

**Does love make a difference?  
Marriage type and Post Marriage Decision-Making Power**

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**Abstract**

Marriage patterns, whether parent-arranged marriages or autonomous “love” marriages, have multiple social implications. This paper examines the association between marriage type and gender autonomy in marital relations using India as a case study. As expected, women in self-arranged marriages have the most decision-making power of any marriage type. But a complex pattern of power relationships among wives, husbands, and in-laws results from different types of marriage arrangement. For example, women in “jointly” arranged marriages have less power (and their husbands’ more) than in parental arranged marriage where the bride is able to consent to the parents’ choice.

[98 words]

### **Introduction**

A variety of studies on women's empowerment in India have noted limited autonomy and decision making ability on the part of women (Bloom, Wypij and Das Gupta, 2001; Jejeebhoy and Sathar, 2001; Mason and Smith 2000, Desai, 1994). Women's empowerment and bargaining power within the household has implications for a series of outcome variables- lower fertility levels and equal intra-household resource allocation (Basu, 1992; Miles-Doan, and Bisharat, 1990; Dyson and Moore 1983), child mortality (Bloom, Wypij and Das Gupta, 2001), child mortality (Das Gupta, 1991), contraceptive use (Kishor and Subaiya, 2005; Dharmalingam and Morgan, 1996) and domestic violence (Jejeebhoy, 1998). It, therefore, becomes important to examine the various factors that are associated with the dynamics of a woman's bargaining position in the household.

### **Previous work on bargaining power**

This paper examines one such factor- marriage type (spousal choice: self-arranged or parent arranged) and its relationship with a woman's decision making power within the household. This is an important question because of the increased significance of love marriage across different social contexts. Previous work suggests that in many countries- China (Xia and Zhou, 2003; Xiaoho and Whyte, 1990), Egypt (Sherif-Trask, 2003), Ghana (Takyi, 2003), Japan (Murray and Kimura, 2003; Blood, 1967), Turkey (Hortacsu, 2003), Trinidad and Tobago (Seegobin and Tarquin, 2003) - self-arranged or "love" marriages have replaced parent arranged marriages as the dominant marriage pattern. This is also happening in India, which is the focus of this paper. Recent evidence suggests that women of more recent birth cohorts are more likely to report greater

autonomy in partner choice than women of older cohorts (Banerji, Martin and Desai, 2008).

The second half of this paper examines power dynamics within the household. Women's lack of decision making power may not necessarily mean that decision making authority is vested in the husband. Rather it may be a function of both gender and generation, especially in developing countries where extended households are common and senior members have an important voice in household decisions (Sen, Rastogi and Vanneman, 2006). So, the related question we examine is whether marriage type is associated with a difference in the gender and generational dimensions of the household power structure.

This paper uses data from the recently conducted household survey, India Human Development Survey (2005), to examine the relationship between marriage type and gender relations. Additionally, we examine the full dynamics of power within a household by marriage type. This nationally representative survey of 40, 000 households has in addition to detailed questions on demographic and other background characteristics of the household, questions on mate selection patterns and on the role played by the respondent, her husband and other adult members in the household in various key decisions. This combination of questions allows us to answer these questions about the various correlates of a woman's decision making power.

### **Marriage type and gender relations**

The theoretical argument in the literature on marriage patterns and gender relations is that love marriages are more likely to be associated with greater equality in gender relations than arranged marriages. Fox (1975, 188-189) following Blood (1972)

argues that since in arranged marriages kin-members play an important role in the spouse selection process, husband-wife relationship is de-emphasized; instead greater emphasis is placed on the “individual’s vertical linkage with and responsibility to antecedent kinsmen and his progeny”. Love marriages, on the other hand, are based on personal qualities and inter-personal relationships. Therefore, it is likely that they emphasize on a “horizontal bond” between marital partners.

