Is Wife's Marital Satisfaction Associated with Husband's Dominance in Family Affairs? Empirical Evidence from China

Zhongwu Li

Abstract: Employing data from the China Family Panel Studies (CFPS), the paper empirically examines the relation between husband's dominance in family affairs and wife's marital satisfaction. While applying the ordinal probit model and ordinary least squares (OLS) method, the paper finds that wife's reported marital satisfaction is positively associated with her husband's dominant role in family affairs. This conclusion remains valid after using an instrumental variable to deal with endogeneity and performing some robustness tests. Some heterogeneities exist: the association is particularly prominent among those women who have traditional gender norms and are living in rural areas. These women tend to embrace the traditional gender ideology which stipulates that men are the masters of the family.

Keywords: Dominance in family affairs · Marital satisfaction · Socio-economic reforms · Traditional gender norms · China Family Panel Studies

1   Introduction

With socio-economic reforms in 1978, e.g., the de-collectivisation of agriculture, the opening up of the country to foreign investment, and the nine-year compulsory education, Chinese women have had more opportunities to work in the labour markets for the past 40 years. Many women are now competing with their male counterparts for those jobs traditionally assigned to men. Additionally, women participate in social and political activities proactively, making their voices heard by others. All of these developments enhance the agency and capability of Chinese women greatly (*MacPhail/Dong* 2007). Under this social background, many women now tend to rid their well-being arising from being dependent on their husbands in order to find a new form of well-being arising from being more independent (*Yu et al.* 2019). In the family, women no longer simply embrace husbands' decisions, but actively participate in the decision-making process to improve their own well-being. In the eyes of women, they are able to do whatever men do, thus, it is unacceptable

that men's ideas dominate in family affairs. So, given the above, wife's marital satisfaction would be negatively affected in case of husband's sole dominance in the family.

In contrast to this, traditional social norms, especially gender norms remain influential in Chinese society. Such norms have been there for thousands of years, which stipulate the appropriate roles and behaviours of both men and women. In the domain of family, men are traditionally regarded as the breadwinners who take the responsibility of feeding family members, while women are affiliated to their husbands for assistance (*Gao* 2003; *Xie* 1994). Correspondingly, men are granted the power over major family affairs, while women are required to accept their husbands' decisions (*Wang et al.* 2019). The gender-based role division influences women's role orientation greatly, so that their expectations on husbands and themselves are increasingly in line with traditional gender norms (*Park*/*Banchefsky* 2019; *Yang*/*Gao* 2021). In this situation, the increasing match between women's expectations and traditional gender norms contributes to their marital satisfaction and stability. So, given traditional gender norms, women tend to find their well-being in being dependent on their husbands contrary to the other form of well-being arising for women from greater independence from their husbands. Consequently, wife's marital satisfaction would increase in case of husband's dominance in the family.

Both socio-economic reforms and traditional social norms jointly determine the relation between wife's marital satisfaction and her husband's dominance. On one side, under the influence of socio-economic reforms, many women not only question the idea of husband's dominance in the family, but they also fight for their own participation in family affairs. So, in this constellation, husband's dominance would negatively affect wife's marital satisfaction. On the other side, under the influence of traditional social norms, many women not only accept the tradition of husband's dominance in family affairs, but they also alienate those who deviate from such men-centered patriarchal traditions. So given this traditional constellation, husband's dominance would instead enhance wife's marital satisfaction. However, which factor exerts more influences in contemporary Chinese society? So far, there has been no relevant studies on this specific topic.

In previous research, marital satisfaction and its correlates have been investigated almost exclusively in Western countries (*Bradbury et al.* 2000). Moreover, in terms of the relation between bargaining power and marital quality, several studies focused on Western countries show some mixed results: some report that shared power in marriage is linked to the partners' higher marital quality and lower attachment insecurity over time (*Leonhardt et al.* 2020). But others report that bargaining power is not associated with the quality of marriage at all (*Sarantakos* 2000). So, it needs some new evidence on the topic for further clarification, especially, in terms of non-Western countries. The contemporary China is a good case for the study given two competing forces are simultaneously influencing both power relations among couples and marital satisfaction.

