

An ESRC Research Group



**Methodological Issues Associated with Combining  
Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches to  
Understanding Poverty Dynamics: Evidence from  
Uganda**

**GPRG-WPS-077**

**David Lawson, David Hulme with James Muwonge**

**Global Poverty Research Group**

Website: <http://www.gprg.org/>

The support of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) is gratefully acknowledged. The work was part of the programme of the ESRC Global Poverty Research Group.

# Methodological Issues Associated with Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches to Understanding Poverty Dynamics: Evidence from Uganda <sup>1</sup>

GPRG Working Paper  
January 2007

David Lawson, David Hulme with James Muwonge\*

*IDPM, University of Manchester, and Ugandan Bureau of Statistics, Kampala, Uganda\**

## **Abstract**

The paper draws from ongoing research that aims to genuinely combine qualitative and quantitative ('Q-Squared') research methodologies to further our understanding of poverty dynamics in Uganda. Using existing nationally representative panel data we use the same sampling frame and extend the panel by visiting the same households - collecting both life histories and further quantitative data, with the intention being, for this first paper in a series of outputs, to consider some of the methodological issues that are of importance when combining such research methods and furthering our knowledge of poverty dynamics. Overall we find that even when using relatively 'dated' panel data as a base for 'Q-Squared' work, although this may not be ideal for the sequencing and triangulation of data if undertaken correctly this can still provide the basis for very unique insights regarding key factors that underpin poverty dynamics.

*Key words:* Poverty dynamics, Q2, Q-Squared, Life histories, HIV/AIDS, Uganda

---

<sup>1</sup>This research was undertaken with support from The Faculty of Humanities, General Research Support Fund, University of Manchester and ESRC's Global Poverty Research Group (GPRG) at the Universities of Manchester and Oxford (grant number M571255001). We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Anthony Matovu and Vincent Ssennono for data extraction and field interviews, and comments from anonymous referees for comments on earlier drafts of the paper.

## 1. Introduction

Over the last few years there has been an increased focus on *genuinely* combining qualitative and quantitative ('Q-Squared') research methodologies to further our understanding of poverty, and in particular poverty dynamics. Despite this, there are still relatively few sub Saharan African based attempts that have successfully achieved such a combination. Most applied papers focus on the use of participatory poverty assessments and simply cross-reference to separate quantitative findings (e.g. Barahona and Levy 2004 for Malawi, Lawson et al. 2006 for Uganda). While in some respects such work is a "breakthrough", in the main it has made only a limited contribution to deepening analysis of poverty because they rarely closely integrate the sampling frame, they use group based methods in public (participatory appraisal) and the analytical methods applied to data collected by participatory appraisal remain opaque.

For this research we combine the strengths of quantitative analysis (representativeness, confidence levels, understanding of correlates and characteristics) and life history analysis (the elaboration of processes that underpin correlations, the understandings that poor people have of their poverty and the critical events that have caused deprivation), to further insights in to poverty dynamics, using nationally representative panel data. In this first paper from the research, and considering the relative infancy of applying 'Q-Squared' to poverty dynamics, we focus on some of the methodological issues associated with such an approach.<sup>2</sup>

We focus on Uganda, a country that has received much acclaim for the reduction in monetary based poverty from 56% in 1992 to 31% in 2005, but where chronic poverty estimates suggest that one fifth of the country is permanently poor (Lawson, McKay, Okidi 2006). These impressive poverty reduction figures have encouraged a large number of both quantitative (Appleton 1999, Deininger and Okidi 2003) and qualitative (Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Process - UPPAP) studies. However, most of these poverty studies tend to be polarised – i.e. they are purely quantitative or qualitative in their approaches.

To deepen our understanding of methodological issues associated with poverty research we use a relatively rich series of nationally based household data, that includes 2 wave panel data for the period 1992/99. We extend the panel by visiting the same households and collect both life histories and further quantitative data, with the intention being to establish what can be gained from combining research methods, and what insights we can obtain regarding some of the main issues of importance for poverty dynamics, such as HIV/AIDS.

The paper is structured as follows. The next section provides a background for combining quantitative and qualitative research by reviewing some of the recent historical developments and poverty related 'Q-Squared' empirical evidence. Section three then provides a detailed outline of the methodological approach used in this paper highlighting, for example, some of the sampling and tracing issues, and further practical issues that need to be considered. In section 4 we provide some

---

<sup>2</sup> See authors webpage [http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/idpm/staff/lawson\\_david.htm](http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/idpm/staff/lawson_david.htm) for links to for further papers relating to the main subject findings from this research.

examples/techniques used to assist in the illustration of understanding issues of poverty dynamics, before concluding summarizing in the final section.

## **2. The Quantitative and Qualitative Assessment of Poverty Dynamics**

### **Overview**

As highlighted, there has been an increased usage of ‘Q-Squared’ poverty based research methods with the debate having moved forward relatively quickly from simply defining the meaning of what quantitative and qualitative research means, in the context of poverty analysis, to more policy useful discussions regarding how poverty insights can be furthered by combining research methods. Perhaps of particular note in regard to the ‘furthering’ of poverty related ‘Q-Squared’ research are the series of ‘Q-Squared’ workshops inc. Cornell 2001, Toronto 2004 and Vietnam 2007, all of which have assisted in putting ‘Q-Squared’ research further ‘on the map’.

