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Pathways to Adaptation – The Rationality of "Think Global, Act Local": A Case Study of Székely–Hungarian Community of Romania

ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study employed an interpretive-social constructivist approach to examine the rural decline of Székely–Hungarian villages and their cultural landscapes in Romania. The convergent interview method was used to understand landowners' decision-making processes and their „think global, act local" responses, which influence community, village, and landscape. Local-level adaptation processes to global challenges, such as climate change and natural resource depletion, are unfolding in „real time and space" within this ethnoregional context. A locally articulated rationality was captured through the adaptation strategies of six emerging personality types: "intellectual peasants," "heirloomers," "locally rooted farmers," "necessity farmers," "hoarders," and "floaters." Each of these personalities is attributed with key human developmental characteristics, which are perceived to influence the Székely ethnic village and cultural landscape, with implications for local and global sustainability goals.

Keywords: local adaptation, ethnic minority, cultural landscape, Southeast Europe, local sustainability, rural decline

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INTRODUCTION

The social, economic, demographic, and institutional causes of rural decline, such as depopulation of villages, as well as voluntary abandonment of homes and land, and subsequent spatial change are extensively documented in post-soviet European countries (Munteanu et al., 2014; Alcantara et al., 2013; Prishchepov et al., 2013; Kuemmerle et al., 2009). Many rural areas are shrinking within Europe and centuries old landscapes are fading. A recent study examined the risk of areas becoming sparsely populated within Europe (ESPON EGTC, 2024a). They found that "large parts of the Baltic countries, Romania and Bulgaria as well as Serbia experienced a strong decrease in their potential between 2011 and 2021 due to negative demographic processes," but the capital regions (p.12). EU policy recommendation identified rural shrinkage as a policy priority because rural areas in EU states are projected to lose 7.9 million residents by 2050, resulting in a shortage of innovation capacity and unstable governance (ESPON EGTC, 2017). Eastern, Southeastern and Southern European regions will experience more severe rural decline and innovation capacity loss than other regions through the outmigration of skilled labor and talents. Without a comprehensive policy strategy, these regions will retain a lower capacity to adapt to such transformations and face greater uncertainty for local governance intervention (ESPON EGTC, 2017).

The cultural landscapes of small sustenance farms are existentially threatened by urban land conversion, land intensification, and agricultural/land abandonment (Schulp et al., 2019; van Vliet et al., 2015). This is occurring simultaneously in both the developing and the developed world. In the European Union (EU), Western and Southeastern and Eastern Europe have experienced distinct institutional and industrialization changes. In the West, land use and land cover change can be attributed to gradual urbanization and industrialization. In the East-Southeast, it has been due primarily to institutional changes (summary after Baumann et al., 2011). Spatial studies of these landscapes identified the primary drivers of land abandonment to be social, economic, demographic, and institutional (Munteanu et al., 2014; Kuemmerle et al., 2006). In addition, physical drivers (e.g., steep slopes) and biophysical drivers (e.g., low soil fertility) are frequently assigned as causes of land abandonment (Baumann et al., 2011). Centuries-old rural landscapes where significant accumulations of historic, cultural, traditional, and artistic value have been interwoven into the natural fabric, are in danger of disappearing despite their value in terms of rural identity (Bezák & Dobrovodská, 2019; Pentz & Albert, 2023; Kovács et al., 2024), and ecosystem services (Hartel et al., 2014). These cultural landscapes also have high value in terms of their biodiversity that "are threatened by land use changes and the abandonment of traditional farming techniques" (Hanspach et al., 2016, p. 853). Worldwide, rural communities find themselves faced with the dual pressures of adjusting to changes at the local scale, while simultaneously dealing with complex and nested hierarchical relationships at much larger scales (Papadopoulou et al, 2023, Winkel et al., 2016). For example, suburbanization of rural minority settlements (Hungarian) within the vicinity of core urban hubs by a majority population (Slovaks) may bring complex issues for the ethnic minority who historically established itself within the area (Balizs

& Somogyi, 2024). While previous studies from the Southeastern European region have studied how communities change spatially and institutionally, the complex nature of social-ecological adaptation processes and interlinked hierarchical nested relationships needs more understanding (Hartel et al., 2016).

Acknowledging different scientific approaches and language-based publications remains a major area to cover along with their deliverance to English language-based audiences such as a review by Díaz-Reviriego et al. (2024) on biocultural approaches to sustainability from the Spanish language literature.

Southeastern European rural communities in spatial studies are often simplified as spatial, geographic, or political entities. However, such communities are also constructs of the people who live on, work on, dream about the future of the land. Rural communities are socially, ecologically, and economically interlinked systems (Hanspach et al., 2014) where people's experiences, memories, and desires continuously shape how they experience a place as they "adapt to them and to themselves" (Ndubisi 2002, p. 112). Communities adapt to change, and adaptation processes can be influenced by their traditions, rituals, customs, and behaviors (see Berkes et al., 2003). Hay (1998) in his cross-cultural study of "rooted sense of place," (p. 245) found that sense of history, tradition, spiritual and ancestral ties to land are essential elements that help sustaining not just indigenous communities but could help modern ones. This would require replacing the "commodity" view of place (e.g., for housing, for work) with one, that promotes ties and rootedness (Hay, 1998).

The Southeastern European country, Romania (RO) lost substantial talent and citizens to foreign work, specifically "Romanian emigrants were the fifth largest group of emigrants residing in OECD countries" in 2015/16 (OECD, 2019, para. 2). This meant that "17% of the total Romanian population [aged 15 and above did emigrate]" (OECD, 2019, para. 2). Romania was the leading country "in the ranking of emigration rates for the top ten origin countries of emigrants living in OECD countries" for year 2015/2016 (OECD, 2019, para. 2.) Therefore, unless local scale dynamics are incorporated into the planning for adaptations that conserve and protect important rural cultural landscapes, these landscapes will continue to vanish.

Rural community and landscape changes caused by political system transitions have been fertile ground for studies in the Southeastern and Eastern European regions, including Romania, where upheavals in political institutions have been frequent, abrupt, and multitudinous (see Verdery, 1983, 2003; Stoian, 2010, Hartvigsten, 2010). However, the decline, disappearance, and rapid transformation of rural villages, and their place in the natural fabric of this region of the world remains poorly examined, especially in terms of ethnoregions, sustainability, and minority landowners' decision-making narratives.

This study looks at change as an inevitable and necessary process that communities engage with through complex and dynamic adaptation processes, rather than through linear cause-effect relationships. This view was influenced by resilience thinking discussed by Holling and Gunderson (2002), Walker and Salt (2006) and others (Cumming, 2011; Folke, 2016). The boundaries for

place-based change and intervention (e.g., governance) can be set by the spatial context of regional extent of place. This can be found at the intersection of people's experience and "activity system" (social, ethnic, and economic), the environment (natural and built) (Ndubisi, 2002, p. 113) and the ethnoregion (the boundaries of the Székely–Hungarian ethnic bloc). The capacity to successfully adapt through change is crucial for resiliency in social ecological systems such as cultural landscapes. A community's cohesion is itself a product of the strength of "inter-generational social connections," "cultural identity,," and "the "capacity […] to advocate for, and acquire," the resources necessary to adapt through change (Liebenberg et al., 2017, p. 43).

