

# THE ROLE OF BRIDGING AND LINKING SOCIAL CAPITAL IN HOUSEHOLD WEALTH: A CASE STUDY OF TWO LIVELIHOODS IN TREASURE BEACH, JAMAICA

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## ABSTRACT

The Caribbean is a developing region of the world that has struggled to overcome corrupt governmental programs and agencies. Poverty and crime are commonplace, and a strong distrust of government is often present. With that said, this research undertook a comparative case study of twenty fishers and twenty farmers in a unique Jamaican coastal community. Extensive qualitative and quantitative research analyzed the role of bridging and linking social capital in contributing to household wealth variations.

Contextual nuances revealed that the use of social capital varies by occupation. Key findings include positive relationships between formal group membership and group diversity and wealth creation for fishers and a negative relationship for farmers. Research found that bonding capital's informal networks play an important role in both occupations. Roles include reduced vulnerability (caused by environmental and economic shocks) of poorer fishers and farmers as well as providing access to technological information, financial capital, and technology, which facilitates household wealth creation. Consequently, developers and policymakers need to utilize this distinction of network preferences in order to more effectively address widespread poverty in Jamaica and throughout the region.