While this theoretical argument is plausible, it is important to recognize that the institutional context mediates the association between marriage types and gender relations (Silva, 2008; Muck, 1996; Malhotra, 1991). A survey of Sri Lankan youth in ages 16-29 indicates that romantic relationships are common among the young in Sri Lanka but are not necessarily associated with egalitarian gender relations. On the contrary, the skewed pattern of gender relations within which these relationships form suggests that they cannot be the basis of an egalitarian marital relation in the future:

“The phenomenon like ragging where violence and bullying may be used by senior males students to establish relationships with junior girls, the male domination in various youth activities including politics, the language of love and sex particularly in the university, hierarchical gender relations in love affairs and the lack of consensus between boys and girls in regard to premarital sex and the importance of preserving virginity are some evidence that love relations do not necessarily ensure egalitarian gender relations in love and marital relationships that may result from such relationships” (Silva, 2008: 9).

In another 1966 study of 754 women in first marriages in Ankara city, Turkey (Fox, 1975) though the scores reported by women on four indices- index of forbidden activities<sup>1</sup>, index of husband’s power in decision making, index of segregation in decision making and index of wife’s support for traditional sex roles- suggest a statistically

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<sup>1</sup> Index of forbidden activities is a 8 point index that includes the husband forbidding the wife from wearing short sleeve dresses, sitting with male visitors at home, shopping alone, venturing outside of the home without wearing a scarf, going to matinee at cinema alone, talking to men and women not known by the husband and going to parties alone.

significant difference in the expected directions by marriage types, there were about 20 percent cases in which the differentials between love and arranged marriages are not in the hypothesized direction. For example, among women with less than primary education, the score on the index of forbidden activities was low in 9.0 percent of arranged marriages. The comparable figure for love matches is much lower at 4.2 percent. A majority of these reversals occur in the “traditional” background categories- rural background, no urban or school experience in post pubertal years, less than primary education and young age at marriage- suggesting that the potency offered by love matches for a gender egalitarian relation in a marriage is inhibited by the structural factors operating in a traditional environment.

Empirically too, the causal argument between marriage types and gender relations must not be over-emphasized, given that the two are a mutually inter-dependent complex. Although the decision to marry precedes the context of gender relations within marriage, greater gender empowerment is associated with both whom to marry (self-arranged marriage) and when to marry (delayed age at marriage), and greater likelihood of residence in nuclear as opposed to joint households (Fox, 1975; Silva, 2008).

With the caveats given above, survey results across different social contexts mostly suggest a positive and significant association between self-arranged or love matches and equitable relations between the husband and wife (Xiaohe and Whyte, 1990; Fox, 1975; Blood, 1967). The 1987 study of 586 ever married women in urban districts of Chengdu, Sichuan province, China on the association between marriage type and the quality of marital relations suggests that the marriage quality index<sup>2</sup> was consistently

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<sup>2</sup> The marriage quality index consists of mean of standardized scores of the women respondents to six close ended questions and one general marriage satisfaction question. These six close ended questions are

higher in love matches as opposed to arranged marriages. These results confirm the findings of an earlier study by Blood (1967) in Tokyo, Japan that found arranged marriages to have a more patriarchal power structure as compared to love matches.

### **The Indian context**

#### *Trends in marriage patterns*

India has long been associated with the institution of parent arranged marriages, where parents exert a strong influence over the choice of partner for their son/ daughter. A previous survey of roughly 800 ever-married rural women in ages 15-39 years confirms that few women across regions and communities have a say in the choice of their husband (Jejeebhoy and Sathar, 2000). In Uttar Pradesh around 10 percent of the Hindu women and 13 percent of the Muslim women had a say in their marriage decision. The corresponding percent for women in Tamil Nadu is higher though still low at 32 percent for Muslim women and 42 percent for Hindu women.

Previous work, however, also suggests that the mate selection process is far more complex and cannot be conveniently placed in the dichotomous categories of either self-arranged (or “love”) marriages and parent-arranged marriages (Munck, 1998, Malhotra, 1991). Rather a more nuanced understanding of marriage processes that treats autonomy in partner choice as a continuum with parent-arranged and self-arranged marriages occupying the extreme ends of the spectrum needs to be adopted. This broader perspective on mate selection patterns suggests a trend of increasing autonomy in spouse

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whether in their free time the respondent and her husband (often, sometimes or not very often) spend together, how often the husband tells his wife of his thoughts and feelings, how often does the respondent tells her husband her thoughts and feelings, how affectionate she is towards him and how much concern he shows for her concerns and problems.

choice across birth cohorts in India though not a trend of increasing self-arranged marriages (ibid). There has been a decline in the share of parent arranged marriages with no consent of the daughter across cohorts from 1956-60 to 1976-80 and a concomitant increase in the share of parent arranged marriages with consent of the daughter (roughly 5 percentage points). The share of love marriages across birth cohorts has remained roughly stable at 4-5 percent. Results from multinomial regression analysis confirm that women of recent cohorts are more likely to report a parent arranged marriages with their consent. Further, education is associated with greater autonomy in partner choice decision but it is most strongly associated with parent arranged marriages with consent.

