

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.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of the role of women's autonomy in enhancing the well-being of women and their families cannot be underestimated. Previous studies have documented the relative significance of women's autonomy in various domains of women's lives (Riyami et al. 2004; Woldemicael 2009, 2010; Allendorf 2012; Ebot 2014). These studies show that autonomous women are better able to secure well-being for themselves and their families. Whereas women's autonomy has received attention as both a means and an end in enhancing the lives of women and their families (Allendorf 2012), empirical evidence on some of the factors that underpin women's autonomy are still not well understood. One of such factors is lineage. The interest in lineage, especially patrilineal lineage and women's empowerment shows the appreciation of scholars that socio-cultural and institutional processes affect women's empowerment (Takyi and Dadoo 2005; Boateng and Flanagan 2008).

The cultures of sub-Saharan Africa are generally patriarchal, characterised generally by

patrilineal descent, patrilocal residence, inheritance and succession practices that exclude or limit women in decision-making and hierarchical relations in which the patriarch or his relatives have authority over family members (Nukunya 1992, 1999). Indeed, in the context of Africa, lineage can potentially dictate household decision-making. This is largely because in the patrilineal context, payment of bride wealth secures rights over the woman to the man and his family with respect to her domestic services, sexual and reproductive rights (Nukunya 1999; Dadoo and Tempenis 2002). In the matrilineal context however, descent is traced through the mother and maternal ancestors. In this lineage system, children belong to their mother's lineage, which in most cases involve the inheritance of property and/or titles despite the payment of bride wealth (Nukunya 1992). Matrilineal cultures despite shrouded in patriarchal cultures plausibly confers greater levels of autonomy—especially reproductive related behaviours—on women than patrilineal cultures (Takyi and Dadoo 2005).

Studies that have explored the dynamics between lineage and women's autonomy have focused on specific dimensions of women's autonomy. Though it is important to understand the dimensions of women's autonomy, these dimensions are interdependent and if considered together will provide more insights on whether, matrilineal lineage confers greater levels of autonomy in household decision-making on wom-

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en than patrilineal systems in general. That said, the literature strongly advises the construction of a summary variable combining the various dimensions of women's autonomy (Acharya et al. 2010; Ebot 2014). Ghana presents a useful setting for this analysis in the sense that about half of the population is composed of the matrilineal Akan ethnic group (Ghana Statistical Service 2012), who also dominate in reproductive related decision-making than non-Akans (Takyi and Dodoo 2005).

Lineage and Decision-making

In Africa, lineage systems strongly influence personal and public behaviour (Takyi 2001). The extant literature has improved our understanding of how lineage influences gender relations, especially reproductive related behaviours in sub-Saharan Africa. However, there has been limited empirical assessment of the broad dimensions of women's autonomy in household decision-making, as well as lack of consensus on whether matrilineal systems generally confer greater levels of autonomy on women in household decision-making than do patrilineal systems. While this study acknowledges demographic data on measures of cultural structures that affect behaviour in sub-Saharan Africa are inadequate they provide some insights into the subtle negotiations that go on between partners in their private lives. The data provides a brief glimpse at the process of household decision-making (Dodoo 1998; Kabeer 1999).

Takyi and Dodoo (2005) indicated that the argument that men hold considerable power, especially in sexual and reproductive decisions, is not only patriarchal but also patrilineal. Studies have shown lineage differences in gender power relations in Ghana. For example, matrilineal women are more able than non-matrilineal women to implement their fertility preferences, in essence matrilineal women who do not want more children are more likely, and able, to use contraception than non-matrilineal women (Takyi and Dodoo 2005). In another study, it was demonstrated that there are mixed results of the effects of matrilineal lineage on decision-making and behaviours, the results showing consistent positive effect of matrilineal lineage on physical access to health care, say in purchase decisions in the household, responsible sexual behaviour and rejecting domestic violence (Boateng and Flanagan 2008). However, matrilineal women were not significantly different from patrilineal women regarding their say in family decisions (Boateng and Flanagan 2008). However, the re-

searchers did not examine the relationship between lineage and the various indicators of women's autonomy in household decision-making, nor did they examine women's autonomy in general (that is, pulling together all the domains of women's autonomy in household decision-making into a summary variable).

