
PhD THESIS

Exploring the Rural Cultural Landscape: Integrating Accommodation Structures, Sustainable Agrotourism, and Vernacular Architecture for a Visionary Future

(SUMMARY OF Ph.D. THESIS)

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Abstract

This thesis examines the potential of sustainable and culturally appropriate agrotourism development in rural Romania, focusing on its multifaceted benefits and role in addressing rural challenges. The research employs a comprehensive approach, combining architectural design, public perception analysis, and economic evaluation to assess the viability and impact of agrotourism projects.

Introduction

The study is motivated by the need to address rural depopulation, economic decline, and cultural heritage preservation in Romania. It explores how agrotourism can serve as a tool for sustainable rural development while maintaining local identity and traditions. The integration of traditional architectural elements into modern rural development is emphasized to preserve cultural heritage and promote sustainable practices.

Research Objectives

The primary aim is to evaluate the benefits of sustainable and culturally appropriate agrotourism development projects in Romania. Specific objectives include:

1. Analyzing public perceptions of architectural blending in rural settings.
2. Evaluating the social and economic impacts of agrotourism housing projects as quasi-public goods.

Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is organized into several key sections:

1. Literature review on rural tourism, agrotourism, and landscape integration.

2. Methodology detailing the systematic review process and survey design.
3. Results and discussion of findings from surveys and cost-benefit analyses.
4. Conclusion summarizing key findings and implications.

Material and Methods

The research employs a mixed-methods approach:

1. Systematic literature review following PRISMA guidelines.
2. Surveys assessing public perceptions of architectural blending and visual impact.
3. Development of architectural scenarios for agrotourism housing.
4. Cost-benefit analysis of conventional versus sustainable construction methods.

Results and Discussion

Key findings include a public preference for traditional architecture and white façades in rural settings, with no significant difference in perceptions between experts and non-experts regarding architectural blending. Sustainable construction methods are found to be cost-competitive with conventional methods. Agrotourism projects offer significant environmental, social, and economic benefits when evaluated as quasi-public goods. The research highlights the broader societal benefits of agrotourism projects, including cultural preservation and economic stimulation.

Conclusion

The research concludes that sustainable and culturally sensitive agrotourism projects can effectively address multiple challenges in rural Romania. These projects are well-received by

the public and offer significant benefits in terms of cultural preservation, economic stimulation, and environmental sustainability. The study supports the development of policies and practices that prioritize sustainability and cultural heritage in rural development.

Selective bibliography

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