

Why we should measure Horizontal Inequalities

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Horizontal Inequalities

- Are inequalities among groups; contrast with ‘vertical’ inequality (inequality among individuals)
- Which groups: groups that are salient (important) to people – either members of the group or others.
- People have multiple identities, and some are fluid and changing.

But identities are still important to people

- Nature of identities binding groups together varies across societies:
 - E.g. religion;
 - Ethnic group
 - Race
 - Region
 - Gender
 - Caste
 - Class

Horizontal Inequalities are multidimensional

- Economic dimensions (incomes; assets; employment)
- Social dimensions (schools; health services; housing; social relations)
- Political dimensions: government, bureaucracy, army, policy.
- Cultural status: recognition of language, religion, practices

Why are His important

- For wellbeing: 'being black and feeling blue'
- Instrumentally for efficiency and for poverty reduction.
- Above all for social stability

Horizontal Inequalities raise the risk of conflict

- Many examples: Rwanda; N.Ireland; Israel/Palestine; Philippines, Thailand....
- Econometric evidence across countries; and within them.
- Most likely to raise risk of conflict when political and socio-economic are in same direction. Cote d'Ivoire as an example. Contrast with Ghana.

Measurement Implications

- Important to record significant HIs so as to identify problems and policies.
- Problems:
 - Defining the relevant groups
 - Getting data

Measurement questions

- How to add up in societies with multiple groups
 - Population weighted coefficient of variation one possibility
- How to deal with issue of distribution within the group.
 - Foster's mean of means approach powerful mechanism for comparing whole distribution across groups
- How to deal with multidimensionality
 - Probably more enlightening to keep major dimensions separate.

Conclusion

- Important to measure horizontal inequalities because societies with severe inequalities are unfair and often unstable.