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Livelihood Strategies and Food Security - A Comparison Between Rural and Peri-urban Kenya

HENNING KRAUSE¹, ANJA FASSE², ULRIKE GROTE³

¹*Leibniz Universität Hannover, Institute for Environmental Economics and World Trade, Germany*

²*Leibniz Universität Hannover, Institute for Environmental Economics and World Trade, Germany*

³*Leibniz Universität Hannover, Institute for Environmental Economics and World Trade, Germany*

Abstract

With around 800 million people being undernourished and 2 billion suffering from hidden hunger, the global community is still very far from achieving the first two Sustainable Development Goals to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. Despite a recent favourable economic development, Kenya ranks still among the top countries where hidden hunger is prevalent with around 20 % of all Kenyans being undernourished. It is thus imperative to investigate the characteristics of food insecurity in the Kenyan society. This paper explores the characteristics in a two-step cluster analysis, focusing on the structural differences of household income, livelihood strategies and asset distribution. It is based on data from the Hortinlea Household Survey 2015, in which 700 vegetable producers have been interviewed - 200 rural producers each in Kakamega and Kisii County, and 150 peri-urban producers each in Kiambu and Nakuru County. To address the complexity of food security in its four dimensions, multiple food security indicators such as the Food Consumption Score, Household Dietary Diversity Index or Month of Adequate Household Food Provisioning have been used to group the households into food secure and food insecure households. Since the differences between rural and peri-urban Kenya are substantial in terms of public infrastructure and level of income, we separated and compared rural and peri-urban households in the analysis by using a dummy. Four clusters have been generated - one food secure and one food insecure one each in peri-urban and rural areas. Results show a significant higher prevalence of food insecurity in the rural areas especially in the utilisation and stability dimension. Food secure producers in the peri-urban area do have higher levels of education and own more land. However, both food secure and insecure households in peri-urban areas are better endowed with household assets such as cars or TVs. Food secure producers have more income from off-farm employment and less from crop production than food insecure ones. Interestingly, this is true for both rural and peri-urban areas.

Keywords: Cluster Analysis, food Security, Kenya, Livelihood Strategies