

The Commodity Chain of the Household: From Survey Design to Policy Planning

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Do household definitions matter?

'The household is central to the development process. Not only is the household a production unit but it is also a consumption, social and demographic unit'

Kenya: Ministry of Planning and National Development 2003:59

The Issue

Why does the definition matter?

What are consequences of household definition?

- Data commissioners
- Data collectors
- Data analysts
- Data users
 - Policy makers
 - Planning / implementing targeted interventions

What are the implications for “household” members?

We are not.....

**Redefining the definition of the
household**

Data designers & collectors have:

clear ideas about why need something called 'household'

clear aims

clear understanding of household definition

BUT what about analysts / users / consumers far removed from collection?

MIGHT: look at definition and assume this is the unit of production, consumption, socialisation central to the development process

MIGHT: not even look at definition because they assume they know what a household is

Do household definitions matter?

- More variables being added in ‘household section’
 - Way of measuring wealth / poverty / access to facilities which influence health
 - New level of analysis / explanation
- More use (researchers & policy makers) made of publicly available data
- Recognition of importance of society’s basic unit as influence upon members’ well-being

Methods

- 1. Document review (1950-present) Sub-Saharan Africa**
- 2. Key informant interviews (International)**
- 3. Ground truthing fieldwork (Tanzania case study)**
 1. Cognitive interviews
 2. Ethnographic interviews
- 4. Modelling differences, to include:**
 1. Female headed households
 2. Household dependency ratios
 3. Asset indices
 4. Household size

Census Data Collection: issues in household definition

AIM: complete enumeration of population along with individual level characteristics for planning purposes

Themes in definitions

- **Eating together**
- **Common housekeeping**
- **Living together**
- **Answerable to head**

'private household'
..defined as a group
of persons living
together and sharing
living expenses.
Tanzania 1967/78/88

"Respondents who live in the
same housing unit or in
connected premises and have
common cooking
arrangements (eat their food
together) **Ethiopia 1994**

-a group of persons who normally
live and eat together **Kenya 1969**

- a group of persons who normally
live and eat together, whether or
not they are related by blood or
marriage **Kenya 1979/89**

- adds answerable to the same
household head **Kenya 1999**

A household consists of a person, or a
group of persons, who occupy a
common dwelling (or part of it) for at
least four days a week and who provide
themselves jointly with food and other
essentials for living. In other words, they
live together as a unit. **S.Africa 1996**

Census Data Collection: issues in household definition

Summary:

- household definition is practical solution to census aims of total enumeration
- recognition (usually) that is a reduced social unit
- recognition that compromises are made
- set of rules for enumerators to follow
- continuity over time – comparability

Creation of what van de Walle (2006) calls ‘a statistical household’

Sample surveys: issues in household definition (eg: WFS, DHS, WHS)

Household definition

practical: to enable the identification of individuals for individual questionnaires

“The household is a device used to get at the individual. The household is the sampling unit while the individual is the observational unit.”

World Health Survey 2002

‘main purpose of household questionnaire was to identify women who were eligible for the individual interview’

Zambia DHS 1992, 1996

Do household definitions matter?

