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Q-SQUARED IN POLICY: THE USE OF QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE METHODS OF POVERTY ANALYSIS IN DECISION-MAKING

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Q-Squared in Policy: the Use of Qualitative and Quantitative Methods of Poverty Analysis in Decision-Making*

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Abstract:

This introductory essay for the journal Symposium presents an overview of issues related to 'Q-Squared in Policy: the use of qualitative and quantitative methods of poverty analysis in decision-making'. We focus on issues raised on the supply side of data use, relating, *inter alia* to the informational content and policy usefulness of different types of data and analysis. These issues are grouped under the headings of: outcomes vs. processes, unpacking processes and thick and thin. We begin however, with a brief discussion of one aspect of the demand side, namely the politics of data use, given its centrality to the issues at hand.

Key words: poverty; methods; mixed method research; policy process; methodological pluralism; impact assessment

* Introduction to Symposium in Journal of Multiple Research Approaches.

Introduction

Over the last decade, there has been a marked increase in the combined use of qualitative and quantitative (Q-Squared or Q2) methods in the analysis of poverty. Issues related to Q2 research have figured prominently in a number of recent conferences, workshops and research projects[1] and a quite sizeable body of work now exists[2]. The present volume is a contribution to this growing literature.

The individual contributions in this Symposium were originally presented at the third in a series of Q2 conferences held in Hanoi, Vietnam at the Centre for Analysis and Forecasting, Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, July 7-8, 2007. The first Q2 Conference at Cornell University, March 15-16, 2001, focused on conceptual and definitional issues. The second Q2 Conference, 'Q-Squared in Practice,' held at the University of Toronto in May 2004, highlighted empirical examples of *Best Practice* in mixed method analysis of poverty.

This third conference, 'Q-Squared in Policy', directed attention to the use of Q2-type evidence in decision-making. Decision-making was defined broadly to include policy-level or programmatic decisions at national or sub-national levels by governments, NGOs, development organizations, etc. We sought papers that discussed the use of Q2 analyses of poverty to inform: i) the formulation or design of policies, programs or projects; ii) budgeting or resource allocation decisions; iii) evaluation, monitoring or impact assessment of policies, programs or projects. We

[1] The Q-Squared Conferences at Cornell, March 15-16, 2001, the University of Toronto, May 15-16, 2004 and the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, July 7-8, 2007, the Conference on Combining Conference on Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in Development Research, University of Wales, Swansea, July 1-2, 2002, the Chronic Poverty Research Centre Workshop on Combining Panel Surveys and Life History Methods, London, Februrary 24-25, 2006, the Global Poverty Research Group at the Universities of Manchester and Oxford, the Well-being in Developing Countries Research Group at the University of Bath, etc.

[2] For example, see Special Issues of the *Journal of Development Studies* (Hulme & Toye (Eds) 2007) *and World Development* (Kanbur & Shaffer (Eds) 2007) and the Q-Squared Working Paper Series (www.q-squared.ca).

were interested in the methodology of the Q2 studies as well as the process through which they were able to inform decision-making.

The vast majority of conference submissions received, and papers selected, focused on the methodology and results of specific studies rather than the ensuing use of information to inform actual decision-making. Accordingly, in this introductory essay we devote more attention to issues raised on the supply side of data use, relating, *inter alia* to the informational content and policy usefulness of different types of data and analysis. Arguably, however, the 'demand side' is more important, in that in the absence of demand, data will not be used, whatever the methodology adopted. For this reason, we begin with a brief discussion of one aspect of the demand side, namely the politics of data use.

The format of this introductory paper is as follows: Section 1 discusses the politics of data use. Section 2 develops an analytical framework within which to situate the individual contributions to this volume, relying on a stylized depiction of the policy process and a distinction between ways of combining methods. Section 3 reviews issues raised on the supply side, drawing, *inter alia*, on examples provided by the articles in the Symposium. Section 4 concludes.