Most of the literature does not address cultural and ethnic variability within regions from a bottom-up approach but focuses on larger spatial extents of landscape change like land abandonment and social-economic aspects of rural decline. Place-based, bottom-up local dynamics remain unattended and rural decline, from an ethnoregional perspective, is poorly addressed in international research studies. Good research has been done on cultural landscapes from this region by Hanspach et al. (2014, 2016), or Hartel et al. (2014, 2016).

Studies provide recipes, or strategies, on how to resolve social, economic, and cultural challenges linked to shrinkage or rural decline (ESPON EGTC, 2025). They provide valuable findings (i.e., Latocha-Wites et al., 2024, ESPON EGTC, 2024b), but in essence, they remain frameworks that recommend the incorporation of different voices aligned to centralized top-down agendas of nation states and supranational systems of the European Union. Such systems are rigid and remain non-inclusive as national agendas cloud true democratic processes. Many times, these studies address culture but not ethnicity. Culture does not equal ethnicity, nor do such initiations consider a minority's presence as a block with a complicated and centuries long land attachment that drives their identity, or their will for self-determination as a community (Pap, 2021). Complex changes have not been addressed, and rural development initiatives are not sensitive enough to local ethnic diversity (Pap, 2021). Land abandonment is one of the main drivers of rural decline and consequent fading of cultural landscapes with characteristics such as high biodiversity meadows. While rural decline is widely accepted as a prevailing issue, it was observed that some villages seemed to be stronger than others in terms of a cohesive community, and liveliness and defy rural decline. This study grew out from such observations.

This qualitative case study used an interpretive-social constructivist approach to study the Székely–Hungarian ethnic minority living in Harghita County, Romania. The chosen study area encompasses the most densely populated block of Székely–Hungarian minority who still adhere to their traditions and have a distinct culture from the majority of the population (Romanian). Their local adaptation mechanism to rural social, environmental, institutional, and demographic changes is discussed. We used a grounded, bottom-up approach where findings were placed in context with the human development literature of personal (individual) resilience. Personal resilience, after Liebenberg et al. (2017), Masten (2016) and Taormina (2015) defined as the pathway of positive adaptation where individuals have the capacity to:

(1) to function and cope with chronic stressful situations,

(2) transform sources from the environment (social, economic, personal etc.) into resources, and

(3) make sense of events during change times.

The findings of this study complement the predominantly spatial and ecological body of work that has been carried out at larger scales to date. Furthermore, they highlight the importance of focusing on local-scale dynamics and individual resilience for future cultural landscape adaptation and community resilience studies.

METHODS

This study uses an interpretive approach, with a social constructivist orientation to study "why do some villages decline while others do not?" Studies with an interpretive approach systematically study "socially meaningful action" to which "people subjectively attach significance" (Neuman, 2006, p. 88). These actions are studied through "the direct detailed observations of people in natural settings" (Neuman, 2006, p. 88). This is done to understand and interpret how people "create and maintain their social world" (p. 88). The constructivist orientation assumes that social reality is created through "the interactions and beliefs of people" (p. 89). The "constructivist paradigm assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities," and that the researcher and "the respondent cocreate understandings" (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, p. 24).

Dick's (2017) convergent interview method was employed for this study, and a detailed literature review on rural decline preceded the formulation of the research questions. Convergent interviews, "can be described as emergent and data driven. It has multiple inbuilt sources of research rigor. It is time-efficient compared to many interview processes. Its uses for research include emergent research and pilot studies" (p. 1).

Convergent interviewing has a built-in authentication process, and as content emerges and gets built it gets authenticated in subsequent interviews through continuous probing of the content, and to the emerging "theory (or interpretation, diagnosis or evaluation)" (Dick, 2017, p. 4). All interviews start with one "broad question," and the collected data is interpreted and processed after each pair of interviews (Dick, 2017). Probing "sub questions" are allowed to vary between interview pairs. A set of interviews "closing questions," which differed from Dicks' method, were asked in this study. This inclusion was specifically requested by the IRB to reduce the broadness of the study and qualify for approval.

The heart of the method lies in gaining an informed insight into the local context by starting with a broad overview and narrowing it down through: (1) a systematic process of pairing respondents (more than one interviewer) or lining them up (one interviewer) to achieve a "maximum diversity of sample" (Dick, 2017, p. 9); (2) identifying agreements and disagreements among interviews; and (3) formulating probing questions and cross-checking for the causes of agreements and disagreements among interviewees (Dick, 2017).

Study area

The study area is in Harghita County, Romania. The county is part of a historic ethnic region known as Székelyland inhibited with Székelys, a Hungarian speaking ethnic minority. This region is mostly bounded by three counties of Mureș, Harghita and Covasna (Figure 1). Molnár et al. (2015) has a relevant and concise summary of the region, its landscape features, history, and traditions. Harghita County has the highest Hungarian–Romanian population ratio in the country and one of the few counties, where ethnic Hungarians constitute most of the population. According to the 2021 Census the county's total population was 291,950 where 79.51% (232,157) of the population identified as Hungarians, and 11.52 % as Romanians (33,634). The rest of the population <2% identified as Roma, or another ethnic group (INS, 2025a). The urban population in 2024 was 45.15% and rural population was 54.85 % (INS, 2025b).

Figure 1. Ethnic map of Mureș, Harghita and Covasna counties of Romania (2021)
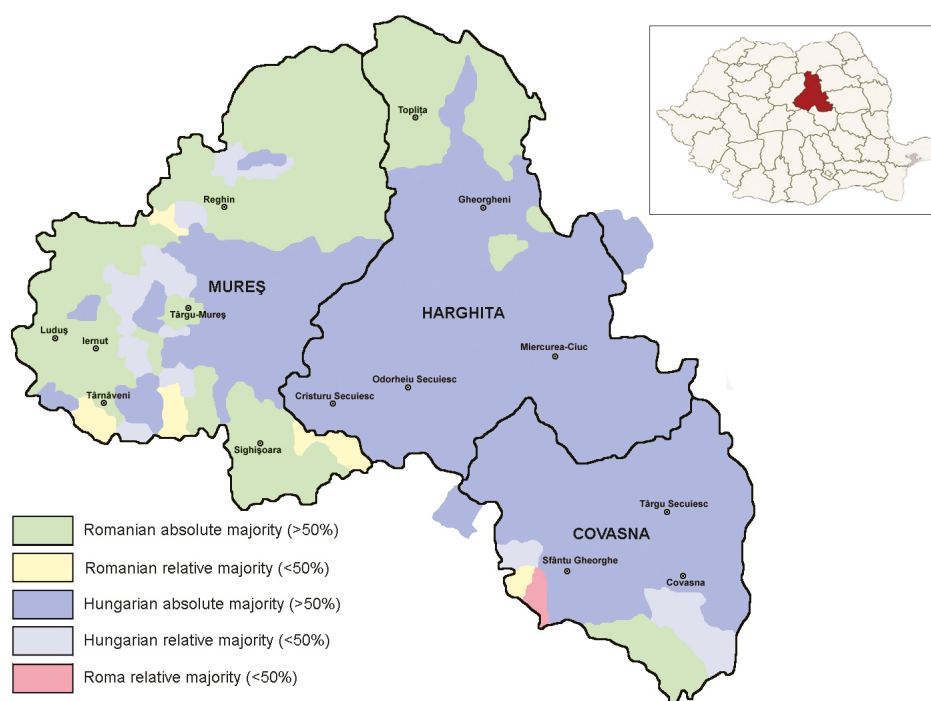
Source: INS, 2025a

