Effects of household definitions on survey results and possible implications for policy design: Evidence from Tanzania’s Maasai

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Introduction

What is the problem?
- Different definitions of a household in surveys
- Lack of consistency
  → comparability may be difficult
  → conclusions may lead to misleading policy recommendations

Identification

General household definition
- "A household definition usually includes some intersection of keywords related to residency requirements, common food consumption, and intermingling of income or production decisions." (Beaman and Dillon, 2011)

Specific survey definition
- Source
  - D1: People who occupy a common dwelling unit (or a part of it) for at least four nights in a week (Beaman & Dillon, 2011)
  - D2: Group of people who lives together, pool their money and eat at least one meal together each day (Schreiner, 2015)
  - D3: Group of people who have stayed in the household for at least 3 months within the last 12 months. (NBS Tanzania, 2008)

Data and Methodology

How did we approach the problem?
- Identify common household definitions used in surveys
- Apply different definitions to a household dataset of 200 Maasai pastoralists living in Northern Tanzania
- Assess variations in welfare indicators resulting from the different definitions

Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Welfare indicator</th>
<th>D1</th>
<th>D2</th>
<th>D3</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income/capita (in ’000 TZS)</td>
<td>17.52</td>
<td>17.37</td>
<td>16.38</td>
<td>1.14 (6.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure/capita (in ’000 TZS)</td>
<td>66.43</td>
<td>65.56</td>
<td>62.62</td>
<td>3.81 (5.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asset/capita (in ’000 TZS)</td>
<td>57.53</td>
<td>57.06</td>
<td>55.04</td>
<td>2.49 (4.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLU/capita</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>0.22 (5.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Differences: Using different household definitions lead to the indicators deviating between 4-7%.

Conclusions

- Differences in welfare indicators do not vary hugely between the three definitions, but:
- Further analysis is required to identify if this leads to different results in regression analyses
- Maasai families are often comprised of several sub-households that may be considered as separate households leading to an increase of the number of households
- Further analysis to address the effect of inflating observations is needed

References

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