While there is evidence of a matrilineal advantage in some domains of household decision-making, there is little empirical evidence on whether matrilineal lineage generally confers greater autonomy across the various domains compared to patrilineal lineage. In addition, there is little empirical evidence on the factors that influence women's autonomy across various domains of women's autonomy among matrilineal and non-matrilineal women. This paper examines the relationship between lineage and women's autonomy in various domains of household decision-making and in general. The literature suggests several indicators of women's autonomy in household decision-making which can be pulled together to assess women's autonomy in household decision-making in general (Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001; Ebot 2014).

METHODOLOGY

Data and Measurement

This study used data from the 2008 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS). The 2008 GDHS was a nationally representative sample survey that used standardised multistage cluster sampling. For a more detailed description of the GDHS methodology, please see the report (Ghana Statistical Service et al. 2009). Respondents for this study were women aged 15–49 years, who were currently in union. The analytic sample for this study was 1,870 with 0.7 percent deleted missing data (total number of couples interviewed were 1883 couples). Weights were included within the GDHS dataset to adjust for the disproportionate number of EAs and the different sample sizes selected per EA per region. To ensure representativeness and adjust for non-response, the present study makes use of the weights in the analysis, using the 'svyset' commands in strata.

Measures

Women's Autonomy

Women's autonomy has been variously defined as "the ability—technical, social, and psy-

chological—to obtain information and to use it as the basis for making decisions about one's private concerns and those of one's intimate"—children and partner (Dyson and Moore 1983). With specific reference to women, Dixon (1978) defined it as "the degree of women's access to (and control over) material resources (including food, income, land, and other forms of wealth) and to social resources (including knowledge, power and prestige) within the family, in the community, and in the society at large" (Dixon 1978: 6). In this paper, women's autonomy is conceptualised as the control women have in the family and over their own lives including; economic decisions, their own health care, freedom of physical movement and number of children.

The literature suggests several domains, but interdependent components of women's autonomy (Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001). The GDHS questionnaire asked about six domains of women's autonomy in household decision-making. However, only five domains of women's autonomy are considered in the present study: 1) their say in daily household needs; 2) their say in major household needs; 3) their say in their own health care; 4) their say in visiting family or relatives and 5) their say in number of children to have. A question about *control over wages* was asked (who usually decides how the money you earn will be used). But, this variable was not included in the analysis because it substantially reduces the sample size since about 22 percent of the women reported not earning an income at the time of survey (also see Hindin 2002). While these may not be exhaustive, these measures are quite representative of various aspects of women's autonomy that women confront daily in Ghana.

Each question had six responses: 1) respondent alone; 2) respondent and husband/partner; 3) respondent and other person; 4) husband/partner alone; 5) someone else and 6) other. To create a binary variable for each domain for the analysis, the first three responses (1–3), where a woman participates in the decision-making is re-coded as 1. Responses from 4–6, where the woman does not participate in the decision-making is re-coded as 0. In this study, a woman is considered autonomous if she makes the decision alone or if she at least makes the decision with other household members. This classification makes it possible for decision-making in consultation with other family members or those who are most affected by these decisions. Furthermore, for many of these decisions (such as those relating to number of children to have), it may be

difficult to regard a jointly determined solution as being less desirable than a solely determined one (Rammohan and Johar 2009).

Summary Measure of Women's Autonomy

A summary measure of women's autonomy that focuses more directly on women's participation is based on the five decision-making domains. The summary measure is a dummy variable denoting whether the respondent reported that she alone or jointly had the final say on at least one of these five decisions (also see Allendorf 2007; Hindin 2000, 2002). The dichotomous approach has the advantage of focusing on women with at least some autonomy.

Independent Variable

Lineage descent is distinguished by self-report of ethnicity. This paper considers only two categories of lineage (matrilineal and non-matrilineal). Akan women with Akan spouses are considered matrilineal, with all other pairings considered non-matrilineal. A four-category representation of ethnicity was examined; (1) pairings in which both the wife and the spouse are matrilineal, (2) both are not, (3) the husband is matrilineal, but the wife is not, and (4) one in which the wife is matrilineal, but the husband is not. However, findings from both analyses were similar, thus the comparison is reduced to the simpler use of two-categories. This measure has its limitation in the sense that a small fraction of Akans are known to have bilateral rather than matrilineal or patrilineal inheritance patterns (Nukunya 1992). However, the data used for this study does not allow for such disaggregation of the Akan subgroups. This might undermine any matrilineal advantage found in this research (also see Takyi and Dodoo 2005).

