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## The significance of social capital for smallholder farmers: Selected evidence on welfare from Kenya

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### Abstract

Poverty continues to be a challenge among smallholder farmers in Kenya. Despite the undated interventions by the government to improve the welfare situation among smallholder farmers, food security emerges among the many socio-economic challenges that impede smallholder farmer welfare development. While other physical and human capital interventions have already been explored, the potential of social capital is not well-discovered to full length.

This study investigates the significance of social capital on smallholder farmers' food security. To achieve the research objectives, a detailed review of relevant literature was implemented together with empirical research. The empirical research was carried out using a survey conducted in Kenya in 2013 and 2015. The ordered logistic model was employed to examine the significance of social capital on smallholder farmer household food security. The result of the study reveals that household connection and interaction in the community are positively associated with household food security while connection and interaction with its immediate relation reduce household food security.

The conclusion was that social capital can potentially improve smallholder farmers' food security, but it would be more beneficial to all households when it is integrated with other food insecurity preventive strategies such as the promotion of diversification, intensification of irrigation practices, and adoption of innovative practices. Based on these results, it is recommended that policymakers should consider integrating and strengthening social institutions such as farmer based organisations (FBOs), farmer cooperatives, and development groups among others that improve household interaction and networking by supporting and promoting the tailored need for household food insecurity coping strategies.

**Keywords:** Food security, social capital, welfare