Interviewee selection

Participant selection criteria were established based on the literature on rural decline within the region and through the local knowledge of the main author who grew up in villages within the study area and was exposed to traditions and experienced institutional changes at first hand (the fall of communism in 1989, becoming a democratic state and an EU member). Throughout three decades she has engaged with the land, community, and people. She served as a local expert for establishing the inclusion

criteria for participant selection. As she examined the literature, she observed that the reviewed literature did not explain why rural decline was not evenly distributed across the cultural landscape of Székelys. For example, she noticed the work of priests in village communities. Historically priests and teachers are key community builders and leaders of villages within the study area. Such expertise was necessary for securing human-subject approval.

Participants were selected based on their landownership, or their prospect of inheritance, because villages and their landscapes are mostly made up of small parcels, larger tracts of church properties, and the commons. Lastly, participants who were not landowners, but were affiliated through their work with villages (voluntary/for-profit/official capacity), were included as participants because their work was directly affecting communities and may contributed to fighting rural decline. A maximum diversity of sample (see Dick, 2017) was compiled through involving local experts, and through snowball sampling. Interviews were collected during the summer of 2019. The collected data was part of the first author's dissertation study and can be found in Pap (2021). The conceptualization and findings have not been part of this dissertation.

The study was reviewed and approved by Texas A&M IRB's Human Subject Research Protection Program as minimal-risk research. In summary, the IRB-approved selection criteria were as follows:
1. Individuals who were living in villages in Harghita County, Romania
2. Individuals who owned land, but did not live in the villages anymore
3. Individuals who were first, second, and third generation of people of 1 and 2 above
4. People who worked as teachers, priests, and served the community in various ways
5. Individuals of 18 years, or older

The broad question focused on the decision-making of people, and served as a basis for starting and setting the direction of conversation: "*What are some of the key decisions that you and your family (or community) have made (in the past 20 to 30 years) that have influenced the way you (they) live and the way (they) you manage your (their) land?"* Pre-identified questions captured important aspects of rural decline and were left broad for capturing meaningful information, and allow participants to express themselves:
1. "What were the reasons of the … (identified) decision?"
2. "Why do you think people abandon their land in your community?"
3. "Can you identify any special outcomes of their decisions?"
4. "In your opinion what makes a community strong?"
5. "In your opinion why do rural communities decline in Romania?"

A total of eighteen respondents were interviewed (Table 1) and sixteen interview sessions were conducted, which was reported in the literature to be an acceptable number (Dick, 2017). Eighteen respondents were audio recorded, and audio recording was optional to participate. Three interviews were conducted with three married couples. Individuals voluntarily gave consent. Both females (10) and males (9) were included.

Table 1. Pairs of respondents

Pair	# ID	Occupation, landowner status
1st	11	Elementary school teacher in a "comună," small sized land holding, permanent city dweller, house owner in a village.
	2	Representative of a local council, medium sized land holding, farmer, resident of a village.
2nd	7	Mayor of a "comună," small to medium sized land holdings.
	26a, 26b	Elderly married couple, small to medium land holdings, farmers (age 85–90).
3rd	19	Unitarian village priest, villager, large church land holding.
	21a, 21b	Young married couple, young farmers (age 25–30), small to middle sized land holding, dairy farmers.
4th	9	Family business owner, small land holding, villager.
	31	Dairy farmer, large land holding.
5th	28	Family consultant, therapist, child protection professional, social worker, city dweller.
	32a, 32b	Small land holding, permaculturist, city dweller.
6th	1	Unitarian priest in a city, serves couple of small rural Unitarian congregations.
	17	Rural development professional, civic actor, works with grants, villager, small, or small to medium land holding.
7th	14	Dairy farmer, villager, small to medium land holdings, retired rural development professional.
	5	Civic actor, grant writer, new village resident, small land holding.
8th	16	Reformed priest, dairy farmer, large church land holdings.
	29	Civic grant writer, active community builder, small land holding, villager, works in a city.

Small land holdings: < 5 ha, small to medium 5–10 ha, medium 10–15 ha, large to medium 15–25, large land holdings > 25 ha (including rented land, forested, and arable land)

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted in two phases. First, most of the data analysis was carried out concurrently with data collection. The data was processed to gather information from converging and diverging answers, as per the method (Dick, 2017). Field notes, and reports were written, and audio recordings were listened to identify convergence, and divergence among interviews. Second, transcription of audio recordings, conceptualization, and write up.

During data collection, attention was paid to agreements and disagreements in answers. After the first four pairs of interviews (Table 1), a general narrative began to emerge. During the interviews that followed, the narrative converged more convincingly around repeated key themes that suggested pathways to adaptation over the past three decades (1989–2019). These themes included:

(1) concept of self, family,
(2) the role of education and upbringing,
(3) community, and
(4) local dynamics – such as participation in local activities and maintaining the land.

Transcription of the interviews was carried out using an online automatic transcription service through *sonix.ai*. Interviews were uploaded and automatically transcribed. The transcribed text then was corrected and rechecked second-by-second and line-by-line. It resulted a total of 620 single spaced

pages of transcribed text, with an estimated 280–300-man hours. Quoted interviews are not stylized, but quoted in a "raw" format, and were only altered, to convey the meaning for English readers.

The results are presented by (1) analyzing agreements and disagreements in responses, which converge into a broad narrative around key topics; (2) identifying interlinked subject areas that shape local adaptation strategies, categorized into six perceived personality types of heirloomers, intellectual peasants, locally rooted mid- and large-scale farmers, floaters, necessity farmers, and hoarders/for-profit agribusiness farmers; and (3) discussing the findings through a human development perspective.

One hundred and sixty-three themes (see Appendix A) emerged during convergent interviews and were probed for agreements and disagreements between interview pairs and the emerging narrative. Themes were grouped into broad *first order* categories[5]. The first order themes were further categorized into *second order* categories based on their specific attributes and/or their "multidimensional" meaning considering the contexts they were discussed[6].

RESULTS

Rural identities and sustainability in transition

The emerging converging and diverging narrative confirmed the literature, especially regarding Romania's transition from communism to democracy and the instability, and chaos that followed (see Verdery, 2002, 2003; Cartwright, 2001). Further, it converged along key attributes of self, family, community, village, landscape, historic ethnic region, state, and the EU (Table 2).

The convergence and divergence patterns lent themselves to a description of six distinct types of rural personalities based on the perceived behavioral attitudes towards the Székely village, community, landscape, and region. The six types can be broken into two main groups. First, those who actively contribute to the self-sustainability of the ethnic region (*heirloomers, intellectual peasants, locally rooted farmers, and necessity farmers*) while observing some, or all of the seven virtues through their decision-making and way of life. Second, those who are either disinterested (floaters) or use practices and attitudes that exploit resources and break up the centuries old landscape (*hoarders/ for-profit agribusiness farmers*).