Control Variables

The control variables in this paper are: religion (Christian, Muslim, Traditionalist/Spiritualist and No religion) and region (Western, Central, Greater Accra, Volta, Eastern, Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo, Northern, Upper East and Upper West). Age (continuous variable, age 15 - 49); education (no education, primary and secondary and above); type of place of residence (urban and rural), economic status (earning wages or not) and marriage type (polygyny and monogamy) are also included. In addition, number of sons and number of daughters are also con-

sidered separately—because the influence of number of sons and daughters in household decision-making is likely to differ because of the differential value of sons and daughters in African societies (Tabong and Adongo 2013).

Methods of Analysis

Bivariate descriptions of the study variables were presented across lineage type. The statistical significance of the association between the study variables and lineage was examined using chi-square tests at the 5 percent level. The logistic regression model was used to assess the relative influence of lineage type on women's autonomy in each dimension of household decision-making and the complementary log-log regression was used to assess the relative influence of lineage type on women's autonomy in general (summary measure of women's autonomy). The complementary log-log regression is an alternative to logit and probit regressions,

but unlike these other estimators, the transformation of the complementary log-log is not symmetric about 0, that is, it is skewed. This model is typically used when the positive (or negative) outcome is rare as is the case with the summary measure of women's autonomy in household decision-making (autonomous = 94.94 and not autonomous = 5.06) in this paper. The complementary log-log model is derived from the assumption that the error distribution (or distribution of the latent variable) follows a standard extreme value distribution (Long 1997; King and Zeng 2001).

RESULTS

Socio-demographic Characteristics of Women in the Sample

Table 1 shows cross-tabulations of the socio-demographic characteristics of women by lineage. From Table 1, marriage type varies sig-

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of women by lineage

	<i>Matrilineal</i>	<i>Non-matrilineal</i>		
	<i>%/M (SD)</i>	<i>%/M (SD)</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Chi-square</i>
<i>Marriage Type</i>				74.21***
Monogamous	92.33	77.19	83.32	
Polygynous	7.675	22.81	16.68	
<i>Type of Place of Residence</i>				28.88***
Urban	48.90	36.42	41.47	
Rural	51.10	63.58	58.53	
<i>Education</i>				279.66***
No education	11.52	47.72	33.07	
Primary	24.90	19.61	21.75	
Secondary ⁺	63.59	32.67	45.18	
<i>Religion</i>				338.60***
Christian	94.59	56.90	72.15	
Muslim	1.42	29.19	17.96	
Traditionalist/Spiritualist	0.98	9.52	6.07	
No religion	3.01	4.38	3.83	
<i>Wages</i>				48.06***
Earns wages	88.11	75.76	80.75	
Do not earn wages	11.89	24.24	19.25	
<i>Region</i>				716.91***
Western	20.28	4.30	10.77	
Central	14.71	2.17	7.25	
Greater Accra	13.98	16.52	15.49	
Volta	0.28	14.38	8.67	
Eastern	10.70	8.65	9.48	
Ashanti	30.18	8.02	16.99	
Brong/Ahafo	9.07	7.68	8.24	
Northern	0.80	22.09	13.47	
Upper east	0.00	11.29	6.73	
Upper west	0.00	4.90	2.92	
<i>Mean Age of Women</i>	33.41 (7.71)	32.12 (7.91)		
<i>Mean Number of Children</i>	3.05 (2.02)	3.19 (1.94)		
Mean number of sons	1.50 (1.38)	1.57 (1.29)		
Mean number of daughters	1.55 (1.34)	1.54 (1.33)		
Weighted total	735	1082		
Percent	40.46	59.54		

⁺p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Source: GDHS 2008 dataset

nificantly by lineage, with 92 percent of matrilineal women compared to 77 percent of non-matrilineal women in monogamous unions. Type of place of residence significantly vary by lineage, with a little more than half (51.10%) of matrilineal women and about two-thirds (63.58%) of non-matrilineal women living in rural areas. In general, a reasonably large proportion of women have no education within lineage groups. A little more than one in ten (11.52%) of matrilineal women have no education compared to about five in ten (47.72%) of non-matrilineal women. About 88 percent of matrilineal women earn wages compared to 75 percent of non-matrilineal women. The most dominant religion across lineage is Christianity and the average age of matrilineal and non-matrilineal women is 33 and 32 years respectively.

