

Summary

The Sustainable Development of Central Lika Contributions to an Analysis of the Human and Social Capital

This book consists of an introduction and five thematic units. The introductory part of the text presents the basic assumption, subject, aims and research methodology.

The first thematic unit, Basic Concepts, explains the meaning of social development, sustainable development and integral sustainability, social actors and capital, including descriptions of social, human, natural and economic capital. The social actors, community, local community and some alternative economic forms are defined and the basic guidelines and indicators of the concepts used in the empirical research are presented and explained in detail.

The second thematic unit, Lika Close Up, presents a historical overview of the development and modernization of Lika, with emphasis on the territory of the rural subregion of Central Lika, which is discussed in detail. Through an examination of the sociocultural and economic events during the past two centuries, the author has sought to determine the causes of the current sociocultural and economic conditions in the area.

In the third thematic unit, Central Lika at the Beginning of the 21st Century, national and local development interests are defined. This unit also provides a review of the current state of the human and social capital of Central Lika on the basis of collected and analyzed secondary data. This unit, the central part of the book, presents an analysis and interpretation of data obtained through the implementation of the first and the second rounds of qualitative research, as well as the results of empirical research. First, the author presents the methods used, research sample and qualitative research methods. Analysis and interpretation of the data collected in the first round of research yield a type of descriptive study of the current sociocultural and economic situation in Central Lika. Analysis and interpretation of the data collected in the second round of empirical

research provide insight into the social capital and sustainable development in Central Lika through the options and attitudes of the social actors interviewed. Assumptions and possibilities for the articulation of the sustainable development of Central Lika in the future are also presented.

The fourth thematic unit presents the concluding observations based upon the main findings from the preceding units, summaries of the research results, discussion of the research objectives and hypotheses.

A review of the new and unresolved questions that arose during the writing of this book, which indicated the need for further research, is presented in the fifth and final thematic unit, Guidelines for Future Research. At the end of the book are a list of references, attachments, summaries in the Croatian and English languages and a note about the author.

This work presents a sociological view of the possibilities for sustainable development in the subregion of Central Lika. Modernization processes that have tended to avoid excessively changing the entire area of Lika have left an intact natural environment, rich in natural resources, which satisfies the basic precondition for the articulation of the concept of sustainable development. However, for sustainable development to become a reality, it is necessary to adapt to the local population, the local communities of certain areas. Therefore, this work is based on a “crossing of” sustainable development concepts with concepts of social and human capital. The basis for combining these three concepts in creating opportunities for the sustainable development of Central Lika is modernization as an initial, fundamental process. The human and social capitals of Central Lika, together with the concept of sustainable development, are explored by means of qualitative empirical research using the interview method, in two rounds. The subjects were local development social actors of Central Lika (representatives of local government institutions, environmental protection institutions, local authorities, the media, educational institutions, entrepreneurs, artisans, farmers and representatives of the civil society), no matter how modest their current local resources. The results have provided insight into the current situation and also contributed to the sociological conceptualization of the possibilities for the sustainable development of Central Lika in the future, which was the aim of this work.

On the basis of the results of the empirical research, looking at the concept of human capital in a general sense, it should be noted that a basic precondition for human capital in Central Lika — positive demographic trends — is not met. Social capital has a future because traditional interpersonal relationships (trusts, cooperation, assistance, acquaintances) are still expressed, which should not be taken as an aggravating circum-

stance but instead as a mitigating circumstance to be used in strengthening the positive forms of social capital.

The final analysis of the sociological prerequisites for the sustainable development of Central Lika can be summarized in the following way: this rural area, a subregion of Lika, has achieved the prerequisites for integrated sustainability in the natural givens: the natural environment and renewable natural resources, possibilities for the production of organic food, sustainable rural tourism and intact interpersonal relationships of cooperation, helping and trust. The local social development actors who participated in the research with their knowledge and skills could contribute to the articulation and implementation of the concept of the sustainable development of Central Lika in the future. The general problems in establishing opportunities for sustainable development can be summarized in the bad demographic situation, economic lag in development, lack of educational facilities and (political) leadership and management, which currently are not conducive to integral sustainability.