Another survey of married and single adults (N=2007) in Mumbai confirms that a sizeable proportion in recent birth cohorts have a say in the choice of their partner (Mathur, 2007). Around 71 percent of married adults had marriages in which the spouse was selected by the parent or the family, 19 percent had marriages in which they selected the spouse but with parental involvement and 10 percent had selected their spouses with no parental involvement. The corresponding percentages for single adult respondents with respect to their expectation regarding their role in the spouse selection process are 60 percent (parent arranged marriages with no input from the respondent), 26 percent (spouse selected by the respondent but with parental involvement) and 13 percent (self-arranged marriages with no parental involvement).

The increased role of individuals in the mate selection process sets the context in which we examine the association between type of marriage and women's empowerment within marriage.

*The nature of power dynamics within a household*

Much of the literature on a decision-making dynamics within the household usually focuses on the gendered nature of women's disempowerment (Remez, 2003; Dharmalingam and Morgan, 1996; Mahler, 1996; Morgan and Niraula, 1995). Usually, the husband or other senior males (mostly the father in-law) is identified as the key decision making authority who limits a woman's say in household decisions. Nevertheless, there is recognition that in developing countries where extended families are common, mothers-in-law (or elder sister in law) could as well be the locus of decision making power (Sofilios-Rothschild, 1982; Caldwell, 1981). This suggests that there is both a gender and a generational dimension to women's say in intra-household decisions (Sen, Rastogi and Vanneman, 2006). Examining the full dynamics of intra-household decisions in the Indian context suggests that some correlates associated with women's empowerment (such as age, senior position in the extended family and landlessness), also increases the decision making power of the husband. On the other hand, endogamy and labor force participation increases the women's decision making power both vis-à-vis her husband and her parents-in-law.

A follow up to the question on the differences in women's decision making power by marriage type is, therefore, to examine if there are differences in the gender and generational dimensions of intra-household power dynamics as well. Data from Taiwan provides some support for the speculation that there is an inter-generational shift in power balance as love marriages replace arranged marriages (Wolf, 1975). In an era of arranged marriages, the early years of marriage was stressful for the young bride as she was a stranger in her husband's household. She had to cope with household drudgery so



that her mother-in-law could enjoy increased leisure time. This resulted in higher suicide rates among younger brides as compared to older women. But with a shift towards greater self-choice in marriage and greater participation of women in the labor force, the burden of household work and child care shifted to older women. As a result, suicides became more common among older women than young brides.

### **Research questions and data**

We use data from the Indian Human Development Survey (IHDS, 2005) to evaluate the above hypotheses. IHDS is a survey of 41,554 households across 33 states in India (the exception are the small island states of Andaman and Nicobar & Lakshadweep). Of a total of 602 districts in India, 383 were included in the sample. The number of villages in the sample is 1,504 and the number of urban blocks is 970. The sampling procedure adopted in the survey aimed to ensure a nationally representative sample (*reference: a technical appendix*). The districts were selected using stratified random sampling to represent a range of socio-economic conditions. Villages and urban centers and households were selected using appropriate population proportional sampling techniques.

The survey asks ever-married women in the age group of 15-49 years (N=32,553)<sup>3</sup> a wide range of questions about education, health and most importantly for the purposes of this paper, questions on mate selection process and detailed set of gendered and generational alternatives to its decision module. This is the only nationally representative

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<sup>3</sup> The sample size in this paper is around 30,538. The sample size is smaller than the original survey sample of 32,553 ever-married women because we have restricted the study sample to currently married women in their first marriages. The first restriction excludes 1369 women (women who are currently married) and the second restriction (women in first marriages) further excludes 646 women.

data to contain information on marriage and mate selection process<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, it offers a unique opportunity to examine changes in marriage patterns across different cohorts and its implications for gender/ generational relations.

