

# Handbook of Research on Agricultural Policy, Rural Development, and Entrepreneurship in Contemporary Economies

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## Chapter 18

# Sustainable Rural Livelihoods: Can Tourism-Related Activities Contribute?

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### ABSTRACT

*The study examines the concept of resilient societies that are emerging recently by opening the question of social empowerment and willingness to cope with uncertainties. It presents a comprehensive review on the issue of real contribution of tourism based economies within rural communities. The study evaluates the basic preconditions for tourism related activities in sampled rural areas in North Macedonia and Southern and Eastern Serbia, being particularly vulnerable in terms of social and economic issues (aging, poverty, migration and depopulation). The concept of 'sustainable rural livelihoods' is further enlightened, and many recommendations are noted. Generally, rural tourism should be focused on providing additional financial input, but also seek a way to attract tourists in periods with low agricultural activity. The vitality and prosperity of the village itself does not rely on tourism activity only, but rather on the natural resources and human capital, thus providing sustainable livelihood for the residents.*

### INTRODUCTION

In the modern world, within the era of globalization, contemporary rural societies are faced with many challenges, with an increasing need to cope with interlinked uncertainties. Economic changes happening within global scopes influenced that many rural areas in Europe are facing dilemmas about their future existence. They are usually considered to be less-favored and least-developed regions which are largely dependent on natural resources and agriculture. As small-scale agriculture is dominant, rural economy is facing the need for alternatives in overcoming low production, poor agricultural incomes, rural abandonment and environmental pollution. Such extreme changes in agricultural practices have also led to rural

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