

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

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## Outline

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

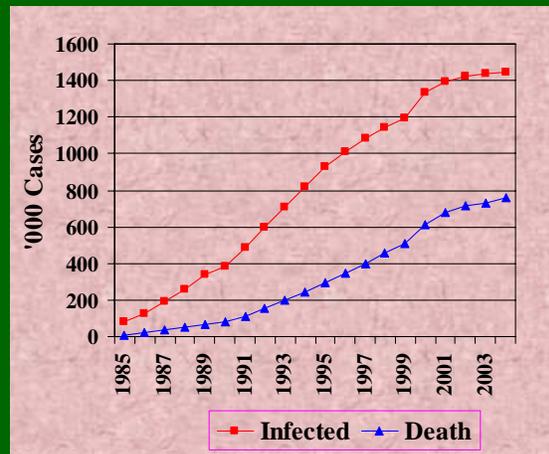
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# HIV/AIDS Situation in Zambia

...Background

- First confirmed case in 1984
- End of 1989
  - 450 000 infected
- End of 2001
  - About 1.3 million infected, 85% adults
  - Orphans – more than 1 million
- Averaging 78 000 HIV infections and 42 000 deaths per year over the entire period
- Currently, about 1.5 mil infected
- Encouraging news: there are signs that infection rates have leveled off and ‘declining’

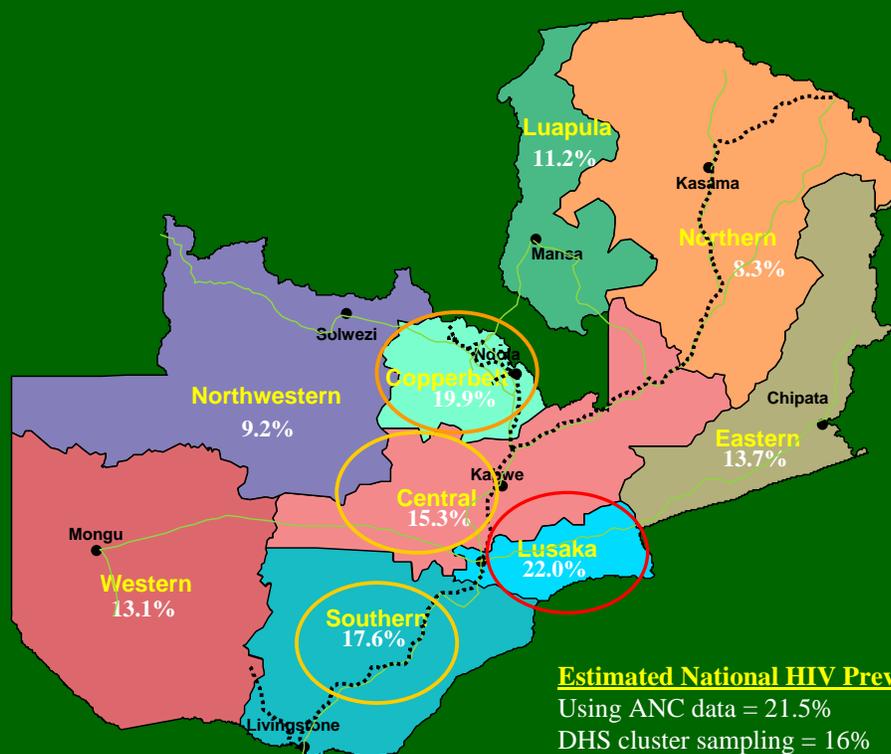
Fig 1: Numbers of HIV/AIDS infection and AID-related Deaths in Zambia, 1985-2004



Source: Ministry of Health and CSO, Zambia

# HIV/AIDS Prevalence in Zambia

...Background



**Estimated National HIV Prevalence**

Using ANC data = 21.5%

DHS cluster sampling = 16%

## Land Inheritance Patterns in Zambia

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- In Southern Africa, 60% of small farmers are women and they make up about 75% of the food production and processing workforce (UNECA, 2003).
- Women rarely own or have control over land they cultivate
  - Inheritance of property, land and other productive assets is almost always the prerogative of the deceased man's male kin.