The first research question in this paper is:

- *To what extent is marriage type associated with a woman's intra-household decision making power?*

The dependent variable here is a “most say index”- eligible women respondents in the age group 15-49 years were asked in the survey:

Please tell me who in your family decides the following things: whether to buy an expensive item such as TV or fridge, how many children you have, what to do if a child falls sick and whom your children should marry.

The respondent was able to offer a “yes” or “no” response for each of the following household members: the respondent herself, husband, senior male, senior female and other. When the respondent identified multiple decision makers, she was asked who the primary decision maker was. In this paper, we focus on a decision making index that counts the number of items in which the primary decision maker is the respondent. The index ranges from 0 to 4, with 0 indicating no autonomy and 4 indicating full autonomy in all the four decisions<sup>5</sup>. A majority (62 percent) of the women in ages 15-49 years and in their first marriages scored 0 on the most say index. Around 23

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<sup>4</sup> Previous two surveys (Mathur, 2007 and Status of Women and Fertility) on parental involvement and spouse choice in India have detailed questions on mate selection patterns. But both these are not nationally representative surveys. SWAF was carried out in two villages each in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu and 400 women were interviewed from each state while Mathur's investigation is based in Mumbai.

<sup>5</sup> When women do not have children, the final two items were not asked. Consequently, when using all four items, our sample is restricted to women with children. Therefore, the analysis presented here omits women without children.

percent scored 1 on the index, 11 percent had a score of 2 and 3 percent had a score of 3 on the index. Only 5 percent of women reported full autonomy in all the above four decisions<sup>6</sup>.

The main variable of interest in this research question is marriage type. To examine the complexity in marriage choices, we created four marriage type categories:

1. Parent-arranged marriages with no consent of the respondent,
2. Parent-arranged marriages with consent from the respondent,
3. Jointly-determined marriages and
4. Self-arranged marriages.

Ever-married women in the age group of 15-49 years were asked in the survey “Who chose your husband?” The responses were divided into 3 categories: arranged by the respondent herself; arranged by the respondent and parents together and parents arranged marriages. Women who had parent-arranged marriages were further probed if they had a say in choosing their husband to which they either responded “yes” or “no”. These responses allowed us to further sub-divide parent arranged marriages into parent-arranged marriages with consent and parent-arranged marriages with no consent. Overall, for currently married women in their first marriages and in ages 15 -49, about 5 percent of the marriages are self-arranged, 35 percent are jointly arranged, 23 percent are parent arranged marriages with consent of the woman respondent and 38 percent of marriages are parent arranged without the consent of the respondent.

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<sup>6</sup> The most say index excludes responses to the question on who in the family makes decision on what to cook on a daily basis. We did not include this variable in the index because of its lower correlation with the other decision making variables. Around 95 percent of the women have some say and 74 percent of the respondents have the most say in what is to be cooked.

Not surprisingly, a careful analysis of trends in marriage types across birth cohorts (1956-60 to 1976-80) reveals a decline in the proportion of parent-arranged marriages *without* the consent of daughters from 38.39 percent to 33.23 percent. The greatest increase is in the marriage type category of parent arranged marriages *with* the consent of daughters from 19.39 percent to 25 percent; an increase in 5 percentage points. In contrast, the share of self-arranged marriages remained fairly constant across birth cohorts; an increase from 4.5 percent in the oldest cohort to 6.3 percent in the youngest cohort or less than 2 percentage points. Surprisingly, jointly arranged marriages *decreased* in prevalence over this time period from 37.7 percent to 35.5 percent (Banerji, Martin and Desai, 2008).

To model the relationship between the “most say index” and marriage type we use ordinal logistic regression since the dependent variable is an ordinal index denoting increasing autonomy of the respondent as her score increases from 0 to 4. The first model (Model 1) is the reduced model. It has the key variable of interest- marriage type with self-arranged marriage as the dependent variable.

In Model 2, we have carried out the same regression with additional background controls- age, years of education and place of residence (rural or urban). Previous work (Fox, 1975) suggests reduction in the size but still significant differentials in marital behaviour by categories of marriage after controlling for these background variables in the regression model. Model 2 also includes caste/religious affiliations of the respondent given its important role in the Indian set up.

