Whose Will Dominates: Individual, Family and Community Influences on Participation in Spouse Selection

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Abstract

This article examines child autonomy, parental power and social control as evidenced by the influences of individual, parental and community beliefs about the level of participation youth should have in selecting their spouse on later spouse choice behavior. The author develops a theoretical framework to explain how the individual, family and local community determine whose desires for spouse choice participation are fulfilled. This framework pays particular attention to the role of education as an allocator of social status and autonomy. Using data from the Chitwan Valley Family Study (N= 734), analyses show that the child's and father's preferences influence spouse choice participation and marriage rate. For children with higher levels of education or more education than their parents, their attitude toward spouse choice is a significantly stronger predictor of later behavior than for those children with lower levels of education or less education than their parents—suggesting education acts as an allocator of social status.

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INTRODUCTION

According to official accounts, on June 1, 2001, Nepal's Crown Prince Dipendra shot and killed ten members of the royal family, including his father and mother, King Birendra and Queen Aishwarya (Bedi 2001; Lak 2001). The ramifications of this event were felt nationwide, and contributed to Nepal's currently unstable political state. The main reason provided for this tragedy was that Dipendra and his parents disagreed over his choice of spouse (Ahearn 2004; Bedi and Laville 2001). It appears his parents wanted to arrange his marriage to a person they felt more suitable, while he had already chosen the woman he wanted to marry. Although this is an extreme example (on many levels), the conflict of wills between parents and children on arranged marriage in Nepal has recently become more common (Ahearn 2004; Ghimire et al. 2006). It is indicative of the intergenerational and societal tension rising from the changing attitudes and values, and ambiguous (and shifting) social status that often accompanies social change. Indeed, the fact that arguing over an arranged versus choice marriage is accepted as reasonable motivation for homicide is noteworthy. More generally, the question of whose desires, will and requests are acknowledged and fulfilled is indicative of the hierarchy, social structure and values of a society (Gould 2003; Thornton 2005; Thornton, Axinn and Xie 2007).

The relationship between the individual and society is a foundational issue within the social sciences. Social scholars like Durkheim, Marx, Weber, Comte and many others were interested in how individuals and different levels of others, like the family, church and community, express and enforce their will. A primary convergence point of the individual, family and community wills and desires is family formation behavior. Family formation has long lasting influences on later social, health and psychological outcomes for the individuals and their kin (Furstenberg, Brooks-Gunn and Morgan 1987;

Hoffmann and Su 1998; Mirowsky 1989; Thornton, Axinn and Xie 2007; Umberson 1989; Upchurch 1990). Marriage is particularly important in an impoverished country as it shapes many trajectories for schooling, childbearing, work, and many other later life course events. Who controls the initiation of a family, either through marriage, partnering or child bearing, is an indication of who has power, not only in that particular relationship, but society-wide (Thornton 2005; Thornton, Axinn and Xie 2007).

Of particular note here is how a marriage is created, or rather, who selects the spouse. Like endogamy is an indicator of social openness, the extent to which the individual has a choice in who they marry can be viewed as a sign of the society's level of autonomy afforded to the individual (Kalmijn 1998; Mare 1991; Rosenfeld 2008; Smits 1998; Gould 2003). Thus, an important focus of sociological and demographic research is examining the social causes and consequences of arranged marriage, where youth have little or no say in their spouse choice, as well as the shift from a society based on arranged marriage to a society based on marriage decided by the choice of both partners, or what Nepalis call a "love marriage" (Ahearn 2004; Caldwell 1983; Dyson and Moore 1983; Ghimire et al. 2006 ; Goode 1970; Malhotra 1991; Thornton, Chang and Lin 1994). There is substantial evidence that in the recent past arranged marriage was prevalent in multiple places around the world, but that its prevalence is also declining rapidly (Caldwell 1982; Caldwell 1983; Dyson and Moore 1983; Ghimire et al. 2006; Malhotra 1991; Thornton, Chang and Lin 1994). This research also details important social transformations related to the decline in arranged marriage, including changes in education, work, media and values (Ahearn 2004; Caldwell 1983; Ghimire et al. 2006; Goode 1970; Smith 1973; Thornton, Chang and Lin 1994).

Despite this research on marital arrangement, however, gaps in our understanding of this important process remain. For example, although youth selecting their own spouse may be seen as an indication of autonomy, in reality, a better measure of autonomy in spouse choice is the relationship

between their attitude about spouse choice and their later spouse choice behavior (Mirowsky and Ross 2007). That is, a better indication of a youth's autonomy is if they have the amount of participation in the spouse choice process they believe should be afforded them. Likewise, if others' beliefs, values and wills, such as those of the parents or community, more accurately indicate future behavior, greater control has been afforded to them. Primarily this lack of attention is due to the extraordinary data requirements of ideational measures from the unmarried individuals, their parents and others followed by later marital information on their spouse selection process.

This paper provides the first examination of the ideational influences on arranged marriage. By examining the relationship between a person's own beliefs concerning arranged marriage and their later degree of choice in their spouse selection process we gain better understanding of their own autonomy (Barber and Axinn 2005 ; Fishbein and Ajzen 1975). Also, by incorporating intergenerational and neighborhood level beliefs I examine the extent to which certain wills dominate others to influence the young adult's family formation behavior (Barber 2001; Bengtson 1975; Coleman 1990; Heckman 1998). There has been a greater emphasis in recent years on the importance of intergenerational and neighborhoods effects, but only rarely focusing on ideational influences (Barber 2000; Furstenberg, Brooks-Gunn and Morgan 1987; McLanahan 1988; McLanahan and Sandefur 1994; Thornton, Axinn and Xie 2007; Thornton 1991; Wu 1996).

This advance is feasible because of the unique data and study location used in this article. The data come from a large and multifaceted data collection effort aimed at gathering information at the individual, family and neighborhood levels between 1996 and 2007, and thus also relies on relatively new statistical models to properly manage all of this information. Nepal is particularly well suited to this study as the society is structured around the family and the local community. In addition, Nepal is particularly interesting as it is currently undergoing dramatic social change, including in rates of

arranged marriage where it was, even recently, nearly universal (Axinn and Yabiku 2001; Ghimire et al. 2006). Prior to examining the data I outline the theoretical framework of this paper with particular attention spent on ideational, intergenerational and neighborhood effects. In addition, I also outline the particularly important role of education in changing and maintaining certain values and social hierarchy.

THEORECTICAL FRAMEWORK

Typically scholars view an individual's sense of personal control[1], or one's perception of their ability to exercise influence over their life, as a reflection of the family and community-level opportunities given to, and restrictions placed on, the individual (Mirowsky and Ross 2007). Thus, by examining society-wide sense of control we garner a reflected view of the society's inequality (Bista 1994; Geis and Ross 1998; Mirowsky and Ross 1983; Mirowsky and Ross 1990; Mirowsky and Ross 2003; Mirowsky and Ross 2007; Ross and Mirowsky 1992; Ross and Mirowsky 2002). It is important to note that this sense of self control may be related to both achieved and ascribed statuses (Bista 1994; Mirowsky and Ross 2007). People can vary tremendously in their sense of control or personal autonomy: including by gender, race, education, age, marital status and numerous other characteristics (Mirowsky and Ross 1983; Mirowsky and Ross 1990; Mirowsky and Ross 2003; Mirowsky and Ross 2007; Ross and Mirowsky 1992; Ross and Mirowsky 2002). As well, an individual's sense of personal autonomy has several social, psychological and even biological effects throughout the life course (Mirowsky and Ross 2007). By better understanding the ways in which individuals gain their sense of control, we have a better understanding of the complex mechanisms through which inequality, hierarchy and power operate in society.