THE DEMAND SIDE: THE POLITICS OF DATA USE

Knowledge is not neutral nor is the use of knowledge in decision-making a technical exercise. Data use in decision-making cannot be divorced from the underlying interests which stand to be affected by these decisions. Likewise, what is included in the field of inquiry, what counts as evidence, the weighting of different forms of evidence, etc. are not independent of the interests at stake (Solesbury 2001). Adjudicating between these different interests and points of view is very much a political exercise. In fact, the politics of data use is a critical determinant of whether, how and what kinds of, data are used in decision-making (Harriss 2007).

An initial question concerns whether or not it is in the perceived interests of powerful actors to promote an agenda of poverty reduction. In the absence of such political will, there is presumably limited scope for effective use of data in to inform poverty-related decision-making. A significant body of literature has addressed questions of the political economy of poverty reduction focusing on such issues as political tactics and coalitions (Ascher 1984), the class basis of social democracy (Sandbrook et al. 2007), the potential for coalition building between elites and the poor (Moore & Putzel 1999).

If political interests drive policy, then it is not surprising that these same considerations would drive data use. Ronald Herring's contribution to the Symposium provides a striking example drawing on the Bt cotton controversy in India. Empirical studies from India have come to very different findings about the effects of Bt cotton: 'either the technology is scale-neutral and profitable for farmers of all size classes, or produces rural catastrophe – reaching the characterization "genocidal" in one prominent critique.' Herring argues, on the basis of existing data, as well as his own field study in the Warangal district of Andhra Pradesh, that the preponderance of evidence does not support the view of negative agronomic, economic or environmental effects of Bt cotton. A more plausible explanation, according to the author, has to do with the underlying interests of rival seed companies, local farmers and NGOs:

> *Reports of the 'failure of Bt cotton' had material consequences and fed into formation of new interests that may distort reporting of yield data. Agitation around cotton crop losses in 2004 led to the refusal of the state government to recommend re-certification of three Bt hybrids for use in Andhra Pradesh. But if Bt cotton had been no more susceptible to failure in 2004 than any other cotton, why was Mahyco-Monsanto forced to withdraw two hybrids from Andhra Pradesh? One local explanation was commercial competition: Nuziveedu Seeds of Secunderabad wanted this outcome, and is politically*

well connected in Andhra Pradesh… Removal of Mahyco-Monsantos seeds from the states market would benefit Nuziveedu.

Farmers and those who claim to represent them have material interests in reports of failure. Why should the failure-of-Bt-cotton story take root in Warangal, of all the districts in India? Part of the answer derives from path dependency and material interests. Successful demands for financial compensation for Bt-crop failure create incentives to claim poor results. When successful, such demands may enter the repertory of rural survival strategies… NGOs act as brokers for flows from governments and INGOs; their interest is consequently in being recognized. One mechanism is dramatic narratives. As Bt cotton becomes normalized by farmers in Andhra Pradesh, new narratives of catastrophe serve the interests of local NGOs.

Whatever one's view on BT cotton, or on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) more broadly, the core point that data are social products (Herring 2003), and the use of data a political exercise, provides a useful backdrop for this journal Symposium.

SITUATING THE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SYMPOSIUM

Defining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches

At the first Q-Squared Conference at Cornell University in 2002, entitled *Qualitative and Quantitative Poverty Appraisal: Complementarities, Tensions and the Way Forward*, discussion centred on definitional and conceptual issues relating to the qualitative/ quantitative distinction. Conference participants had different views on how the 'qual/quant' divide should be conceptualised though all agreed that a finer set of categories was required to capture its many dimensions. Kanbur (2003) suggested one typology of differences building upon, and adding to, a number of the schemas presented. It was based on the following five dimensions:

1. Type of Information on Population: Non-Numerical to Numerical.
2. Type of Population Coverage: Specific to General.
3. Type of Population Involvement: Active to Passive.
4. Type of Inference Methodology: Inductive to Deductive.
5. Type of Disciplinary Framework: Broad Social Sciences to Neo-classical Economics.

