The Significance of Social Capital for Smallholder Farmers: Selected Evidence on Welfare from Kenya

UNIVERSITY OF HOHENHEIM

Institute of Agricultural Sciences in the Tropics (Hans-Ruthenberg-Institute),
University of Hohenheim, Germany.
Author: James Bosomtwe Quaicoe

Background and objectives

- Smallholder farmers remain marginalized in Kenya.
- Production challenges -> diminishing farmlands, climate change shocks, inadequate credit access, low technological & innovative practices, etc.
- Resulting -> hunger, malnutrition, and chronic poverty.
- Physical and human capital interventions explored -> not yielded as expected.

This study investigates the significance of social capital on smallholder farmers' food security.

Figure 1: Production challenges (Drought & fall armyworm)

Data and Methods

- Relevant literature review & empirical research were implemented.
- Socio-economic data –> SIMLESA (2013 & 2015) in Kenya.
- Food security measured by HFIAS.
- Social capital is measured by bonding, bridging & linking forms of social capital.
- Food security and social capital -> Ordered logit Model (Table 2).

- Food security is a household-level problem -> requires specifically tailored household intervention.
- Social capital can improve household food security -> works best when blended with physical & human capital.
- Policymakers should strengthen social institutions (FBOs, farmer cooperatives, and development groups, etc.).
- Promote diversification, intensification of irrigation practices & adoption of innovative practices.

Results

Indicator	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
HFIAS	916	5.77	6.29	0	27

Table 1: Descriptive of Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (2013 & 2015)

- Average household was **mildly** food insecure.
- Membership in social groups improves farm outputs -> resulting in improved food access.
- Households' connection and interaction in the community improves food security.
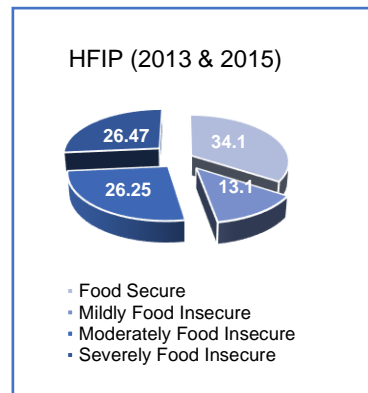- Households' connections with their immediate relation reduces household food security.

HFIP (2013 & 2015)

26.47   34.1
26.25   13.1

- Food Secure
- Mildly Food Insecure
- Moderately Food Insecure
- Severely Food Insecure

Figure 2: Household Food Insecurity Prevalence

Ordered logit Model				
Exp. variables:	Coeff.	Std. err.	Odds. rat.	Std. err.
Bonding S.C				
Years	0.018**	0.009	1.018	0.009
Nonrelatives	0.035**	0.014	1.035	0.015
Relative within	-0.061**	0.029	0.940	0.027
Bridging S.C				
Decisions	-0.257***	0.140	0.772	0.108

Table 2: Significance of Social Capital on Household Food Security

Conclusion

Figure 3: Social capital improves food sharing, farm labor & farm yield