To examine the issue of personal autonomy in spouse selection I build on three significant social theories or frameworks. One theory emphasizes the relationship between beliefs and action—

1 As Mirowsky and Ross (2007) explain, the concept of sense of control is similar to several other concepts in the social sciences, including: locus of control, self-efficacy, personal autonomy, fatalism, helplessness and powerlessness (Bista 1994; Gecas 1989; Rotter 1996; Seeman 1983; Seeman and Seeman 1983).

particularly the micro-level theory of reasoned action and planned behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975). The second theoretical framework emphasizes the role of education in inducing changes in individuals' attitudes, behavior and social status (Caldwell 1982; Pallas 2000; Stevens, Armstrong and Arum 2008; Thornton 1994; Thornton and Fricke 1987). Finally, the third component of this research is that I expect the two previous frameworks to work at multiple levels to influence an individual's behavior. In part, I expect this to operate at multiple levels because social-psychological research consistently reports that an individual's sense of control, power or autonomy is significantly influenced by the social environment (Bird and Ross 1993; Krause 1987; Ross and Mirowsky 1992).

Attitudes and Behavior

Scholars have long theorized about how communities, families and individuals interact to influence individuals' actions. A major question is the extent to which society's norms, attitudes, beliefs, and values affect individual behavior. Some scholars have theorized that people closer to the individual, like family and friends, may have unique effects. Others suggest that the local community, such as neighbors, may have an important independent effect on an individual's behavior. Even the extent to which individuals' own ideas affect behavior, conditional on the local community's ideational context, is generally unknown. However, despite their importance and long history in sociology, questions concerning the interaction of the effects of community, family and individual attitudes on behavior are unknown because inadequate data and incapable statistical methods have halted complete examination of these questions. Nevertheless, a large body of literature examines pieces of this larger issue and therefore provides important insights into what we can expect by combining all three levels of ideational influences.

Scholarly work relating people's beliefs to their family formation behavior covers fertility, contraceptive use, cohabitation, marriage, and divorce (Barber 2000; Thornton, Axinn and Xie 2007).

One of the most widely used frameworks for linking attitudes and behavior at the micro level is Fishbein and Ajzen's theory of reasoned action and planned behavior. Attitudes, defined as "disposition[s] to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution, or event" (Ajzen 1988 p. 4), along with social pressures, predict intentions, which predict behavior. Thus, positive attitudes toward a particular behavior make that behavior more likely (Barber and Axinn 2005; Fishbein and Ajzen 1975). For example, individuals with more positive attitudes toward marriage are likely to enter marriage earlier, and those with more positive attitudes toward cohabitation are more likely to enter cohabitation prior to marriage (Thornton, Axinn and Xie 2007). Following this theoretical model, an individual with greater desire for choice of their own spouse would try to gain greater control of the spouse selection process. It is important to note that although they may not get complete control, they may at least get some ability to approve or disapprove the match (Ahearn 2004; Ghimire et al. 2006). Likewise, we would expect an individual who wants to have their marriage arranged to encourage parents or others to organize the spouse match.

Researchers concerned about family formation behavior also rely on intergenerational models (Barber 2000; Furstenberg, Brooks-Gunn and Morgan 1987; McLanahan 1988; McLanahan and Sandefur 1994; Thornton, Axinn and Xie 2007; Thornton 1991; Wu 1996). In particular, the idea of parental attitudes affecting children's behavior has been applied to the study of parents' influence on their children's marriage behavior (Barber 2000; Thornton, Axinn and Xie 2007). This research shows that parents' desires operate in two related mechanisms: socialization and social control. Parents socialize their children by influencing their children's beliefs so that they are in line with their own beliefs and desires about family formation. This comes not only from direct teaching, but also from less direct influences such as the shared environment, social modeling and the experiences of the parents and children (Barber 2001; Bengtson 1975). This would suggest that parents' desire to arrange their

children's marriage would influence their child's own attitude on participation in spouse selection. However, as Barber (2001) shows, through social control mechanisms parents' desires may strongly predict the child's family formation behavior despite the child's own attitudes. Social control uses both punishments and rewards, and is often combined with socialization (Coleman 1990; Heckman 1998). Therefore we might expect that parents' attitudes to not only influence the child's attitude-behavior link with arranged marriage, but that it might also have an independent effect.

The intergenerational literature on marriage cited above is primarily from western societies, where both parents may have effects that depend on a multitude of parent-child relationship characteristics such as if the child lives with the parent or if the parent-child relationship is strong (Barber 2000; Furstenberg, Brooks-Gunn and Morgan 1987; McLanahan 1988; McLanahan and Sandefur 1994; Thornton, Axinn and Xie 2007; Thornton 1991; Wu 1996). In contrast to this work, Nepal provides an alternative context where parental influences and decision-making abilities are not symmetrical. That is, Nepal is a strongly patriarchal society where the father makes the majority of the decisions concerning major family-life events such as marriage (Ghimire et al 2006). Thus we would expect the father's attitude to be more predictive of the level of participation in spouse choice than the mother's, and possibly even more than the child's.

In addition to parents, other people's desires and expectations have also been shown to influence individual behavior (Bernardi 2003; Harris 1995; Montgomery and Casterline 1996; Troyer 1997; Yabiku 2006). In past sociological theorizing, the neighborhood was seen as a primary unit, where common norms and shared culture were expected to influence behavior (Cooley 1909; McKenzie 1921). In particular, neighborhoods acted as both agents of socialization (Hogan and Kitagawa 1985; Vartanian 1999; Wilson 1987; Yabiku 2006) and as social modelers (Crane 1991; South and Baumer 2000; Yabiku 2006). This idea of the neighborhood as a primary unit is particularly powerful in Nepal where

neighborhoods are often areas of tightly packed homes surrounded by fields, thus strongly encouraging the constant face-to-face interaction required by these theories (Cooley 1909; McKenzie 1921). In fact, Yabiku (2006) shows that when neighbors' ideal age of marriage is older than the single person's age, that person has a much higher rate of marriage, and when neighbors believe that there is a strong benefit to remaining single, single individuals marry at significantly lower rates. This suggests that neighbors' shared attitudes may influence the spouse selection behavior of individuals, both by socializing the individual (and parents), as well as independently as a normative control.

In sum, I expect an individual's own attitudes toward arranging their own marriage to have a significant influence on their participation in their later spouse selection. Similarly, I expect that parents may influence the attitude-behavior link of the child through socialization, and might also have a unique effect on the spouse choice participation of the child through social control. In particular, I expect the father's attitude to have a stronger effect than the mother's attitude due to the patriarchal family context of Nepal. Local community, or in this case, neighborhoods, are also expected to influence the behavior link of the child through socialization, and possibly may still have an independent influence on the behavioral through mechanisms of social control.

Education and control

Education plays an important role in the distribution of authority in people's lives. I argue that one mechanism of education's influence on an individual's participation in spouse choice is through allocation of social status. Research on allocation concentrates on the use of education as an easy marker of knowledge, skills and personal traits for others in the society (Becker 1993; Pallas 2000; Schieman and Plickert 2008; Stevens, Armstrong and Arum 2008). Thus, regardless of the person's real ability, the symbol of educational attainment is sufficient for others to imbue the person with greater authority and trust, which essentially gives the person greater power and personal autonomy. In the Western context,

this imputation occurs at all levels of education, but is primarily noted for college education (Collins 1979; Pallas 2000; Stevens, Armstrong and Arum 2008). In Nepal, where educational attainment is often only a few years of schooling, even low levels of education are valued and may be treated with high levels of trust and status. In particular, education in Nepal has seen a striking expansion over the last several years—from low levels of educational attainment, where only the wealthy and privileged were able to get education, to a large expansion of available schools today (Axinn and Barber 2001; Axinn and Yabiku 2001). This rapid expansion of education often leads to a large education gap between generations (Axinn and Barber 2001; Thornton, Chang and Lin 1994). This lends itself particularly well to the idea of even low levels of education changing the social status of individuals in society and the power dynamics within between parents and children.