This typology helps by clarifying terminology and spelling out exactly what is being distinguished. As such, it has served the purpose for which it was developed. Nevertheless, there are important questions about whether or not the distinctions in this schema can be maintained (Shaffer 2005). For example, virtually all narrative data can be transformed numerically by counting, scaling, ranking, etc.. Small *n* studies can involve collection of standard numerical data or narrative information as can large *n* studies. All research methodologies combine induction and deduction though in different ways. Within most of the social science disciplines there are established numerical, statistical and mathematical traditions in addition to traditions focusing on narrative, historical or comparative analysis.

There are two recourses. First, it is possible to 'go philosophical' and look for foundational categories from which these intermediate categories derive. In previous work, we have suggested that many of the differences in the Kanbur typology are derivative of a typology in the philosophy of social science which distinguishes between empiricism/positivism; hermeneutics/constructivism; critical theory/critical hermeneutics (Kanbur and Shaffer 2007).

Alternatively, it is possible to go specific and refer to exactly what is being done in different studies. We will adopt this strategy here. Accordingly, we will restrict usage of the qualitative and quantitative terminology and refer mainly to particular techniques, methods and research approaches.

Ways of Combining

There are a number of schemes to characterize ways of combining different approaches to poverty analysis. Examples include: sequential vs. simultaneous mixing (Ravallion 2003); confirming, refuting/integrating, merging (White 2002); primary, lead, check/follow-up (Hentschel 2003); iteration, linkage, triangulation, convergence (Booth 2003), etc.

The present typology is inspired by a distinction by Bryman (1988). It contrasts 'Putting Together' and 'Methodological Integration'. In the former, results of different approaches which address the same research questions, are put together *ex post* with a view to enrich or confirm/refute each other. The appropriate metaphor here is putting together the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. In the latter, the outputs of one approach feed into the design or methods of another, or the integration of techniques typically used in one approach are used in another, (e.g. using probabilistic sampling to select participants in ethnographic or participatory poverty studies).

It should be noted that, as with the qualitative/quantitative distinction the distinction between ways of combining is not rigidly drawn. Certain examples of putting together could be considered as methodological integration and vice versa. Nevertheless, it serves as a useful heuristic and has cutting power in relation to the contributions to this Symposium.

The Policy Process

A final distinction is between stages in the so-called policy process which refers to the mechanisms and processes underpinning the formulation, implementation and assessment of policy. Figure 1 is a schematic depiction of one representation of this process.