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[5] L=landscape, VC=village community, I=individual, F=Family, FM=Farming, O=Other.

[6] The second order categories are FM=Farming, INC=Income, IA=Individual Assets, VC=Village Community; SWMOB=Seasonal Work Mobility, LM=Land Management, F=Farming, O=Other, EDU=Education, Knowledge, Upbringing, EMPL=Employment, ABR=Abroad, O=Other, OTL=Outlook (future, do business), INV=Investment, Lead=Leadership, ETH=Ethnicity, INC=Income, PROF=Profitability, CUL=Culture, COMM ELEM=Elements of community; Variability, F=Family.

Table 2. Themes of rural life and sustainability: diverging and converging perspectives in the Székely–Hungarian context

Diverging themes
• Going abroad vs. staying home to make money, and how earned money is spent.
• Young generation's irresponsibility vs. responsibility.
• The perceived burden and disadvantage of keeping animals, and maintaining the land, rather than renting, or abandoning the land. This was expressed as "enslaved to the land and to farm animals" vs. not.
• Influence of the developed and modernized West e.g., conservative vs. liberal approaches to raise a family, negative influence of agricultural intensification and its perceived benefits considering the cultural landscape's ecology.

Converging themes
• Self: a complicated theme that includes the importance of personal belief, faith, ethnic belonging, worldview, mentality, and the presence of seven virtues (prudence, wisdom, justice, courage, temperance, faith, hope, and love). Self is nested within the immediate family, community, village, and landscape topics.
• Family: responsible roles for each family member, the role of upbringing, family level models of sustainable living, family structure, and the family's role in the community.
• Community: generational differences, key elements that make a community strong, historic burden of ethnic belonging, the importance of language, the importance of good examples.
• Villages: the role of strong leaders/residents, priests' and teachers' roles, creative initiations, the importance of good examples.
• Landscape and farming: change has been fueled by EU grants and subsidies, landscape attachment (e.g., renting, abandoning, or working the land), changing farming typologies. These ideas are related also to the way one relates to the land itself, including the concept of living 'in the land' not 'off of it', the importance of cooperatives / collaborations, what it takes to be a good farmer, and the younger generation's ties to the land.
• Knowledge, education, and upbringing: public education, local knowledge, training, and exchange programs, spread of knowledge, and perception of the value of hard work and step-by-step achievement.
• Talent abroad, or talent drain: seasonal workers, lack of professionals, lack of labor.
• Housing: unsustainable modern building, restoration of vernacular houses and buildings.
• Institutions and governance: legislation and ordinances are out of touch with historic local ways of living. For example, where cows are allowed to be kept in a village. There are common concerns regarding local leaders, corruption, and EU projects.
• Civic activity: building capacity, advocacy.
• Future: uncertainty, inability to imagine.

Six rural personality types

Intellectual Peasants: The intellectual peasant has some history of working on land, often in a family setting. However, this personality also has pursued some higher education or has a strong drive to self-educate and grow. At some point in their lives, they consciously made the choice to live in a rural setting, though they might have traveled and been exposed to new ideas. The term "intellectual peasant" was used by one of the respondents, and so is an example of a narrative component emerged from the data. There are two types: people who do not live off any EU or state funds, and grants. The other type is those who use EU and state funds to some extent. In a family setting, they have started to live a life that is set by traditions, worldviews, and frames of reference regarding the past, present, and future. Characteristics are moderation, faith, and value-based self-conduct rooted in Christianity,

ecumenism, active networking, information sharing, and the building of social capital. They work towards self-sustainability and independence from any system that currently dominates, a sort of intellectual resistance through action. Their attitudes are reflected through self, family, community, village, landscape, ethnic region, and the larger, fragmented Hungarian nation. They also connect to the wider European community through shared interests and their past or present exchange of knowledge. They feel at one with the landscape, and their work is rooted in preserving and conserving the cultural heritage of that landscape, while working with contemporary means of technology.

Heirloomers: As with intellectual peasants, heirloomers have some experience working the land in a family setting. What sets them apart from intellectual peasants is that they are working in some creative, innovative setting, and do not live off the land like peasants would do by raising cattle and growing crops. Heirloomers do small scale gardening or farming. They engage in activities that restores and preserves the tradition, or through activities that provide some similar "heirloom" nature of their work. Examples might include preserving seed banks or horsing traditions. There are two major types of heirloomers: people who do not live off any EU or state funds and grants, and those who use EU and state funds to some extent.

Locally rooted mid and "big" scale farmers: These include a wider variety of people who work with current EU subsidies and grant systems to farm, rent, or start a business by utilizing such funds. They might initiate a new way of making an income, and while they work for the community and can be intellectual, they are less focused on faith, landscape, and sustainability than heritage heirloomers and intellectual peasants. The three are quite distinct categories. However, they are all locally rooted, can engage, and fuel community events, so they are rooted. Three groups emerged with limited insights into them: floaters, necessity farmers and hoarders/for profit agribusiness farmers. The three groups are perceived personality types and behavioral adaptations to opportunities and challenges of the changed and changing social-economic landscape of the region. Due to the scope of the study, we are able only point toward these groups and seek more understanding about each in future studies.

Floaters: Primarily individuals from the younger generation (18+), who engage in seasonal employment and are affiliated with a village through land ownership. Their connection to the land or the village is primarily mediated by friends and family. However, they do not cultivate the land themselves, and their social ties to the village through friends and family remain weak.

Necessity farmers: These are farmers who were raised in the agrarian system, many of whom felt there was no other choice in life than to farm with the means they received and learned from their parents, or by the means the state tries to help. They are often locked in poverty and into routine.

Hoarders/For-profit agribusiness farmers: These farmers are only in agriculture for profit. Their actions are exploitative and utilitarian. Their investment in the landscape is minimal, lasting only as long as the profits and/or subsidies last.

Pathway to adaptation

It was perceived among the interviewees that heirloomers and intellectual peasants make up the needed critical minority who can set a direction to move forward the "canned culture". The "canned culture" was articulated by respondent #14, as most of the current Székely–Hungarian culture living off of the past, and mostly "exhibited" [e.g., theatrical plays, dances, festivals], rather than lived daily. In order to reimagine the ancestors' culture and apply it and extend it in contemporary terms to agriculture remains very important. This reimagining includes integration of physical artifacts such as barns, haystacks, vernacular architecture, the Székely gate, and the peasants' house. As one of the intellectual peasant respondents expressed, past peasant society produced the culture that is only exhibited today, and the true peasant society has disappeared.