There is strong evidence that education confers people greater control over their own, and reduces the influence of others (i.e. the parent or society) in decision making (Caldwell 1982; Kerchkhoff 1976; Mirowsky and Ross 2003; Pallas 2000; Schieman and Plickert 2008; Thornton and Lin 1994). That is, independent of the values, skills and knowledge gained from education, education changes both the child-parent relationship and child-society relationship by modifying the meaning of childhood and the social and economic value of the child (Caldwell 1982; Kerchkhoff 1976; Mirowsky and Ross 2003; Mirowsky and Ross 2007; Pallas 2000; Schieman 2001; Schieman and Plickert 2008). The literature explains that by attending school, parents lose some authority over their children as the direct responsibility of the child's daily activities shifts from the family to the school (Thornton, Chang and Lin 1994). This affords students the ability to participate in normally restricted, or at least closely monitored, activities while not under their parent's control. As well, because their children are attending school, parents cannot rely on their children to supply as much labor as if they were not in school

(Caldwell 1982). In fact, the students may have additional work related to school even when they return home—thus further reducing their economic contribution to the family.

Of particular note here is that the increase in status due to education may have ramifications for social and family hierarchy (Gould 2003). Clearly hierarchy is based on several ascribed characteristics such as gender, age, caste and role in the family, however, hierarchy can also be based on earned statuses such as employment, education and intelligence. In fact, it is rarely just one characteristic that determines hierarchy, thus making hierarchies vague and confusing—which can lead to interpersonal conflict (Gould 2003). Thus, while the father and mother may have authority in the home, if they are less educated, they may be granted less authority by the community to make decisions than their highly educated son. Key to this study is that education confers status, and at some point that status may be sufficient to modify the social hierarchy.

Education's role as an allocator of status implies an interaction with other effects of spouse choice participation. For example, at lower levels of individual education, parents' access to nonfamily work, education or attitudes may strongly influence their children's spouse choice behavior, independent of the child's own desire to participate. However, as an individual's education increases—thus providing more status (and more control) to the child, these influences may decrease and the desire of the child may become more influential in determining the amount of participation in the spouse selection process. Thus, while education is expected to have an additive effect—due to multiple mechanisms beyond the scope of this paper—I am particularly interested in its interaction with other effects. By illustration, during my fieldwork in Nepal, I visited with several parents who reported preferring arranged marriage for their children, but often provided the reasoning that if they did not let their child pick their own spouse, they were afraid the child would leave them. This was a possibly horrifying situation since the child was expected to know how to interact in the future world, a future the parents were certain they

would be unable to survive in alone. Thus, I expect that education not only influences control over spouse selection, but it also changes other factors' effects on the marital arrangement process.

DATA and METHODS

To examine the impact of individual, family, and community beliefs, behaviors and experiences on the amount of participation in the spouse choice process, I rely on several data collection projects within the Chitwan Valley Family Study (CVFS) in Nepal. Using individual interviews, life histories, neighborhood histories and prospective demographic surveillance data, I am able to examine several possible influences simultaneously. In the paragraphs below I detail the setting, methods of data collection and coding, as well as my analytic framework.

Setting

There are several considerations that make Nepal an especially appropriate location for the study of participation in spouse choice. Although not all Nepalis are Hindus, the country was, until recently, ruled by a Hindu king and other Hindu ruling elites. In part due to the extreme exploitation of the ruling elite, there was a Hinduization of the non-Hindu population which has had an enduring influence on many aspects of Nepali life (Adhikari 1998; Ghimire et al. 2006). This is important because several aspects of the Hindu religion secure parents' authority over spouse choice by prohibiting youth from participating in the spouse selection process for spiritual, pragmatic and social reasons (Ahearn 2004; Berreman 1972; Ghimire et al. 2006). Thus, for at least the last several hundred years the standard practice for families in Nepal was to have parents arrange the marriages of their children. Nevertheless, Ghimire and colleagues (Ghimire et al. 2006) show that from the mid 1970's to the mid 1990's arranged marriage has gone from being essentially universal to comprising only 2/3rds of marriages.

The data for this research were collected in Chitwan Valley, which lies in the south central part of Nepal. In 1955, the Nepalese government opened this valley for settlement; prior to this it was

covered with dense tropical forest. Chitwan soon became a social melting pot, receiving migrants from all over the country. The valley has become connected to the rest of the country by all-weather roads, making it a business hub for the country. Furthermore, there has been a massive expansion of schools, health services, markets, bus services, cooperatives, and employment centers in Chitwan (Axinn & Yabiku, 2001). Previous work in Chitwan shows that there has been a sharp increase in school enrollment, visits to health clinics, employment outside of the home, and exposure to different sources of mass media and new ideas in recent birth cohorts (Axinn and Barber 2001; Axinn and Yabiku 2001; Ghimire et al. 2006).

Sample

In order to properly examine both ideational and nonfamily experience influences on behavior it is necessary to have longitudinal data, where the ideational concepts and nonfamily experiences are measured prior to the behavior being studied. I also need these measures for individuals, families and local communities. To accomplish my objectives I use data gathered as part of the 1996 CVFS. These data come from 151 randomly selected neighborhoods where all individuals 15-59 years old in the neighborhoods were interviewed concerning their values, beliefs, experiences and behaviors (Barber et al. 1997). The 97% response rate to the 1996 study generated 5,271 individuals within the sample.

The marital behavior of the 1,011 never married study participants was collected in regular (typically monthly) interviews between 1996 and 2007—providing 126 months of information. In 2006, we administered a supplemental questionnaire to the 841 young adults that had married in the intervening 10 years (we also interviewed those few couples that married during 2007). The primary focus of the instrument was to gather the details of the arrangement of the marriage, as well as some additional marriage related information. Approximately 400 of the young adults no longer lived within the study area, and thus we conducted the interview in their new location. The marital supplement was

completed by 753 respondents for a response rate of 90%. However, for the purposes of a more uniform analytic sample, I exclude all respondents over age 25 in 1996, thus reducing the analytic sample to 734 respondents.

Even though my focus is on prospective marital behavior, I also use information gathered from life histories to account for pre-1996 nonfamily experiences and institutions for the individual, the parents and neighborhood. This information was gathered using the life-history calendar method, which has been shown to provide accurate information for these types of experiences (Axinn, Pearce and Ghimire 1999; Freedman 1988). Also, this study uses information from the neighborhood histories, but particularly for 1996. Similar to the life-history calendar, the neighborhood histories provide information on the distance to several services including markets, schools and religious locations. Finally, the English translations of the Nepali question wordings are noted below.

--Table 1 about here--

Measures

Participation in Spouse Choice

As mentioned earlier, marriage in Nepal has historically been arranged by the parents or extended family. However, the greater control of spouse selection this society has afforded to the youth has been on graduated levels (Ghimire et al. 2006). Therefore, I use a measure of the continuum of participation in spouse choice. The marital supplement questionnaire asked: "People marry in different ways. Sometimes our parents or relatives decide who we should marry, and sometimes we decide ourselves. In your case, who selected your husband/wife? Your parents/relatives, yourself, or both." Those respondents who reported their parents or relatives decided who they could marry I code as 0, and those who chose their own spouse themselves I code as 4. People who responded "both" received the follow-up question, "Although both of you may have decided, one of you may have had a little more

influence than the other. Who had more influence in choosing your husband/wife? You, or your parents and relatives, or both equally?" Respondents who reported parents or relatives having greater influence I code as 1, those who reported having greater control themselves I code as 3 and those who reported having equal control with their parents and relatives I code as 2. Thus, I create a 5 point scale from 0-4 where 0 means no control of the child in the spouse selection process (i.e. an arranged marriage), and 4 suggests the child had complete control of the spouse selection (i.e. an individual-choice marriage).