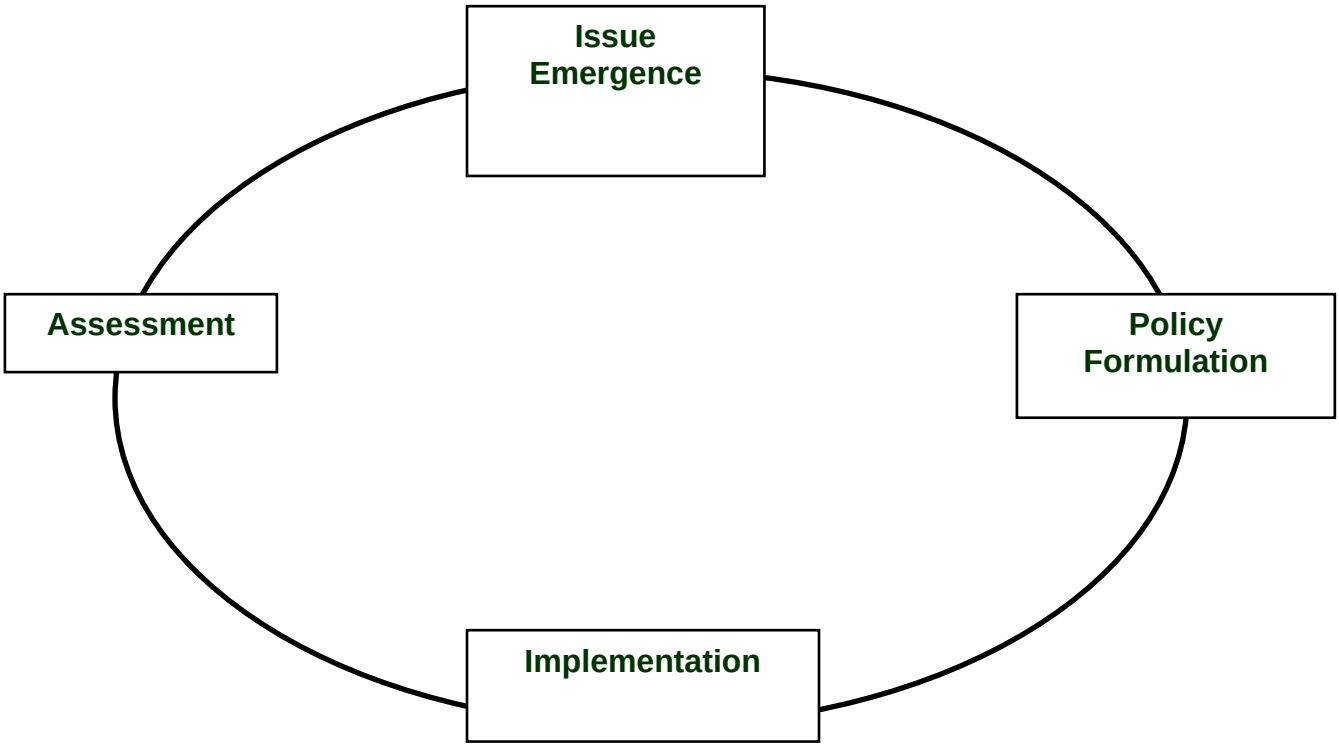

Figure 1: The Policy Process

In Figure 1 the core stages are issue emergence, policy formulation, implementation and assessment. Other stages, less relevant for the present purposes, include agenda setting, alternative selection and enactment (Birkland 2001).The circular form of the process denotes hoped-for feedback mechanisms from assessment to issue emergence/policy formulation.

It should be mentioned that this presentation of the policy process has been labeled the rational or linear model and widely critiqued for its lack of realism (Birkland 2001; Omano 2004). Nevertheless, it serves a useful function of categorizing the contributions in this journal Symposium. As with the distinctions above, we retain it for heuristic purposes.

Analytical Framework

The analytical framework below combines the three elements discussed above to situate the contributions in this Symposium. The first column, stages of the policy process distinguishes between issue emergence/policy formulation on the one hand and assessment on the other. The second column, Ways of Combining Approaches distinguishes between putting together and methodological integration. In keeping with the decision to limit usage of the qualitative/quantitative terminology, the rows refer to the actual methods used in the studies in question. The order of papers in this journal Symposium will follow the presentation below.

Stages of Policy Process	**Ways of Combining Approaches**	
	'Putting Together'	**'Methodological Integration'**
Issue Emergence/ Policy Formulation		
• Statistical analysis of Stages-of-Progress data comprising life histories and well-being rankings in Gujarat, India		• Krishna and Lecy
• Analysis of poverty dynamics in Bangladesh drawing on panel survey data and life history interviews	• Baulch and Davis	
• Analysis of poverty dynamics in Uganda Combines combining national panel survey data with life histories.	• Lawson et. al.	
• Calculation of Poverty Measures derived from Participatory Poverty Assessments using National Household Survey Data in Namibia		• Levine/Roberts

Assessment • Evaluation of conditional cash transfer programs in Nicaragua and Turkey combining survey and ethnographic methods.	• Adato	
• Statistical analysis of participatory rural appraisal and panel survey data to assess impact of a development project in Bangladesh.		• Sulaiman and Matin
• Evaluation of resettlement efforts of a highway development project in Sri Lanka using data from a household survey and focus group discussions.		• de Silva and Gunetilleke
• Assessment of the impact of trade liberalization in Vietnam drawing on data from a household survey and focus group discussions.	• Jones et. al.	

THE SUPPLY SIDE: SELECT ISSUES

While the demand side is a critical determinant of data use, supply side issues are also important in that they spell out key characteristics of the policy-relevant information in question. As argued elsewhere (Hulme and Toye 2006; Kanbur and Shaffer 2007), there are potentially large payoffs in using Q2-type methods to inform decision-making in that they can provide richer, more complete information. This central point is illustrated below by reviewing issues grouped under three headings: outcomes vs. processes, unpacking processes and thick and thin.

