



# IAERE

Italian Association of Environmental  
and Resource Economists

## IAERE10 Tour

22 November 2022, 14:15

**Organizers:** Dipartimento di Economia Marco Biagi – Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia

**Venue:** Via Jacopo Berengario, 51, 41121 Modena MO, Italia

**Speakers:** Massimiliano Mazzanti (University of Ferrara and SEEDS)

**Title:** Beyond individualistic behaviour: Social norms and innovation adoption in rural Mozambique.

**Abstract:** The adoption of new technologies by smallholder farmers to support economic and human development has received increased attention from scholars and development policymakers. This is particularly true for Africa, given the importance of the agricultural sector for economic growth and poverty reduction. Nevertheless, profitable innovations, such as improved seeds, fertilizers, and crop-protection chemicals, are not sufficiently adopted by farmers. This paper aims to contribute to a better understanding of this limited adoption by examining the drivers and obstacles to innovation by smallholder farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a special focus on cultural and behavioural aspects. The concepts of social norms and peer approval are considered in the farmers' decisions on innovation adoption. The focus is mainly on the social norm of being a 'good farmer', a distinction made amongst farming peers, based on the characteristics that are socially approved in the rural community. Adherence to the social norm of being a good farmer is considered one of the main drivers of farmers' decisions,

including innovation adoption. The study is based on a survey of 300 smallholder farmers in Mozambique. The results of our study show that the social norm of being a good farmer differs from that mostly shared in developed countries mainly connected to maximizing farming production. What emerges from our investigation is a socially accepted idea of a good farmer being one who is extremely concerned about others in her or his community. The results of various quantitative analyses on the intensity and adoption of innovations show that this prosocial idea of the good farmer does not prevent farmers from adopting innovations and has a significant impact on the adoption of the most radical innovations. The present study reveals the need to contextualize the analysis of farmers' decisions in the cultural and social context in which they operate.

### **Hybrid seminar:**

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