Working the land and living off of the land is tied closely with culture, and as respondent #14 captured it, it is an intellectual task, that was reinforced by #16. The importance of learning, and self-education as part of farming, working the land was reinforced by #2, 5, 9, 19, 21a, 21b, 29, 31, 32a, 32b. The close relationship between culture and agriculture was explained by respondent #14, and being a peasant in the 21st century is an "*intellectual task*" because the rebuilding of the "*peasant society*" agriculture's "*culture-creating*" role is needed. Along with culture, an inner spirit and character emerges. This is tied to one's soul. It resembles a holistic care and appreciation-based approach to family, community, village, and landscape. These include respecting the carrying capacity of the native habitats, ecosystems, biodiversity, and loving care of animals were explained. In this setting, children have a vital role in the family. Interviewees say that current trends in bringing up children are overprotective. This was succinctly put as "*for the sake of responsibility [you] take away responsibility*" (#9) from children. Instead, they follow a practice of preparing children to be self-dependent, and "*fit for life*". It was articulated that these children would be more resilient and learn to be responsible for their actions. An example would be providing children with tasks such as feeding animals and milking cows. Daily chores, or routinely assigned tasks, where the child will learn the importance and consequences of not performing an assigned task (i.e., an unfed animal dies). This approach was believed to be crucial to bringing up responsible generations.

A new, alternative system to take the place of the current corrupt one was articulated. This system links daily actions to a sustainable future, connects local scale to global, and links farming with the desired attitude (i.e., seven virtues) to achieve a desired state of self-sustainability. Transformation of the cultural landscape is rapid, and heirloomers and intellectual peasants both expressed that the current time is crucial for avoiding the bad examples of the West. It was said that one needs to "*live in the landscape*" rather than off it. Reasoning and decision-making vary depending on whether one views living with the system or off the system as an intellectual resistance. However, heirloomers and intellectual peasants do converge on the idea that one should farm out of love, not because there is an opportunity for a grant.

The six personality types, as adaptation strategies, can point towards a mechanism of local adaptation. Heirloomers, intellectual peasants, and locally rooted farmers, who actively engage with the land, move communities forward toward a desired local self-sustainability. One of the respondents (#9, see Table 1) expressed it, and respondents reiterated, that the Székely community, the Székely village, and landscape are one, and should not be separated, and it will not "work," by taking out one of the elements: "I don't think this can be separated, land, community, village; they can't be separated […] It's a block, as it is, so good. I take out any of them then it no longer works" (# 9).

Family is especially important for heirloomers, intellectual peasants, and for locally rooted farmers. Family provides strength for moving along the path towards local self-sustainability, where members of the family, from children to adults, have a role in working and taking care of the land, business, or making of a product. Parents educate and teach their children about small-scale living or might have been greatly influenced by a family member. It was articulated by heirloomers, and intellectual peasants that an ecologically sound local and ethnoregional economy is needed that considers the ecology of the region, and builds a positive sense of pride for those who do agriculture, as currently, it lacks such. For example, respondent #17 expressed the value of agriculture in an ethnoregional context. In Székelyland farming can be perceived as a burden, rather as a source of pride. The interviewee compared Székelys to Romanians with whom she experienced the opposite.

Intellectual peasants and heirloomers use different tools but work toward the same goal of building capacity and relationships. They self-organize to promote the region's self-sustainability. The spectrum ranges from total detachment from or minimal attachment to current institutional frameworks. Some may completely reject subsidies and will not participate in grants, while others, as civic actors, work with the system, bringing in EU or other funds to promote sustainability and build knowledge. Their involvement in day-to-day farming is frequently minimal, but they also belong to the heirloomer category. In the case of two interviewees, intellectual peasants had been engaged in formal civic or state-level jobs, and their experiences led to a shift in their perspectives. Both groups agreed that the current subsidies and grants have created an artificial environment that threatens the region's famed biodiversity and overall ecology.

Necessity farmers are locked into the system, have no power, and means to escape and are perceived as an important group who still keep traditions by necessity, and not by choice.

Floaters were perceived as cargo on village, community, and landscape. Their ties to the land through ownership and livelihood have eroded over time and reflect generational differences. Floaters avoid the cumbersome way of living and rather move to cities or maintain a family property in the village for housing purposes while they frequently work abroad. Floaters were mentioned as unable to fit into the local community, and who have little or no interest in building communities or investing in their local community. They can be represented as a group of high school graduates who go abroad to work in fruit, and vegetable picking industries, farming and in construction. Many may have higher degrees acquired in Romania, but utilize their knowledge abroad, or never work within their chosen disciplines. Their assignment as "floaters" represents the view of the heirloomers, intellectual peasants

and locally rooted farmers. "Floating" was also articulated as a trend with positive aspects, because people have incomes that can be used to build a house or buy a tractor back in their homeland. One interviewee (#14) stated, "*engineers, forest engineers and all kinds* [of higher educated individuals]*,"* say that "*they only work for two or three years, collect money to come home, invest at home and start a business.*" Another positive aspect of the floater phenomenon mentioned was how it can facilitate escape or rise from poverty. It "*makes sense*" considering that in just a few months (3–4) one can earn as much abroad as one year in Romania (#7, 28).

However, despite the accumulation of income, reintegration is not easy. People working abroad keep extending the years before they return home, and while at home they might invest the money, these are "*prestige investments,*" (e.g., a big, fast car, a house that is too big to keep up). Thus, the "*transition period* [between accumulating/earning money to return] *slowly gets extended*" and they can "*lose their roots*" during this process (#14). Their subsequent increase in age affects considerations for starting or building a family. For example, floating was described for people who work abroad and only visit their family for a short period of time. These individuals may become disconnected from their roots and upon their return, they lack support through friends and family. The possibility for them to be entrepreneurs with an accumulated capital is questioned as they perceived to have insufficient knowledge of local economic and legal expectations. He explained these points as:

> He [in general] is already 35–40 years old and they still have nothing in their hands so they lose their roots and when he would come home at the age of 50 to start something then-then on the one hand nobody standing behind him, a partner, a group of friends, a social stratum. He no longer knows the legal order and economic order here; he has no network capital (#14).

The same interviewee, while not quoted, mentioned that the same individuals lack the "leadership" qualities required for running a business, start-up, or lead local innovation. They might have acquired some knowledge by working abroad but lack the experience to build upon it. The interviewee spent about three decades working with local community development programs. In contrast, a heirloom couple (#32a, b) and a locally rooted married couple (#21a, b) built upon their experience acquired from working abroad.

The findings of this study reinforce the findings of previous studies of the region's such as rural societies as social-ecological systems (Hartel et al., 2016). The corrupt and uncertain political landscape were described by others and a detailed discussion will not be provided (see Cartwright, 2001); and the hectic land reinstitution process was documented by Verdery (2003). Beyond this, the current study has provided new and novel insights revealing that, in the rapidly changing rural cultural landscape, villages and their communities seek to adapt to change. The process is occurring in a "twilight" period (Hartel et al., 2016, p. 9), implying a state of ambiguity and/or decline, within which individuals and their families are adapting in response to substantial and rapid change. The study does not claim that it captured the adaptation process of rural communities in a post-communist context. However, it captured an ethnic group's "space and place" bounded adaptation process. It is not the only process likely. However, within the studied space and place, an "act locally, and think

globally" process is enacted, "*and theories are tested in practice*" (#14). It is, in this sense, an evolving pragmatic landscape.

The 163 converging and diverging themes gets translated through the six key personalities so we may understand an unfolding "act local, think global" pragmatic landscape. The broad research question asked about decisions of individuals, their family members, or members of communities. People elaborated in detail the reasons why certain decisions were made, and how those influence the community, village, and the landscape.

