

Mechanism and Function of Food Sharing Practices in Rural Africa: Case Study of Rice Consumption Process of Farmers in the Irrigation Scheme Area in Kenya

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Summary

This study examines the mechanism and function of food sharing practices in rural Africa through analyzing the rice consumption process of farmers in the irrigation scheme area in Kenya. The study revealed that: (1) The amount of rice consumption of farmers in the community is leveled through their sharing practices. (2) The farmers change the way of rice distribution seasonally corresponding to fluctuation of market price and intend to reconcile expanding territorial ties in the village and ensuring survival of blood ties into the next generation. (3) The government and international development aid agencies can support “endogenous development” of rural communities by complementing the mutual aid mechanism such as food sharing practices inside the community. This case study suggests the needed perspective and approach for outsiders to take when assuming a role in community initiative development.

Key words: Africa, Food sharing practices, Consumption leveling, Community development