Despite the generality surrounding the first of these workshops, it adopted a refreshing approach in requesting qualitative and quantitative specialists to be self critical and to ask what the other approaches could bring to the task of understanding and reducing poverty (Kanbur 2001:3). As a result, a process was initiated through which researchers adopted an increased focus towards the issue of genuinely trying to combine quantitative and qualitative methods to understand poverty. Suggestions, amongst others, included ideas that qualitative work could identify causal connections to be econometrically tested, understanding statistical outliers, finding appropriate ‘exclusion restrictions’ in econometrics, and appreciating the extent of measurement error. Moreover initial participatory exercises could suggest questions for inclusion in the standardised surveys (Kanbur 2001:2). Sequential, and simultaneous, mixing of techniques, was also raised. One example might be, for example, to use open ended questions, in unstructured surveys, of non random samples as a preliminary step in formulating structured sample survey questionnaires.

Many of the related papers of the late 1990’s/early 2000’s offered relatively little in application. However the debate quickly moved forward, especially with the assistance of Toronto 2004 Q-Squared Conference where papers focused on the experiences of combining qualitative and quantitative methods in poverty appraisal. Many of the applied papers, e.g. Barahona et al. 2004 for Malawi, focused on the use of participatory techniques and cross-referenced to separate quantitative findings. Such work was useful in its own right for example authors were able to (Kanbur and Shaffer 2005:2) assess the validity of quantitative results (Barahona and Levy, 2004) and provide a dynamic dimension to one-off household survey data (Howe and McKay). However, in the main such work did not operated in parallel, i.e. it did not use the same sampling frame or applied integrated methods to the same households, although Adato *et al.* (2004), for South Africa provided a notable exception. They combined socio-economic survey panel data separated by a five year period, with in depth semi-structured household interviews, to explain the quantitative relationships that had been established from econometric analysis.

## **Ugandan Context**

As noted above, there has been a wealth of nationally based poverty research for Uganda, but very little has focused on poverty dynamics, and there has been very limited genuinely integrated poverty research.

In the case of Uganda, McGee (2000) and Appleton and Booth (2001) were perhaps the first to note the advantages of combining research methods to further our understanding of poverty causality and poverty dynamics. McGee focused on methodological suggestions of how nationally representative quantitative household surveys could be combined with PPA findings. As noted by Kanbur (2001:19), she concluded that the PPA could be used to further examine the downturn in welfare indicators between 1995/6 and 1996/7 as derived by the Uganda National Household Survey (UNHS); provide insights to refine the UNHS questionnaires e.g. including questions on risk and vulnerability; Visit some of the same households for both the PPA and UNHS; Try and standardise poverty trends assessment in PPA and repeat the PPA for subsequent waves. Appleton and Booth (2001) highlighted the need to take advantage of the panel data in furthering our understanding of poverty and other issues.

Of the combined qualitative and quantitative research Lawson et al. (2006) attempted to understand the factors and processes underlying poverty transitions and persistence. They used the nationally based UPPAP findings and two wave panel data (1992/99), to undertake econometric analysis. The research showed that the qualitative sources added significantly to the information available from the panel survey data alone. It helped in identifying the key issues to investigate using the survey data and by providing important additional insights not available from the survey data, including about processes and contextual factors. Despite the findings being based on different sampling frames and the interviewing of different households they found that factors such as, the lack of key physical assets, high dependency ratios and increased household size were identified by both the qualitative and quantitative approaches, as major factors influencing poverty transitions and persistence. In other instances though the qualitative approach identified additional factors not so easily captured in quantitative studies - for example the impacts of excessive alcohol consumption on well-being (or more accurately ill-being) in many cases.

A more notable attempt at genuine 'Q-Squared' research for rural Uganda, was that undertaken by Bird and Shinyekwa (2003). They built on the qualitative (participatory) and quantitative livelihoods research undertaken in three districts and undertook in-depth life history interviews with the heads of nearly 25 households in three villages. Their decision to talk to people about their life, rather than adopting a thematic approach, meant they were able to identify the most common covariant and idiosyncratic shocks which triggered a decline into poverty (drivers) and the constraints which prevented accumulation, investment and movement out of poverty (maintainers) (Bird and Shinyekwa, 2003:10).

As with UPPAP, Bird and Shinyekwa found that poor gender relations and excessive alcohol consumption were key factors, with the latter often financed by the sale of household assets and a major cause of domestic violence and household breakdown. Additionally, they found that the poorest had suffered recurrent and composite shocks

and personal tragedies compared with the persistently non-poor who had simply managed to avoid personal disaster, allowing them to retain their assets and even continue to accumulate (Bird and Shinyekwa, 2003:31).

More recently Ellis et al. (2006) completed a study for the three districts of Mbale, Kamuli and Mubende. 266 panel households were interviewed and the information complemented with community qualitative interviews. They found reasons for downward trajectories in welfare status to be: farm sub-division, chronic illness, death of household head, livestock disease, theft, and spending money on gambling and drink. Even more recent attempts at ‘Q-Squared’ have been made by the Government of Uganda, with support from The World Bank, to understand the dynamics of upward mobility out of poverty.

