Public Abstract
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Graduation Term: SS 2012
Department: Agricultural Economics
Degree: MS
Title: MOBILE PHONES AND MARKET PARTICIPATION AMONG SMALLHOLDER FARMERS IN THE BOLIVIAN ALTIPLANO

Farm households in the developing world who choose to be self-sufficient, instead of producing for the market, lack the money necessary for medical care and education among the other products that cannot be produced within the home. It has been noted that households located at a greater distance to market (or with higher transportation costs) are more self-sufficient than households closer to the market (or with lower transportation costs). This self-sufficiency has been noted to increase faster than the transportation costs alone can explain. One promising theory on why is that the markets are volatile and information about those markets is costly for the distant farmers. Landline phones are generally not available so the only way prior to the introduction of mobile phones to get information about markets was to transport a member of the household to the market or to deliver without information. Both of these options are potentially costly. This thesis project examines the relationship between mobile phones and transportation costs on market participation with survey data taken in 2009 in several communities of the Bolivian Altiplano. Through the use of statistical methods a significant link has been found. Mobile phone use in trade allows high cost of transport farm households to be integrated at a higher level than otherwise possible. These findings can guide development efforts and enhance the understanding of the impact of reducing information costs.