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Prof. Dr. Thomas Kutsch

Jürgen Piechaczek

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ILR

Institut für Lebensmittel- und Ressourcenökonomik
Lehrstuhl für Wirtschaftssoziologie
der
Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität

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The Case of Smallholder Coffee Growers in South Colombia**

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Referent:	Prof. Dr. Thomas Kutsch
Korreferent:	Prof. Dr. Marc Janssens
Korreferent:	Prof. Dr. Jürgen Pohlan
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Implications of Quality-Based Agri-Food Supply Chains on Agri-Social Systems: The Case of Smallholder Coffee Growers in South Colombia

Globalization of markets for high value agricultural products, such as the specialty coffee sector and thereby high quality coffees, creates dynamic markets for coffee producers at regional, national, and international level, whereby high quality coffee needs reliable standards. However, the implementation of such standards requires the farmer's capability for product innovation and improvement of quality and efficiencies of management processes; the adjustment of production comes at a cost that many small-scale producers may not be able to afford. These costs depend on the specific biophysical, socio-economic and cultural conditions under which different groups of producers operate.

The present research aimed at deriving the conditions under which high-valued coffee can significantly increase household incomes and therefore enhance living conditions of people in rural areas by using the example of small-scale coffee producers from south Colombia; the study was based on the analysis of specialty coffee farm systems. In the center of consideration was the family farm system; the theoretical basis consists of the decision making behavior of small-scale coffee farmers. Moreover, the theoretical framework was described by the rational choice theory. The outcome of the conceptual framework was the differentiation of objective environment in social environment, physical environment, and the belief system of farm managers. For this not representative study, the principle of triangulation with a combination of methods from different approaches of social empirical research was applied in the two Colombian departments of Cauca and Huila to achieve the necessary information.

The results suggest that the higher the market orientation of a coffee-growing farm is towards high-quality specialty coffee markets, the more important are specific conditions, such as farmer's education and therefore understanding of the concept of quality-oriented coffee production. Moreover, the marketing of high-value coffee in high quality coffee markets has a significant positive impact on the household income situation. In contrast to high quality production, organic coffee production is economically less favorable. However, high quality coffee can only be produced, processed, and marketed under extremely restricted conditions like environmental conditions and particular abilities of farmers, which can be regarded as minimum requirements for the farm household to grow high quality coffee economically. Furthermore, the success of high quality coffee marketing requires a well-organized coffee growers association and consequently a better access to high-value markets. As a consequence of non-tariff trade barriers, some associations try recently to combine certification with high quality markets. However, specialty coffee marketing in high-value markets is not reasonable for all family farm households. The classification of family farm households has shown that especially young and modern farmers, high-educated farmers with off-farm activities, and medium sized farms with intensive production in ecological niches are more successful in high-quality coffee production.

In conclusion, further research should be focusing on a more detailed economic analysis with a representative sample of small-scale farms, which sell their coffee in high-value markets; this approach would make the different production systems more comparable.

Auswirkungen von qualitätsbezogenen Agri-Food Supply Chains auf agrarsoziale Systeme: Der Fall von kaffeeanbauenden Kleinbauern in Südkolumbien

Durch die Globalisierung sind neue Absatzkanäle auf regionaler, nationaler und internationaler Ebene für hochwertige, landwirtschaftliche Produkte entstanden, welche im Falle von Kaffeebauern Märkte für qualitativ hochwertige Kaffees beinhalten. Diese qualitativ hochwertigen Kaffees brauchen verlässliche Standards. Allerdings erfordert die Umsetzung solcher Standards die Fähigkeit der Landwirte zu Produktinnovation und Verbesserung der Produktionsprozesse im Sinne von höherer Qualität und Effizienz. Die Anpassung der Kaffeeproduktion an Produktstandards bedarf eines finanziellen Aufwands, den aber viele kleinere Erzeuger nicht in der Lage sind aufzubringen. Diese Kosten hängen von spezifischen biophysikalischen, sozioökonomischen und kulturellen Bedingungen ab, unter denen unterschiedliche Gruppen von Landwirten produzieren.

Die hier vorliegende Arbeit hatte das Ziel am Beispiel von kaffeeproduzierenden Kleinstlandwirten in Südkolumbien die Bedingungen aufzuzeigen, unter denen die Vermarktung von hochwertigem Kaffee das Haushaltseinkommen deutlich steigert und folglich auch zu besseren Lebensbedingungen der Menschen in ländlichen Gebieten führt. Die Grundlage bildete dabei die Analyse von landwirtschaftlichen Haushaltssystemen von Familienbetrieben, hochwertigen Kaffee produzieren. Der theoretische Hintergrund bezog sich auf das Entscheidungsfindungsverhalten von kaffeeproduzierenden Landwirten. Als theoretischer Rahmen wurde hierfür die Rational Choice Theorie verwendet. Das Ergebnis war ein Analyserahmen, der die objektive Umwelt in die soziale Umwelt, physische Umwelt sowie die persönlich-individuellen Einstellungen des Landwirtes unterteilte. Für diese nicht repräsentative Studie wurde das Prinzip der Triangulation genutzt. Durch diese Kombination von verschiedenen Methoden der empirischen Sozialforschung konnten alle notwendigen Daten in den kolumbianischen Distrikten Cauca und Huila erhoben werden.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass je höher die Orientierung der Betriebe auf die Vermarktung von qualitativ hochwertigen Kaffee liegt, desto wichtiger sind spezifische Bedingungen, wie beispielsweise Bildung und damit einhergehend das Verständnis für qualitätsorientierten Anbau von Kaffee. Es wurde festgestellt, dass die Vermarktung von hochwertigem Kaffee in entsprechenden Märkten einen positiven Einfluss auf die Haushaltseinkommenssituation der untersuchten Betriebe hat. Im Gegensatz zur qualitätsbezogenen Kaffeeproduktion ist im Fall dieser Studie die rein biologische Kaffeeproduktion wirtschaftlich weniger vorteilhaft. Hochwertiger Qualitätskaffee kann allerdings nur unter extrem restriktiven Bedingungen hergestellt, verarbeitet und vermarktet werden. Diese Bedingungen stellen die Mindestanforderungen für einen landwirtschaftlichen Betrieb dar, der hochqualitativen Kaffee produzieren möchte. Jedoch ist auch ein gut organisierter Verbund von Kaffeebauern mit einem guten Zugang zu hochqualitativen Märkten für den Vermarktungserfolg erforderlich. Dennoch stellt die Vermarktung von hochwertigem Kaffee nicht für alle landwirtschaftlichen Familienbetriebe die beste Lösung dar. Im diesem Zusammenhang hat die Klassifizierung der landwirtschaftlichen Familienbetriebshaushalte aufgezeigt, dass vor allem junge und moderne Landwirte, hoch ausgebildete Landwirte mit nebenbetrieblichen Tätigkeiten und mittelgroße Betriebe mit intensiver Kaffeeproduktion in ökologischen Nischen erfolgreicher sind als andere bei der Produktion und Vermarktung von hochwertigem Qualitätskaffee.

Weiterführende Studien sollten sich auf eine sehr viel detaillierte ökonomische Analyse fokussieren und diese mit einer repräsentativen Anzahl an Kleinbauern mit einer Produktion von hochwertigen Kaffee, welche zum genauen Vergleich von verschiedenen Produktionssystemen führt.

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