### 3. Sampling, Methods and Selection

#### Sampling and Methods

As can be seen from Table 1, Uganda has a series of household panels from 1992 to 1999. All of these are based on nationally representative household surveys, the sample sizes of which are recorded in column 2. As with most of prior work on poverty dynamics we base the analysis on the 1992/3 Integrated Household Survey (IHS) and 1999/00 National Household Survey (UNHS), the latter of which was designed to include 1398 households that had previously been surveyed in 1992/93, and this panel subcomponent was also designed to be nationally representative.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1: Distribution of Panel Samples in Uganda National Household Survey Programme**

Survey and Year	Total sample of Households Surveyed	Panel Sample of Households Allotted from Base-line survey	Panel Sample Actually Surveyed
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
IHS-'92-'93 (Base-line)	9,925	–	–
FMS-'93-'94	5,040	1,260	1,096
SMS-'94-'95	4,925	1,096	918
TMS-'95-'96	5,667	918	706
UNHS-'99(c)	10,696	1,984	1,398 <sup>4</sup>

**Note:** For UNHS-'99' a fresh panel sample of 1984 households was selected from 4960 households of the base-line HIS-'92-'93 survey.

The quantitative analysis in this paper is based on a subset of the intended panel households that can be matched with confidence. This is the same subset used for Uganda's chronic and transient poverty figures (Lawson et al. 2006).<sup>5</sup> This study uses

<sup>3</sup> A further sub-component of the 1992/99 two wave panel has been added which covers approximately 200 households in Northern Uganda Survey (NUS). The main author of this paper has undertaken a similar matching process, for the panel component, as was undertaken in the 1992/99 two wave panel – refer to in footnote 5.

<sup>4</sup> Uganda Bureau of Statistics official figure is 1370 households. The difference is likely to reflect administrative errors when additional households were added in a later collection round.

<sup>5</sup> To ensure that the panel households were the same in both periods, a two part matching process was undertaken. The first stage matched the sex and age of the household head, allowing for an acceptable error range given uncertainty about precise ages etc. A second stage focused on those households

quantitative data/analysis from the 1103 households matched households to inform the further collection of quantitative and then life history data from a sample of these matched households. We also mounted two participatory exercises but found the data from these to be too general.<sup>6</sup>

The analysis of monetary based poverty in this paper is based on the same approach used for the national level poverty studies (Appleton 2001). With the poverty instrument being a monetary measure of wellbeing calculated as total household consumption expenditure per adult equivalent, adjusted for variations in prices between regions and the time period between the surveys, and the poverty line is defined with reference to minimum calorie requirements. It is these poverty lines that form the basis of the poverty matrix in Table 2, where we can see that approximately 19% of the population are chronically poor, 29.6% moved out of poverty between 1992 and 1999 and 10.3% moved into poverty. The table also indicates significant regional effects, with for example almost 40% of the Northern Region being persistently below the poverty, compared with approximately 14% of households in the Central region.

**Table 2: Poverty Incidence (by Region) – 1992/99 Panel**

Geographic location	Poverty Status				All
	Chronic Poverty	Moving Out of Poverty	Moving Into Poverty	Never In Poverty	
<b>National</b>	18.9%	29.6%	10.3%	40.9%	100%
<b>Urban/Rural and Region</b>					
<b>Row percentages</b>					
Urban	10.6	23.9	6.0	59.1	100
Rural	20.5	30.7	11.1	37.6	100
Central Region	13.8	29.7	8.5	47.8	100
East Region	16.4	36.8	10.4	36.2	100
North Region	38.9	22.8	18.1	20.1	100
West Region	16.2	27.2	8.7	47.6	100

Source: Lawson, McKay, Okidi (2006)

Based on the country's accepted monetary based poverty measures, a sample of households that are chronically poor (poor in both periods), never poor, moving into poverty, and moved out of poverty were selected for further collection of quantitative and life history information.

### Selection

The sampling of households to be selected for further interview was based on the proportions in the national panel, with 53 households interviewed (comprising roughly equally proportions of households, across several districts and mainly 2 regions - Central and East, that were persistently poor, moved into poverty, moved out of poverty and have never been poor). Although the selection of households was based on the panel, due to resource limitations the total number of households selected for further data collection/life history interview was not intended to be nationally representative. Households were classified as always poor, never poor, moved into poverty, moved out of poverty before the interview (in line with the

---

whose head had changed over the period, for example where a household head had died and another member of the family had become the new head. See Lawson et al. (2006) for further details.

<sup>6</sup> The meaning of quantitative analysis in this context is largely related to undertake descriptive and econometric analysis of the household data, in the context of poverty dynamics. Unless otherwise stated, qualitative in the context of this paper refers to life history analysis.

aforementioned monetary definitions) and a total of 12, 17, 14, and 10 households interviewed in each respective category.

For logistical and budgetary reasons, the majority (34) of the interviews took place in the Central Region districts of Masaka, Mukono, Jinja and Luwero.<sup>7</sup> A further 19 households were interviewed in Kumi and Soroti in the Eastern Region and Apac in the Northern Region – some households of which formed a three wave quantitative panel from the 1992/99 national household panel and the 2005 Northern Ugandan Survey. It should be emphasized that due to the selection of regions this does not allow us to claim a representative coverage of Uganda however it did permit us to collect data on better-off and worse areas (and ‘extreme’ households), different ethnic groups and stable/unstable areas, thus allowing us to provide at least some insights that go beyond the methodological issues.<sup>8</sup>

### **Practical Issues Associated with ‘Q-Squared’**

The process of genuinely combining quantitative and qualitative poverty research may take many forms, but ultimately this tends to involve starting with qualitative (quantitative) work such as participatory group interviews (descriptive/econometric analysis of quantitative data) that then ‘informs’ quantitative (qualitative) surveys with the perceptions and reasons for change and then possibly further re-visiting for subsequent ‘waves’ of qualitative and/or quantitative data collection. The point here is that the process of combining methods should be sequenced, with the collection of quantitative and qualitative data organised in such a way as to heighten the reliability of recall and method complementarity.

