

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL END OF AWARD REPORT



For awards ending on or after 1 November 2009

This End of Award Report should be completed and submitted using the **grant reference** as the email subject, to **reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk** on or before the due date.

The final instalment of the grant will not be paid until an End of Award Report is completed in full and accepted by ESRC.

Grant holders whose End of Award Report is overdue or incomplete will not be eligible for further ESRC funding until the Report is accepted. ESRC reserves the right to recover a sum of the expenditure incurred on the grant if the End of Award Report is overdue. (Please see Section 5 of the ESRC Research Funding Guide for details.)

Please refer to the Guidance notes when completing this End of Award Report.

Grant Reference	RES-175-25-0014		
Grant Title	The commodity chain of the household: from survey design to policy planning		
Grant Start Date	15/10/2007	Total Amount	£79,101.74
Grant End Date	30/11/2009	Expended:	
Grant holding Institution	London School of Economics		
Grant Holder	Dr Ernestina Coast		
Grant Holder's Contact Details	Address	Email	
	Dept of Social Policy LSE Houghton Street London WC2A 2AE	e.coast@lse.ac.uk	
		Telephone 0207 955 6335	
Co-Investigators (as per project application):		Institution	
Dr Sara Randall		UCL	
Dr Tiziana Leone		LSE	

1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Please provide below a project summary written in non-technical language. The summary may be used by ESRC to publicise your work and should explain the aims and findings of the project.

[Max 250 words]

Worldwide, household surveys generate much of the data for comparative indicators on poverty and welfare especially in developing countries. Increasing numbers of household surveys is reflected in an explosion in analysis of the data produced. Using diverse methods this study investigated the extent to which producers and users of survey data shared an understanding of the core household unit used for these surveys.

Whereas survey professionals have clear understandings of what a survey household is, this “statistical household” often poorly represents residential or consumption units important in people’s lives. Household survey analysts rarely consider the implications of household definitions for their analyses, perpetuating an uncritical approach to household survey data; harmonisation of major international datasets means that such uncritical use of household survey data is increasing. Many users of published results of household surveys are unaware of the limitations and implications of ‘households’ generated by survey definitions, tending to use reports “off the shelf”, accepting concepts as unproblematic.

A more flexible and reflexive approach to households in surveys is needed. Aiming to compare ‘like’ with ‘like’ implies that all populations are structured in similar ways: but they are not. The assumption that the majority of individuals live in / contribute to / obtain resources from just one domestic unit is often false, especially in contexts of rapid social change or where wider kin support remains important. Analytical implications of different conceptualisations of the household generate substantial variation in standard indicators such as household size and characteristics of household head.

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

a) Objectives

Please state the aims and objectives of your project as outlined in your proposal to the ESRC.

[Max 200 words]

AIM: To establish how the concept of the household is defined and used in household surveys in sub-Saharan Africa and the implications of these definitions for analyses and policy-making.

OBJECTIVES:

- Review of definitions and applications of the concept of households in household surveys in sub-Saharan Africa
- Review the understanding and awareness of varying concepts of the household by key international and national producers and consumers of household survey data.

- Description of diverse basic social units in a range of Tanzanian settings
- Scenario modelling of the impact of different household concepts on socio-demographic indicators

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How are survey conceptions of the 'household' at odds with the local reality of households?
2. What are the characteristics of the differences between survey and local definitions of the household?
3. What are the implications of current household definitions for analyses and policy decisions?
4. How might differences in the survey and local conception of the household impact on analyses and policy making?
5. How could household surveys be improved in order to better capture the reality/ realities of households?

b) Project Changes

Please describe any changes made to the original aims and objectives, and confirm that these were agreed with the ESRC. Please also detail any changes to the grant holder's institutional affiliation, project staffing or funding. *[Max 200 words]*

The project end-date was changed to 30/11/09 in agreement with ESRC in order to take account of Dr Coast's maternity leave. There were no cost implications arising from this change.

The original proposal included a dissemination workshop in Dar Es Salaam. This was replaced, with agreement from the ESRC, with an online e-conference.

c) Methodology

Please describe the methodology that you employed in the project. Please also note any ethical issues that arose during the course of the work, the effects of this and any action taken. *[Max. 500 words]*

A combination of secondary and primary data analysis, using mixed methods in one case study country (Tanzania) was used. Five research methods were used:

1. Review of existing household surveys (post-1960) and censuses (post-1950) in sub-Saharan Africa involving textual analysis of description of differences in standard household definitions by country, and survey type,

including change over time. Review included household survey documents (e.g.: enumerators' manuals, methodology reports). It covered all censuses and national surveys for which documentation could be found either on the internet or in the libraries of SOAS and LSE. Censuses for: Botswana, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Surveys examined for a subset of countries: Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia and included: Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), World Health Survey (WHS), World Fertility Survey (WFS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS), , Integrated household surveys, Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaires (CWIQ), and Household Budget Surveys. Not all surveys were undertaken in all countries.

