

A seat at the table: The role of information, conditions, and voice in redistributing intra-household property rights

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Background

- ▶ Maybe 90% of rural land in Africa is not formally documented and is largely held under customary ownership, which often disadvantages women
- ▶ Governments seek to formalize land rights to promote both efficiency and equity
- ▶ But limited evidence on how to get men to agree to share land rights with their wives

Methods

- ▶ We conducted an experiment with 739 married couples from 170 villages in the Ankole region of Uganda (patriarchal setting)
- ▶ These couples were offered assistance in obtaining a freehold title for a parcel of land they held customarily in a door-to-door intervention
- ▶ We cross-randomized the following conditions during offer stage:
 - ▶ Requiring presence of wife during discussion
 - ▶ Providing information about benefits of adding wife's name to title (using short video clip)
 - ▶ Making titling offer conditional on wife's name being added to title

Sample

- ▶ Sample is part of an RCT of a land titling intervention
- ▶ Average wife is 41 years old, and has 5 years of schooling
- ▶ Average husband is 7 years older, and has 1.3 additional years of schooling
- ▶ Average couple owns 2.5 parcels of land
- ▶ 58% parcels purchased, 89% used for agricultural crops
- ▶ 65% (99%) of women (husbands) say they “own” the parcel
- ▶ 81% (57%) of women (husbands) believe a woman’s name should go on land title

Stage 1: Presence of Wife Treatment

- ▶ Greetings and introductions
- ▶ First treatment stage takes place: we randomly varied whether we asked to speak with the husband, or the husband *and* the wife
- ▶ Motivation: empower the wife, increase visibility of husband's choices

Stage 2: Information Treatment

- ▶ All participants provided with *factual* information on benefits and costs of freehold titling
- ▶ Second treatment stage takes place: we randomly varied whether or not additional *emotional* information about benefits to family of adding wife's name to a title was provided
- ▶ Motivation: psychological salience, moral persuasion

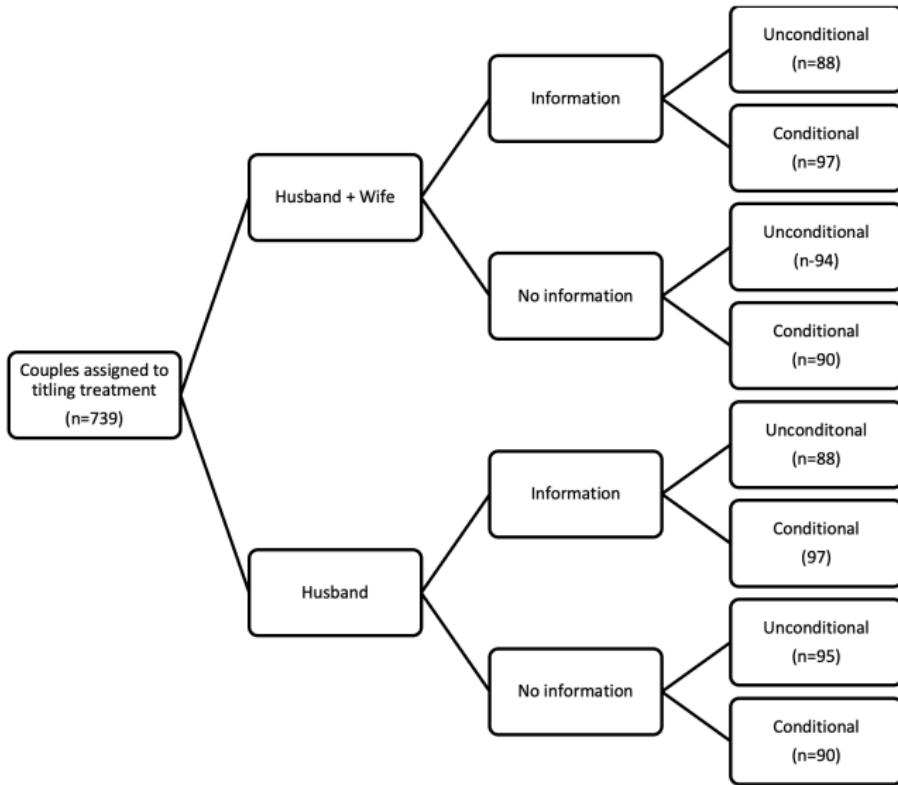
Stage 3: Conditionality Treatment

- ▶ Team conveys offer to assist household in obtaining a freehold title for a parcel of land at no cost
- ▶ Third treatment stage takes place: we randomly varied whether or not the offer was made on the condition that the wife's name was added to the title
- ▶ Motivation: material incentive, no longer a nudge as it restricts choices, a benchmark

