

SDC 2019 Annual Meeting Abstracts

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Title: Persistent Peasant Poverty and Assets

Measuring changes to rural lives is hard where good data are scarce, and where there is disagreement over what is changing and how to measure it. Here we explore variation in meanings of wealth and poverty across different sites in Tanzania, using data from multiple village focus groups, and compare these to measures discussed in academic and policy debates. We find that both need to pay more attention to measures that matter locally, and in particular to assets. Assets are either not measured in poverty line data, or they are assembled in indices that many villagers will find hard to recognise. We then present findings from a variety of villages that explore trends in asset accumulation in rural areas of Tanzania.