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## .....Land Inheritance Patterns in Zambia

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- Two land tenure systems exist in Zambia :
  - Customary
  - Statutory land tenure systems
- Customary land tenure system
  - Traditional authorities (chiefs and/or village headman) allocate vacant land to families and individuals
  - No title deeds to the land and the land cannot be sold.
  - 94% of total land area under this system
  - Tribal authorities rarely allocate land directly to women (Mutangadura, 2004).
  - Virilocal marriages in both patrilineal and matrilineal communities tend to reinforce the lack of women's direct access to, control over, and ownership of land in Zambia.

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## Why study this issue?

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- The HIV/AIDS pandemic has substantially increased the number of widow-headed households in Africa.
  - Using nationally representative rural survey data from Zambia:
    - 9.4 % in 2001
    - 12.3% in 2004
- Huge number of conceptual and 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

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## .....why study issue?

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- 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 after the death of their husband

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## Objectives of study

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Three objectives:

1. To assess how widow-headed households' landholding size is affected by the death of the male household head
2. To determine the factors influencing 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

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## Data

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Nationally-representative panel data of smallholder rural farm households in Zambia

- Collected by Central Statistical Office in collaboration with MSU and the Food Security Research Project
- 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)
  - Our interest is the 73 widow-headed households

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## Factors hypothesized to influence widow's ability to retain land

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- Characteristics of the widow
  - Age
  - Years of education
  - Widow's relation to village headman
- Initial household characteristics ( $X^h$ )
  - Wealth status
  - Household composition (number of PA adults and children)
  - Deceased husband's relation to the village headman
  - Number of years household has been settled in locality
- Community characteristics
  - Villages adhering to matrilineal vs. patrilineal land inheritance rules

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## Analytical technique

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- Econometric analysis of 5342 households interviewed in both years
  
- Household fixed-effects models (see paper for details) – the intent being to measure the impact of various factors on households' landholding size after controlling for other factors that influence landholding size.

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## 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  $\Delta$  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%

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## 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

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## FINDING 3

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

Table 3: Simulations of the % change in landholding size

Profile	Widow age 50 & above	Wealth status	Children age 6-14	Widow related to head	Years settled in locality	Δ in land size
*1	No	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	-54.8%
2	Yes	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	-29.9%

\*Age of widow: 16-39

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## FINDING 4

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

Table 4: Simulations of the % change in landholding size

Profile	Widow age 50 & above	Wealth status	Children age 6-14	Widow related to head	Years settled in locality	Δ in land size
1	Yes	Non-poor	Mean (2.2)	Mean	Mean	-48.4%
2	Yes	Non-poor	5.00	Mean	Mean	-62.3%

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## 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	Years settled in locality	Δ in land size
1	Yes	Poor	Mean	Mean	Mean	-11.9%
2	Yes	Non-poor	Mean	Mean	Mean	-48.4%

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## 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	Years settled in locality	Δ in land size
1	Yes	Non-poor	5	No	Mean	-66.4%
2	Yes	Non-poor	5	Yes	Mean	-24.3%

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## FINDING 7

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- Duration of household's settlement in the locality tends to reduce widow's ability to retain land. Result is weakly statistically significant, the greater the number of years settled in the village, the greater the percentage decline in landholding size.

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## FINDING 8

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- The results indicate no difference between widows living in matrilineal versus patrilineal villages.
  - both are at risk to losing their rights to productive assets including land to their brothers and/or uncles.

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## CONCLUSION

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- ❑ The view that widows and their dependents in rural areas of Africa face greater livelihood risks in the era of HIV/AIDS is indeed supported by the nationally-representative survey results in Zambia.
- ❑ That said, it should be noted that 2/3 of the widow-headed households did not lose any land after the loss of their husbands.
- ❑ Efforts to safeguard widows' rights to land through land tenure innovations involving community authorities may be an important component of social protection, poverty alleviation, and HIV/AIDS mitigation strategies.

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## .....Conclusion

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- ❑ The Poverty Reduction Strategies being conceived and implemented in many African countries may provide a vehicle for addressing property grabbing and widows' access to land and other productive assets.
- ❑ 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.

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# **WANT TO KNOW MORE??**

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**Food Security Group of Related Research :**

**<http://aec.msu.edu/fs2/index.htm>**

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