

Nuptial strategies for regulating exposure to HIV in rural Malawi

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the marriage & health literature

- ▶ protection vs. (positive) selection
- ▶ 'negative' selection

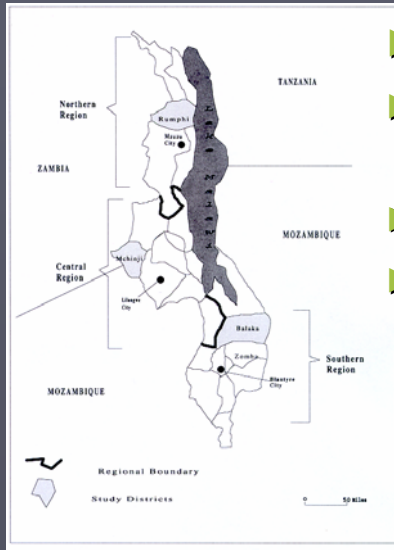
hypotheses

- ▶ divorce is higher in couples where one spouse has an elevated risk of infection
→ negative selection
- ▶ selection of spouses with lower risk of infection
→ positive selection

data

- ▶ Malawi Diffusion and Ideational Change Project (MDICP): 2 waves
 - wave 2: retrospective marriage histories (2001, 1300 women & their husbands)
 - longitudinal data (paper only)

the setting



- ▶ 3 rural districts
- ▶ HIV% & AIDS mortality increased fast in the 1990s
- ▶ marriage is universal
- ▶ divorce rates are high

hyp 1 : negative selection

- ▶ if true response to AIDS, divorce should:
 - become more prevalent in 1990s
 - be higher in couples where one of the spouses engages in risky behavior

Q: "During your time together, did you suspect or know that your husband/wife had sexual relations with other women/men apart from you?"

marriage descriptives (in %)

| | <i>Women</i> | <i>Men</i> |
|--|--------------|------------|
| Suspicion of spouse's infidelity (XMA) | 31 | 14 |
| Self-reported infidelity | 2 | 20 |
| Divorced/Separated | 33 | 29 |
| Widowed | 7 | 4 |
| N (marriages) | 1939 | 1815 |
| N (individuals) | 1305 | 1075 |

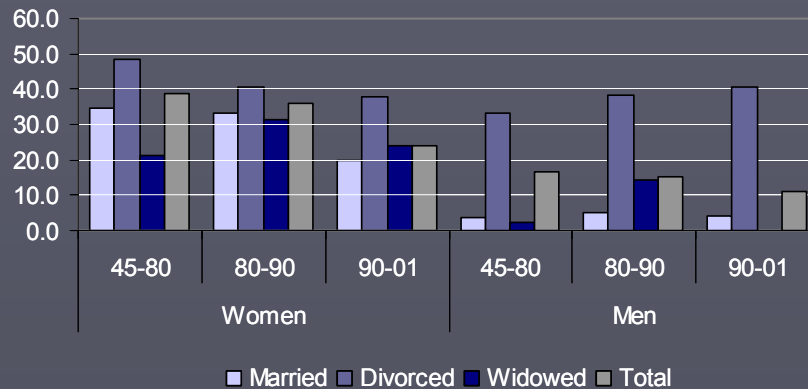
hyp 1: Cox divorce hazards

| | Women | | | Men | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------------------|------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| | M1 | M2 | M3[†] | M1 | M2 | M3[†] |
| District (vs.South) | | | | | | |
| - Center | 0.68** | 0.68** | 0.75** | 0.77** | 0.77** | 0.82* |
| - North | 0.55** | 0.55** | 0.73** | 0.49** | 0.49** | 0.59** |
| ≥ 2nd marriage (vs 1st) | 0.71** | 0.70** | 0.61** | 0.81** | 0.81** | 0.72** |
| YM89 | 1.05** | 1.03 | 1.01 | 1.02 | 1.00 | 0.99 |
| XMA | 1.57** | 1.43** | 1.12 | 5.30** | 4.81** | 2.81** |
| YM89 * XMA | | 1.06** | 1.10** | | 1.07** | 1.10** |

Notes: XMA: extra-marital affairs
 YM89: year of marriage, ≤89=0, 90=1, 91=2, ...
 *: p<.1; ** p<.05; robust standard errors
 †: M3 = M2 + controls (i.e. age at marriage, polygamy, educational status, age difference btw spouses, ethnic homogamy, virilocal residence, ...)

retrospective bias ?

The suspicion of adultery by marriage cohort, marriage outcome and gender (in %)



hyp 2: spouse selection

- ▶ remarriage conditioned by outcome previous marriage (death vs divorce) ?
- ▶ if true response to AIDS, widow(er)s:
 - should have a lower remarriage hazard
 - particularly in the 1990s

hyp 2: remarriage hazards

| | Women | | Men | |
|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | M1 | M2 | M1 | M2 |
| District (vs.South) | | | | |
| - Center | 0.71** | 0.71** | 0.89 | 0.90 |
| - North | 0.55** | 0.55** | 0.67** | 0.66** |
| Age | 0.97** | 0.97** | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Widow(er) | 0.74** | 0.86 | 0.94 | 1.27 |
| YR90+ | 1.22** | 1.23** | 1.57** | 1.68** |
| Widow(er) * YR90+ | | 0.71* | | 0.58** |

Notes: YR90+: calendar year at the end of the previous marriage ($\geq 90 = 1$, $< 90 = 0$)
Widow(er): widowed=1, separated/divorced=0
*: $p < .1$; **: $p < .05$; robust standard errors

conclusion: marriage is a resource ...

- ▶ negative selection
 - ▶ adultery increasingly sanctioned by divorce in the 1990s
 - ▶ ... while reported adultery itself declined
- ▶ positive selection
 - ▶ remarriage rates of widows/widowers are lower; particularly in the 1990s

***conclusion: marriage is a resource ...
but more so for men?***

- ▶ Infidelity is more typical for men
- ▶ Women do not have the same power to sanction infidelity with divorce

outstanding issues

- ▶ longitudinal evidence (paper)
- ▶ effectiveness of these strategies
- ▶ heterogeneity by marriage customs or kinship system ?