GLOBAL LAND INEQUALITY

Luis Bauluz, Yajna Govind, Filip Novokmet
Introduction

• 3 out 4 of the poorest billion individuals in the world depend on agricultural land for their subsistence (FAO, 2016)

• Existing cross-country estimates of land inequality use distribution of the size of operational holdings from agriculture censuses (Deininger and Squire, 1998)

• Problems:
  • Operational holding ≠ land owned
  • Size of land ≠ Value of land
  • Missing landless households

• Need for clearly defined and consistently measured land ownership inequality
What we do

• We exploit survey data which allows us to focus on the land privately owned by a household

• Provide consistent estimates of land ownership inequality across countries and regions of the world:
  • Both in terms of area and value
  • Accounting for the landless

• Main limits at this stage:
  • We do not account for communal land
  • We do not correct surveys (under-reporting etc.)
What we find

1. Land-area inequality estimates from censuses and surveys are highly correlated, but...

2. Land-area inequality can differ importantly from land-value inequality

3. Differences in the proportion of landless across countries vary substantially, affecting markedly inequality estimates

4. Regional patterns in inequality according to our benchmark metric contradict existing patterns from agricultural censuses
1) Land-area inequality: census vs survey

Gini estimates for land area based on census and survey
2) Land area, land value and the landless Top 10%
THANK YOU!
Next steps

• Macro
  • Decompose total agricultural land into institutional sectors: private, corporate, public
  • Value of agricultural land as % of national income

• Distribution
  • Role of communal land across countries:
    (i) estimate its value
    (ii) distribute it among agricultural households
  • Impute land-value inequality in countries where we only have land-area inequality (e.g. Brazil, Peru, Mexico)

• Access to census micro data
  • Distribution of agricultural land by institutional sectors
  • Correction of surveys using BFM method
Land-area vs land-value inequality

Top 10% share owners: land values vs land area
(most recent year available)
Landowners vs landowners & landless Top 10%

**Global Land Inequality**

![Graph showing top 10% shares of land value by country](image)

- **India**
- **Bangladesh**
- **Pakistan**
- **China**
- **Vietnam**
- **Ecuador**
- **Guatemala**
- **Ethiopia**
- **Gambia**
- **Malawi**
- **Niger**
- **Nigeria**
- **Tanzania**

**Legend:**
- Land value: owners
- Land value: owners and agricultural non-owners
Landowners vs landowners & landless

Bottom 50%

Bottom 50% shares, most recent year available

India | Bangladesh | Pakistan | China | Vietnam | Ecuador | Guatemala | Ethiopia | Gambia | Malawi | Niger | Nigeria | Tanzania

Land value: owners | Land value: owners and agricultural non-owners