Model 3 is the full model. It adds additional controls that are not strictly exogenous to the dependent variable, viz., age at marriage and family type (nuclear or joint<sup>7</sup>)- to Model 2.

<Table 1 about here>

The second research question in this paper is:

- *Given that extended families are common in the Indian context, to what extent are there differences in the gender and generational dimension of power structure by marriage types?*

To answer this question, we construct three additional decision making indices - for the husband, senior male, senior female. The scales are counts on the four decisions- whether to buy an expensive item such as TV or fridge, how many children you have, what to do if a child falls sick and whom your children should marry- on which the respondent identified that person as having most say.

Table 2 gives the distribution of “most say” for each of the four decisions. The distribution clearly reveals a substantial gendered and generational pattern of authority. In all the four decisions, husbands usually have the most say. For decisions regarding treatment of the sick child and number of children to have, majority of women respondents have some say, though participation in these decisions are skewed in favor of the husband. Senior members of the household usually do not have much voice in these decisions. However, for purchase of an expensive item and choice of a child’s marriage

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<sup>7</sup> Family structure is measured as a dummy variable. Household in which there is only one adult male and only one *currently* married eligible woman respondent who identified herself as either the head of the household or as wife to the head of the household were recorded as nuclear households. All remaining households were categorized as joint households. Around 66 percent of the households are nuclear.

partner, senior members (both male and female) along with husbands have an important say. The role of women in these decisions is at best marginal.

<Table 2 about here>

In the multivariate analysis that we use we have a set of four regression equations with the respondent most say index, husband most say index, senior female most say index and senior male most say index as the dependent variables. The independent variable of interest is marriage type. Additionally, we control for background characteristics as age, years of education, place of residence (rural or urban), caste/religious background and family type (nuclear or joint). Previous research has found these variables to be significantly associated with women's empowerment (Sen, Rastogi and Vanneman, 2006).

## **Results**

### *Association between marriage type and women's empowerment*

We begin with descriptive statistics of the distribution of "most say index" for women across different background characteristics. Table 3 shows the weighted distribution of responses first for the overall sample and then broken down by marriage type and selected background characteristics. Overall, the results indicate that most women do not have much say in household decisions. Around 62 percent of the women scored 0 in the "most say index"; the next common response (23 percent) was 1, around 10 percent and 2 percent of the respondents scored 2 and 3 on the index respectively. Only 3 percent of the eligible women respondents enjoyed full autonomy in household decisions.

<Table 3 about here>

As might be expected, the proportion of women who have the least say in household decisions is lowest for the category self-arranged marriages (53 percent scored 0 on the “most say index”). The next category after self-arranged marriages is the category of parent arranged with consent (62 percent) and not surprisingly, the highest proportion is for the category parent arranged marriages without consent (66 percent). Around 5 percent of the women who had self-arranged marriages also reported to enjoy full autonomy in household decisions. The corresponding percent for women in jointly arranged and parent arranged marriage with consent is 3 percent. The proportion of women who have full autonomy in household decisions is lowest for women in parent arranged marriages without consent. Rather surprisingly (and this pattern holds for other background characteristics as well), the greatest difference across marriage categories is in the proportion of women who reported having *no or some say* and not *complete say* in household decisions.

Comparisons across age cohorts indicate that women in younger ages are more likely to score at the lower end of the “most say index” than women in older ages. This is consistent with previous evidence highlighting generational hierarchies in the Indian subcontinent that manifests itself in greater powers enjoyed by the mothers-in law than daughters-in-law (Bloom, Wypij and dasGupta, 2001; Jejeebhoy and Sathar, 2001; Balk, 1994). Differences in responses across education groups are in the expected direction. Women in higher educated groups are more likely to report greater say in household decisions than women from less educated groups. It is important to note that compared to lower education levels, higher educated women are more likely to be associated with some rather than full autonomy in household decisions. Rural women are less

autonomous than urban women. Again, women in urban areas are associated not so much with full autonomy rather with some say in household decisions. For example, 64 percent of the rural women have no say in household decisions. The corresponding percent for urban women is 57 percent, a difference of 7 percentage points. But the difference between urban and rural women is less than a percentage point for the highest score of 4 in the most say index. In terms of caste differences too, the greatest group difference is in terms of the proportion of women reporting no and at least some say instead of full say in the decision making index.