Women's Autonomy in Various Domains of Household Decision-making

Table 2 shows the frequency distributions for all the five domains of women's autonomy measures considered in this paper. In general, the results show high proportions of women participating in household decision-making in Ghana. Generally, matrilineal women (average, 3.94) compared to non-matrilineal women (average, 3.50) are marginally more autonomous in household decision-making. In all comparisons, a higher proportion of matrilineal women participate in household decision-making than non-

matrilineal women. In addition, the results show that Ghanaian women are relatively more autonomous regarding visits to family and relatives compared to other domains of household decision-making.

The Influence of Socio-demographic Characteristics on Various Domains of Women's Autonomy Across Lineage

Table 3 shows the results of logistic regression analyses examining the factors that are associated with women's autonomy in various domains of their lives among matrilineal and non-matrilineal women. The dependent variable for each model is dummy coded (0 does not participate, 1 otherwise). While it would have been informative to examine women's autonomy in general (summary measure of women's autonomy) by lineage type, the small number of cases in some of the categories of the variables did not allow for such analyses. The results show that within each lineage type (matrilineal and non-matrilineal) women's autonomy is explained by different sets of factors across various domains of women's autonomy. The goodness fit tests (Linktest) show that the models fit the data well.

Controlling for other factors, age is positively related to women's autonomy across various domains (Table 3). However, it appears to be more important among matrilineal women than among non-matrilineal women. While age is significant in predicting women's autonomy in decisions about the number of children, seeking health care, daily household purchases and major household purchases among matrilineal women, age is significant in predicting women's autonomy in daily household purchases, major household purchases and women seeking health care (significant $p < 0.1$) among non-matrilineal women.

Contrary to expectation, there appears to be a very weak association between education and women's autonomy across various domains of household decision-making. Among matrilineal women, only secondary⁺ education is significantly related to women's participation in the decision of the number children they want to have. Both primary and secondary⁺ education are all marginally related to major household purchases. Among non-matrilineal women, only women with primary level of education are related marginally to women's participation in seek-

Table 2: Women's autonomy in various domains by lineage

	<i>Matrilineal</i>	<i>Non-matrilineal</i>
Decision making on number of children		
Participate	78.39	67.01
Decision on own health care		
Participate	65.36	61.45
Decision on mobility		
Participate	82.32	74.53
Economic decisions -daily HH purchases		
Participate	82.03	66.32
Economic decisions -major HH purchases		
Participate	67.12	55.54
Summary index (0-5)	3.94	3.50
Weighted total	735	1082
Percent	40.46	59.54

Source: GDHS 2008 dataset

Table 3: Odds ratios of the influence of socio-demographic characteristics on women's autonomy across lineage

