

Widows Land Security in the Era of HIV/AIDS: Panel Survey Evidence from Zambia

Antony Chapoto, Thom Jayne and Nicole Mason

Presented by Antony Chapoto at
The Workshop
*HIV/AIDS and Development in Zambia: Taking Stock
and Rethinking Policies*

Held at the TAJ Pamodzi Hotel, Lusaka, Zambia
February 4, 2010

1

Outline

- Why study this issue?
- Objectives of study
- Data and methods
- Findings and conclusion

2

Why study this issue?

- The HIV/AIDS pandemic has substantially increased the number of widow-headed households in Africa.
 - Using nationally representative rural survey data: rose from 9.4 % to 12.3% between 2001 and 2004 in Zambia
- Huge number of qualitative studies highlight gender inequalities in property rights.
 - that widows face difficulties in retaining access to land after the death of their husbands
 - eg. Milimo, 1990, Amstrong, 1992 Mutangadura, 2004; WLSA, 1997; Shezongo-Macmillan, 2005; UNECA, 2003

3

Why study this issue?

- However, there remains limited quantitative evidence on:
 - the extent to which widows lose their rights to land after the death of their husbands
 - whether widows lose all or part of the land they were formerly controlling?
 - the characteristics that influence the likelihood of widows losing land rights after the death of their husband

4

Objectives of study

1. To assess how households' land access is affected after the death of the male household head (and headed by a widow) compared to households not incurring mortality
2. To determine the characteristics that influence the extent to which widows lose their access to land
3. To identify implications for social protection of widows, poverty alleviation and HIV/AIDS mitigation strategies

5

Data and Methods

- Nationally-representative panel data of smallholder rural farm households in Zambia
 - CSO/MACO/FSRP/MSU
 - surveyed in May 2001 and May 2004
- 5342 households were successfully re-interviewed
 - Of which:
 - 574 households incurred illness-related prime-age mortality.
 - 91 households incurred male head of household death (73 widow-headed, 18 headed by another person)
- Econometric Approach (DID and PSM)

6

Factors hypothesized to influence widow's ability to retain land

- Widow characteristics
 - Age
 - Years of education
 - Widow's relation to village headman
- Initial household characteristics
 - Wealth status
 - Household composition (adults and children)
 - Deceased husband's relation to the village headman
 - Number of years settled in locality
 - HHs in villages adhering to matrilineal vs. patrilineal land inheritance rules

7

FINDING 1

- Landholding size between 2001 and 2004 declined among both afflicted and non-afflicted but declined most among households becoming widow headed .

Table 1: Average change in landholding size by HH type

Household Type	Change between 2001 and 2004
Non-afflicted	-12.7%
Other deaths (not widow headed)	-18.7%
Male head death (widow headed)	-39.3%

8

FINDING 2

- Widow-headed households:
 - were least likely to increase their landholding size
 - most likely to reduce their landholding size
 - most likely to suffer a greater than 50% decline in land holding size

Table 2: Changes in landholding size: % HHs by HH type

Household Type	% HH increased landholding size	% HH reduced landholding size	% HH with more than 50% decline in landholding size
Non-afflicted (no deaths)	45.7 ↑	50.3 ↓	23.8
Other deaths (not widow headed)	40.6	52.7	23.6
Male head death (widow headed)	27.5	65.0 ↓	30.4

FINDING 3

- To some extent, older widows are protected against loss of land compared to younger widows.

Table 3: Simulations of the %age change in landholding size

Profile	Widow age 50 & above	Wealth status	Children age 6-14	Widow related to head	Change in Landholding size
*1	No	Mean	Mean	Mean	-45.2%
2	Yes	Mean	Mean	Mean	-36.5%

FINDING 4

- Having more children age 6-14 does not protect the widow from losing land after the death of her husband.
- Number prime-age male and females-the impact is negative but statistically insignificant – **does not support labor shortage hypothesis**

Table 4: Simulations of the %age change in landholding size

Profile	Widow age 50 & above	Wealth status	Children age 6-14	Widow related to head	Change in Landholding size
1	Yes	Non-poor 90 th pctile	Mean (2.2)	Mean	-55.1%
2	Yes	Non-poor 90 th pctile	5.00	Mean	-36.8%

1

FINDING 5

- Initially relatively wealthy households are particularly vulnerable to losing land access.

Table 5: Simulations of the %age change in landholding size

Profile	Widow age 50 & above	Wealth status	Children Age 6-14	Widow related to head	Change in Landholding size
1	Yes	Poor (25 th pctile)	Mean	Mean	-11.9%
2	Yes	Non-poor 90 th pctile	Mean	Mean	-48.4%

12

FINDING 6

- Widows whose family has kinship ties to the village authorities are less likely to face a severe decline in landholding size after the death of their husbands.

Table 6: Simulations of the %age change in landholding size

Profile	Widow age 50 & above	Wealth status	Children Age 6-14	Widow related to head	Change in Landholding size
1	Yes	Non-poor 90 th pctile	5	No	-66.4%
2	Yes	Non-poor 90 th pctile	5	Yes	-24.3%

13

FINDING 7 & 8

- Number of years settled in the village does not seem to protect the widow from losing their land after the death of her husband (results weakly significant).
- Widows living in matrilineal areas do not fare any better than those living in patrilineal areas- equally likely to lose their rights to land
 - maybe - brothers and/or uncles may still grab the land).

14

CONCLUSION

- The view that widows and their dependents in rural areas of Africa face greater livelihood risks in the era of HIV/AIDS is somewhat supported by the nationally-representative survey results in Zambia.
- Efforts to safeguard widows' rights to land through land tenure innovations involving village elders/chiefs and other community authorities may be an important component of social protection, poverty alleviation, and HIV/AIDS mitigation strategies.
 - Any legislative approach that ignores village elders/chiefs may not be successful in protecting the land rights of widows (and women in general)

15

CONCLUSION

- Rural communities' resilience and resistance to the AIDS epidemic tend to be related to how they treat the most vulnerable parts of the community:
 - so mobilizing support among traditional authorities to better understand the social and economic impacts of existing land inheritance institutions may have high economic, social, and health payoffs.

16



THANK YOU