This study also relies on the prospective marital history gathered between 1996 and 2007 as part of the household registry system. The household registry system relies on household reports of marriage and other family formation behaviors. This registry allows me to create a timing of the first marriage, which I then use to estimate a discrete-time hazard model. By recoding the information above into arranged (code 0 from above) vs. some participation (codes 1-4 from above), I can estimate models of rates of entering an arranged marriage vs. entering a marriage with some individual spouse choice. These are then competing models of entering marriage. For those 88 respondents who we were unable to interview concerning their marriage arrangement type, I tested the model both by leaving them out and by treating them as a third state in the competing risk model (i.e. rates of entering an arranged marriage vs. an individual-choice marriage vs. a marriage that we don't know how it was arranged). The results suggest that the characteristics of this group of missing respondents are unrelated to our variables of interest.

Attitudes

In order to capture the influence of beliefs and norms on spouse choice selection I rely on a question asked of all individuals in the 1996 interview. Specifically this question asks, "Next I would like to ask a little more about your attitudes toward family life. I will read some statements to you. Please listen to them carefully and tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly

disagree with the statements. Parents should always choose a spouse for their child." I code the responses as 0=Strongly Agree, 1=Agree, 2=Disagree, 3=Strongly Disagree. I interpret a low score of this attitude as preferring parental arranged marriage, and a high score as evidence of a strong belief that children should have some control in the spouse selection process. This relies on the assumption that when respondents disagreed that the parents should arrange the marriage, they were implying that the child should have some control, and not that other people, like extended family, the government, etc, should have more control. Based on my own experience in Nepal, this assumption is reasonable. For this reason, I will refer to this attitude as being in favor of giving more autonomy to the child in Tables 2-4. Among our marital supplement study participants, the average score on the 0-3 measure was 1.3, or less than halfway along the continuum.

To obtain a measure of the parents' and neighbors' ideational influences on spouse choice I also use the 1996 interview question described above asked of the parents and neighbors. Approximately 158 of the fathers, and 86 of the mothers did not provide attitudinal information. To account for this loss of information I impute the parents' attitude using standard imputation methods (Little and Rubin 2002)[2]. The average attitude of the parents on the 0-3 scale is 1.2 for fathers and 1.0 for mothers, or just slightly lower than their children. I also use the same attitude question and coding for the neighborhood measure. That is, I average all the neighbor's attitudes to create a "generalized other" attitude. The average for the 151 neighborhoods was also 1.2. The range of scores was small—from 0.62 to 1.69, and thus a standard one unit increase in this variable would equal the entire range of variation. To compensate for this in the model I report the effect as a change in 0.1 units (or equivalently, I multiplied the variable by 10 so the range went from 6.2 to 16.9 with a one unit increase).

All of these attitudes are measured prior to the spouse selection behavior. This fact strengthens the causal interpretation of the effects as long as marriage arrangements were not made prior to the

2 I also tested the models by excluding these cases and found no influence on the effects.

survey question. Nepali marital arrangements, are typically not from birth, and marriages are often completed within a year of the arrangement (Ghimire et al 2006). For this reason, we might expect the few marriages occurring during the first year of the study to be more prone to endogeneity bias, but after the first year the bias is essentially nonexistent. Even after excluding all marriages that occurred in the first year of the study, the results remain as indicated below.

Controls

In any study such as this there are several important factors that are not the focus of the study, but are necessary to correctly understand the context of the study. For this paper I include several important controls, but I do not report the effects in the tables of results. Below I briefly discuss the roles of all of the controls in this research.

The relationship between *age* and arranged marriage is well-documented (Ghimire et al. 2006). Those who have marriages primarily arranged by their parents also tend to marry at much younger ages, and those who choose their own spouse are typically much older. In part, this is a result of the fact that by delaying marriage individuals are expected to have more nonfamily experiences. This is particularly true if the delay is due to educational goals or nonfamily work necessities. Therefore it is reasonable that although I start at a fairly young age for marriage of 15, I may have already missed people who were already married by the 1996 interview. As well, age often has a nonlinear relationship to marriage in general, with sharp increases seen at earlier ages, and decreases in rates of marriage at older ages; this creating an inverted U relationship (Yabiku 2006). Thus, I use the age at the time of risk of marriage as an important control when predicting participation in spouse choice. In addition I use the time varying age and its square in the hazard model to account for the nonlinear relationship. The average age of marriage is a surprisingly high 22.5 years, with a range from 15 to 35 years old.

Gender differences for many social, health and demographic outcomes exist in Nepal (Ahearn 2004; Bennett; Macfarlane 1986). Compared to men, women are typically seen as having lower status (Caldwell 1983; Dyson and Moore 1983; Ghimire et al. 2006). In relation to marriage, women are typically younger than their husband, and often have less control over the spouse selection (Ghimire et al. 2006; Yabiku 2006). Thus I also expect that women will have less control over their own spouse choice, and will enter marriage, and particularly arranged marriage, at much faster rates than men.

Caste/Ethnicity is an important control variable for this study because certain castes, particularly Hindus, prefer to have their family play a large role in finding or deciding on a spouse. Although caste is extremely complex, a common classification is into five major groups: high-caste Hindu, low-caste Hindu, Newar, Hill Tibeto-Burmese, and Terai Tibeto-Burmese (Axinn and Yabiku 2001; Ghimire et al. 2006). The first two groups both have similarly origins from India, and both practice the Hindu religion, but the former has had much greater access to political, economic and social resources. Newars are unique in that they practice elements of both Buddhism and Hinduism. Despite being native to the Kathmandu valley, due to their extensive involvement in the business sector of Nepal, they can be found all over Nepal. The Hill Tibeto-Burmese group is primarily from Tibet and primarily practice Buddhism. Finally, the Terai Tibeto-Burmese groups are the native inhabitants of the Chitwan Valley. Despite the strong Hinduization of the non-Hindu groups which has influenced almost every ethnic group to arrange their marriages to some extent, (Ahearn 2004; Berreman 1972; Ghimire et al. 2006), ethnic groups still differ widely in their forms of arranging marriage, with the two Hindu groups being the major practitioners of arranged marriage followed by Newars and then the two Tibeto-Burmese groups (Ahearn 2004; Bennett 1983; Fricke 1986; Ghimire et al. 2006; Macfarlane 1986).

I also control for 6 types of nonfamily experience that have been shown to be particularly important for arranged marriage: education, nonfamily work, media exposure, participation in youth

clubs, travel and residential moves (Ghimire et al. 2006; Thornton, Chang and Lin 1994). I also include a neighborhood measure of the distance to the nearest school. Below I briefly describe how each measure was constructed.

Educational experiences have been a major focus of the CVFS. Using the 1996 interview I create two measures of education for the main, or focal, sample of never married youth. One measure is the total accumulation of education, in years, until 1996. The second measure is if the respondent was enrolled in school in 1996. Including both is typically important as they often have opposite effects on timing of marriage (Raymo 2003; Thornton, Axinn and Teachman 1995; Yabiku 2006). The mean number of years of school of the main sample was 7.3 years and 63% were enrolled at the time of the interview.

Measures of parent and neighborhood education also use the 1996 interview data. However, in the few cases where either the father or mother did not supply an educational attainment measure; I use the child's report of the parent's education level. Among the parents of the focal sample of unmarried children, fathers had attended school for an average of 3.6 years while mothers had attended an average of only 0.7 years of school.