2. In-depth semi-structured interviews (n=41 with 54 individuals) with household survey producers and consumers, national and international, to identify how the concept of the household is produced, understood and used at different stages of data production and use. Interviews focused on:

- What they understood by the term 'household'
- Understandings of the concept of household in survey data collection
- Awareness of which types of individuals are ex/included in survey 'households' and why
- Perceptions of the divergences between survey 'households' and their own experience of the primary social units in Tanzania where applicable
- Their reflections on particular populations who might be poorly served / represented in household surveys

Recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed for both content and language used. Content was analysed to ascertain respondents' knowledge and understanding of the conventions dictating household definitions in that country and whether there are steps in the chain of data production and analysis where unfounded assumptions are made about how 'household' has been used.

3. In-depth qualitative study of local concepts of the household for selected national sub-populations, identified on the basis of interviews with data producers and consumers. Sub-populations included: urban communities with high proportion of temporary migrants (two suburbs of Dar es Salaam, n=24), pastoral and polygamous groups (Maasai ethnic group, n=8, but 218 people because these locally defined households were very large) and a rural area with high levels of temporary migration (Rufiji area, n=20).

4. Scenario modelling of the impact of the different household concepts to estimate the size and direction of impacts of different household concepts on a range of socio-demographic outcomes.

5. Literature mapping of articles (n=2,393) drawn from across the social

sciences, published between 2003 and 2009. A systematic mapping of the literature in major social science databases¹ based on keywords and phrases². This established the scale of awareness of the nuances of household in the published literature.

Ethical clearance obtained from the LSE's Research Committee. No ethical issues arose during the course of the work.

d) Project Findings

Please summarise the findings of the project, referring where appropriate to outputs recorded on *ESRC Society Today*. Any future research plans should also be identified. *[Max 500 words]*

Household survey analysts neglect the household

Household surveys are the mainstay of micro-level data for resource-poor settings. They are vital for poverty measurement and there has been an upsurge in the number of household surveys conducted post-1950, accompanied by an explosion in published research analysing household survey data.

Scholarly end-users of household survey data rarely consider the implications of the definition of the household for their analyses or results as demonstrated by our review of nearly 3000 articles published between 2003-2009 that used household survey data in their analyses where just 3% considered to any extent, what was represented by the household in the survey analysed. Most end users working in policy and development were unaware that surveys used a tightly defined 'statistical household definition' assuming that the 'households' for which data were available for any country were the basic socio-

Survey definitions of household currently ignore respondents' realities and could be improved

The academic literature from many disciplines generates rich critiques of the concept of household but relatively little research examines how these critiques could translate into improved household survey data collection and analysis.

Our research identifies two major influences on definitions of households in surveys.

1. Comparability and harmonisation over time and across countries

¹ Scopus, JSTOR and Web of Knowledge

² Search terms: Household survey, household analysis, household analyses, household-level analysis, household definition, definition of household

Many household survey definitions are oriented around facilitating comparison over space and time. Survey definitions often remain unchanged even if there is evidence that they no longer (or perhaps never did) represent people's realities.

2. The influence of the census: Censuses require individuals to be counted once and once only, and how people are enumerated in a census reflects these constraints. Because of the importance of comparability and harmonisation, census definitions feed into, and strongly influence subsequent survey tools.

These two constraints generate problems for household survey data:

a. Aiming to compare 'like' with 'like' implies that all populations are structured in similar ways in terms of residence, provisioning and expenditure: but they are not

b. The assumption that the majority of individuals live in / contribute to / obtain resources from just one 'household' is often false - especially in contexts where migration and complex livelihoods are the norm, and where kin networks remain important.

Poor representation of realities is not distributed at random across a population. It is concentrated in groups such as: ethnic minorities; the poor; migrants; and mobile populations. In many settings these are the groups targeted for poverty reduction interventions and for whom the MDGs will not be met. Conceptualisations of households which better reflect people's realities generate very different characteristics in terms of indicators and explanatory variables such as household size or characteristics of household head. Deficient representations of realities are likely to differ spatially, yet many development interventions are geographically focused and development organisations want and are dependent on data for specific localities.

Complex living arrangements in urban sub-Saharan Africa are poorly represented in household surveys. In rural areas survey definitions rarely capture interdependencies of production, consumption and support.

Household surveys could easily collect better data if they took a more flexible approach to recording household membership and relationships. Ways need to be found to alert data users to definitional consequences

All project outputs to date are recorded on ESRC Society Today

e) Contributions to wider ESRC initiatives (e.g. Research Programmes or Networks)

If your project was part of a wider ESRC initiative, please describe your contributions to the initiative's objectives and activities and note any effect on your project resulting from participation. *[Max. 200 words]*

The project is part of the ESRC's Survey Design and Measurement Initiative (SDMI³), a component of the ESRC-funded Survey Resources Network (survey.net.ac.uk) and participation to date involves:

- Hosting at LSE of SDMI annual meeting (2009)
- Presentation at SDMI inaugural meeting (2008)
- Presentation at ESRC Research Methods Festival (2008)

Involvement with the SDMI has meant useful networking with other SDMI participants and the dissemination of our project outputs through these online hubs.

