

# **MANAGEMENT OF RURAL COMMUNITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS: DEFINING FACTORS AND STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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## **Abstract**

The structural and socio-demographic transformations of the Romanian rural space, accentuated by complex phenomena such as rural-urban migration, demographic ageing, persistent economic disparities, and unequal access to resources, necessitate a profound reevaluation of traditional paradigms of community development. This requires a reconsideration of traditional models of local development. In this context, community development management transcends its traditional administrative and punctual character goes beyond traditional administrative and punctual approaches, requiring a strategic, integrated, and participatory approach focused on the sustainable valorization of local resources and the strengthening of social cohesion. This study aims to provide a theoretical and practical analysis of the defining factors shaping rural communities, considering both traditional and emerging elements, and exploring their role in the dynamics of local development. The stages of rural economic development are identified, and the necessity of adopting a managerial approach based on principles such as active community participation, authentic local leadership, decision-making transparency, and multidimensional sustainability is argued. The research adopts a mixed methodology (quantitative and qualitative analysis), identifying the stages of rural economic development and arguing for a managerial approach based on active participation, authentic local leadership, transparent decision-making, and multidimensional sustainability. The study contributes to consolidating a robust conceptual and operational framework intended to guide the formulation and implementation of public policies and intervention strategies in rural environments, with the fundamental objective of promoting resilient, adaptable, and development-oriented communities. This approach aims to provide a clear conceptual and operational framework to support public policies and interventions, promoting resilient, adaptable, and sustainably oriented rural communities.

## **Keywords**

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sustainable rural development, community management, active community participation, Local leadership, rural–urban migration, socio-demographic change

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