A sense-making, or a "meaning-making" (after Park, 2010) narrative was a frequent way to express personal decisions. This could include how one responded to change, description of the resources that were at one's disposal, resources that were missing (e.g., a wife's support, the knowledge of the father, and his support, #31, or even the spiritual support of the landscape #14, 16, 19; etc.). The articulation of the importance of the seven virtues, the support of family members, local priests, and the work of the civic activity indicate the importance of the availability of a support system that are external to the individual (e.g., environment) and internal (mental, spiritual). The human developmental literature would capture these element as "individual resilience," (Liebenberg et al., 2017, p. 4) "individual agency" (p. 42), "psychosocial functioning" (World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe, 2009, p. 13).

Pathways to adaptation through the lens of individual resilience

The discussion of the findings of the social reality articulated by the interviewees considers human development literature on individual resilience. The definition of individual resilience by Liebenberg and her colleagues (2017) is "…a developmental process, resilience primarily involves the agency, or inner capability of individuals of all ages, to call on their internal strengths, engage with others and look for external resources to successfully transform stressful situations or adversity into opportunities to learn and thrive" (p. 4).

Research indicates that psychological wellbeing and the availability of psychosocial sources for individuals are important for handling stressful events and situations to endure and cope with change (World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe, 2009, 2015; Liebenberg et al., 2017; Masten, 2001, 2016), such as rural outmigration. Individual resilience depends on the capacity to harness psychosocial resources (Liebenberg et al., 2017), and the "Determination, Endurance, Adaptability, and Recuperability" of the individual (Taormina 2015, p. 36). Individual resilience considers the life course development of individuals to promote population mental health and wellbeing in various cultural contexts (Liebenberg et al., 2017).

Individuals make sense of everyday life changes and their response depends on both internal and external resources and assets (Liebenberg et al., 2017). Agency is a key individual asset that includes individuals' "meaning-making frameworks and meaning-making processes as well as the capacity to decide and act in a given environment" (Liebenberg et al., 201, p. 6). The capacity to act

is complimented with Taormina's (2015) definition of personal resilience and agency as a "… person's determination and ability to endure, adapt, and recover from adversity" (DEAR) (p. 36). Meaning making frameworks (frames of reference) can be developed both individually and collectively, especially where the community has experienced a stressor (Liebenberg et al., 2017, Park, 2010). It can also be carried out across generations. Liebenberg et al. (2017), based on their synthesis of the individual resilience literature describe three elements of individual resilience: "*individual assets*" (intelligence, spirituality, meaning making processes, sense of humor etc.) (p. 18), "*contextual resources*" (education, recreation, civic and religious engagement, community cohesion etc.) (p. 21) and "*relational resources*" (extended family, relationships with parents, friends, stable and accepting relationships) (p. 19). The "mutually agreeing" consensual nature of these relations is expressed by Liebenberg et al. (2017) as necessary for human wellbeing.

These elements are well reflected in the way interviewees explained their engagement with land, family, self, and community in an everchanging, and unsustainable climate of environment and institutions. The definitions of intellectual peasants, heirloomers, and locally rooted farmers (necessity, and large scale) showcase a quality of "calling on internal strengths," or "harnessing" sources and transforming them to resources in a stressful environment where psychosocial functioning was challenging. Across scale, place, and time, individuals made sense of their life events in relation to self, personal capacity, psychosocial climates, family, community, and institutions.

Villagers and/or landowners in Romania went through stressful events that affected individuals' global beliefs. For example, interviewees expressed that, in response to lack of economic opportunity, many family members emigrated to take on seasonal jobs abroad that led to depopulation of villages. The reinstitution of confiscated land was a chaotic process that caused significant stress between 1990 and 2000 at the personal and the village levels (Verdery 2002, 2003, Cartwright, 2001). The land reinstitution stressor called for village residents to exercise rapid decision-making and required its own adaptation process. In general terms, individuals found it necessary to reposition themselves from a communist collective behavior to behaviors that are more aligned with a free market driven democratic country.

The Székely–Hungarian ethnic minority group continues to struggle with the remnants of several institutional systems, while simultaneously adjusting to pressures of assimilation, globalization, depopulation, and natural resource depletion. Many of these groups eagerly anticipate economic growth and modernization. Others focus on avoiding the failures of the West. The latter tend to resist unsustainable practices promoted by old economic models of constant economic growth. They seek to change the region's cultural-economic development by enacting ideals espoused in the circular economy model instead. Therefore, they live on a smaller scale and tend to remain rooted in ethnoregional sustainability (similar to bioregionalism, but ethnic block is emphasized). In given answers a personal determination narrative, of will and experience, is emergent. Individual and collective meaning making frameworks serve as the pathways to overcome adversity and stressors in this cultural landscape.

CONCLUSIONS

This study adopted an interpretive-social constructivist approach to understand why villages and their landscapes are rapidly declining. It captured a locally voiced social reality, explained through the decision-making of individuals, their families, and their village communities. Locals explained that a massive seasonal loss of labor has driven rural change for the worse, resulting in abandoned land and communities. Self-organized, loosely, or more firmly knit local characters—whom we captured as intellectual peasants, heirloomers, and locally rooted farmers—drive local change.

The rural landscape and the society are fragmented in the Székely ethnoregion, where the common Hungarian language, ethnic-cultural ties, religious affiliations, and the ancestral land binds the community together. It is feared that the institutional-economic landscape created through the Rural Development Program's subsidies and grants will destroy the remaining beauty and diversity of one of the most culturally and biologically diverse landscapes. Intellectual peasants, heirloomers, and locally rooted farmers work toward an ecologically sound cultural landscape, small scale living and/or responsible farming. Rural decline is not occurring at the same pace everywhere. This study indicates that local level adaptations are diverse, and many adaptation processes remain unknown. Grants and subsidies, while not favored by everyone, remain important sources of support for farming. The community biding role of priests, and teachers was expressed as a desired component of villages, next to a family oriented rural society.

Individuals, such as the ones interviewed, seem to push forward to achieve local sustainability that is integrated into global perspectives of climate adaptation and circular economy, among others. This study shows that more studies need to adopt a human development perspective to study rural change. More attention needs to be given to understanding individual (actor) level sense making pathways through the entire life course of individuals. Individuals make sense of their life events that often are chronic, reappearing, rather than acute. The sustainability of cultural landscapes depends on small sustenance farms, and their farmers. Adopting a human developmental perspective allows seeing individuals along a continuum, where the evolution of self is not fixed.

The group of floaters needs to be studied more thoroughly. This includes understanding their drives and aspirations, their meaning-making pathways, and individual resilience to change, all of which require more attention. The limitations of this study lie in the fact that it only provides perspectives on social reality through the eyes of heirloomers, intellectual peasants, and locally rooted farmers. At the time of the interview, many „floaters" were abroad, performing seasonal jobs. However, the study did incorporate the perspectives of two young couples (21a, 21b, and 32a, 32b). After returning from abroad, they began farming and engaging in small-scale sustenance gardening and farming.