Outcomes vs. Processes

> *Economics is mainly about outcomes… [not] about processes. Economists, of course, have models of perfect competition, or bargaining to reach a Nash*

equilibrium, or surplus extraction and use by the dominant class. But economists tests show only whether a modelled process is consistent with the measured outcomes … Only seldom does the economist empirically explore the processes themselves (Lipton 1992, 1541).

Michael Lipton and others (Bardham and Ray 2006) have argued that the distinction between outcomes and processes maps closely to the distinction between economic and anthropological analyses of social phenomena. While exceptions exist (Rao et. al. 2003; de Weert 2006), the outcome/process distinction does appear to have cutting power when contrasting approaches to poverty analysis (Shaffer 2002). As discussed below, it is particularly relevant within the evaluation/assessment context.

The informational content of data on outcomes and processes is different and accordingly, it responds to different preoccupations of decision-makers when assessing the effects of program or policies. In short, data on outcomes give information on magnitudes while process data provide information on reasons. Otherwise stated, outcome data answer how much questions while process data inform why and how questions[3].

There are many good examples of Q-Squared type analysis which combine process and outcome information in the literature (Frankel & Lehmann 1984; Knodel, Havanon & Pramualratana 1984). Adatos' contribution in the Special Issue provides another insightful example with relevance to wider debates about methodologies of impact assessment.

In their evaluation of a conditional cash transfer (CCT) scheme in Turkey[4], a combined strategy was employed using both regression discontinuity methods as well as ethnographic techniques involving extended village studies. The former is a type of quasi-experiment, in that well-being outcomes were compared in treatment and comparison groups to assess program impact. Comparison groups were

[3] Bardhan (2005: 16) makes a similar point.
[4] The evaluation was undertaken by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

constructed statistically on the basis of characteristics of those who fell just below and the program eligibility cut-off.

The CCT project provided payment for primary and secondary enrollment as well as health benefits conditional on vaccinations and check-ups for children and pregnant women. The assessment of the impact of the educational component of the program, found that the CCT program raised secondary school enrollment for girls but that secondary enrollment rates were still very low, less than 40 percent for program beneficiaries. In rural areas, enrollment rates were even lower. The key contribution of the ethnographic work was to explain some of the reasons why, namely:

> *the research encountered many constraints that the cash transfer could not overcome. These were primarily sociocultural, articulated with financial and logistical constraints, particularly in the conservative provinces of Van and Diyarbakir. For boys, these included parents and boys doubts about the value of employment, particularly in the context of high unemployment as well as rural livelihoods, where there is honor associated with working on the land. For girls, work was largely seen as inappropriate, and even counterproductive with respect to their primary role as wives and mothers. Also primary were issues of honor, reputation and sexuality—the perceived threats to girls and their families honor if the girls go to school after they have reached maturity, expressed here by a father in a village in Van: 'the girls have only their honor as a valuable thing in the village and it is my duty to prevent any bad words about that… No one sends their daughters to school anyway. Why should I send mine? They will look at them in a bad way.'*

Results such as this are highly significant in the context of the experimental turn in development economics. Much recent academic and popular media attention has focused on the use of randomization in assessment impact of programs or policies experiments, championed, *inter alia*, by the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab at

MIT[5]. There are many attractive features of experimental designs, foremost, that causal identification is cleaner and requires less explicit assumptions.[6] A major shortcoming, however, is that experiments provide little or no information on the processes generating impact. As such, there are serious concerns about extrapolating research findings to different contexts where the underlying processes are not the same (Rodrik 2008). In the above case, CCTs are unlikely to work well where non-pecuniary constraints are the major factors inhibiting enrollment.

Unpacking Processes

Processes are complex. Poverty-related processes are particularly complex. Shaffer (2008) distinguishes four relevant types of processes, depicted in Figure 2[7].