	Matrilineal					Non-matrilineal				
	NC	HC	MV	DH	MH	NC	HC	MV	DH	MH
Age	1.06*	1.05*	1.04	1.04*	1.07***	1.01	1.02*	1.02	1.05***	1.04**
Education (No education)										
Primary	1.45	1.53	1.01	0.95	1.76*	0.77	1.44*	0.67	1.5	1.45*
Secondary ⁺	2.22**	1.49	1.37	1.56	1.79*	1.26	1.26	1.16	1.54*	1.63*
Residence (Rural)										
Urban	1.19	1.44	1.09	1.47	1.00	0.97	1.87**	1.53*	1.52*	1.33
Marriage type (Monogamy)										
Polygyny	1.77	2.43*	1.07	2.02	0.71	0.47***	0.64**	0.49***	0.67*	0.60**
Economic status (Earning wages)										
Not earning wages	1.11	1.20	0.68	0.83	1.27	0.34***	0.75	0.45***	0.47***	0.75
Number of sons	0.93	0.83*	0.93	0.90	0.74***	0.99	1.03	1.01	0.94	0.99
Number of daughters	0.82*	0.87	0.86	0.82*	0.81**	0.94	0.98	1.08	1.04	1.04
Religion (Christian)										
Muslim	4.43	0.81	0.55	0.60	0.65	1.27	0.85	0.93	0.71	0.76
Traditionalist/spiritualist	0.11*	-	0.43	0.92	3.11	0.84	2.55**	1.97*	2.18*	1.86**
No religion	2.68	0.72	5.04	0.68	0.58	0.82	1.02	1.2	0.85	1.95*
Region (Ashanti)										
Western	0.49*	0.81	0.63	0.97	0.55*	0.37*	0.75	0.48*	1.17	1.1
Central	0.69	1.18	0.49*	1.00	0.62	0.78	1.38	0.78	0.52	0.78
Greater accra	0.98	0.47*	0.91	0.49*	0.46*	0.31**	0.48*	0.33*	0.52	0.68
Volta	0.12	0.48	0.05*	-	0.19	0.9	0.96	0.66	1.35	1.18
Eastern	0.87	1.16	0.66	1.06	0.54	0.55	1.09	0.57	0.96	0.7
Brong/Ahafo	0.29**	0.45+	0.54	0.50	0.36**	0.49	0.5	0.35*	1.01	1.11
Northern	1.86	-	0.43	0.29	0.41	0.42*	1.51	1.01	1.48	1.73
Upper east	na	na	na	na	na	0.74	1.74	1.85	3.72*	0.46*
Upper west	na	na	na	na	na	0.88	0.7	0.37**	1.15	0.68
Observations	617	607	617	615	617	1253	1253	1253	1253	1253
Linktest										
Hat	0.00	0.00	0.27	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00
Hatsq	0.11	0.22	0.49	0.38	0.21	0.47	0.31	0.59	0.68	0.89

Reference category in parenthesis (); * $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Source: GDHS 2008 dataset

Note: NC-number of children; HC-health care; MV-freedom of movement; DH-daily household purchases; MH-major household purchases.

“-” dropped as a result of perfect prediction; “na” no cases in category

ing health care (significant $p < 0.1$). In addition, secondary⁺ level education is marginally (significant $p < 0.1$) related to daily household purchases. Both primary (significant $p < 0.1$) and secondary⁺ level of education are significantly related to major household purchases among non-matrilineal women. Generally, the results show that increase in education increases a woman's autonomy. For instance among matrilineal women, while women with primary education are not significantly different from women with no education; women with secondary⁺ education compared to women with no education are significantly more autonomous in decision-making concerning the number of children they want to have. The results show that the odds of women with secondary⁺ education are 122 percent more likely to participate in the choice of

number of children compared to women with no education. Among matrilineal women, urban women are not significantly different from rural women across all domains of decision-making. Among non-matrilineal women, those in urban areas are significantly more autonomous than those in rural areas with respect to seeking health care, visiting family and relatives (significant $p < 0.1$) and in daily household purchases (significant $p < 0.1$).

While the relationship between marriage type and women's autonomy appears to be weak among matrilineal women, it is very strong among non-matrilineal women. Among matrilineal women, polygyny is associated with women's autonomy in only one domain (seeking health care), on the contrary, among non-matrilineal women, polygyny is associated with women's lack of

autonomy across all domains. While women who are not earning wages are not significantly autonomous than women who are earning wages among matrilineal women; among non-matrilineal women, those who are not earning wages are significantly less autonomous than those earning wages with respect to number of children to have, visiting family and relatives and daily household purchases. Among matrilineal women, number of sons is significantly related to women's participation in seeking health care and major household purchases. The results show that increase in number of sons decreases the odds of women participating in both seeking health care and major household purchase. However, among non-matrilineal women their number of sons is not significantly related to any domain of women's autonomy. With respect to matrilineal women, number of daughters is significantly related to women's participation in their choice of number of children, daily household purchases and major household purchases. The results show that increase in number of daughters decreases the odds of women par-

ticipating in the decision of the number of children they should have, daily household purchases and major household purchases. However, among non-matrilineal women, number of daughters is not significantly related to any domain of women's autonomy.

There is a weak relationship between religion and women's autonomy across all domains of decision-making among matrilineal women with the exception of decision-making regarding number of children, where only Traditionalist women are significantly less likely to be autonomous compared to Christian women. However, among non-matrilineal women, only Traditionalist women are significantly more likely to be autonomous in all domains of decision-making, compared to Christian women with the exception of decision-making regarding number of children to have.