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APPENDIX A

Probed Convergent Interview (CI) themes

The following tables consist of the 163 themes that emerged during convergent interviews and were probed for agreements and disagreements between interview pairs and the emerging narrative. Themes were grouped into broad "first order" categories of L=landscape, VC=village community, I=individual, F=Family, FM=Farming, O=Other. The first order themes were further categorized into "second" order categories based on their specific attributes and/or their "multidimensional" meaning considering the contexts they were discussed. The 2nd order categories are FM=Farming, INC=Income, IA=Individual Assets, VC=Village Community; SWMOB=Seasonal Work Mobility, LM=Land Management, F=Farming O=Other, EDU=Education, Knowledge, Upbringing, EMPL=Employment, ABR=Abroad, O=Other, OTL=Outlook (future, do business), INV=Investment, Lead=Leadership, ETH=Ethnicity, INC=Income, PROF=Profitability, CUL=Culture, COMM ELEM=Elements of community; Variability, F=Family.

A-1 CI themes – Individual and family

#	Probed Themes	First order themes	Second order themes
1	People emigrate	I	O
2	Education is important	I	EDU
3	Exchange of experiences is important	I	EDU
4	Knowledge gap, break in the knowledge	I	EDU
5	Useless/valueless diplomas/certificate	I	EDU
6	No high school graduation exam	I	EDU
7	Earns capital abroad [villagers working abroad]	I	FM, INC
8	Invests the money earned abroad	I	FM, INC
9	Working capital	I	FM, INC
10	People go away to feel better financially, emotionally	I	IA, SWMOB
11	Farmers help each other	I,	VC
12	Whoever goes abroad escapes	I	O
13	Internet, smartphone's negative influence on children	I	O
14	In villages the land is given for building a house; people stay [in villages] to build	I	O
15	The world collapses around them [those who are abroad]	I	SWMOB, O
16	For those who go abroad the world is ahead of them	I	SWMOB, O
17	The importance of mentality/the way one thinks	I	IA
18	Endurance, insistence, perseverance	I	IA
19	Belief, hope (opinion, importance)	I	IA
20	[Székelys] do not relax	I	IA

A-1 CI themes – Individual and family (continued)

	Probed Themes	First order themes	Second order themes
21	People [Székelys] are materialistic they do not look after themselves and they only stop if there is a problem (or during wintertime)	I	IA
22	People do not relax and then think, [a] difference between village and city	I	IA
23	People are negative, positive thinking would be needed	I	IA
24	There is a lot of people who drink at home alone	I	IA
25	People do not even think that the soul's problems are important, mental "things" are important	I	IA
26	Desertification of the soul	I	IA
27	Do not look at the negatives [comes intuitively, being positive]	I	IA
28	There is a problem with self-identity [of people]	I	IA
29	Székelys are envious of each other	I	IA, O
30	Whoever goes away will stand on his feet	I	IA, SWMOB
31	Whoever goes abroad should have a "sense of self" [know oneself]	I	IA, SWMOB
32	Whoever wants to leave will leave	I	IA, SWMOB
33	Székelys can work a lot but cannot relax	I	IA
34	Only a few people self-educate themselfs (not just farming, in general)	I	EDU
35	Current liberal upbringing of children results in children who are "nonviable" [do not cope with difficulties, too laid back, not working, irresponsible, not aligned with the reality and hardship of life, spoiled]	I	EDU
36	Who am I? Self-identity and self-consciousness' role for young people	I	IA
37	One can get lost if he does not try to step out of his [bad] circumstances and bleakness [appeared as a choice to go abroad]	I	IA, CR, RR
38	There is too much stress, people cannot stop [do not know how]	I	IA
39	Stress level should be recognized	I	IA
40	It is taboo to speak about spiritual/soul problems openly to strangers [including doctors]	I	IA
41	The soul and the body are separated [in medicine, day-to-day living]	I	IA, O
42	People are "hoarding" that is a problem	I	IA, O
43	Teenagers are like zombies	I	IA, O
44	The world dictates the self-image, self-identity	I	IA, O
45	Mental hygiene - ,soul health' is an artificial concept, it is good for those who do not know himself, does not know his consciousness, not aware of himself	I	IA, O
46	There is a lot of people who suffer from anxiety, who are alcoholics in villages, family problems [are an issue]	I	IA, O
47	People who go abroad can become lonely, use drugs, develop alcoholism, the family collapses [home and/or abroad]	I	IA, SWMOB
48	People want to avoid compromise (i.e., to be part of corruption) and it makes them to go abroad, bleakness at home [social, political] and become sick of it/feds up	I	IA, SWMOB
49	There is a health risk for those who do not go away [abroad] because they can become depressed because there is no work in [villages]	I	IA, SWMOB
50	Whoever stays at home does not take responsibility from a perspective that if he does not get his place at home, but tries it abroad it is not irresponsible because he learns to work abroad, learns responsibility, responsible with himself and tries to step out of his current situation	I	IA, SWMOB
51	It is good if he goes away, it is a good decision, there is no work locally in villages, one can get lost	I	IA, SWMOB
52	Many young people's souls are abroad already	I	IA, SWMOB
53	There is a difference among those who go abroad and those who remain	I	IA, SWMOB

A-1 CI themes – Individual and family (continued)

#	Probed Themes	First order themes	Second order themes
54	The person who goes abroad and is/were unable to stand on his feet at home, will not be able to stand on his feet abroad	I	IA, SWMOB
55	Expectancy of instant, immediate income, profit, or results	I	O
56	Mentality change needed of looking at "what are you doing well rather what are you doing wrong"	I	O
57	[Only] a little attention [given to others] is needed because it recharges people, and gives strength	I	O
58	Isolated people get lost	I	IA, O
59	One should live in a village if [he is already] happy	I, VC	O
60	Buildings are reflecting depression, inner „soul-world"	I, O	O
61	Slave to the land	I, FM	INC, LM, PROF
62	The model of family: women's and men's traditional role	F	F
63	If the family decides what direction wants to go, then they will go that way	F	F
64	Family suffers because of its members who work abroad	F	F, SWMOB
65	Only mothers remain in the village because the young are abroad, husbands/fathers are abroad	F	F, SWMOB
66	The importance of upbringing in families	F	EDU, F
67	People take their children from villages to the city because there is "romanization" in villages [schools are weaker and education is weak, because there are many Roma children who had less resources from birth to progress, and due to cultural differences]	F, VC	O
68	Mental hygiene approach and its distribution in villages to help families, to prevent the problems/sickness of the soul, helps with raising children, cope with alcoholism (spiritual/ soul counseling, lectures, the presence of professionals in villages, stress, relaxation teach for positive thinking)	F, I, VC	F, VC, EDU
69	Upbringing is important	F, I	EDU, F, IA
70	Role playing is important for children	F, I	EDU, IA

A-2 CI themes – Farming

#	Probed Themes	1st order categories	2nd order categories
71	Permaculture is the solution, family friendly	F, FM, L	F, LM
72	Selling the produce is very hard	FM	INC, PROF
73	APIA subsidies are important for farmers	FM	INC, PROF
74	Marketing's importance	FM	INC, PROF
75	Facebook is important for selling and trading	FM	INC, PROF
76	Not ready for market, cannot brake into the market	FM	INC, PROF
77	Subsidies will run out	FM	INC, PROF, LM
78	There is a lot of expectations from small scale farms in the EU	FM	LM, O
79	Cattle that are foreign to the landscape do not manage the weather well	FM	LM, O
80	No labor, hard to find people to do day worth of work	FM	LM, PROF, O
81	The farmer is not a businessman but should be educated	FM	EDU
82	Everybody should take part in work, have a role in families even children	FM	F
83	Recipes (for growth, productivity, smarter farming)	FM	INC, LM, PROF
84	EU grants promote illusionary farming/economy	FM	INC, LM, PROF