Outcomes

- ▶ Participants decide: (i) whether to accept the offer; and if yes (ii) whose name(s) will appear on the title
- ▶ Team returns later: first to adjudicate parcel, then to demarcate parcel, and finally to deliver freehold title
- ▶ Participants asked to confirm/update their decisions during demarcation and adjudication visits

Sample Size in Each Group



Results

On-The-Spot Titling Acceptance Rates and Co-Titling Rates by Treatment Group

| | Control | Info | Wife | Wife + Info |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Accepts land titling offer (%) | 94.8 (2.66) | 94.5 (2.30) | 83.9 (3.21) | 81.8 (3.69) |
| <i>P-value for equality with control</i> | | [.940] | [.030] | [.006] |
| Observations | 95 | 88 | 94 | 88 |
| Adds wife's name to land title (%) | 52.8 (4.91) | 77.8 (4.66) | 79.7 (4.54) | 88.8 (4.64) |
| <i>P-value for equality with control</i> | | [.001] | [.000] | [.000] |
| Observations | 90 | 83 | 79 | 72 |

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. Sample restricted to couples receiving unconditional offer.

Results

Fraction of Households Who Eventually Decline Offer After Initially Accepting It

| | Control | Info | Wife | Wife + Info |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Rejects land titling offer (%) | 18.4 (4.29) | 20.1 (3.91) | 20.6 (4.22) | 20.0 (4.90) |
| <i>P-value for equality with control</i> | | [.782] | [.711] | [.820] |
| Observations | 90 | 83 | 79 | 72 |
| Heterogeneity wrt joint vs solo title | [.742] | [.722] | [.891] | [.806] |

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. Sample restricted to couples receiving unconditional offer.

Results

Final Titling Acceptance Rates and Co-Titling Rates by Treatment Group

| | Control | Info | Wife | Info & Wife |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Accepts land titling offer (%) | 76.8 (5.03) | 75.6 (3.70) | 67.1 (4.27) | 65.3 (4.71) |
| <i>P-value for equality with control</i> | | [.862] | [.187] | [.110] |
| Observations | 95 | 88 | 94 | 88 |
| Adds wife's name to land title (%) | 66.3 (5.24) | 78.4 (4.85) | 85.9 (4.98) | 91.4 (5.15) |
| <i>P-value for equality with control</i> | | [.107] | [.028] | [.002] |
| Observations | 74 | 65 | 65 | 56 |

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. Sample restricted to couples receiving unconditional offer.

Discussion

- ▶ Combined treatment caused 25.1pp reduction in share of households choosing to title in both spouses' names, rather than in husband's name alone
- ▶ One explanation is that the treatments induced husbands to share land ownership rights with their wives
- ▶ Alternative explanation is that treatments induced households least predisposed to do so to *self select* out of titling
- ▶ Adjusting for differential selection into titling by baseline characteristics, using inverse probability reweighting, lowers impact of combined treatment to 19.3pp ($p = 0.05$)
- ▶ This suggests that differential selection into/out of titling accounts for nearly one-fourth of the total combined-treatment impact on co-titling rates