Nonfamily work is also an important measure of nonfamily experiences. For all individuals including children and both parents, I use the life history calendar to determine if they ever worked for a nonfamily institution (both wage and salary positions) by 1996. For those parents who did not have a work experience history, I rely on the child's report of if the parent had ever worked for pay. Looking at Table 1 we see that 59% of the unmarried children, 53% of fathers, and 27% of mothers had ever had a nonfamily work experience.

Mass media, including radio, television and movies, in Nepal generally present Western values and views, and typically have been shown to encourage the reduction of social control (Axinn and

Barber 2001; Janowitz 1981). Ghimire and colleagues (Ghimire et al. 2006) found that for past generations, any exposure to mass media was associated with greater participation in the spouse selection process. To control for the media exposure of individuals this study uses three questions about the extent to which people listen to the radio, watch T.V. and attend movies. Few in this study had never seen at least one of these three media forms, and the amount of consumption for the three types is highly correlated. Therefore I create an index by combining the three types of media consumption, where 0=never or rarely consume the media, 1=refers to low levels of consumption such as once a week for the radio, once a month for T.V. and fewer than 4 movies a year, and 2=is higher levels of media consumption. Combining all three variables gives a range of 0-6, with a mean of 4.2.

Participation in youth clubs has increased tremendously over the past several years, and research shows they provide an important venue for youth to exchange ideas, as well as facilitating finding romantic partners (Ghimire et al. 2006). The measure of youth club participation comes from the question on the life history calendar, "Have you ever been a member of a youth club?" A "yes" response was coded as 1 and a "no" response was coded as 0. By 1996, 17% of the focal sample had ever participated in a youth club.

Travel can provide several opportunities to see new behaviors and learn new ideas. In particular, traveling to a major city (i.e. Kathmandu), or abroad may be a particularly powerful experience. Based on the interviews I create two dichotomous measures: 1) if they ever traveled to Kathmandu and 2) if the respondent had ever traveled out of Nepal. In 1996, 30% of the respondents had traveled to Kathmandu and 10% of the focal sample had traveled out of Nepal.

Residential moves may also introduce people to new ideas and enlarge their social networks. Although most likely a decision of the parents (or other family member), children have been shown to be strongly influenced by the number of residential moves. In particular, Ghimire and colleagues

(Ghimire et al. 2006) find that those who moved more frequently in their premarital life, had greater control over their spouse selection. Using the life history calendar, I can estimate the number of moves based on the changes in residential location. Prior to 1996, half of the focal sample had never moved (giving even more strength to the influence of the neighborhood), another 25% had only moved once, and typically the rest only move 1 or 2 additional times.

The number of children a respondent's mother has may be a measure of resource competition within the household. To account for this I control for the number children the mother had by 1996. Also as discussed above, I control for those respondents who were not living in the same neighborhood as their parents in 1996. About 10% of the focal sample was in this group. This variable has the important methodological role of indicating whose parent information was imputed. It also may be a measure of the current non-family living. Like other nonfamily experiences, this measure may influence spouse choice, and thus it is an important methodological and substantive control (Thornton and Lin 1994).

Analytic Framework

In order to examine the multiple influences of spouse choice participation simultaneously, my analysis consists of two components. The first uses ordinal logistic regression to examine spouse choice participation. As part of that analysis I interact the entire model by education to test my hypothesis that education changes the influence of other variables. The second portion of the analyses is a variation of the participation model which models the hazard of having an arranged marriage as a competing risk to having a marriage with some spouse choice given to the child. For reasons I detail below, I also run each model separately by gender and caste. What follows is a description of each of these steps.

Participation in Spouse Choice

In order to estimate multivariate models of the five point ordinal measure of participation in spouse choice, I use ordinal logistic regression (Hoffmann 2004; Powers and Xie 2000). This technique

uses the cumulative logit function to estimate the relationship between the ordinal dependent variable and the collection of independent variables. This approach is particularly useful because the underlying assumption of the statistical model is that the ordinal measure represents a continuous underlying function. Because the data are hierarchical, I use Mplus' multilevel option to account for the clustering at the neighborhood level (Muthén and Muthén 2006). Because of the scarce number of multiple observations within family, I do not cluster at that level.

The multilevel ordinal logistic regression estimates of the odds ratios predicting increasing control of the individual in the spouse choice are presented in Table 2. My general interpretation for these coefficients is that for each unit increase in the independent variable there is a multiplicative increase in the odds of moving to the next highest category in the ordinal scale of individual (i.e. child) control of the spouse choice process. Presented coefficients greater than 1 indicate a positive relationship between the independent variable and spouse choice participation, and coefficients less than 1 indicate a negative relationship. Finally, although not shown here, I also tested these models in a multilevel multinomial logistic regression to examine the proportional odds assumption of the ordinal logistic regression model (Powers and Xie 2000). I find that for the most part the categories do appear ordinal in nature, and therefore do not need to be treated as nominal categories.

To examine the influence of education as a method of allocation, I interact the ordered logistic regression model with two education categories based on the respondent's education attainment in 1996. For the first education grouping, I divided the sample into those with 8 years or greater of education, and those with fewer than 8 years of education. I have two reasons for this cut point. First, the median level of education for this sample is 8 years of school. Thus the groups are of equal size, which provides maximum statistical efficiency. More importantly, however, is that I originally chose the 8 year cutoff because that is the grade level everyone should have obtained by age 15. Thus, if they had gone to

school according to standard schooling practices (and even if they started late or were held back) they should have completed the 8th grade by age 15, the youngest age in this sample. I present the same model for each of the two groups (above vs. below 8 years of school), and point out significant differences between the two.

The second categorization of education I use for an interaction is if children had more schooling in 1996 than their parents, or if they had the same or less education. I used the child's educational attainment in 1996 and whichever of the parent's education was higher (usually the father). This measure focuses the issue of education's role of providing status. Thus, if the child has higher education levels than the parents, then they may have more status and even more autonomy. Although I did try a measure of the number of years more education a child had, because the results are so similar, I went with the more parsimonious measure of education. Again, I present the same model for each of the two groups, and point out significant differences between the two.

Hazard of Arranged Marriage

I also estimate the effects of individual, family and neighborhood beliefs and nonfamily experiences on the rate of marriage using discrete-time hazard models. These models take the full unmarried sample and follow them for 126 months to estimate the timing of marriage (Hoffmann 2004; Powers and Xie 2000). Specifically, I am using a competing-risks hazard model, and focus on the effects of the independent variables on the rate of entering an arranged marriage vs. the rate of entering a choice marriage (i.e. any amount of choice). In this model, person-months of exposure become the unit of analysis, and although the number of person-months is extremely large this does not inflate the standard errors (Allison 1982). I use logistic regression to estimate the effects of the independent variables on rate of marriage. Again, I present the results as exponentiated log-odds ratios (i.e. odds ratios) and because the time periods (i.e. months) are so narrow, I interpret the estimates as changes in the rate of marriage,

as is standard in the literature (Thornton, Axinn and Xie 2007). Following the example of Yabiku (Yabiku 2006) I control for the seasonality of marriage by giving each of the 12 months its own dummy variable (i.e. 11 dummy variables and one comparison month), but these effect estimates are not presented in the results. I also tested for several other parameterizations, including a full parameterization of 125 dummy variables for all 126 months of observation. None of the parameterizations of the baseline hazard influenced the results, and thus I used the more parsimonious 12 month parameterization. I also present a model that explicitly compares the effects of the different independent variables on arranged marriage compared to their effects on choice marriage. Finally, I also run all the education, gender and caste interactions but do not present those results in this paper, other than to note any important findings.