As we were undertaking fieldwork in 2006/7 and by using previously collected 1992/99 household data the aforementioned ‘sequencing’ and possibility of undertaking, for example, sub sample group based surveys that might inform the design of the 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of quantitative instruments simply wasn’t possible. However, and given the unique nature of the data that had already been collected we were able to undertake microeconometric analysis of the two wave panel, looking for the key factors, associated with poverty dynamics, which were then able to be used for the design of a semi-structured life history interview of household heads. Hence, we used the descriptive and econometric findings from the national surveys to inform our life history interviews.

In physically tracing the households we firstly approached the local council leader who, in most cases, was able to quickly identify where the household was located, by recognising the name of the household head. Although in several instances this involved travelling extensive distances to locate households, who had for example split or moved, life history information was collected more than 98% our pre-identified sample. When a household was found to be split then we spent, sometimes considerable, time to trace all additional households that had split and interviewed these.<sup>9</sup> In most instances we aimed to interview the main economic head of the

---

<sup>7</sup> The first phase of the interviews took place between December 2005 and March 2006, and many are currently being followed up, with interviews in 2007.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Extreme Households’ refer to those that may have been extremely poor, or experienced movements from high standards of wealth into extreme poverty etc.

<sup>9</sup> A household was defined as ‘split’ when it was recognisably a different economic unit than from that previously identified.

household/main person responsible for doing the cooking/food preparation (spouse) – as this links in the same person interviewed in the nationally representative data that we were basing our investigation.

The adoption of life histories allowed for the opportunity to provide comparative information about households as well as recording responses to open-ended questions that arise during the course of interviews. The latter focused on critical incidents, events and factors identified by households and information that households identify as important but was not part of the questionnaire design. The life histories adopted a “best practice” approach drawing from the work of others, an extensive review of life history literature, advice from life history experts, and experience of the research team. Specifically the life histories traced an individual’s life from childhood to the present day, focusing on key events. In many instances the interviewee also drew a timeline at the end of the interview to triangulate the details of the interview, clarify any inconsistencies and identify incidents or processes not captured in the previous discussion. Interviews took from one to two and a half hours. At the end of the semi-structured interview, which on average lasted between 2-3 hours, the respondents were given an opportunity to ask the interviewers questions.<sup>10</sup>

We avoided qualitative referencing problems of determining welfare levels as we ‘anchored’ to the money metric measure calculated in the national household surveys, however self judgement (of the respondent) of welfare status was asked for in some instances. By talking to the chronic, transient and non-poor we hoped to identify the factors causing their poverty or the advantages which protected them from falling into poverty, and to show in what way the experiences of the severely and persistently poor differed from those of the transitorily poor. As with (Bird and Shinyekwa 2003) by talking to a person about their life, we also hoped to find out about path-determination in individuals’ lives and to pinpoint key moments of choice – or the absence of choice, but with the advantage of also having robust quantitative panel data to underpin this.

More specifically, and given that the last quantitative data collection (the final wave of this panel) was 6 years prior to this life history and data collection round the first phase in the interview process involved collecting data to establish if the households that is located is in fact the one from the panel. To assess this we cross referenced characteristics of the household and the former heads, along with certain asset details. Additionally we found that it was also necessary to observe/calculate at least a ‘rough’ monetary poverty measure with the collection of current data. One this was established, the interviewee was then asked about changes over the period 2000-2005 and then 1992-99, followed by life history.

For the households that had 3 waves of panel data (1992/99/2005), the same approach was adopted as above, but this also allowed us to test the reliability of nationally based quantitative data. We also collected data on 7 new households (i.e. households that were not members of the original panel dataset). This was done to gain an idea of the degree to which the poverty/non-poverty of more recently established and younger households was similar or dissimilar to the panel dataset. One potential problem of

---

<sup>10</sup> The life history interview process followed a semi structured format - an example template that was used can be viewed at <http://www.chronicpoverty.org/CPTtoolbox/Lifehistories.htm>

the panel dataset is that it shows what life is like in the middle and later life stage households but does not cover young households.

