

Rorya Customary Practice Survey

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Abstract

This document provides an overview of a household survey that the Institute of Developing Economies (IDE-JETRO) conducted in a rural area in northeast Tanzania, Rorya district in Mara region.

Overview of the survey

The Institute of Developing Economies (IDE-JETRO) conducted a household survey (Rorya Customary Practice Survey, RCPS) in a rural area in northeast Tanzania, Rorya district in Mara region. This district is predominantly settled by the Luo, an ethnic group that has great publicity due to the practice of levirate marriage (also known as widow or wife inheritance). This practice has been common in many societies in Africa (e.g., Doosuur and Arome (2013); Nyanzi et al. (2009); Shiino (2008); Stern (2012)) and typically, a widow is inherited by the brother or other male relatives of the deceased. In case of the Luo, elder brothers of the deceased husband (including the husband's elder half-brothers) tend to inherit widows.¹

In the developing world, traditional practices violating women's human rights often exist (e.g., female genital cutting, polygyny). Despite many efforts attempted to eradicate those practices, socio-economic environments that prompt the institutional changes are still insufficiently understood. One reason for this lack of prior interest may stem from the fact that the institutional changes generally take long time and thus, the data tenable to an empirical analysis rarely exists. The RCPS aimed at overcoming this problem. The practice of levirate marriage in Rorya provides one unique setting for the purpose, because this centuries-long practice has only recently been disappearing in this area.

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¹If no elder brothers (including the half-brothers) exist, it is also possible that a widow is inherited by her husband's elder cousins born to his uncles on his father side. As cousins on the father side are called brothers or sisters based on the Luo culture.

The target population of the RCPS was a female aged 20 to 40 years and her husband. Consequently, the survey team attempted to reach 405 couples, resulting in 405 interviews with females and another 405 independent interviews with their husbands. In this survey, the survey team collected information on expenditures, a family structure, perceptions about HIV/AIDS and women's property rights as well as preferences for risk, time, and several customary practices of the Luo (including the levirate marriage) and so on.

Sampling procedures

The site of the RCPS is a rural area in northeast Tanzania, Rorya district in Mara region. The Rorya is located on the east side of Lake Victoria and bordered by Kenya (see Figure 1). Based on Tanzania Population and Housing Census 2012, the total population is 265,241.

The target population of the RCPS is young married females that may be inherited by male relatives of their husbands in the future as well as their husbands that may inherit widowed relatives in the future (or have ever inherited widowed relatives). Focusing on this population enables researchers to assess currently married people's willingness to practice levirate marriage, while controlling for all time-invariant factors specific to each couple.

Based on the 2012 census, the Rorya district included 80 villages located in 21 wards. In July to September 2015, the survey team attempted to make a list of married females aged 20-40 years residing in all these villages. This work was done by actually visiting those villages. During this process, it was realized that some villages separated into two and thus, eight new villages existed. Of the total 88 villages, the RCPS made the relevant female list corresponding to 82 villages that existed at the point of the survey. The number of females on the list reached 9,990 in total. Since one of those 82 villages were used for training of enumerators, in the subsequent household survey, the RCPS collected the relevant information in 81 villages, covering approximately 92% of all the villages in Rorya.

For each of those 81 villages, this survey randomly selected five females from the list, and attempted to interview them and their husbands (so, 405 couples). When a husband is away from a surveyed village (e.g., working in other wards), the survey team had a difficulty in contacting him. In this case, the team did not interview the couple and instead, contacted an alternative female and her husband selected from the waiting list. In the waiting list, females that were not chosen during the first selection process were randomly sorted in order, and the first person on the waiting list became the first replacement sample. If a husband of the first replacement sample is also not residing in a surveyed village, the second female and her husband on the waiting list became the alternative sample. This process was repeated until the survey team could find 5

couples in each village that enabled the team to have an independent interview with the wife and husband. Approximately, half of the interviewed 405 couples were eventually selected from the waiting list.

While the survey team intended to start the interview with the selected 405 couples from September 2015, it was difficult due to people's enthusiasm for the coming general election in October. Consequently, the relevant household survey took place in November and December. A one-week intensive training of enumerators and another one-week refreshment training were conducted in late September and early November.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of 22 sections. The first four sections collected information specific to a family belonging to each couple. Section 4 to 13 and Section 14 to 22 collected individual-level information relevant to wives and husbands, respectively. The survey team asked questions in Section 1 to 13 for wives, whereas questions in all the remaining sections were independently attempted for their husbands. The interviews were conducted in an environment where each of the wives and husbands was alone with the survey enumerators.