Heterogeneity

Wife's pre-experiment rights over land parcel

| | Control | Info | Wife | Wife + Info |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| A: Wife had <i>strong</i> rights | | | | |
| <u>Accepts titling offer (%)</u> | 66.9 (11.2) | 73.8 (11.7) | 66.1 (12.1) | 65.8 (13.2) |
| P-value for equality with control | | [.685] | [.967] | [.949] |
| Observations | 26 | 23 | 32 | 22 |
| <u>Adds wife's name to title (%)</u> | 98.2 (7.43) | 98.7 (5.75) | 83.5 (8.34) | 94.5 (2.58) |
| P-value for equality with control | | [.954] | [.327] | [.582] |
| Observations | 17 | 15 | 22 | 16 |
| B: Wife had <i>weak</i> rights | | | | |
| <u>Accepts titling offer (%)</u> | 85.4 (5.18) | 79.3 (4.54) | 67.6 (6.02) | 67.5 (5.63) |
| P-value for equality with control | | [.414] | [.036] | [.031] |
| Observations | 63 | 62 | 55 | 59 |
| <u>Adds wife's name to title (%)</u> | 58.9 (6.54) | 71.5 (5.60) | 85.8 (6.37) | 89.0 (5.99) |
| P-value for equality with control | | [.176] | [.019] | [.002] |
| Observations | 55 | 48 | 39 | 38 |

Heterogeneity

Husband's baseline views towards adding wife's name to title

| | Full Control | Information Alone | Wife Alone | Information and Wife |
|--|----------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| A: Husband has <i>favorable</i> views | | | | |
| <u>Accepts titling offer (%)</u> | 73.7 (7.15) | 76.1 (5.52) | 68.9 (6.23) | 75.1 (6.87) |
| P-value for equality with control | | [.798] | [.661] | [.896] |
| Observations | 57 | 50 | 55 | 44 |
| <u>Adds wife's name to title (%)</u> | 73.2 (7.04) | 69.8 (8.15) | 84.9 (9.13) | 88.6 (8.17) |
| P-value for equality with control | | [.752] | [.421] | [.166] |
| Observations | 41 | 37 | 41 | 32 |
| B: Husband has <i>unfavorable</i> views | | | | |
| <u>Accepts titling offer (%)</u> | 81.6 (6.83) | 82.6 (6.45) | 64.9 (6.26) | 48.4 (7.45) |
| P-value for equality with control | | [.916] | [.135] | [.004] |
| Observations | 44 | 38 | 39 | 44 |
| <u>Adds wife's name to title (%)</u> | 60.7 (9.25) | 85.9 (7.14) | 85.6 (8.56) | 97.4 (7.39) |
| P-value for equality with control | | [.056] | [.086] | [.008] |
| Observations | 33 | 28 | 24 | 24 |

Conclusions

- ▶ Results are important for the design of land titling programs
- ▶ They show the power of simple, low-cost choice architecture changes in the way these programs are delivered in inducing households to register land in both spouses' names
- ▶ These results were accompanied by modest decreases in overall demand for titling (among men who appear to have chosen to solo title otherwise)
- ▶ As a benchmark, we found that conditioning the offer on the wife's name being added to the title did not reduce the titling acceptance rate (precisely estimated null impact)