A-2 CI themes – Farming (continued)

#	Probed Themes	1st order categories	2nd order categories
85	The question is what will happen to the „pumped up" farms after the grants/subsidies [dry up]	FM	INC, LM, PROF
86	Guerrilla gardening [as alternative to conventional farming]	FM	INC, LM, PROF
87	Working in cooperatives (for farming, accessing grants) is hard	FM	INC, LM, PROF
88	Politicians do not want to support Hungarian farmers	FM	INC, LM, PROF, O
89	Cooperatives (for farming, accessing grants) would be good	FM	LM
90	Kitchen garden should be brought back, along with permaculture	FM	LM
91	Farmers are not asked what they want	FM	LM, O
92	Productivity (attitude towards)	FM	IA, PROF
93	Three types of farmers	FM	IA, LM
94	Under responsibility they take away responsibility from children [EU laws and required policies in school and other areas]	FM	EDU, F
95	Do not apply for grants, not even...	FM	IA, INC, LM, PROF
96	Responsible farming	FM	LM
97	Distrust among farmers	FM	O
98	There is a difference between farmer and farmer	FM	FM, IA
99	Those who work have an "orderly" life	FM, O	O
100	European Union subsidies do not promote self-sustainable farms	FM, LC	LM, O
101	Leaders do not have conscience, soul-knowing, which is why we have a problem	FM, L, O	IA, O
102	There is uncertainty because of unclear property titles	FM, L	INC, LM, PROF, O
103	There are too many farms, it is not good for the ecological balance	FM, L	INC, LM, PROF, O
104	Two-three farmers work most of the land in a village (Low number of farmers work the land)	FM, L	LM
105	There is no small scale/sustenance farmer in the village/villages	FM, L	LM, O
106	The small scale/sustenance farmers future is beyond hope, there is no future	FM, L	INC, LM, PROF
107	Animals [for husbandry] have to be placed in the landscape, European Union grants, and subsidies do not do this	FM, L	INC, LM, PROF
108	Giving up land is OK	FM, L	IA, LM, O
109	People in their teens and twenties behave non-responsible towards the community, and working the land/agriculture	FM, I, L, VC	IA, LM
110	Upbringing/Educating "local patriots" [who love and not leave their homeland]	FM, I, L	EDU
111	Building [local, traditional] knowledge into the modern contemporary context	FM, I, L	EDU, LM
112	People are needed who are worthy for the landscape	FM, I, L	IA, LM
113	People became too comfortable	FM, I, L	IA, INC, LM, PROF
114	"Shepherds with jeeps and trucks" care for profit, see animals as a money-making machine; profit-oriented mentality [mentioned using too big trucks too frequently causing habitat loss, and land degradation]	FM, I, L	IA, INC, LM, PROF
115	Healthy balance of man and the land: an inner "program", soul-knowing/[maybe] conscience, empathy [towards landscape, animals, people]	FM, I, L	IA, INC, LM, PROF
116	Young people do not want to do farming	FM, I, L	INC, LM, PROF
117	We are "here" because of education and upbringing [problems caused by lack of land attachment, not involved in community, not helping each other]	FM, I	EDU

A-2 CI themes – Farming (continued)

	Probed Themes	1st order categories	2nd order categories
118	It started in other people's soul that we do not only talk about problems, but we show alternatives for i.e., farming, growing plants	FM, I	EDU, IA, INC, LM, PROF
119	Envy and the obstruction of each other, and not helping of each other shows a capitalist, businesslike/entrepreneur mentality	FM, I	IA, INC, LM, PROF
120	The working of the land (agricultural jobs) is carried out stressfully, they release tension in alcohol, people are grumpy, moderation/calmness needed [to work the land]	FM, I	IA, LM
121	There is a conscious generation in their 30's, who do not want to farm stubbornly and stressfully	FM, I	IA, LM, O
122	The current reality is that it is important who knows who, and where, e.g., farmers cheat each other through a network of acquaintances, try to buy land cheaply	FM, I	IA, INC, LM, PROF

A-3 CI themes - Village community, landscape, other

#	Probed Themes	1st order categories	2nd order categories
123	Community events are important	VC	COMM ELEM
124	There is a difference between village and village	VC	Variability
125	There is youth in the village	VC	COMM ELEM
126	Cohesion or togetherness is important for a good community	VC	COMM ELEM
127	Priests and teachers are very important for the community	VC	COMM ELEM
128	A leading person is needed for a good community, a main organizer	VC	COMM ELEM
129	Activities performed are contagious [in a village, inspires] shows example	VC	COMM ELEM
130	An individual's success also depends on the community	VC	COMM ELEM
131	The community is envious	VC	COMM ELEM
132	There are no resources on the level of village-communities	VC	COMM ELEM
133	Work together, and celebrate together	VC	COMM ELEM
134	The importance of a handful of people in a community	VC	COMM ELEM
135	There is cohesion in the village community	VC	COMM ELEM
136	Importance of community spirit	VC	COMM ELEM
137	Little things that make a community good and strong	VC	COMM ELEM
138	The realities [social, economic] differ by village	VC	Variability
139	There is no "uniformity" among people, everyone is different	VC	Variability
140	A layered [wealth, status, professional] local village community	VC	Variability
141	Cultural belonging, heritage, and religion are important for community, and feeling belonging, unity	VC	ETH, VC
142	Consolidation of land	L	LM
143	Grants/subsidies shaped landscape	L	LM
144	One must live in the landscape does not work it [till it up entirely, etc.]	L	LM
145	The village is declining	L, VC	LM, VC
146	Land, community, and the village cannot be separated	L, VC	LM, VC
147	They still the forest away	L, O	IA, LM
148	Open and liberal thinking and its consequences	O	CULT, EDU
149	Do not know what it will be like in 20 years	O	CULT, EMPL, INC, OTL, PROF

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A-3 CI themes - Village community, landscape, other (continued)

#	Probed Themes	1st order categories	2nd order categories
150	There are no alternatives [for doing things]	O	INC, OTL, PROF
151	EU grants for village tourism	O	INC, PROF
152	Little kings "outgrew" themselves	O	INC, PROF
153	Micro-loans are a good solution for buying homes if they do it smart	O	INV
154	Leading figures need to be trustworthy/authentic	O	LEAD
155	Good communities get formed abroad [from those who leave to live/work abroad]	O	ABR, EMPL
156	New copy-paste culture needed	O	CULT
157	Herd mentality	O	CULT, EDU
158	Professional knowledge is outdated	O	EDU
159	There are no wise people	O	EDU
160	There is agreement between Romanian and Hungarian people/farmers.	O	ETH
161	Alcoholism [in villages]	O	O, OTL, INC, EMPL, COMM ELEM
162	Gates should be open [for people, including young people, to go abroad, try out various things in life]	O	ABR, EMPL
163	Abroad the employer respects the employee	O	ABR, EMPL