

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

## 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

Planning and National Development 2003:59

### THE ISSUE

What are the consequences of household definition for?

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

### SURVEYS RECENTLY

More variables being added in 'household section': to measure wealth / poverty / access to facilities which influence health

MDGs  
Poverty reduction  
Asset indicators

More use 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 in-depth interviews (International)
3. Ground truthing fieldwork (Case studies) : Cognitive & Ethnographic interviews
4. Modelling differences: Female headed households, Household dependency ratios, Asset indices, Household size

### RESULTS

Data designers & collectors have: clear ideas about why need something called 'household'  
clear aims  
clear understanding of household definition

BUT what about analysts / users 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

#### Ground truthing fieldwork: Tanzania