RESULTS

--Table 2 about here--

Before presenting the results in Table 2, it is useful to examine the amount of spouse choice over the last 10 years for this sample. As mentioned earlier, of the 1,011 never married respondents in 1996, 843 (83%) were married after 10 years. Of those, we were able to interview 753 respondents[3]. Of these respondents, 28.4% reportedly had no control over their spouse choice, 13.4% reported having some control, but that their parents had more, 12.0% were recorded as saying that they and their parents' shared equally in the spouse selection process, an additional 15.0% said both they and their parents had say in the process, but that they had more of the control, and finally 31.2% reported choosing their spouse by themselves. When combined with the retrospective work of Ghimire and colleagues (Ghimire et al. 2006) the results confirm a dramatic change in marriage in Nepal. In their study of ever married people ages 25-54 in 1996, 65% reported no control over the marriage arrangement and 22% chose their spouse for themselves (the other percentages in order of increasing children participation were 6%, 2%

3 The analytic sample, of 734 youth 15-25 in 1996, provides very similar percentages to the full sample of 753 respondents.

and 5%). This is evidence of a fast shift from a society of almost no child participation in spouse choice, to one where most people have the majority of the control over their own spouse selection, to possibly one soon that will see few parents having the majority of the control of choosing a spouse.

Participation in Spouse Choice

I present the results of the multilevel ordinal logistic regression in Table 2. Also, although not shown in Table 2, I will refer to models where the effects were run alone or in groups to test their mediating effects on other relationships. In addition, all models control for age at marriage, gender, caste, child and parent educational attainment, distance from neighborhood to closest school, if respondent was enrolled in school in 1996, media exposure, if respondent ever traveled to Kathmandu, if respondent ever traveled outside of Nepal, number of residential moves in respondents lifetime and the number of children the respondent's mother has (i.e. number of siblings still living); but these results are not presented in the tables, nor are they extensively discussed. Generally, the effects of these controls did not differ from past research findings (Ahearn 2004; Caldwell 1983; Ghimire et al. 2006; Goode 1970; Smith 1973; Thornton, Chang and Lin 1994).

Model 1 presents the estimate for the effect of the child's attitude that youth should have more say in their spouse selection on their the child's own spouse selection process, conditional on the controls mentioned above. In line with my hypothesis, model 1 shows that the more a individual believes youth should have more control of their spouse choice the greater the control they receive in their own spouse choice (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; Thornton, Axinn and Xie 2007). However, despite the nontrivial size of the estimate, statistically, the effect is non-significant. The addition of parental and the neighborhood average attitudes in model four changes the size of this effect (or it significance) little. Thus, although the effect is in the expected direction, the evidence is lacking that the individual's own attitude predicts their spouse choice participation.

Model 2 of Table 2 presents the estimated joint effects of the parents' belief that children should have more control over their spouse choice, while controlling for several other factors. Recall that the hypothesis is that parents who believe that children should have more choice in their marriage partner selection will have children with more involvement in the process (Barber 2000; Barber and Axinn 2005; Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; Thornton, Axinn and Xie 2007). Jointly, parent's attitudes do predict spouse choice participation, although only marginally significant. More interesting is that the effect of the father's belief is larger and in the hypothesized direction, compared to the mother's attitude. More specifically, as father's belief that children should have more say in the spouse choice increases by one level, there are ((1.17-1)*100) 16% higher odds the child will move to the next highest level of participation. This effect implies that the father's belief is at least as important, if not more important, than the child's own value in determining the level of participation in the spouse selection process. The positive effect of the father's belief is in line with the hypothesis that parents play an important role in determining the child's level of participation and that within the patriarchal context of Nepal father's attitudes are typically more influential than mother's view. The inclusion of the child's and the neighborhood attitudes inconsequentially change the effects for both parents.

Model 3 is the test of the neighborhood average attitude on the child's spouse choice. Both the coefficient in Model 3 and the full model in the final column point to community having little to no effect on participation in spouse choice. Of course, important here is to note that the effect is really the attitude of the members of the neighborhood in 1996. That is, while all of the measures of attitudes suffer from possible changes within individuals (i.e. the father becomes more accepting of child participation which leads to more child participation), the neighborhood suffers the additional problem that people move in and out. Therefore, even if these attitudes were fixed across time and within individual, a neighborhood could change substantially due to migration of people with different beliefs.

Thus, it may be that neighborhood effects are more difficult to detect, due to this possibly constant change. Similarly, the average attitude of the neighborhood may not be the "generalized other" most people are influenced by. That is, a better measure may include different age groups, peer networks or gender.

Models by Gender and Caste As discussed earlier, both gender and caste are extremely influential in determining the level of participation in spouse choice. As expected, being female is the largest (negative) indicator of participation in spouse selection (Ahearn 2004; Bennett; Caldwell 1983; Dyson and Moore 1983; Ghimire et al. 2006; Macfarlane 1986; Yabiku). The results in all of the models (not shown) confirm these findings and suggest this is still the case in Nepal. Young women typically have 78-80% lower odds of participating in next higher category of spouse choice than men. The results of all four models show that caste is strongly related to spouse choice participation, paralleling past research (Ahearn 2004; Bennett 1983; Berreman 1972; Fricke 1986; Ghimire et al. 2006; Macfarlane 1986). Generally we see that Low-caste Hindus do not have significantly different spouse selection involvement from High-caste Hindus. Newar youth appear to be about 2 times more likely to be in a higher category of spouse choice participation than High-caste Hindus. And both Tibeto-Burmese groups are 3.4 to 4.6 times more likely to participate in the next highest level of spouse choice involvement. Altogether this suggests that caste still plays a strong role in marital arrangement, and in fact, because the effect sizes appear to be larger than previous work, it may be evidence the Hinduization of non-Hindu's is declining (Ghimire et al. 2006). This may suggest that soon arranged marriage may only found within the Hindu caste groups.

In order to consider the different cultural milieus for people of different castes and the different processes for young men and you women, I run model 4 allowing for interactions by gender and then by caste (results not shown). Although most variables appeared to operate in similar directions and

magnitudes for both men and women, some important distinctions are evident. First, the moderate positive effect of the child's attitude appears to be the result of combining the essentially no effect for males (odds ratio of 0.99) and the significant positive effect for females (odds ratio of 1.28). This result indicates that the child's attitude matters more for women than for men (an unexpected result). Of course it is also important to keep in mind that while 44% of boys chose their own spouse only 20% of girls did the same, and similarly while 15% of boys had their marriage arranged 41% of girls had no say in choosing their marriage partner. Hence if arranged marriage is primarily for girls, an attitude effect would be much easier to detect than it would for boys.

Another interesting finding is that, for males, both parents' attitudes are relatively large, positive and significant. That is, for boys, both the mother's and the father's attitudes toward giving more control to the child increase that child's participation in their spouse choice selection (odds ratio of about 1.25 for both). Because of the lack of the effect from the boy's own attitude, this implies a stronger social control mechanism over socialization (Barber 2000). However, for girls, the effect of the father's attitude similar to that for boys, but the mother's attitude has a very strong negative effect (odds ratio of 0.73). The large negative effect may be evidence of a statistical anomaly due to the moderate correlation of 0.325 with father's attitude. However, further exploration suggests that this effect is negative and significant even after removing other ideational measures. One possible explanation is that in the case where the mother is pushing for greater control over the spouse choice process for her daughter, the father may in fact put greater limitations on the young woman's role. However, this is purely speculative and would require greater field work to flesh out this issue.

The models of spouse participation do fit slightly better for the Hindu groups (both High-caste and Low-caste) compared to the non-Hindu groups. That is, the person's own attitude toward greater child participation in spouse choice has a stronger (and significant) effect on actual participation.

However, the differences in most of these effects are not statistically significant (in part due to the smaller sample sizes of the non-Hindu groups). Thus, although there are certainly large differences in the amount of control afforded to the children in their spouse selection, the ideational effects do not appear to be significantly different across caste.

Interaction with Education

--Table 3 about here--

Table 3 reports the test of the interaction of two categorizations of education with the ordered logistic model in Table 2 (model 4). These tests are intended to reflect the hypothesis that education allocates status, trust and autonomy, so that parents and others view the individual differently. That is, under different levels of education we would expect different effects from multiple variables.

