

The Impact of Kinship System on Agricultural Production & Food Security

Evidence from Patrilineal & Matrilineal Societies in Malawi

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Kinship System

Kinship systems determines the **people considered “related” to you** and to whom you have social obligations. They are also commonly key determinants of **inheritance, female autonomy, and sources of social assistance** (Lowes 2022)

Matrilineal v Patrilineal

In **matrilineal** systems, kinship follows **female family members**, where children are part of their mother’s kin group, and inheritance is restricted to female family members. In **patrilineal** systems, kinship is follows **male family members**, and inheritance is restricted to male family members (Lowes 2022)

Matrilineal ≠ Matriarchy
Patrilineal ≠ Patriarchy



Comparing Matrilineal v Patrilineal in the Literature

Generally, in matrilineal societies, women:

- have **greater control over their children** (Lowes 2022)
- exert **more decision-making power in the household** (Lowes 2022, Ellena & Nongkrnrih 2017, Djurfeldt et al 2018)
- may experience **higher social protection**, as social status is tied to her family rather than her husband's (Lowes 2022)

As a result, previous studies found that in matrilineal societies:

- households tend to **eat more meals per day** (Djurfeldt et al 2018) and **children have better nutrition** (Lowes 2022)
- household **spending tends to focus on the needs of the family** (Djurfeldt et al 2018)
- women tend to **view domestic violence as less justified** (Lowes 2022), and female and male children tend to receive **equal education opportunities** (Lowes 2022)



Guiding Question

Do matrilineal and patrilineal societies have different levels of agricultural production and food security?



Hypotheses

H.1. Matrilineal societies have significantly different levels of food security than patrilineal societies

H.2. Matrilineal societies have significantly different levels of agricultural production than patrilineal societies



Why is this important?



The effects of kinship structure on agricultural production and food security are not well understood, creating a major gap of understanding about a significant number of communities



Improving agricultural production and food security are instrumental in improving well-being and livelihoods in the developing world



Further knowledge building regarding women's rights; including with respect to property rights, education, and household decision-making



Data

- Fifth Integrated Household Survey 2019-2020
- Produced by Malawi's National Statistical Office with technical assistance from the World Bank
- Split into five surveys: household, agriculture, market, fishery, and community.

50,499 Households - Household Survey
42,555 Households - Agriculture Survey



Next Steps

- **Data organization**
- **Further literature exploration of kinship systems in Malawi**
- **Descriptive Statistics & further clarification of econometric methods utilized for project**



Thank You!
Questions or Suggestions?

