

Institutional isolation, soil conservation and crop productivity

Abstract:

Some rural areas in Kenya are characterized by a combination of low agricultural potential, high population density, poor market access, and un conducive institutional setting. Such areas have been classified as suffering from institutional isolation. This paper analyses the role of institutional isolation on the adoption of soil conservation technologies and crop productivity in Machakos and Mbeere districts of Kenya, using survey data. Multinomial logit and probit models of adoption of soil conservation and ordinary least squares model for crop productivity are estimated. The results show that institutional isolation hinders conservation and also adversely affects productivity. The effect is more pronounced in Machakos than in Mbeere district. To encourage adoption of soil conservation practices and boost crop productivity, there is the need for policies that improve tenure security, facilitate market access and access to information and extension services, as well as promote social capital formation.