An examination of the results suggests this hypothesis is supported. Those youth with 8 years or higher education in 1996 have substantially higher levels of control over their spouse choice, and those with lower levels of education are more influenced by the experiences and characteristics of others. The best example of this is the change in the coefficient for the child's own attitude toward spouse choice. Recall that in the previous model there was a positive relationship between the attitude and behavior that was interpreted as an indication of some level of control over spouse selection for at least some of the children. The interaction with education shows that this small positive effect is a result of the strong positive effect of the attitude for the individuals with higher levels of education (odds ratio of 1.43), while those with less than 8 years have little control as the odds ratio of 0.97 is not significantly different from 1. That is, the effect of the attitude for those above 8 years of education is a 43% increase in the odds of moving in to the next highest participation category for each one unit increase in disagreeing that parents should control their children's spouse choice, while for those with less than 8 years there is essentially no effect of the individual's attitude on later participation in spouse selection.

This result is confirmed in the third and fourth columns when comparing significant difference in the effects of the child's attitude for children with the same or fewer years of school than their parents (a nonsignificant odds ratio of 0.94) and those having more education than their parents (odd ratio of 1.27). One reason for the slightly smaller effect in this education interaction is that while few of the children with less than 8 years of education probably ever obtained enough additional education to move into the 8+ years of education group, several of the children could have moved from the less than or equal to group to the kids having more than their parents group between the survey date and the marriage date. Nevertheless, overall, this supports the hypothesis that education provides an avenue for youth to express their will, possibly due to the higher social status they obtain by completing more education (Caldwell 1982; Gould 2003).

The interaction with education produces interesting effects in the other ideational measures as well. Regardless of having more or less than 8 years of school, the father's attitude has a similar effect for those with less than 8 years of school and for those with more than 8 years. And although the difference between the effects is somewhat larger in the interaction with the child-parent education comparison (i.e. columns 3 and 4) the effects are not significantly different. However, for the effect of the mother's attitude on child participation in spouse choice there does appear to be a significant change in effect size. That is, for those with less than 8 years of school the effect of the mother's attitude is negative (i.e. odds ratio of 0.79) which is significantly different from the effect of mother's attitude for children with more than 8 years (odds ratio of 1.07). This result is interesting in that for children with higher education the individual and both parental attitudes are all in the expected positive direction, whereas for those children with lower levels of education the effects are more difficult to understand.

Models by Gender and Caste To conclude the discussion of the spouse choice participation model I briefly discuss the differences in these regressions by gender and caste. To be clear, at this point these

models are three-way interaction models, and are difficult to interpret in part because it is difficult to know how to compare across the four groups (i.e. male-lower than 8 years, male-higher than 8 years, female-lower than 8 years and female higher than 8 years). Nevertheless, the general pattern holds that among lower educated people (or people with less education than their parents)—whether male or female, or of most any caste—their parent's attitudes have stronger effects and their own attitudes have weaker effects when compared to those effects of people with higher levels of education (or more education than their parents). In other words, education's ability to provide greater control of the spouse choice to the child (as indicated by a significant attitude effect for the child) appears to work for both males and females and works similarly for most castes.

--Table 4 about here--

Competing-risk hazard models of arranged and some choice marriage

I present the results of the competing risk hazard model in Table 4. The first column of results represents the odds of entering a marriage where the spouse was selected solely by the parents (i.e. an arranged marriage). The second column of results represents the odds of entering a marriage where the child had some involvement in selecting their spouse (i.e. a choice marriage). Both of these models account for the risk of entering the other marriage type as a competing risk (and of being in the "married but did not respond to the supplement" group). The third column supplies the effect size difference comparing arranged marriage to choice marriage. Although the first two columns examine the rate of entering a certain type of marriage, controlling for the option of entering another type of marriage, the third column explicitly compares those two types of marriages. Thus, a significant effect larger than 1 implies that the characteristic promotes choice marriage over arranged marriage and a significant effect below 1 asserts that the characteristic discourages choice marriage over an arranged marriage. Recall that the purpose of this model is to control for the censoring of people who never married. It also

provides a secondary examination of the results from the ordinal logistic regression and the education interaction.

Because many of the results here parallel the findings of Tables 2 and 3, I will only emphasize the important substantive findings. For example, we can see that the stronger a person's own belief that parents should not choose their child's spouse, the slower their rate of entry into any marriage, and particularly into arranged marriage. More specifically for every increase in disagreeing that parents should choose their children's spouse there is a 29% decrease in the rate of entering an arranged marriage, and a 7% decrease in the rate of entering a choice marriage. Although the effect is only significant for arranged marriage, the third column indicates that having a more positive attitude toward greater child control in spouse choice does significantly reduce entry into an arranged marriage over a choice marriage. Thus, even if children do not get the full participation they want, their attitude may delay the arranged marriage substantially.

Parental attitudes are consistent with the intergenerational transmission literature that suggests that even after controlling for the child's own attitude, parent's attitude has significant influences on family formation (Axinn, Clarkberg and Thornton 1994; Thornton, Axinn and Xie 2007). More specifically, more positive father attitudes toward child participation in spouse choice increases rates of entering a choice marriage and promotes entering a choice marriage over an arranged marriage. Again this unique effect of father's attitude implies that parent's influence operates through social control mechanisms in addition to any socialization mechanisms—and that the patriarchal family system of Nepal is still relatively strong in family formation decisions. Also note that in this case the effect of mother's attitude is never significantly different than 1, but does still appear to discourage choice marriage over arranged marriage.

The effects of the controls (not shown) are also worth quickly mentioning. Age operates under the well-established inverted U shape (Yabiku 2006; Yabiku 2005). However, arranged marriage does seem to have a more compressed inverted U. Women are entering choice marriage at 33% faster rates than men, which is consistent with previous work (Ghimire et al. 2006; Yabiku 2006). However, more impressive is that women enter arranged marriage at 6.1 times faster rates than men. This effect has actually increased from the past generation, and suggests that for some women in Nepal there is still a great lack of control in one of the defining events of their lives. As well, caste appears to have strong effects for entering an arranged marriage, with the Hindu castes having much higher rates than the Newar and two Tibeto-Burmese groups. However, there is evidence that caste is less an issue with choice marriage timing. That is, many of the differences seen in arranged marriage are not evident in the hazard of entering a choice marriage. In sum, the results of the controls imply that arranged marriage is now primarily an issue for females within the Hindu castes.

Finally, I ran each of the competing risks models for both sets of education groups (more/less than 8 years and more/less than parents). These interactions reaffirmed the overall findings of this study. For example, although the child's own attitude toward greater participation in spouse choice lowers rates of entering both the arranged and choice marriage, it was only in the higher education groups (i.e. 8 or more years of school, or children with more education than their parents) that the effect the attitude had significantly stronger effect on delaying arranged marriage compared to choice marriage[4].

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper is to explore a central focus of social science research; namely the influence of parents and neighborhood context on a person's sense of control, or autonomy. As a manifestation of autonomy I examine the extent to which people participate in the selection of their

4 I also extended these models to include interactions with caste and gender, but no new or important findings were evident, so I do not discuss them for the sake of parsimony.

spouse. More specifically, I operationalize autonomy as the relationship between a person's attitude toward spouse choice and their later spouse choice participation. That is, greater autonomy would be related to stronger relationships between the attitude and later participation. I test the extent to which the individual, parents and neighbors influence participation in spouse choice and the rate at which people enter arranged versus choice marriages.

