

Abstract

Women's empowerment is important for economic growth and development. When women are empowered, there is increased investment in children's education, health, and nutrition thereby enhancing future economic growth. Promoting women's empowerment is therefore an important developmental goal. Social capital has been identified as one of the channels through which empowerment can occur. This study investigates the effect of social capital on women's empowerment using a rich data set from Kenya. We measure social capital using social participation, social support, and active membership in finance/savings/credit, religious, and women's groups. We also generate a social capital index. Women's empowerment is measured using asset ownership, savings, and participation in decision making on major purchases, earnings, and health. We control for potential endogeneity of social capital. We find that different indicators of social capital have differing effects on women's empowerment indicators.