The Influence of Lineage on Women's Autonomy

Table 4 shows the results of logistic and complementary log-log regression analyses. The re-

Table 4: Odds ratios of the influence of socio-demographic characteristics on women's autonomy

	NC	HC	MV	DH	MH	Sum Index
Lineage (non-matrilineal)						
Matrilineal	1.59**	1.40*	1.47*	0.96	1.14	1.20*
Age	1.03*	1.03**	1.03*	1.05***	1.05***	1.02*
Education (No education)						
Primary	0.85	1.45*	0.75	1.22	1.48*	1.00
Secondary+	1.36	1.35*	1.19	1.59*	1.65**	1.30*
Residence (Rural)						
Urban	1.06	1.67**	1.36	1.48*	1.15	1.07
Marriage type (Monogamy)						
Polygyny	0.58***	0.80	0.57**	0.85	0.63**	0.70***
Economic status (Earning wages)						
Not earning wages	0.44***	0.84	0.50***	0.54***	0.84	0.71***
Number of sons	0.96	0.95	0.96	0.92	0.87**	0.94
Number of daughters	0.89*	0.94	0.99	0.93	0.93	0.95
Religion (Christian)						
Muslim	1.22	0.84	0.88	0.70*	0.72	0.86
Traditionalist/spiritualist	0.81	2.72***	1.59	1.83*	1.84**	2.40***
No religion	1.12	0.91	1.51	0.84	1.43	0.95
Region (Ashanti)						
Western	0.44**	0.81	0.55*	1.01	0.70	0.82
Central	0.60	1.22	0.51*	0.85	0.67	0.90
Greater Accra	0.41**	0.47*	0.44**	0.50*	0.55*	0.79
Volta	0.98	0.89	0.67	1.21	0.9	0.96
Eastern	0.66	1.12	0.62	0.97	0.60+	1.19
Brong-Ahafo	0.41*	0.48*	0.41**	0.72	0.66	0.84
Northern	0.46*	1.39	1.09	1.22	1.34	1.98**
Upper east	0.88	1.70	2.04*	3.51**	0.37***	2.20***
Upper west	0.95	0.65	0.40**	0.99	0.51*	1.01
Observations	1870	1870	1870	1870	1870	1870
Linktest						
Hat	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Hatsq	0.94	0.23	0.85	0.35	0.98	0.38

Reference category in parenthesis (); * p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Source: GDHS 2008 dataset

Note: NC-number of children; HC-health care; MV-freedom of movement; DH-daily household purchases; MH-major household purchases; SumIndex-Summary Index of women's autonomy.

gression models regresses each domain of women's autonomy on lineage controlling for other background characteristics. For the logistic regression models each dependent variable is dummy coded (0 does not participate, 1 otherwise). The dependent variable for the complementary log-log regression is the summary index of women's autonomy in household decision-making. The goodness fit tests (Linktest) show that the models fit the data well.

Matrilineal women compared non-matrilineal women are significantly more likely to participate in decision-making regarding number of children to have, seeking health care and freedom of movement. Controlling for other factors, the odds of matrilineal women compared to non-matrilineal women participating in decisions regarding number of children to have are 59 percent higher, seeking health care for themselves are 40 percent higher and visiting family and relatives are 47 percent higher (significant at $p < 0.1$). In general, women's autonomy (summary measure) is marginally associated with matrilineal women (Table 4). The complementary log-log results show that in general matrilineal women compared to non-matrilineal women have significantly higher levels of autonomy that is 20 percent higher (significant $p < 0.1$).

From Table 3, the results show that age is significant in predicting all the domains of women's autonomy. An additional year of age of a woman increases her odds of participating in all the domains of women's autonomy considered as well as in general (summary index). In general, women with primary education are not significantly different from women with no education regarding women's autonomy in household decision-making (summary index). However, women with secondary⁺ education compared to women with no education are 1.30 times more likely to be autonomous. With respect to the domains of women's autonomy, women with primary education compared to women with no education are only more likely to participate in decision-making regarding seeking health care (OR, 1.45) and major household purchases (OR, 1.48). On the other hand, women with secondary⁺ education compared to women with no education, are more likely to participate in decisions regarding seeking health care, daily household purchases and major household purchases.

Regarding type of place of residence, urban women are only more autonomous with respect

to seeking health care and in daily household purchases. In general however, urban women are not autonomous than rural women. Polygynous women appear to be more autonomous in number of children, freedom of movement, major household purchases and in general (summary index).

