

## DIVERSITY, RESILIENCE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT<sup>1</sup>

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Diversity is considered, in social and ecological systems, a key to resilience where resilience is defined as the degree to which the system can build and increase the capacity for learning and adaptation. While diversity in ecological systems has been extensively inquired and its relationship with resilience is wide recognized, the social systems diversity needs further exploration. Human and ecological systems are dynamic, interacting and interdependent. Interest in the diversity and resilience of social-ecological systems is growing fast particularly in the rural contexts due to its implications for issues like social and economic development and livelihoods. This paper aims to analyze the role of economic and social diversity in defining alternative patterns of development in rural social ecological systems. It starts from the identification of critical characteristics of rural diversity then they are assessed in their dynamics ending with the identification of key relation between degree of diversity and development. The analysis of the changing spatial and temporal set of diverse rural strategies has been conducted in order to understand the emergence of an ongoing and differentiated flow of development models as response to the implementation of rural development policies. The results show that in a specific social ecological system higher socio-economic diversity leads to higher degree of rural development measured through standard socio-economic indicators.

Key words: *diversity, resilience, rural development*

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