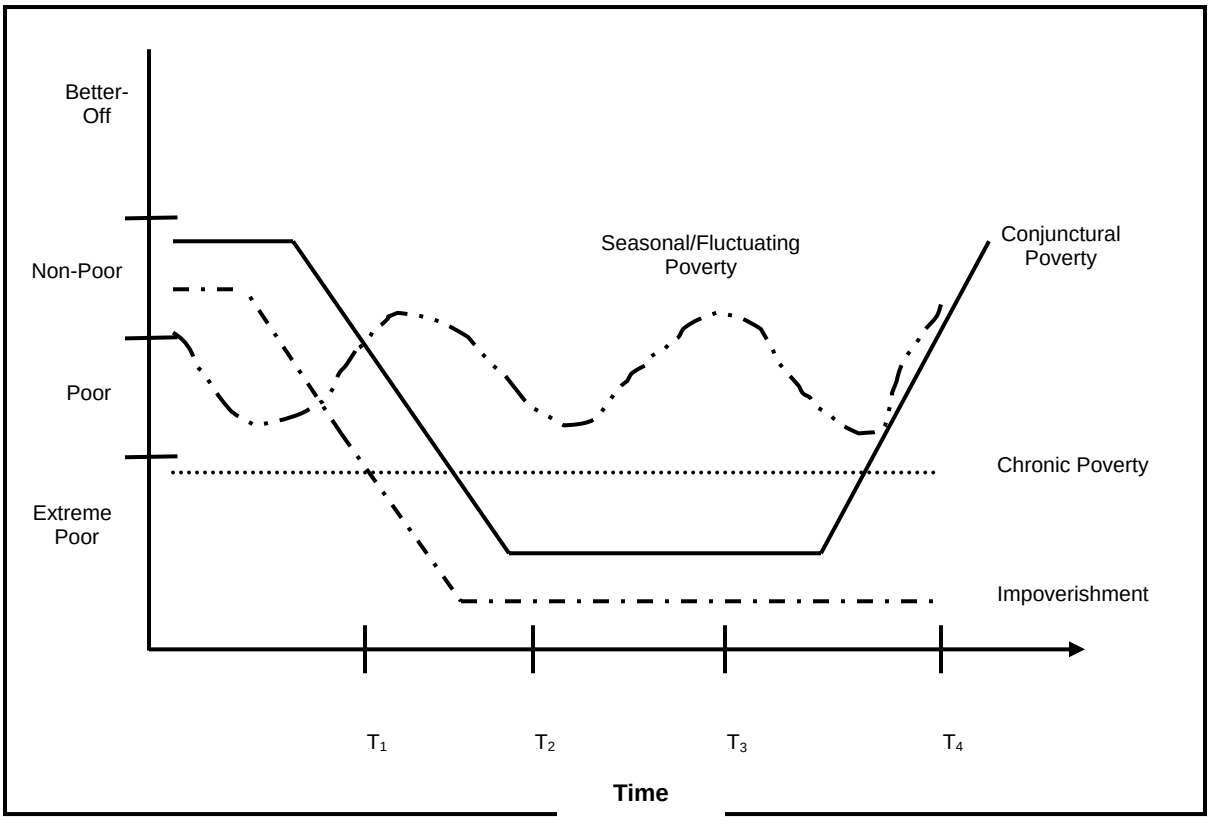

Figure 2: Trajectories of Change and Types of Poverty

[5] The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab website at www.povertyactionlab.org/ contains a range of relevant papers and links to popular media coverage.
[6] It should be noted however, that the causal identification is not airtight in experiments and does not absolve the need for judgment in making causal claims (see for example, Heckman et al. 2000)
[7] The categorization draws on Hulme and Shepherd (2003) and Yaqub (2000).

Chronic poverty refers to the persistence of poverty over time, characterised by many small upward and downward movements over time. Impoverishment is a change in the permanent component of income or consumption. It reflects a dramatic fall in living conditions to a new long-term level. Conjunctural poverty refers to increases in poverty due to circumstances which are likely to persist over the medium term. Examples include macroeconomic shocks, such as the Asian crisis, the situation facing transition countries as well as major lifecycle changes such as widowhood. Fluctuating or seasonal poverty (Churning) refers to income variability in normal times, such as over the course of a season, or following frequent and repeated natural shocks. The distinction between types of processes has important practical implications in that appropriate policy responses for each may be systematically different.