Issues of misrepresentation

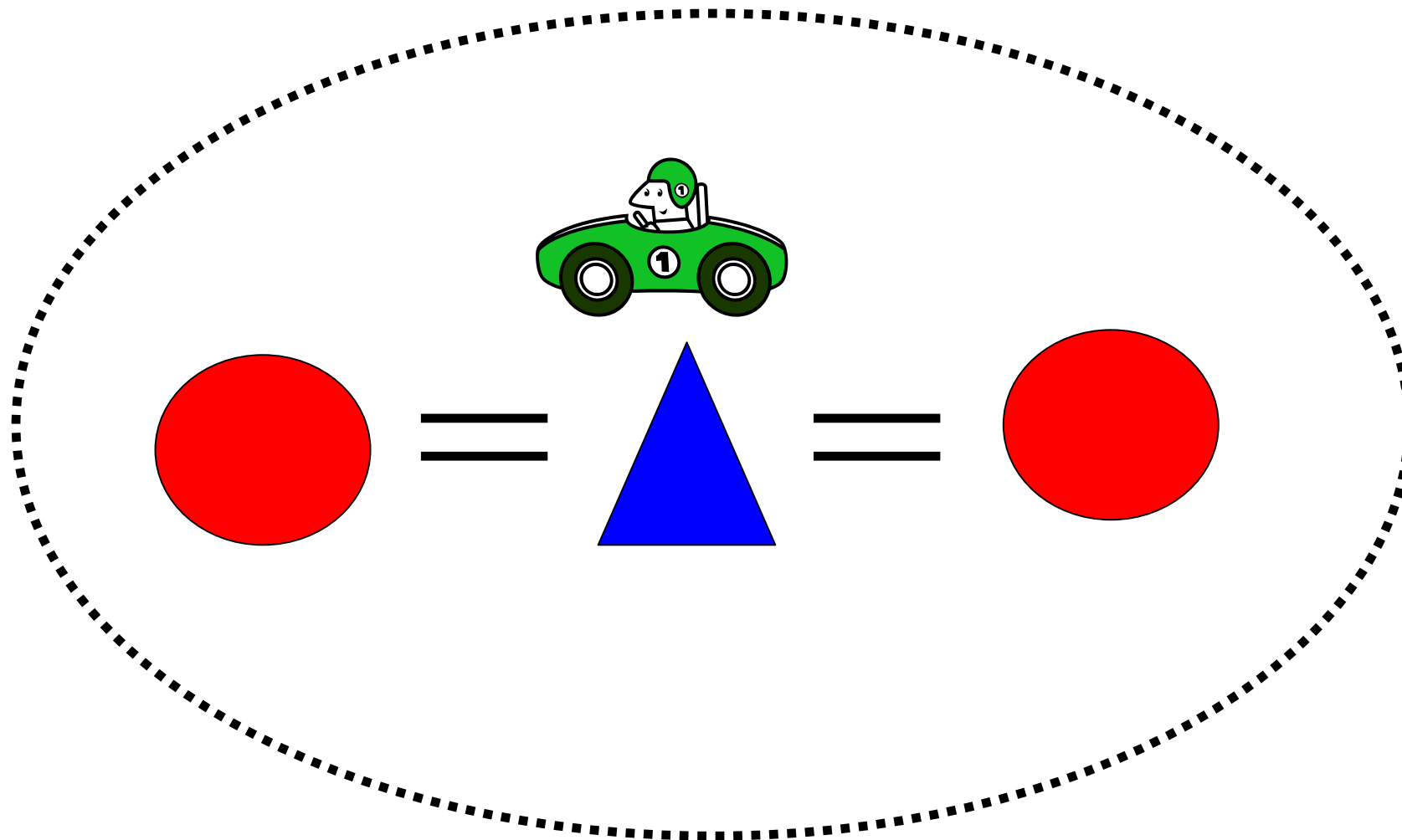
- Labour / resources / consumption / poverty...
- Sub-groups
 - Homeless
 - Street children
 - Mobile production systems (fishers, pastoralists, miners, construction)
 - Migrants
 - Single person households

Do household definitions matter?

Increasing use of ‘indicators’

Many indicators calculated at the household level

- MDGs
- Poverty reduction
- Asset indicators
 - Access to piped water / latrine
 - Access to key resources (production or communication)
 - Consumption and expenditure
 - Including food



SOCIO-ECONOMIC HOUSEHOLD

Emerging themes

- Single person households
- Urban affluent
 - Household headship?
- Migrants and mobility
 - Low-income rental neighbourhoods
- Occupations
 - Mining
 - Agribusiness
 - Construction

Where is the cooking pot?