Appendix: Treatment-Control Balance

Table A1: Balance Across Treatment Arms

Means, standard deviations in parentheses, p-values in brackets

| | Unconditional Offer | | | | | | Conditional Offer | | | | | | Balance [p value] | Balance [p value] | |
|---|---------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------------|--|
| | No Information | | Information | | Husbands (1) | Couples (2) | No Information | | Information | | Husbands (5) | Couples (6) | Husbands (7) | Couples (8) | |
| | Husbands | Couples | Husbands | Couples | | | Husbands | Couples | Husbands | Couples | | | | | |
| Household/spouse characteristics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Household size | 7.09 (3.15) | 6.78 (3.06) | 7.56 (2.75) | 7.06 (2.59) | | [.302] | 7.42 (2.64) | 7.36 (2.89) | 7.22 (2.79) | 7.45 (3.41) | | [.937] | | [.535] | |
| Wife's age | 40.7 (12.6) | 39.6 (13.6) | 39.9 (11.9) | 39.6 (12.2) | | [.919] | 40.5 (12.9) | 37.8 (11.3) | 43.4 (12.8) | 40.7 (12.8) | | [.029] | | [.192] | |
| Husband's age | 48.1 (15.1) | 47.7 (15.6) | 47.7 (14.3) | 47.8 (14.9) | | [.998] | 48.0 (15.8) | 46.5 (13.9) | 52.3 (14.8) | 48.1 (14.8) | | [.045] | | [.274] | |
| Wife's education | 4.49 (3.40) | 5.81 (3.87) | 4.99 (3.77) | 5.64 (4.11) | | [.044] | 4.78 (3.38) | 5.31 (3.95) | 3.78 (3.54) | 5.42 (4.10) | | [.006] | | [.003] | |
| Husband's education | 6.01 (4.11) | 6.33 (4.19) | 6.27 (4.14) | 6.43 (4.38) | | [.895] | 5.62 (3.82) | 6.61 (4.63) | 5.76 (4.29) | 6.69 (4.00) | | [.149] | | [.507] | |
| Parcels owned | 2.47 (1.46) | 2.56 (1.79) | 2.35 (1.45) | 2.17 (1.29) | | [.402] | 2.58 (1.59) | 2.40 (1.68) | 2.56 (1.94) | 2.54 (1.71) | | [.896] | | [.678] | |
| Cattle owned | 1.89 (3.25) | 1.96 (3.17) | 1.42 (2.96) | 2.03 (3.36) | | [.431] | 1.54 (2.77) | 1.50 (2.80) | 2.29 (3.34) | 1.77 (3.12) | | [.267] | | [.424] | |
| Goats and sheep owned | 2.52 (3.14) | 2.09 (2.80) | 2.19 (2.80) | 2.70 (3.47) | | [.436] | 2.64 (3.25) | 2.54 (2.38) | 2.65 (3.29) | 2.67 (3.28) | | [.995] | | [.752] | |
| Poultry owned | 2.45 (3.29) | 2.54 (3.11) | 2.49 (3.26) | 2.47 (2.86) | | [.997] | 2.06 (2.79) | 2.57 (3.06) | 1.79 (2.40) | 2.51 (3.34) | | [.213] | | [.422] | |
| Farming tools owned | 6.78 (3.33) | 5.93 (2.86) | 6.96 (3.63) | 6.49 (3.09) | | [.130] | 5.97 (3.11) | 6.64 (3.24) | 6.28 (3.37) | 6.96 (3.59) | | [.210] | | [.167] | |
| Parcel characteristics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Parcel was purchased (%) | .573 | .494 | .518 | .593 | | [.482] | .530 | .536 | .556 | .484 | | [.779] | | [.785] | |
| Household lives on parcel (%) | .548 | .587 | .667 | .540 | | [.227] | .567 | .580 | .617 | .583 | | [.908] | | [.659] | |
| Wife has ownership rights (%) | .642 | .638 | .568 | .534 | | [.652] | .689 | .744 | .567 | .588 | | [.140] | | [.242] | |
| Grows plantains (%) | .758 | .809 | .795 | .761 | | [.722] | .767 | .733 | .701 | .742 | | [.766] | | [.699] | |
| Grows beans (%) | .421 | .479 | .489 | .511 | | [.628] | .456 | .567 | .412 | .505 | | [.208] | | [.490] | |
| Grows coffee (%) | .326 | .298 | .318 | .352 | | [.858] | .300 | .389 | .289 | .340 | | [.457] | | [.843] | |
| Grows maize (%) | .147 | .170 | .125 | .148 | | [.863] | .133 | .167 | .082 | .093 | | [.363] | | [.533] | |
| Grows millet (%) | .126 | .117 | .102 | .159 | | [.727] | .122 | .167 | .155 | .165 | | [.787] | | [.877] | |
| Grows cassava (%) | .126 | .138 | .170 | .182 | | [.809] | .078 | .111 | .093 | .072 | | [.831] | | [.461] | |
| Parcel size (acres) | 1.95 (2.51) | 1.78 (2.16) | 2.14 (2.63) | 2.46 (2.91) | | [.443] | 2.30 (2.87) | 2.15 (2.41) | 2.26 (2.64) | 2.29 (2.61) | | [.974] | | [.750] | |
| Number of households | 95 | 94 | 88 | 88 | | | 90 | 90 | 97 | 97 | | | | | |
| Number of communities | | 43 | | 42 | | | 42 | | 43 | | | | | | |