#### 4. Findings

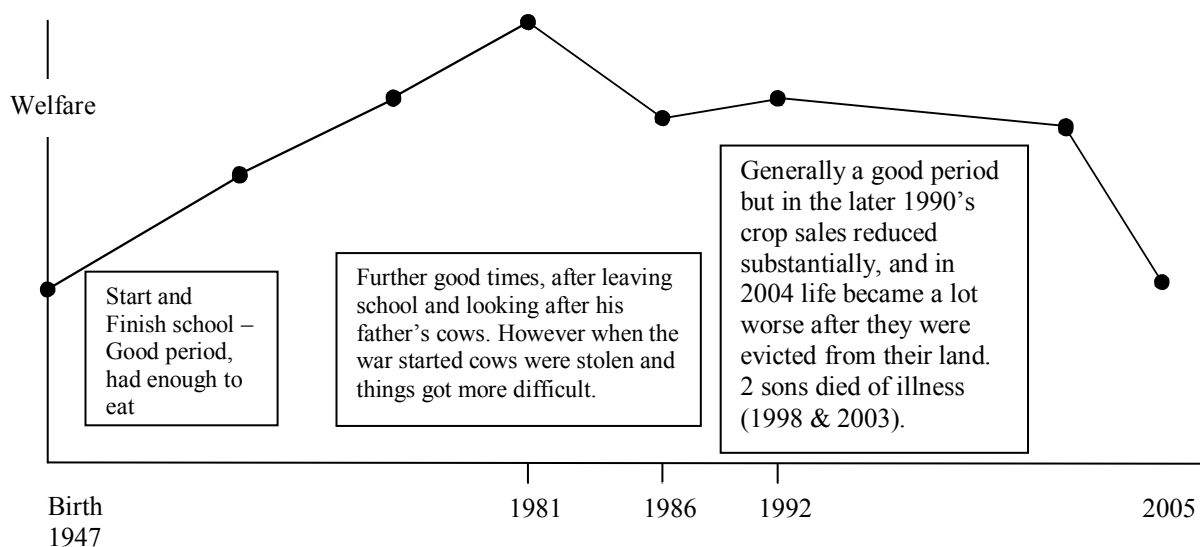
Having outlined some of the methodological and practical issues associated our ‘Q-Squared’ research we now provide a selection of time line/life history data that was collected, all of which assisted in further our understanding of 1) The methods used in poverty analysis and 2) The ‘real stories’ that explain why some people experience poverty and others do not. Once again, given the focus of this paper, these are provided not necessarily to provide in depth insights with regards to subject themes/areas that may seem relevant to explain poverty dynamics, but to highlight how such methods help may assist in this process.

For all households interviewed life histories were and then summarized, for ease of future reference. Box 1 shows such a brief example of a household that was monetarily defined as chronically poor, between 1992 and 1999 in addition to the Figure 1 showing the time line that was drawn by the household respondent.

**BOX 1: (Abbreviated) Life History<sup>11</sup> ....of a ‘Chronically Poor’ Household**

Andrew was born in 1947 in this village, the oldest of 2 boys and 2 girls (1 died when young) his father bought 2 cows and these soon multiplied to 40 by 1983. They all lived on the ‘evicted land’ from 1959 – although they had no land title. Andrew left school and looked after the animals but when the war ended in 1986 all the cows had been stolen or had died. In 1992 the household bought 2 cows, by 1995 they had 6, and since then 4 of them died and 2 were sold when the ‘old man’ was sick (and died in 1996). When the father was sick the family ate 3 meals per day (as with before the event) and they didn’t borrow money - at the time of the funeral none of the family, including his father owed money to anybody.

**Figure 1: Timeline (Drawn by Interviewee)**



<sup>11</sup> See Separate ‘Time Line Information Box’ for further life history information on this individuals and household.

The advantage of using life history method, as opposed to solely relying on looking at simple associations of descriptive data, this complementary method enables us see the major events in a persons life with the timeline diagram allowing us to clearly see the impact of such events on the interviewee's life.<sup>12</sup> In this case, although chronically poor, the interviewee recalls the 1992-99 period as a "better period" in his life, than currently, although quantitative national panel data indicates that the monetary status of the household has changed little since 1992. Hence we were able to triangulate the quantitative data.

From such an example, we can already see some of the deeper understanding provided by combining methods from the same sampling frame. For example, the life history and time line corroborate the 'bad times' suggested by the quantitative data but, the timeline also furthers our understanding of the quantitative data. For example, 2 wave panel data inform us that in 1992 and 1999 the number of cows was zero, but the life history also provides further information/reasons for changes/understanding of the processes that occurred between these two end periods i.e. 'good times' prevailed in the mid-1990's with the number of cows/assets increasing until the death of household members.

By looking at the social, occupational factors etc., the timeline also enables us to corroborate, or negate, the quantitative welfare situation (in this case the 1992-1999 period represents a better period than currently - contradicting quantitative data that indicates the period to be similar. It is clear from Box 2 that even if monetarily defined as the same now as in 1992, that psychologically at least things are worse and the families long term income prospects are diminished due to land insecurity.

### **Multi-Time Line Analysis**

The advantage of the previous 'all in one' timeline is that in many situations you can get the interviewee to draw the line (on paper or on the ground outside the house) at the end of an interview. Such interaction helps substantially with recall/reflection from previous periods. However, by disaggregating the time lines to represent, for example an individual's economic, occupation, education, social and psychological, migration etc. this potentially reveals far more information regarding the complexity of an individual's life. In this case we show the same Chronically Poor household but disaggregate the time lines. This is potentially far more revealing.

#### **BOX 2:Detailed Life History (1992-99) and Timeline Information<sup>13</sup> ...of a 'Chronically Poor' Household**

##### **Economic (and Occupation) History**

In 1992 the present head of household bought, with his father, 2 cows and by 1995 they had 6 cows. "I remember that my father bought a bicycle that improved our well being (+3) and the cows also (+2). During this period things were good and in 1993

<sup>12</sup> The welfare indicator is based upon a person's life, as it changed over time. The initial starting point is a relative scale based on whether the person remembers/recalls being told of any health problems when born (health endowment), the degree of welfare is then judged by the interviewee and interviewer, based on the information from the interview/life history.