Future activities we are committed to with SDMI

- Presentations at
 - o ESRC Research Methods Festival 2010
 - o SDMI meeting at Royal Statistical Society (21/09/10)

3. EARLY AND ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

a) Summary of Impacts to date

Please summarise any impacts of the project to date, referring where appropriate to associated outputs recorded on *ESRC Society Today*. This should include both scientific impacts (relevant to the academic community) and economic and societal impacts (relevant to broader society). The impact can be relevant to any organisation, community or individual. [Max: 400 words]

On the basis of a range of activities we have been contacted by international researchers from both within and beyond academia (e.g.: World Bank) following up on our findings. All research outputs are up-to-date in *ESRC Society Today* and the project website.

Presentations

Research findings have been presented at 7 international conferences (Tanzania, Morocco, USA, UK, Spain, Canada), 1 in-house seminar series, and 3 research network events

Publication

We have a plan for publishing our research findings in peer-reviewed journals. One article is currently being revised for re-submission to *Population Studies*. One article is under review with *Population, Space and Place*. A further 4 articles are in progress, each with a lead author and peer-reviewed journal identified.

Workshop

In May 2008, with funding from the British Society for Population Studies,

³ <http://www.iscr.essex.ac.uk/survey/ulsc/survey-design-and-measurement-initiative>

we convened a one-day workshop *Defining the household: implications of household definitions in surveys and census*⁴. The purpose of this workshop, which attracted 40 participants and 6 invited papers in addition to our own, was to highlight our work and to develop a network of researchers with similar research interests. Some participants were involved in the subsequent e-conference.

E-conference

Our e-conference, held in November 2009, attracted 103 participants from at least 15 countries⁵ and involved participants from a range of international and national organisations (including: World Bank, Afristat, USAID, CGIAR, In-depth network, INED, UNICEF, IRD, INED) and universities. The bi-lingual (French and English) e-conference attracted particular comment from participants for its ability to develop dialogue across linguistic barriers. Given our future Anglo-Franco funded research collaboration arising out of this project, this e-conference forms the basis of an innovative international research findings dialogue for our future ESRC-funded research.

Participant word of mouth

Our methodology involved in-depth interviews with professionals involved in the design and conduct of household surveys in sub-Saharan Africa. We know from our interview transcripts (and the questions asked of us) that respondents were engaged with our research agenda, and some respondents may have incorporated some of our discussions in their future and on-going work. We cannot measure or provide evidence of this impact at this stage.

Further funding secured

As a pilot study focusing on one country (Tanzania) this project formed the basis of a large-scale (5 country - Senegal, Uganda, Burkina Faso, UK, France) grant proposal, submitted in 2009. Funding (£246,891) has been secured for a project jointly led by Dr Randall "*Harmonising the household: the implications of standardised data tools for understanding intergenerational relations*" under ESRC-ANR bilateral funding, for which Dr Coast is a co-applicant.

b) Anticipated/Potential Future Impacts

Please outline any anticipated or potential impacts (scientific or economic and societal) that you believe your project might have in future. *[Max. 200 words]*

The project website (www.surveymouse.org) has web-based contact facility. We anticipate that this open source resource, which acts as a repository for all of our outputs (including content from the e-conference), will attract future requests for research findings and feedback and further engagement with our scientific findings.

⁴ <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/socialPolicy/BSPS/dayMeetings/DefiningtheHousehold.aspx>

⁵ Some participants' country location are unidentifiable

As our research findings are published in peer-reviewed journals we anticipate increased impact. Where appropriate our peer-reviewed journal content will be made available in open source, including: LSE Research Online (<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/>) and UCL (<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/publications/>)

You will be asked to complete an ESRC Impact Report 12 months after the end date of your award. The Impact Report will ask for details of any impacts that have arisen since the completion of the End of Award Report.

4. DECLARATIONS

Please ensure that sections A, B and C below are completed and signed by the appropriate individuals. The End of Award Report will not be accepted unless all sections are signed.

Please note hard copies are NOT required; electronic signatures are accepted and should be used.

A: To be completed by Grant Holder

Please read the following statements. Tick ONE statement under ii) and iii), then sign with an electronic signature at the end of the section.

i) The Project

This Report is an accurate overview of the project, its findings and impacts. All co-investigators named in the proposal to ESRC or appointed subsequently have seen and approved the Report.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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ii) Submissions to *ESRC Society Today*

Output and impact information has been submitted to <i>ESRC Society Today</i> . Details of any future outputs and impacts will be submitted as soon as they become available.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
OR	
This grant has not yet produced any outputs or impacts. Details of any future outputs and impacts will be submitted to <i>ESRC Society Today</i> as soon as they become available.	<input type="checkbox"/>
OR	
This grant is not listed on <i>ESRC Society Today</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>

iii) Submission of Datasets

Datasets arising from this grant have been offered for deposit with the Economic and Social Data Service.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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OR

Datasets that were anticipated in the grant proposal have not been produced and the Economic and Social Data Service has been notified.

OR

No datasets were proposed or produced from this grant.