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Title:

Prudent Resilience of Farmers

Abstract:

The paper examines the resilience of the farmers which is defined as prudent. The adjective “prudent” stands here for virtue; for the actions that may not always be economically rational but are prudent from social sustainability and risk-management point of view. By relying on ethnographic research findings from rural Serbia and Kosovo, I explore five resilience strategies: *scattered land parcels, managing neighbouring effect, storing crops, direct sale* and *safety networks*. As much as these strategies address individual situation of the farm household, they at the same time directly and indirectly respond to the broader local political, economic and environmental predicaments.

Because of farmers’ rather holistic perceptions of individual and community risks, the prudent resilience is almost always multisectoral which enables farmers to manage parallel threats, amortize their negative consequences, ensure forward-looking, and at the same time maintain their ethical threshold.

The paper argues that such prudent resilience as a virtuous practice cannot be measured which is a tendency imposed by global sustainability agendas and international organisations. Attempts to measure farmers’ resilience, create another danger of perpetuating the image of farmers as victims and not as competent and self-confident managers or risks and of ignoring their reservoir of knowledge.

Keywords: resilience, risk, farmers, prudence, Serbia, Kosovo, self-management.