<sup>13</sup> The number in brackets represents the level of severity attributed to an event by the household respondent.

we built an additional room onto his house. This put us at a good level of well being (3 or 4). However 4 cows then died and 2 were sold when the 'old man' was sick (he died in 1996).

The crops grew well during the mid-late 1990's. (+1) but not since then (-1). The household size has increased from 6 (1999) to 9 (2005) this has created extra economic pressure on us (-2). In 2003, 3 goats died (-2) and in late 2003 one of my sons died after being in hospital for some time, we had to borrow 100,000 Ug Sh (30GBP) for hospital fees. (-3)

In 2004 we were evicted from the land/home that we had stayed on since the 1960's, by the owner who put herdsman and cattle on the land. This resulted in a very large decline in our wellbeing as we had to move and I had no job (-5). Since then the man across the road from where we now live (next door to the plot of land from which the household was evicted) said we could stay on his land (increase of +1) so we now stay here. In addition I also rent 1 additional acre (increase of +1) to crop food. However, I would like to plant cash crops on this additional land but can't as the owner would charge me (at the moment I pay rent 'in kind' – by giving the landlord crops)."

From an occupational perspective several of the economic history events overlap, but as a herdsman for his father and as an agriculturist for most of his life, the household heads occupation was relatively stable until the deterioration in crop output and loss of land.

### **Social, psychological and cultural**

"In 1996 my father was sick the family still ate 3 meals per day and we didn't borrow money - at the time of the funeral none of the family, including his father owed money to anybody. When my father died, this left a gap at the head of the family but I've tried to fill this (-1).

In 1998 and December 2003, my two sons died. The latter of these died in hospital, but we had to borrow money for hospital fees that we have still not repaid (-3). This resulted in a very large decline in well being. Shortly after this, in 2004, we were evicted from our house and land and I moved the entire family to town (for 6 months) but I could not find a job this was a very bad time for all of us. We didn't have enough money and we could not afford to send the penultimate child to school (-4)."

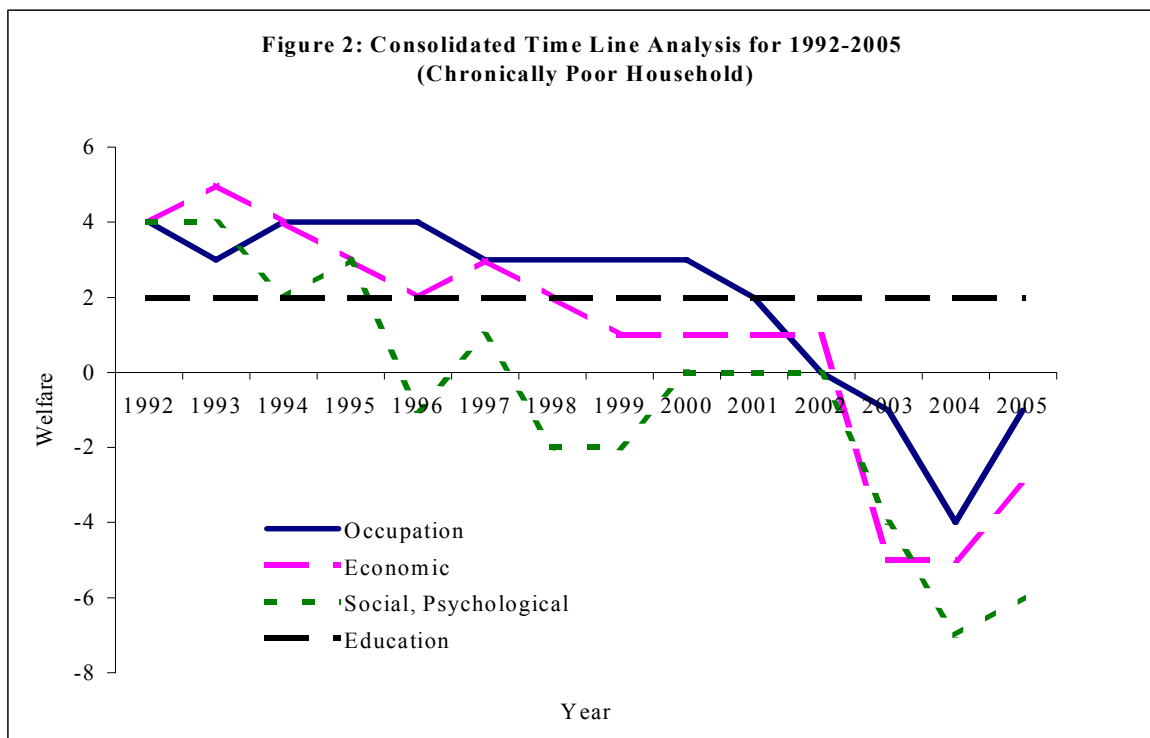
Late in 2004 a former neighbour told the head that he could stay on his land so they moved to a plot of land and house that is adjacent to the old one. However, he can't tell how long he will be at this current household and plot of land, and has not asked the owner as he does not want the landlord to consider this. Therefore, although things have improved (+1 increasing overall welfare to -6): There is a feeling of great uncertainty regarding the future, "we don't know how long we have here, and things are very uncertain and I dare not ask the owner how long we can stay as this might be 'tempting fate'." He says that there have been no good events recently, other than a child having been born (+1).