Section 1: Household roster

Section 1 collected names of household members, their relationship to a head of the household, their religion, ethnicity, sex, age, completed level of education, the current residential places, and marital status. An answer to question 1 can be used to identify who are wives and husbands interviewed in the RCPS within this family. The definitions of a household and household head exploited in this survey are as follows.

- A household: a group of people who live in the same homestead (which may consist of more than a single dwelling) and share food and other items bought from a common household budget. This includes people who are away temporarily (e.g. herding or at boarding school for less than 8 months per year).
- A household head: a person who provides most of the needs of the household and is familiar with all the activities and occupations of the household members.

Section 2: Household consumption and expenditures

This section collected information on a household's food (Part A) and non-food (Part B) expenditures in the last six months.

Section 3: Household asset

This section collected information on a household's asset and income.

Section 4: Household savings

This section collected information on a household's savings.

Section 5: Information on natural parents

This section collected information on a wife's biological parents.

Section 6: Information on siblings

This section collected information on children born to a wife's biological fathers (i.e., siblings and half-siblings). The information includes sex, age, and whether they are currently alive, and if not, age at death.

Section 7: Sexual disease

This section collected information on HIV/AIDS-affected people in a wife's social network, her risky sexual behavior, and her knowledge on this communicable disease.

Section 8: Preference

This section collected information on a wife's risk and time preferences, altruism and reciprocity, and optimism. The LOT-R (Life Orientation Test-Revised) was exploited to evaluate an individual's generalized optimism relative to pessimism.

Section 9: Marriage and reproduction

This section collected information on a wife's marriages, children born to her, and mortality of those children.

Section 10: Expectations

This section collected information on a wife's subjective probability relevant to HIV/AIDS and its relationships with levirate marriage.

Section 11: Personal savings

This section collected information on a wife's savings that her husband is not aware of.

Section 12: Activities

This section collected information on a wife's activities in the last seven days.

Section 13: Customary practices

This section collected information on a wife's perceptions about and preferences for customary practices (including levirate marriage) of the Luo. This section also collected information relevant to a wife's security concern in her widowhood.

Section 14: Information on natural parents

This section collected information on a husband's biological parents. The first 14 questions are the same as those asked for a wife in Section 5. The questions 15-17 additionally collected information on a husband's cousins on his father side.

Section 15: Information on siblings

This section collected information on children born to a husband's biological fathers (i.e., siblings and half-siblings). The information includes sex, age, and whether they are currently alive, and if not, age at death.

Section 16: Sexual disease

This section collected information on HIV/AIDS-affected people in a husband's social network, his risky sexual behavior, and his knowledge on this communicable disease.

Section 17: Preference

This section collected information on a husband's risk and time preferences, altruism and reciprocity, and optimism. The LOT-R (Life Orientation Test-Revised) was exploited to evaluate an individual's generalized optimism relative to pessimism.

Section 18: Marriage and reproduction

This section collected information on a husband's marriages, children born to him, and mortality of those children.

Section 19: Expectations

This section collected information on a husband's subjective probability relevant to HIV/AIDS and its relationships with levirate marriage.

Section 20: Personal savings

This section collected information on a husband's savings that his wife is not aware of.

Section 21: Activities

This section collected information on a husband's activities in the last seven days.

Section 22: Customary practices

This section collected information on a husband's perceptions about and preferences for customary practices (including levirate marriage) of the Luo. This section also collected information relevant to a husband's concern about his wife's security in her widowhood.

Data

Although the collected data has not yet been in public domain, each section has the corresponding data file that includes *wid* (ward id), *vid* (village id), and *hhid* (household id). By using these unique ids, it is possible to merge the data sourced from different sections. In addition, an answer to question 1 in Section 1 (Household roster) helps identify who is the interviewed wife and husband

within a household. In each household, only one female and one male are identified as “Yes” to that particular question. Those two people are the respondents interviewed in the RCPS.

References

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Figure 1: Rorya district

Source: Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics. The data is available from <http://www.nbs.go.tz/nbstz/index.php/english/statistics-by-subject/population-and-housing-census/258-2012-phc-shapefiles-level-one-and-two>.