Women who do not earn wages are less likely to be autonomous in number of children to have, visiting family and relatives, daily household purchases and in general (Table 4). While Muslim women are not significantly autonomous than Christian women, women who subscribe to the Traditionalist/spiritualist faith appear to be in general more autonomous in household decision-making than Christian women. Interestingly, with respect to region of residence, whereas only women in the eastern region appear to be more autonomous than women in Ashanti region (not significant), women in the three northern regions appear to be more autonomous than women in Ashanti region are (only women in the Upper west region are not significantly different from women in the Ashanti region).

DISCUSSION

This study sought to investigate the influence of lineage type—matrilineal versus non-matrilineal—on women's autonomy in Ghana. It is evident from the results that the matrilineal advantage in household decision-making is inconsistent across various dimensions of household decision-making. Matrilineal women compared to non-matrilineal women are more likely to participate in decisions concerning number of children, seeking health care and to some extent freedom of movement. In essence, matrilineal women are more likely to participate in reproductive related decision-making. In a related study in Ghana matrilineal women were found to be more able than non-matrilineal women to translate their reproductive preferences into action consistent with their goals (Takyi and Doo 2005). Other studies have demonstrated non-matrilineal women's lack of autonomy in reproductive decision-making and have largely attributed it to practices such as bride-wealth payment which transfers reproductive rights of the woman to the man and his family (Bawah et al. 1999; Horne et al. 2013). However, in matrilineal systems the payment of bride-wealth does not imply the transfer of the reproductive rights of the woman to the man and his family.

On the other hand, matrilineal women are not different from non-matrilineal women regarding decisions concerning daily household purchases. Indeed, traditionally daily household decision-making can be said to be the preserve of women and major household purchases in most cases is the preserve of men. Thus, it is not surprising that matrilineal women do not differ from non-matrilineal women with regard to daily household purchases and major household purchases. This finding of the inconsistent effect of the matrilineal advantage is also demonstrated by another study (Boateng and Flanagan 2008).

In addition, the study shows that different set of factors influence women's autonomy among matrilineal and non-matrilineal women. Research shows that variables such as place of residence, marriage type, economic status and religion affect women's autonomy in household decision-making (Acharya et al. 2010; Amin and Alam 2008; Cvorovic 2008; Darteh et al. 2014). Whereas these socio-economic factors appear to be very important in predicting women's autonomy across various domains among non-matrilineal women, the influence of the socio-economic factors on women's autonomy among matrilineal women is relatively minimal. This can be attributed to the matrilineal system which creates a buffer for matrilineal women and perhaps makes these socio-economic factors less important. As indicated earlier, in the matrilineal context, descent is traced through the mother and maternal ancestors. In this societal system children belong to their mother's lineage which can involve the inheritance of property and/or titles (Nukunya 1992; UNDP 2007).

The literature on lineage and household decision-making has shown that matrilineal women compared to non-matrilineal women have higher levels of autonomy in some specific domains of decision-making (Takyi and Dodo 2005; Boateng and Flanagan 2008). This analysis also shows a similar pattern. However, matrilineal women generally have high levels of autonomy than non-matrilineal women even though the relationship is weak. The weak matrilineal advantage in general can perhaps be attributed to the changing social structure of the family and the impact of economic pressures which is derailing matrilineal women's advantageous position in the matrilineal systems of Ghana (Amanor 2001). In today's world, men are with-

drawing their responsibilities towards matrilineage and focusing on their children. Consequently, women have declining access to land and have to rely on their husbands for land. This has implications on women's decision-making prowess (Amanor 2001).

CONCLUSION

Many factors affect women's autonomy in household decision-making. Some of these factors relate to the type of decision that is taken and some to the background of the women. This study provides evidence that matrilineal lineage enhances women's autonomy with regard to reproductive related decision-making. However, there appears to be very little matrilineal advantage with regard to economic decision-making. This study also demonstrates that different set of factors influence women's autonomy among matrilineal and non-matrilineal women across various domains of household decision-making.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study recommends that women should be mobilized, enabled to access economic resources and provide them with support to challenge the traditional norms that underlie gender inequalities. In addition, the efforts to enhance women's autonomy must be designed to meet the specific needs of the lineage groups, since different sets of factors influence women's autonomy in different lineage systems.

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