### Education history

The head of this chronically poor household has 2 years of primary education and has not completed any subsequent training, formal or otherwise, and as such feels that his educational status/history has remained relatively stagnant over the period in question and has not improved or decreased his well being.

NOTE: “ “ indicate quotations from the interviewee

Combining the above details reveals the overall impact of economic, social, education and occupation history this chronically poor household.



In this case, there are several marked events/depressions that appear to have compounded poverty in a household. Furthermore, for this household it appears that social/psychological events have also had negative impact on the household, with a series of shocks/problems compounding each other (Bird and Shinyekwa 2003).

Firstly, the death of the father in 1996 caused a negative short term psychological and economic impact. However, this period also coincided with the loss of 4 cows due to disease therefore substantially depleting reserves to call upon in emergencies. Combining such events with the lower crop production that followed, this marked a period of generally lower levels of welfare – partly explaining why the poverty gap, over the period 1992-99, increased for this household.<sup>14</sup>

Secondly, although the occupation remains the same as in the late 1990's there is further economic and social downturn as deteriorating rainfall and crop sales reduce

<sup>14</sup> The shortfall of the welfare of this poor household from the poverty line, expressed as a proportion of the poverty line, increased from 0.67 (1992) to 0.75 (1999).

crop productivity and sales, combined with the death of one son. These events are then shortly followed by a third series of shocks in 2003 when assets are further reduced (death of goats through disease) and one son dies and land eviction (2004) (economic and social impacts).

Methodologically we can see that the aggregated timeline enables us to easily view major events that have signified declines or upturns in a person life. For this chronically poor household the aggregated quantitative analysis produced in the previous section is generally supported. For example, both assets depletion and death/illness has been associated with chronic/deepening of Poverty. At a micro level, the household specific quantitative data also supports this. However, what the life history clearly provides is reasoning why this household has been unable to escape chronic poverty, based on 1992/99 consumption data.

Aggregated timeline analysis clearly has advantages as we can see major events that have marked declines or upturns and we can adapt the investigation to match the household characteristics e.g. if an individual has experienced substantial geographical migration then a migration history line might be appropriate. However, the method is very time consuming and can potentially confuse the interviewee when asking about different time lines e.g. education time line, social/psychological etc. In addition, recent events colour the judgement of previous ones. For example, recall judgment may be unduly influenced by the 'bad times' that have followed in subsequent periods e.g. despite the relative decline in welfare in the 1990's the head remarks that this period was generally very good for him, as he and his family were settled. However, in this instance the period might appear better than it was given the very bad events that followed since 2003.

From a methodological perspective therefore, using the life history and time line analysis allows us to:

- Corroborate/negate the aggregated and household level quantitative data
- Provide more insightful findings regarding the reasons for poverty movements – including social, psychological, occupational reasons etc.
- Quantify the impact (as perceived by the household) of each event on the subjective welfare status of the household.
- Use methods that further interactions and assist interviewee recall – heightening the quality of the recall information.

Naturally the aforementioned approaches typically only focus on one (typically the economic head) of a household (assuming these are the ones interviewed). Hence the general flow of an individual's welfare pattern is likely to at least partially reflect that of the household, although obviously does not cover intrahousehold issues. Naturally the analysis could be extended to cover all individuals in the household.

## 5. SUMMARY

The research represents, what is our view, a relatively rare attempt at obtaining qualitative information from the same households as those in a nationally based multiple wave multiplex income and expenditure survey.

For this research the sampling frame of the quantitative panel was adopted for the life history interviews, and although the sample was too small to be nationally representative, the idea behind the work was to produce one of the first integrated works to highlight how such methods could be used to explain some of the propagators, maintainers, and interrupters of poverty.

In this paper we focus on the methodological issues that enabled us to develop this understanding. We have shown that even by using ‘dated’ quantitative panel data it is possible that households can be traced and that life history techniques, perhaps more than other qualitative methods, can provide relatively deep insights, especially when adopted sequentially with national representative quantitative data. Although we fully recognise that it is not ideal to revisit households that were last interviewed 6-7 years prior to the life history interview being undertaken, we have demonstrated that when confronted with such scenarios that the aforementioned approaches can elicit further understanding. Ideally the collection of quantitative panel data should be designed to incorporate a life history collection – i.e. carry out life history and the wave of quantitative data collection within a very short time period of each other – this will build reliability of the data. Furthermore when combining extended analysis such as that form the multi time line diagrams with life history and quantitative data this allows for even more understanding of the main issues that underpin poverty dynamics.

Although the findings have not been the focus of this methods paper, it is worth noting even from the few examples that we have provided to illustrate methods that certain key factors are likely to have played a major role in poverty dynamics in Uganda. For example, a statistical association between ill health (and in particular HIV/AIDS) and extreme poverty is commonly highlighted. This appears even in the few of the examples provided here.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, such interconnections were found to have consequences on coping mechanisms and for example preferencing of types of assets sold. In ‘times of crisis’ luxury goods such as radios were commonly sold first, but the willingness to sell any assets was dependant upon the age and geographical location of the household/head (e.g. older household heads were substantially less willing to sell any livestock – firmly believing that they were looking after the assets on behalf of future generations). Asset smoothing, at the expense of food consumption, was also found to be common.