The remainder is arranged as follows. The second section reviews the previous literature and proposes the research hypotheses. Data, variables, and descriptive statistics are displayed in the third section. In the fourth section econometric

analysis is carried out and interpreted. The last section discusses the findings and concludes the study.

2   Literature review and research hypothesis

Our study draws on the literature on intra-household bargaining power: the determinants and the outcomes of intra-household bargaining power. Two research approaches are proposed to explain what determines one's intra-household bargaining power. The first is resource determinism, emphasising that the relative advantages in terms of education, occupation and income affects the position of family members (*Agarwal* 1997). Whoever has relative advantages in such resources as education, income and assets, holds stronger intra-household bargaining power, because the resources offer him/her more outside options in case of marriage dissolution. The second approach focusses on cultural norms emphasising that cultural background and institutional factors are important determinants of family decision-making outcomes (*Mabsout/van Staveren* 2010; *van Staveren/Ode bode* 2007). Such cultural norms can affect one's exit options, one's bargaining agency, e.g., accepting male authority when women have formally equal rights (*Nikièma et al.* 2008), one's preferences, e.g., adapting to what is deemed proper for women (*Sen* 1990), and one's roles in the family, e.g., limiting what can and cannot be bargained over (*Cuesta* 2006). Consequently, cultural norms would influence one's intra-household bargaining power, and even they will override the relative resources in determining one's bargaining power in the family (e.g., *Goetz/Gupta* 1996; *van Staveren/Ode bode* 2007). Meanwhile, previous research pointed out that bargaining power can directly or indirectly affect key personal outcomes, such as children's health, education, family production decisions, marital violence, and women's well-being (*Deere/Doss* 2006; *Luke/Munshi* 2011; *Panda/Agarwal* 2005).

Further, our study also draws on the literature of marital satisfaction. It is found that many factors are related to marital satisfaction across different societies. The following part will review the central variables that are predictors of marital satisfaction. *Gender*: it is reported that women are less satisfied with their marriages compared to men (*Rostami et al.* 2014). *Age*: there is no clear association between age and marital satisfaction in the literature (*Schmitt et al.* 2007). *Religiosity*: a positive association between religiosity and marital satisfaction is found across different religious groups (*Fincham et al.* 2011). *Duration of marriage*: the literature shows either a negative or U-shaped relationship between marriage length and marital satisfaction (*Karney/Bradbury* 1995; *Kurdek* 1999). *Number of children*: some contradictory findings are there in terms of the relation between the number of children and marital satisfaction (*Onyishi et al.* 2012; *Twenge et al.* 2003). *Education*: level of education is found to be positively related to marital satisfaction (*Rouhbakhsh et al.* 2019; *Stanley et al.* 2006). *Economic status*: low income or material hardship is associated with lower levels of marital satisfaction and stability (*Kurdek* 1999). *Personality traits*: it is found that neuroticism trait has a negative relationship with marital satisfaction, while conscientiousness trait has

a positive relationship with marital satisfaction (*Sayehmiri et al.* 2020). Moreover, the existing literature reveals that marital relationships are heavily influenced by culturally shaped norms, customs and expectations (*Berscheid* 1995). So, studying the correlates and even determinants of marital satisfaction in some other cultures apart from Western ones, would deliver new insights.

Based on relevant research approaches and social development in contemporary China, this paper proposes three research hypotheses for empirical investigation.

According to social role theory (*Akerlof/Kranton* 2000; *Eagly/Wood* 2016), there are generally held expectations for ideal male and ideal female roles. Such expectations, or social roles, are shaped by the values prevalent in a given society, which in turn are shaped by various social constraints. For thousands of years, Chinese patriarchal society rules that men are the masters of the family, while women are subordinate to their counterpart men (*Luo/Chui* 2018). All major family affairs are controlled by the husbands, and women are required to abide by their husbands' will. As an exchange, men bear the responsibility of feeding family members and winning reputation for the family. In the male-centered social system, women's well-being is fully dependent on their husbands' social and economic achievements (*Wang et al.* 2019). As a survival strategy, women prefer to marry such men with higher socio-economic status and income (*Chen* 2018). Influenced by surrounding environments and family members, women also subconsciously believe in husband's dominant role in family affairs. In marriage, such gender-based role division helps to form a harmonious relationship which improves women's marital satisfaction. With deviation from the social role arrangement (e.g., men's dominance in the family), both husbands' and wives' marital quality and marital stability might be hurt to some extent (*Park/Banchefsky* 2019).