Table 3 also shows distribution of “most say index” by family type and age at marriage. Here again the differences are in the hypothesized direction though again the greatest group differences is in the proportion reporting no or some say in the “most say index”.

We further examine these descriptive findings using the ordinal logistic regression model, the results of which are given in Table 4. In all the three regression models, the association between “most say index” and the independent variables are in the hypothesized direction and barring a few variables, most significantly affect a woman’s empowerment.

<Table 4 about here>

*Differences in women’s decision making power by marriage types*

Model 1 which has only marriage types as independent variable indicates that women in self-arranged marriages are more likely to make more decisions than women in parent arranged marriages without consent. Surprisingly, the size of the coefficients



associated with marriage type change only marginally with the addition of controls in the regression models- Model 2 and Model 3.

Model 2 indicates- age, years of education and residence in urban areas- are all positively associated with greater gender autonomy. In conformity with previous literature, the results indicate that as compared to the reference group (Brahmins), women from other caste/ religious group enjoy greater decision making power. Estimates of coefficients in Model 3 though interesting are potentially problematic for causal interpretation. Given these caveats, the results of Model 3 do not change the main arguments presented above.

The results indicate differences in a woman's decision making power by marriage type. Overall, a higher percent of women in self-arranged enjoy greater decision making power than women in parent arranged marriages without consent or even than women in jointly arranged marriages. Women in jointly arranged marriage are only slightly better off than women in marriages that were parent arranged without their consent. But women in marriages that were parent-arranged with consent are in between – they have only slightly less decision-making power than women in self-arranged marriages, but significantly more than women in parent-arranged marriage without their consent or even more than women in jointly arranged marriages.

To whom do women in parent arranged marriages without consent lose decision-making power? The main beneficiary may not be the husband but other senior members of the household such as the husbands' parents. Table 5 shows results from four seemingly unrelated regressions for which the four decision-making alternatives (respondent, husband, senior male, and senior female) are considered jointly.

The first column, for the respondent's own decision-making power shows the results of a model very similar to the results of model 2 in Table 4. Women in self-arranged marriages (the omitted category) have the highest decision-making power; women in parent-arranged marriages with consent are next, followed by women in jointly arranged marriages. Women in parent-arranged marriages without consent have the least decision-making power.

The next column shows the results for the husband's decision making power. In general, marriage types that have lower women's empowerment have higher husband's empowerment. Men make slightly more decisions in jointly-arrange marriages than in parent-arranged marriages without the wife's consent, but the differences are small. However, husbands in parent-arranged marriages with the wife's consent have little more decision-making power than husbands in self-arranged marriages. Both marriage types are more husband-wife egalitarian than the other types.

The third column of Table 5 shows how marriage type is related to the decision-making power of a senior male in the household, most often the husband's father. Most striking here is that the father-in-law has even less power in jointly arranged marriages than in self-arranged marriages. Thus, while the wife has low power in the jointly arranged marriage, so does her father-in-law; it is the husband who does best in this type of marriage. Fathers-in-law are most powerful, not surprisingly, in marriages arranged by parents without the woman's consent. But they retain almost as much power in marriages arranged by parents with the woman's consent. It is self-arranged or jointly-arranged marriages that diminish the father-in-law's power.

The final column of Table 5 shows how marriage type is related to the decision making power of a senior female in the household, most often the husband's mother. Her pattern is quite similar to the senior male's pattern. Both types of parent-arranged marriages benefit senior women, and in fact, she has slightly more power in parent arranged marriages in which the bride has had some consent than when she doesn't. The mother-in-law's power is lowest in self-arranged marriages and about as low in jointly arranged marriages.

Thus, the four marriage types are associated with different configurations of decision-making power in the household (See Figure 1). Self-arranged marriages are clearly the most empowering for the woman. Women with self-arranged marriages have more decision-making power than women in any other marriage type; and their husbands and in-laws have less decision-making power (a partial exception is fathers in law who have even less power in jointly arranged marriages than in self-arranged marriages).

