

The Stockholm Seminars

- focusing on the dynamics and stewardship of social-ecological systems

A social-ecological approach to identify local development risks and opportunities: insights from Southern Transylvania, Romania

Prof. Joern Fischer

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NOTE VENUE: Room 312, Stockholm Resilience Centre,
Kräftriket 2B, SE-114 19 Stockholm

Global change fundamentally influences the development trajectories of social-ecological systems worldwide. Navigating change at a regional scale requires an understanding of heterogeneity in local conditions within the target region, drivers of change and the role of uncertainties.

Drawing on a case study in Central Romania, Joern Fischer will present preliminary findings of a study that addressed each of these three requirements. To characterise local conditions in different villages, the study mapped their natural capital bundles, isolation, and several socio-economic indicators. Fischer and colleagues used participatory workshops with a wide range of local experts to elicit drivers of change and key uncertainties. Combining the findings, they show that different villages are subject to different types of “social-ecological inertia”, which may be amplified or dampened by internal and external uncertainties.

The approach should be transferable to other systems, and allows for the spatially explicit assessment of development risks and opportunities within heterogeneous regions.

About Joern Fischer

Joern Fischer is a professor at the Faculty of Sustainability at Leuphana University Lueneburg, Germany. In 2004, he obtained his PhD from The Australian National University.

In 2010, he received a Sofja Kovalevskaja Award by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation to fund his present research in Romania. Fischer’s interests range from conservation biology and landscape ecology to ecosystem services, resilience, and social-ecological systems.