

The Sustainable Livelihood Approach as a tool for the analysis of local living conditions in the villages bordering the Piatra-Craiului Mountains

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Within the framework of the Sustainable Livelihood Approach the author investigates in a case-study (based on an analysis of the macro structural changes in Romania) how settlements bordering the Piatra Craiului Mountains in Romania are structured. In the villages of the area, the situation is quite diverse: While some villages have a booming rural tourism, others have high unemployment problems because of a restructuring of industries. In remote mountain-villages traditional lifestyles along with natural-resource-based livelihoods can be found. With this the author demonstrates that the Sustainable Livelihood Approach is adequate and fruitful when analyzing individual household structures not only in developing countries but also in a European context.

Introduction

After the 1989 revolution Romania has faced a deep social and economic change. Compared to other Eastern-European transformation-countries the starting conditions in Romania were much worse after the end of the communistic system, so that the economic shock was dramatic. Only since 1999 Romania's economy has started to recover slowly, a process which was initiated much earlier in other Eastern-European countries.

In this situation individual households developed different living strategies. Based on this individual villages are very diversely structured today.

Within the framework of the Sustainable Livelihood Approach the author investigates - based on an analysis of the macro structural changes in Romania - how different villages in the Piatra Craiului Mountains are structured and how a sustainable development of the area can be achieved.

Conceptual basis: Sustainable Livelihood Approach

To analyse the situation of individual households in the study area the Sustainable Livelihood Approach (SLA) is used as a conceptual frame. This approach is shortly described here. The SLA is based mainly on research done by Chambers during the mid-1980s. Founded on this a research-group at the Department for International Development (DFID) in London published in 1998 a modelization of the SLA (vgl. Department for International Development 2001, 3; Carney 1998, 3ff; Solesbury 2003, 10f.). The SLA is used today mainly in the International Development Cooperation, for example as a field scheme to quickly evaluate the situation of households after shocks like droughts or earthquakes in developing countries or to analyze the situation weaknesses and strengths of households to find ways to improve their situation in