

Lineage and Women's Autonomy in Household Decision-making in Ghana

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ABSTRACT This paper examines the relationship between lineage and women's autonomy in household decision-making using the 2008 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey dataset. The sample consists of 1,870 women currently in union. The results show inconsistent support for the hypothesised negative effect of non-matrilineal lineage on the various domains of women's autonomy in household decision-making. Matrilineal women appear to be more autonomous with respect to decisions on the number of children to have, seeking health care and to some extent freedom of movement. However, there is no significant difference between matrilineal and non-matrilineal women with regard to major and daily household purchases. In addition, the factors that influence women's autonomy among matrilineal and non-matrilineal women differ across various domains. In general, even though the matrilineal advantage regarding women's autonomy appears to be weak, matrilineal women appear to be more autonomous in a number of household decision-making domains than non-matrilineal women.