. Hand drawn map of Viscri from 1943 with the population and the division of the surrounding land, possessed by a villager



Figure 11. Typical Southern Transylvanian landscape with strip-farming, wood pasture and hay-meadows



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