Overall therefore, although in the main this research has integrated quantitative and qualitative components, for future reference we think that it is worth noting that more can be done in future to further what might be perceived to be *genuine* ‘Q-Squared’ work. For example, samples could be further embedded into each other, the timing of surveys could be sequential and the sample sizes larger resulting in a better sample design and the research questions explored (Thorbecke 2001). Despite the relatively

---

<sup>15</sup> See footnote 2 for further evidence/papers from this research.

small life history sample size and distant recall period, that were complemented with quantitative data collection, we hope at least to have further highlighted the benefits that can arise from integrating research methods, and it is at least clear that such techniques have huge potential of informing future UNHS national data surveys.

**References:**

Adato, M, F. Lund and P Mhlongo, (2004), “Methodological Innovations in Research on The Dynamics of Poverty: A Mixed-Method Longitudinal Study in Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa”, Q-Squared in Practice Conference: A Conference on Experiences of Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Poverty Appraisal, University of Toronto.

Appleton, S., 2001, ‘Education, Incomes and Poverty in Uganda in the 1990s’, CREDIT Research Paper 01/22, Nottingham: University of Nottingham.

Appleton, Simon and David Booth (2001) ‘Combining Participatory and Survey-based Approaches to Poverty Monitoring and Analysis’, Background Paper for the Workshop to be held in Entebbe, Uganda, 30 May – 1 June.

Barahona, Carlos and Sarah Levy (2004), “How to generate statistics and influence policy using participatory methods in research: reflections on work in Malawi 1999-2002”, IDS Working Paper, presented at Conference on Experiences of Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Poverty Appraisal, University of Toronto.

Bird, K. and Shinyekwa, I. (2003), “Multiple Shocks and Downward Mobility: Learning From the Life Histories of Rural Ugandans”, Chronic Poverty Research Centre Working Paper no. 36.

Booth, David, I Holland, J. HentscheLand, P Lanjouw and A Herbert (1998), “Participation and Combined Methods in African Poverty Assessment: Renewing the Agenda”, Social Development Division, African Division, DFID London, February

Carvalho, S and Howard White (1997), “Combining the Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches to Poverty Measurement and Analysis”, World Bank Technical Paper No. 366

Davis, Peter (2006), “Poverty in Time: Exploring poverty dynamics from life history interviews in Bangladesh”, Chronic Poverty Research Centre Working Paper no. 69

Deininger K, and Okidi J, (2003), “Growth and Poverty Reduction in Uganda: 1999-2000: Panel Data Evidence”, *Development Policy Review* 21(4): 481-509.

Frank Ellis, Sarah Ssewanyana, Bereket Kebede and Eddie Allison (2006), “Patterns and Changes in Rural Livelihoods in Uganda 2001-05: Findings of the LADDER 2 Project”, EPRC/ODG Report.

Kanbur, Ravi (2001), “A Commentary on Qualitative and Quantitative Poverty Appraisal”; presented at ‘Qual-Quant: Qualitative and Quantitative Poverty Appraisal: Complementarities, Tensions and The Way Forward’, held at Cornell University March 15-16.

Kanbur, Ravi (2001a), “Qualitative and Quantitative Poverty Appraisal: The state of Play and Some Questions”, presented at ‘Qual-Quant: Qualitative and Quantitative Poverty Appraisal: Complementarities, Tensions and The Way Forward’, held at Cornell University March 15-16.

Kanbur, Ravi and Paul Shaffer (2005), “Epistemology, Normative Theory and Poverty Analysis: Implications for Q-Squared in Practice” Q-Squared Working Paper No. 2, University of Toronto

Lawson, David (2003), “Gender Analysis of the Ugandan National Household Surveys (1992 – 2003)” Uganda – Revision of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) 2003.

Lawson, David (2004), “The Influence of Ill Health on Chronic and Transient Poverty: Evidence from Uganda”, Chronic Poverty Research Centre Working Paper no. 41., University of Manchester.

Lawson, David, Andy McKay and John Okidi (2006), “Poverty Persistence and Transitions in Uganda: A Combined Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis”, Journal of Development Studies, Vol. 42, No. 7: 1225- 1251

Okidi, J. and G. Kempaka (2002), “An Overview of Chronic Poverty and Development Policy in Uganda”, Chronic Poverty Research Centre Working Paper No. 11, January.

McGee, Rosemary (2000), “Analysis of Poverty Assessment (PPA) and Household Survey Findings on Poverty Trends in Uganda”, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex (UK) and Department for International Development, DFID (UK).

Republic of Uganda (2000), *Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Report: Learning From the Poor*, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Kampala.

Republic of Uganda (2005), *Moving out of Poverty Uganda Case Study: Understanding Growth and Democracy for the Bottom-Up – Concept Note*: Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Kampala.

Thorbecke, Erik (2001), “Tensions, Complementarities and Possible Convergence Between the Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches to Poverty Assessment”, presented at ‘Qual-Quant: Qualitative and Quantitative Poverty Appraisal: Complementarities, Tensions and The Way Forward’, held at Cornell University March 15-16.