

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

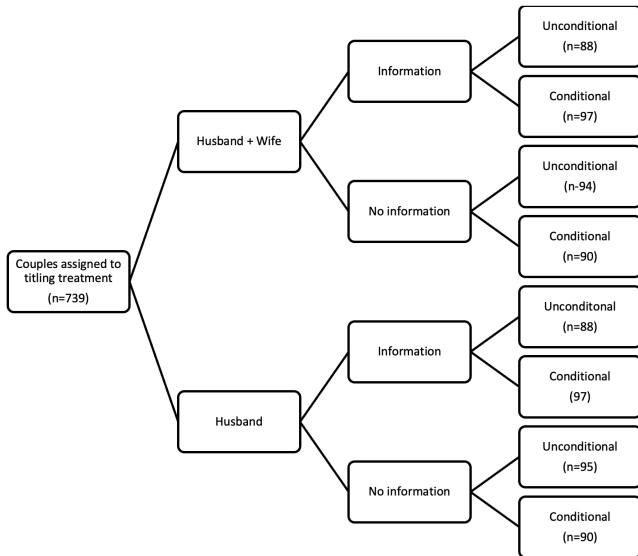
Stage 3: Conditionality Treatment

- ▶ 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 names(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				Balance [p value]	Conditional Offer				Balance [p value]	Balance [p value]
	No Information		Information			No Information		Information			
	Husbands (1)	Couples (2)	Husbands (3)	Couples (4)		Husbands (5)	Couples (6)	Husbands (7)	Couples (8)		
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			