Women in "jointly" arranged marriages have low decision-making power; their husbands have more power than in any other marriage type but their in-laws have relatively little. Despite the seeming egalitarianism of "joint" arrangements, it is a generational not a gender empowerment. The husband gains at the expense of senior family members, but the wife is actually less empowered than when parents arrange the marriage but give the bride some consent authority.

Marriages which the parents arranged are best for the in-laws; this should not be surprising. But more interesting is that granting consent power to the bride does not diminish the in-laws' own power very much, not at all in the case of the mother-in-law. Granting consent privileges to the bride does enhance her eventual decision-making

power over the no-consent arrangement but not so much at the expense of her in-laws as at the expense of her husband. Her husband has no more power in parent-arranged marriages where the bride has consent power than in self-arranged marriages.

### **Discussion**

The results confirm the expected relationships between a woman's choice in marriage and her subsequent decision-making power in the household. Self-arranged marriages, so-called "love" marriages, do result in the woman assuming more decision-making power in the household. But a substantial proportion of parent-arranged marriages provide for the bride's consent to the partner and women in these marriages end up only slightly less powerful than women in "love" marriages.

More surprisingly, jointly arranged marriages are not very empowering for women. It is their husbands who derive the most decision-making power in these marriages, partly at the expense of their wives but also at the expense of older men in the extended family.

Thus, both marriage types and decision-making power in the household must be viewed in a more multi-dimensional framework. How marriages are arranged in India is related to the subsequent decision-making power of not just the bride and groom but of an older generation of family members as well. Nor is there a simple single dimension of marriage types extending from self-arranged "love" marriages to parental arranged marriages in which the children have not even the power of consent or rejection. The intermediate types – jointly arranged marriages and parent-arranged marriages with a bride's consent have complex associations with who has eventual decision-making power in the household.

Table 1: Outline of Ordinal Regression Models with “Most Say Index” as the Dependent Variable

	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>
<b>Independent Variables</b>			
	1. Marriage type	1. Marriage type	1. Marriage type
		2. Years of age	2. Years of age
		3. Years of education	3. Years of education
		4. Current residence	4. Current residence
		5. Caste/religious affiliation	5. Caste/religious affiliation
			6. Age at marriage
			7. Family structure

Table 2: Percent of Members Having “Some Say” or “Most Say” on Four Household Decisions

Decisions	Percent Participating			
	Respondent	Husband	Senior Female	Senior Male
Treatment of Sick Child				
<i>Some Say</i>	85	84	18	16
<i>Most Say</i>	30	60	4	6
Number of Children				
<i>Some Say</i>	84	92	12	8
<i>Most Say</i>	19	76	3	2
Purchase an expensive item				
<i>Some Say</i>	75	90	20	22
<i>Most Say</i>	11	74	3	12
Choose Child's Marriage Partner				
<i>Some Say</i>	79	91	24	25
<i>Most Say</i>	10	73	3	14

Table 3: Distribution of “most say index” for women (15-49) in their first marriage, by selected characteristics

		Most Say Index				
	N	0	1	2	3	4
<i>Full sample</i>	28594	61.65	23.15	9.85	2.38	2.97
<i>Type of marriage</i>						
Self-arranged	1168	53.43	23.39	14.58	3.18	5.49
Jointly arranged	10708	62.54	20.09	11.41	2.64	3.32
Parent arranged with consent from the respondent	6501	54.31	28.88	10.97	2.52	3.31
Parent arranged with no consent from the respondent	10040	66.12	22.63	7.19	1.97	2.09
<i>Age cohort</i>						
15-19 years	664	69.53	22.95	5.59	1.55	0.38
20-24 years	3909	67.75	22.11	7.19	1.48	1.47
25-29 years	5528	62.14	23.90	9.99	2.03	1.93
30-34 years	5739	61.06	23.56	9.86	2.24	3.28
35-39 years	5719	60.10	23.35	9.43	2.89	4.23
40-44 years	4159	57.82	23.13	12.13	3.20	3.72
45-49 years	2876	59.98	22.04	11.94	2.54	3.50

Table 3 (contd.): Distribution of “most say index” for women (15-49) in their first marriage, by selected characteristics