This same point is illustrated by the contribution of Krishna and Lecy in this issue. They used a series the Stages-of-Progress methodology, whereby households are asked to rank their poverty status at the present time, 15 years ago and 25 years ago and to provide reasons for poverty transitions. Applying econometric and other statistical analysis to these data, the authors make a convincing case for the importance of 'the balance of positive and negative everyday events [in explaining] where a household will eventually land up.' Examples of such small events include government assistance, charity assistance, formal employment, expansion of business, positive or negative marriage, negative health outcome, failed land improvement, accidental loss, etc. There are important implications for the policy process stages of issue emergence and policy formulation:

> *Policy outcomes can be improved by designing and implementing programs that focus specifically on region-specific pathways into and out of poverty, taking care to identify the nature of everyday events, positive and negative, that influence households longer-term economic fortunes. Grassroots-level analyses of reasons and events are particularly important for this reason: interventions can be more fruitfully designed only after these reasons are better known within each particular context.*

The importance of small movements in explaining broader trends also finds expression in the contribution of Sulaiman and Matin in this issue. In their impact assessment of a Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) rural development program for the ultra poor, they relied on participatory rural appraisal techniques, specifically well-being rankings, to gauge well-being trends. Instead of focusing on broad poverty transitions the study examined both big and small changes in well-being status. The authors conclude that:

> *most empirical studies of poverty dynamics by focusing on relatively large movements into and out of poverty in different waves, miss out on the smaller movements experienced by households [due mainly to provision of basic needs] which are important but do not lead to movements out of poverty as defined by some threshold measure. Capturing and understanding such changes in the lives of the poorest is clearly important for policy and programme development.*

The importance of unpacking processes to enhance understanding of poverty dynamics is brought out in the contributions of Baulch and Davies and Lawson, Hulme and Muwonge, which combine panel survey data with life histories. The detailed life histories presented in the first study allowed for the construction of a rich typology of life trajectories based on their direction (improving, stable and declining) and pattern (smooth, saw-tooth, single step and multi-step). They find that:

> *A clear majority of the life histories (146 of 184 cases) show a fluctuating or saw-tooth pattern, in which improvements in peoples lives are reversed by intermittent shocks such as illness (often accompanied with large medical costs), dowry and wedding expenses, death of a family member, household or property division, disputes and conflicts, floods and storms, and court-cases. Periods of slow improvement are commonly interspersed with sudden declines … [and not] the smooth process of accumulation or sharp decline that are hypothesised by standard quantitative models.*

In the Lawson et al. study, the life histories focused on critical incidents, events and factors identified by households which were not part of the questionnaire design. The ensuing analysis led to a very rich and variegated understanding of actual processes of change and the underlying reasons for them in Uganda. Further, it allowed one to put the time-period of the panel data (1992-1999) within a broader historical perspective and to bring in psychological, social and cultural variables not included in the panel data.

Thick and Thin

The term ‘thick description’ was popularised by Clifford Geertz (1983) to denote the hermeneutic content of applied anthropology. As discussed in Kanbur and Shaffer (2007), ‘hermeneutics’ is generally defined as the interpretative understanding of intersubjective meanings, defined as the core categories, beliefs and values which give meaning to social phenomena.

The case for hermeneutic inquiry rests on the view that social phenomena are ‘intrinsically meaningful’. That is, social phenomena depend for their existence, and/or significance, on the meanings ascribed to them. Phenomena such as poverty are partly constituted by these intersubjective meanings and always interpreted by social actors, including researchers. Accordingly, social explaining entails a ‘double hermeneutic’ analysis, i.e. to interpret a world which is pre-interpreted by social agents (Giddens 1976: 162). Failure to do so introduces serious biases in social inquiry: ‘we interpret all other societies in the categories of our own’ (Taylor 1985: 42).

