

Women, Marriage and Asset Inheritance in Uganda

Cheryl R. Doss
Yale University

Research Question

- ▶ Patterns of asset ownership
- ▶ Rights over assets
 - By sex, marital status
 - Whether land was purchased or inherited

Data:

- ▶ Focus groups and key informant interviews
 - ▶ Household/individual survey data
 - ▶ Interviews regarding life history of inheritance and assets
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- ▶ First two completed as part of a study funded by USAID on Women's Access to Land and Other Assets in Liberia and Uganda

Survey Data

- ▶ 3 Districts: Kapchorwa, Kibale and Luwero
- ▶ 3–4 villages in each district
- ▶ 30–35 households per village
- ▶ 2–3 individuals per household

Total of about 730 individuals

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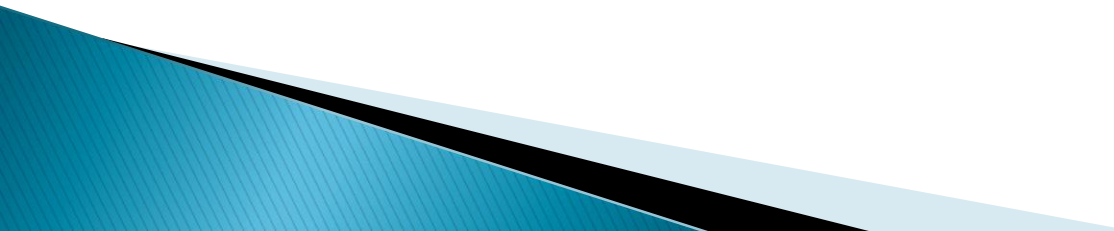


One respondent asked to list all household assets, with information about the owner.

60% of these respondents were women.

Each respondent asked about individual rights over assets.

Each respondent also asked whether they are married and if so, the type (customary, statutory, Christian, Muslim) and whether they had ever inherited any assets.



58% of men and 55% of women said that they were currently married

Most in customary marriage

About 10% reported Christian marriage

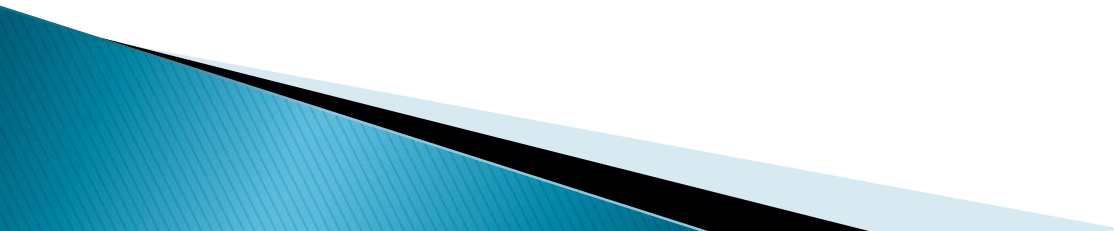
Less than 2% said either statutory or Muslim marriage

17% were in consensual unions

10% women and 14% men never married

21% women and 6% of men were widowed

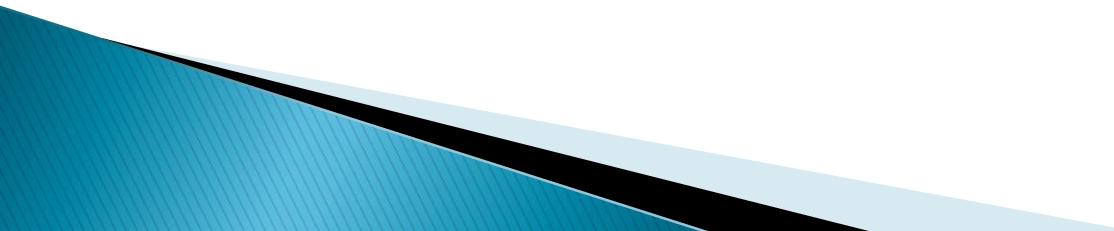
6% of women and 2% of men were divorced



Legal frameworks

- ▶ Customary Marriage (Registration) Act does not specify property rights
- ▶ Domestic Relations Bill has not been passed

Inheritance patterns

- ▶ Land is the asset that is inherited
 - ▶ Little livestock reported as being inherited
 - ▶ Business assets: women with business assets were more likely than men to say that they were inherited, but most purchased
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Land Ownership

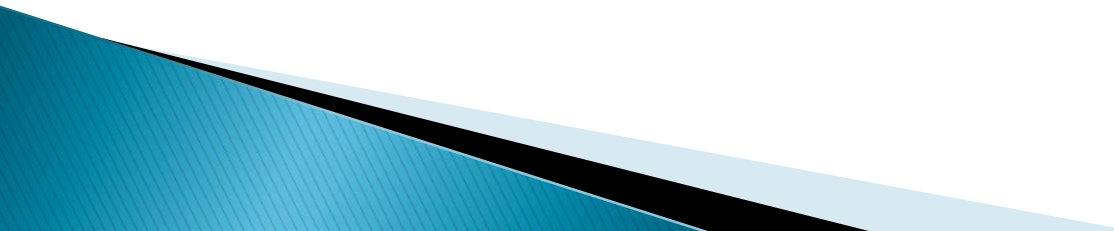
Table 1. Mode of Land Ownership, by Sex.