		Most Say Index				
	N	0	1	2	3	4
<i>Level of education</i>						
Illiterate	12330	64.55	21.73	8.04	2.44	3.24
Primary	4660	59.69	23.72	11.67	1.82	3.10
Upper primary	4028	59.89	25.66	9.91	2.19	2.35
Secondary	4177	58.37	24.92	11.34	2.93	2.44
Senior secondary	1505	57.21	23.89	14.75	1.59	2.56
College	1516	53.01	25.56	14.01	3.75	3.67
<i>Residence</i>						
Rural	18332	63.66	22.53	8.79	2.27	2.74
Urban	10262	56.74	24.67	12.45	2.62	3.52
<i>Caste/religious affiliation</i>						
Brahmin	1636	64.70	21.17	9.86	2.41	1.86
Other castes	5032	60.39	26.25	9.81	1.91	1.64
OBC	9910	62.54	22.49	9.96	2.18	2.84
SC	5889	58.85	24.24	10.15	2.48	4.27
ST	1890	67.43	19.32	9.33	2.39	1.54
Muslims	3316	63.13	20.63	8.83	3.29	4.12
Sikhs/Jain	475	48.43	39.31	9.64	1.03	1.60
Christians	446	56.46	22.08	13.42	4.47	3.57



Table 3 (contd.): Distribution of “most say index” for women (15-49) in their first marriage, by selected characteristics

<i>Family structure</i>						
Nuclear	19259	59.64	23.85	10.72	2.45	3.34
Joint	9335	65.76	21.75	8.07	2.22	2.21
<i>Age at marriage</i>						
Below 15 years	4576	63.59	24.08	7.31	2.15	2.87
15-19 years	17101	62.01	23.10	9.80	2.26	2.83
20-24 years	6005	59.41	22.72	11.77	2.80	3.30
25 years and above	912	56.12	21.17	14.74	3.53	4.45

Table 4: Outline of Ordinal Regression Models with “Most Say Index” as the Dependent Variable

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Marriage type</i> (Ref. category: Self arranged marriages)			
Jointly arranged	-0.39* (0.06)	-0.43* (0.06)	-0.43* (0.06)
Parent arranged with consent from the respondent	-0.14 (0.06)	-0.17* (0.06)	-0.17* (0.06)
Parent arranged with no consent from the respondent	-0.61* (0.06)	-0.58* (0.06)	-0.57* (0.06)
<i>Years of age</i>		0.02* (0.001)	0.02* (0.002)
<i>Years of education</i>		0.02* (0.002)	0.02* (0.03)
<i>Current residence</i> (Ref. category: Rural )			
Urban		0.16* (0.03)	0.14* (0.03)
<i>Caste/religious affiliation</i> (Ref. category: Brahmins)			
Other castes		0.12 (0.06)	0.12 (0.06)
OBC		0.23* (0.06)	0.23* (0.06)
SC		0.45* (0.06)	0.44* (0.06)
ST		0.08 (0.07)	0.07 (0.07)
Muslims		0.24* (0.06)	0.23* (0.07)
Sikhs/Jain		0.41* (0.12)	0.41* (0.12)
Christians		0.21* (0.11)	0.19* (0.11)
<i>Age at marriage</i>			0.005 (0.004)
<i>Family structure</i> (Ref. category: Nuclear families)			
Joint families			-0.17* (0.03)
N= 28417 p< 0.01			

Table 5: Decision making power of four types of household members by marriage type.

	Woman	Husband	Senior Male	Senior Female
<i>Marriage type</i> (Ref. category: Self arranged marriages)				
Jointly arranged	-.299 **	+.440 **	-.283 **	+.234 ns
Parent arranged with consent from the respondent	-.132 *	+.070 ns	+.251 *	+.400 **
Parent arranged with no consent from the respondent	-.474 **	+.307 **	+ .431 **	+.356 **
<i>Years of age</i>				
<i>Years of education</i>				
<i>Current residence</i> (Ref. category: Rural )				
Urban				
<i>Caste/religious affiliation</i> (Ref. category: Brahmins)				
Other castes				
OBC				
SC				
ST				
Muslims				
Sikhs/Jain				
Christians				
<i>Age at marriage</i>				
<i>Family structure</i> (Ref. category: Nuclear families)				
Joint families				

Figure 1. Decision-making power by marriage type and household member.