Historically in Nepal, arranged marriage was almost universal. However, recent social changes have seen that practice quickly and consistently decline (Ghimire et al. 2006). I document the continued decline of arranged marriages over the past 10 years in Nepal. For the first time in hundreds (if not thousands) of years, more people are probably choosing their spouse completely by themselves than having their parents choose one for them. Only about 28% of the sample still had their marriages arranged, down from 65% of the previous generation. However, I also document that certain historical relationships still remain. For example, Hindu castes (both Upper and Lower Hindus) are still the primary participants of arranged marriage. This is not surprising since it was the Hinduization of the other groups that lead to the near universal practice of arranging marriage. Also, there is strong evidence that the bulk of the decline of arranged marriage is among males. That is, women often have 5-6 times higher odds of being in an arranged marriage than their male counterparts.

An important finding of this study is that there are strong ideational influences on spouse choice. For example, there is a positive effect of preferring more child participation in spouse choice and then getting to participate in one's own spouse selection process. I judge the significant positive relationship between attitude and behavior to be a sign of some autonomy given to these youth in the marriage process. More importantly, this paper shows that children with higher levels of education (8 years and over) and those with higher levels of education than their parents have a much stronger attitude-behavior link, thus suggesting that autonomy is greater at higher levels of education. This finding confirms the

hypothesis that allocation of status and autonomy by education is changing the effects of other variables, and not just acting as a mediating factor. As well, for those who have higher levels of education there is evidence that both parental attitudes toward child participation in the spouse choice process positively influence the child's spouse selection. However, among less educated youth, it is only the father's attitude that influences the participation of the child. That is, for children with lower levels of education the patriarchal context of Nepal affords the father the authority to determine the amount of participation the child has in his or her own spouse choice.

This study finds a strong effect of the allocation of status and autonomy through education. However, this study was not able to fully examine the socialization effects of education, although there is some evidence of the effect of socialization. A better study of this would examine the role of nonfamily experience in changing values or abilities. Also, more work needs to be done on women's experience with spouse choice. Based on this study's results, unless there is dramatic social change, Nepal will soon be a place where only Hindu women have arranged marriage, and these women will have few mechanisms for gaining more control over their spouse selection.

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Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Measures Used in Analyses

Measure	Coding	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
Dependent Variable						
Child articipation in spouse selection	0=low - 4=high	734	2.07	1.63	0	4
Independent Variables						
Attitude-Parents should always choose spouse						
Child's attitude	0=SA - 3=SD	734	1.29	0.88	0	3
Father's attitude	0=SA - 3=SD	576	1.18	0.91	0	3
Mother's attitude	0=SA - 3=SD	648	0.98	0.90	0	3
Neighborhood average attitude	0=SA - 3=SD	151	1.21	0.23	0.62	1.69
Controls						
Respondent Age at Marriage	Age in years	734	22.54	3.65	15	35
Gender	1=female	734	0.52		0	1
Ethnicity		734				
High-caste Hindu	0=No, 1=Yes		0.54		0	1
Low-caste Hindu	0=No, 1=Yes		0.08		0	1
Newar	0=No, 1=Yes		0.07		0	1
Hill Tibeto-Burmese	0=No, 1=Yes		0.13		0	1
Terai Tibeto-Burmese	0=No, 1=Yes		0.17		0	1
Child's educational attainment	Total years	734	7.26	3.06	0	14
Father's educational attainment	Total years	720	3.62	4.18	0	1
Mother's educational attainment	Total years	730	0.67	1.82	0	1
Distance walk to nearest school	in minutes	734	9.2	6.55	0	30
Child enrolled in school in 1996	0=No, 1=Yes	734	0.63		0	1
Child ever worked for pay	0=No, 1=Yes	734	0.59		0	1
Child's media exposure	0=low - 6=high	734	4.2	1.14	0	6
Child ever participated in youth clubs	0=No, 1=Yes	734	0.17		0	1
Child ever traveled to Kathmandu	0=No, 1=Yes	734	0.30		0	1
Child ever traveled outside Nepal	0=No, 1=Yes	734	0.10		0	1
Number of residential moves for Child	0 - 3+	734	0.81	0.97	0	3
Father ever worked for pay	0=No, 1=Yes	734	0.53		0	1
Mother ever worked for pay	0=No, 1=Yes	733	0.27		0	1
Mother's number of children	1 - 9+	734	5.1	1.89	1	9

Table 2. Ordinal Logistic Regressions of Increasing Child Participation in Spouse Selection for First Marriages

Measure	(1) Individual	(2) Parents	(3) Community	(4) Combined
Attitude-Children should participate in spouse choice				
Child's attitude	1.11			1.13
	(1.29)			(1.44)
Father's attitude		1.16 +		1.17 +
		(1.72)		(1.79)
Mother's attitude		0.92		0.94
		(-1.00)		(-0.79)
Neighborhood average attitude (0.1 unit increase)			0.97	0.96
			(-0.85)	(-1.19)
N	734	734	734	734
df	21	22	21	24
-2 log likelihood	2097.69	2095.47	2098.58	2092.62
Z-values in parenthesis	+ p<0.10, *p-value<0.05, **p-value<0.01, ***p-value<0.001 (two-tailed tests)			

All analyses control for respondent age at marriage, gender, caste, child and parental educational attainment in 1996, neighborhood distance to closest school, 1996 school enrollment, media exposure, child and parent nonfamily work, travel, migration, and number of siblings.

Table 3. Ordinal Logistic Regressions of Increasing Child Participation in Spouse Selection by Education Groups

Measure	Level of Education: > 8 years of education		Level of Education: 8+ years of education		Parent/Child Years of Education: Child ≤ Parent	Parent/Child Years of Education: Child > Parent	
Attitude- Children should participate in spouse choice							
Child's attitude	0.97		1.43	**	0.94	1.27	**
	(-0.21)		(2.70)		(-.040)	(2.25)	
Father's attitude	1.22	+	1.24		1.15	1.24	*
	(1.65)		(1.60)		(0.81)	(1.97)	
Mother's attitude	0.79	+	1.07		0.81	0.97	
	(-1.78)		(0.56)		(-1.32)	(-0.33)	
Neighborhood average attitude (0.1 unit increase)	1.08		0.96		0.93	0.98	
	(1.34)		(-.29)		(-1.07)	(-0.51)	
N	366		368		233	501	
df	24		24		24	24	
-2 log likelihood	926.48		1020.60		645.06	1352.13	
Z-values in parenthesis	+ p<0.10, *p-value<0.05, **p-value<0.01, ***p-value<0.001 (two-tailed tests)						

All analyses control for respondent age at marriage, gender, caste, child and parental educational attainment in 1996, neighborhood distance to closest school, 1996 school enrollment, media exposure, child and parent nonfamily work, travel, migration, and number of siblings.

Table 4. Discrete Time Hazard Model of Competing Risk of Timing of First Marriage

Measure	Arranged marriage		Choice Marriage		Choice compared to Arranged	
Attitude Children should participate in spouse choice						
Child's attitude	0.71	***	0.93		1.30	*
	(-3.64)		(-1.29)		(2.39)	
Father's attitude	0.90		1.12	+	1.25	*
	(-1.14)		(1.94)		(2.00)	
Mother's attitude	1.10		0.98		0.88	
	(1.00)		(-0.40)		(-1.06)	
Neighborhood average attitude (0.1 unit increase)	1.01		0.97		0.95	
	(0.32)		(-1.58)		(-1.11)	
Person-months	64,947					
df	108					
-2 log likelihood	8934.08					
Z-values in parenthesis	+ p<0.10, *p-value<0.05, **p-value<0.01, ***p-value<0.001 (two-tailed tests)					

All analyses control for respondent gender, caste, child and parental educational attainment in 1996, neighborhood distance to closest school, 1996 school enrollment, media exposure, child and parent nonfamily work, travel, migration, number of siblings and month parameterization for seasonal changes in probability of marriage.