	Men	Women
Individually owned	19%	19%
Owned jointly (w/spouse)	46%	36%
Owned jointly (other than spouse)	1%	1%
No land owned	34%	42%

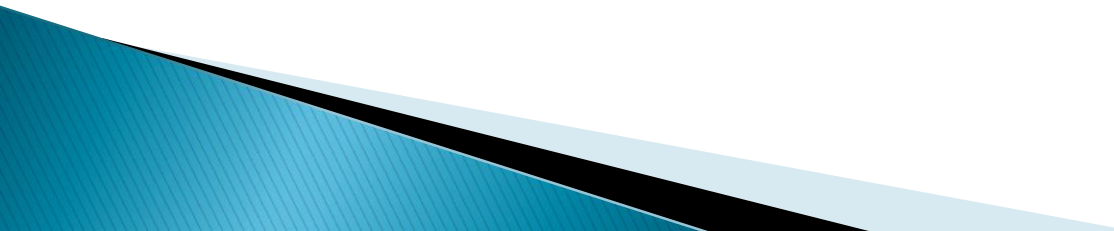
Percentage of men and women owning land by marital status

	Men	Women
Single	13%	11%
Married	80%	66%
Widowed	39%	67%
Divorced	38%	52%
Consensual Union	85%	53%

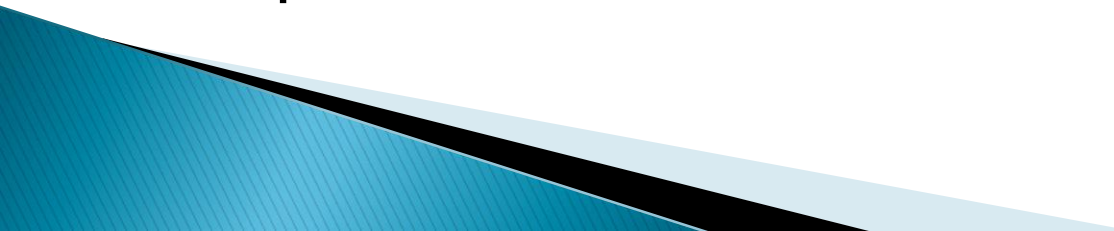
Inheritance

- ▶ Of land owners, 39% of men and 25% of women said they had inherited land
 - ▶ Others purchased or received as a gift/transfer.
 - ▶ Of those who inherited land 61% were men.
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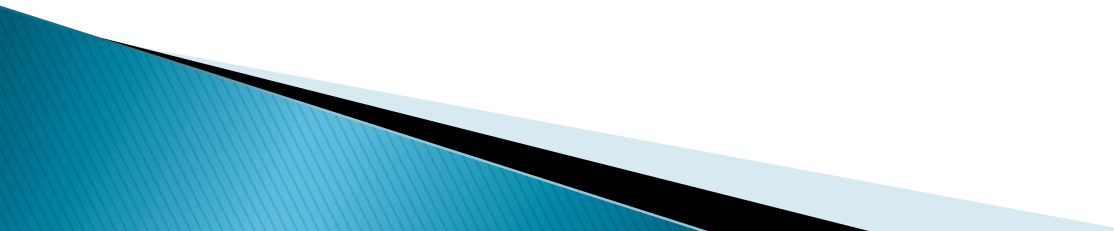
Who did you inherit from?

- ▶ Of men who inherited, 76% from father
 - ▶ Of women who inherited, 49% from father
 - ▶ Women, 28% from someone other than parent, aunt or uncle or grandparent
 - ▶ 8% of men and 20% of women said that they no longer had the land that they had inherited.
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Impacts of asset inheritance

- ▶ Qualitative evidence:
 - ▶ Janet inherited a substantial amount of land (15 acres) from her father when he died when she was 18. She moved to her husband's smaller plot when she married. But when the marriage fell apart, she returned to her inherited land. She has been successful in farming and diversified into livestock and two motorcycles. She says that her story is concrete evidence for the paramount importance of women's land rights.
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- ▶ Janice inherited $1/8^{\text{th}}$ of her father's one acre plot. She currently lives nearby with her husband and sees her land as a form of security that she can turn to if her marriage does not go well. While her marriage is strong, she expresses great comfort in knowing that there is land that belongs solely to her.

- ▶ When Sophie's father passed away, her mother could not inherit the land. Her mother was allowed to manage the farm until her brother was old enough to claim ownership rights.
 - ▶ Sophie is now married herself and manages a farm that she and her husband purchased. Her husband has the full ownership rights. She will not be able to bequeath the land to her daughters.
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		Inherited Land		Purchased land	
		Men	Women	Men	Women
Right to sell	Alone	2	8	6	6
	In consult.	54	15	61	33
	None	44	76	33	61
Right to bequeath	Alone	11	15	10	4
	In consult.	62	19	62	31
	None	27	65	27	65
Right to rent	Alone	6	11	5	6
	In consult.	61	19	63	41
	None	33	69	32	53

Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

- ▶ Rights over land vary by sex and by whether the land was inherited or purchased.
 - ▶ But purchased land does not necessary contain the full bundle of ownership rights.
 - ▶ Patterns of ownership, inheritance and rights are embedded in relationships within the household and community
 - ▶ Men and women both frequently say that they own land jointly with their spouse.
 - ▶ Challenge becomes how to protect women's claims with dissolution of household
 - ▶ Independent land rights give women security, in the event of potential dissolution of their marriage.
 - ▶ Health shocks to both men and women have a big impact on women's welfare.
 - ▶ As Uganda's economy grows and moves away from subsistence agriculture, other assets may become more important.
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