A core objective of participatory and applied social anthropological analysis of poverty is to better understand what is meant by poverty (Green 2006). Inquiry focuses on local categories deemed relevant when thinking about well-being, types of social relationships that are important when analyzing social change, symbolic representations of well-being categories, etc. The contributions by Levine and

Roberts and by de Silva and Gunetilleke in this journal demonstrate that inquiry of this sort has decided relevance for policy.

In their study, Levine and Roberts compared data on levels and trends of poverty drawing on data from national income/expenditure surveys and participatory poverty assessments. These two set of data came to starkly different conclusions, with participatory poverty assessment presenting a much more negative picture concerning both levels and trends[8]. One reason for this conflicting results centred on the different dimensions of poverty used in the two studies. Specifically, the more negative conclusions of the participatory poverty study resulted from a number of factors which do not necessarily map onto income or consumption poverty, namely a deterioration in asset holdings, reduced access to and quality of basic services and increasing vulnerability related to food insecurity and the AIDS. In light of these systematic differences the authors conclude that:

> *for purposes of strengthening the national poverty monitoring system, including establishing a new poverty line and updating targets for the Millennium Development Goals, and for designing interventions under the next medium term for national development it is recommended that the differences between popular and official perceptions of poverty are reconciled.*

De Silva and Gunetilleke present results of a study conducted to monitor involuntary resettlement under a highway development project in Sri Lanka. The methodology includes both a household survey, with fixed response and open-ended questions, as well as focus group discussions. A key conclusion is the overriding importance of the criteria used in the assessment exercise as illustrated by the valuation of paddy land and evaluation of resettlement *tout court*.

In terms of paddy, monitoring data confirmed the low compensation paid to farmers reflecting the low profitability of paddy cultivation price according to government

[8] This is a common finding in the literature (Kanbur 2001; Jodha 1999; McGee 2004; Shaffer 1998)

and project sources. Additional support for this view came from the survey data which found virtually no replacement of paddy lands lost by the household. The focus group discussions and interviews, however, came to a very different conclusion:

> *Far from being happy that they received a means of exiting the paddy sector through the land acquisition, households expressed a great deal of dissatisfaction with the loss of their paddy lands. In most cases the lands have been with these households for generations and they had used the harvest for their own consumption. …. The data also indicated that limited replacement of paddy lands is due as much to lack of paddy lands available for sale in the market, as reluctance on the part of land owners to replace their lost lands. Households tend to hold on to their paddy lands because they place a high value on what has been in their families for generations and which represents an important aspect of their lifestyle.*

Likewise the overall evaluation of resettlement differed starkly depending on the assessment criteria employed. The standard indicators used in the monitoring pertaining to such variables related to the verification of payment allowances, replacement of agricultural land, physical quality of housing and access to basic utilities, generally presented a quite favorable assessment of the resettlement process. Focus group discussions presented a different picture:

> *Shared ownership of lands among families, the informal social networks where housework such child care is often shared, and open access to assets within the extended family, are characteristics of these villages which the STDP has caused to be suddenly severed … Despite making resettlement decisions that allowed them to maintain their social networks, the whole process of relocation and the change it stimulates has an impact on social well being. A major articulated loss is the loss of the traditional/ancestral village and the lifestyle that goes with it.*

All of these examples point to the different policy conclusions that arise when thickening the analysis of poverty. While there may be sound reasons not to rely exclusively on local conceptions and meanings of poverty, it would be odd if they did not figure at all in the analysis.

CONCLUSION: Q-SQUARED IN POLICY

Q-Squared in Policy is the logical conclusion of the series of Q-squared Conferences which have spanned definitional/conceptual issues, empirical examples of best practice and now the use of Q2-type information to inform decision-making. It is heartening that in many decision-making circles the debate has shifted from establishing the merits of mixed methods approaches to finding ways to maximize their benefits. We believe that the contributions in this journal symposium make a strong case for the value-added of Q-Squared approaches in informing poverty-related decision-making and provide concrete examples on which others can draw.

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