In contemporary China, women have made great achievements in various social and economic fields along with technological progress. Many new ideas have permeated through the whole country, so, many women are open-minded to free themselves from old ideas and concepts (*Qi* 2018; *Zheng et al.* 2011). They not only challenge the men-centered patriarchal system, but also fight for more bargaining power for their own well-being in the family. Overall, the socio-economic transition from a closed socialist economy to an open market economy lays the foundations for women to free their well-being from dependence on their husbands, psychologically and economically (*Yu et al.* 2019). However, a series of research shows that unlike the trend of gender equality in many Western societies, Chinese families are evolving slowly to give women more space, but the traditional gender norms remain dominant in determining the roles of couples (*Ji/Yeung* 2014; *Yu/Xie* 2021). This is deeply reflected in strong expectations regarding women's marriage and child birth at a specific age, otherwise, external pressures are seriously imposed on those unmarried and childless women. Once a single woman is approaching her 30s, her parents and relatives would worry about her marriage and family life. Moreover, according to *Wang et al.* (2019), many women heavily rely on their husbands' political identity and social status for better well-being. Also, most women tend to marry men with higher socio-economic status and income, and the phenomenon of hypergamy prevails across different regions (*Chen* 2018). Relative

to women, men's employment status plays a more important role in the well-being of the couple (*Qian/Qian* 2015; *Zhang/Tsang* 2013).

Therefore, so far, traditional gender norms remain dominant in influencing personal social behaviours and role expectations. Following the traditional gender division of labour, we might expect that there is more harmony and higher satisfaction in marriages. Consequently, husband's dominance in family affairs would improve his wife's marital satisfaction, given the consistency of social role and behaviours. Regarding this, we propose the first hypothesis.

H1: Wife's marital satisfaction is positively associated with husband's dominance in family affairs.

Considering that there are huge differences across people and living regions, we believe some heterogeneities exist in the relation between wife's marital satisfaction and husband's dominance. Among various heterogeneities, two of them deserve our detailed discussions, which can further strengthen the robustness of the conclusion.

The first one is personal gender ideology, as it directly affects wife's attitudes towards her husband's dominance. For a woman with traditional gender ideology, such as men being the masters of the family, her behaviours will bear the characteristics and imprints of such ideology (*Egan/Perry* 2001; *Nielson et al.* 2020). The woman would subconsciously believe that it is her husband who should manage major family affairs. So, she tends to accept or even embrace the role arrangement of husband's dominance in the family, despite possible welfare loss (*Endendijk et al.* 2018; *Rittenour et al.* 2014). Moreover, she would oppose against any deviation from such arrangement by alienating even condemning such deviating behaviours. Overall, the woman rarely questions the tradition of men's dominance, and more, plays a supportive role in the family (*Turner/Salemink* 2015; *Valutanu* 2012). Therefore, her marital satisfaction will be improved if the role arrangement matches with her expectation of men's dominant role in family affairs. Based on this, we propose the second hypothesis.

H2: The positive association between marital satisfaction and husbands' dominant roles in family affairs is particularly evident among those women with traditional gender norms.

The second one is living regions (urban vs rural). Women from rural and urban regions are fundamentally different in their decision making regarding family affairs (*Cheng* 2019). It is possible that the positive impact of husband's dominance only exists in rural families, but not in urban families. The rural-urban gap is large, and continues to amplify in educational, social, economic, and ideological aspects (*Meng/Zhao* 2019). In rural areas, women have been disadvantaged for a long period of time, given limited education and economic opportunities (*Xiao/Asadullah* 2020). The economic opportunities being more concentrated in urban areas, rural villagers have to depend on limited land for livelihood. Given the physical advantages in farming, rural men naturally become heads of the family to control major family affairs. Additionally, compared to urban areas, advanced ideas and thoughts are difficult to penetrate in the isolated rural areas, so, traditional gender norms remain influential there (*Song et al.* 2021). Consequently, rural women personally believe

that women's subordinate status is normal, and compliance with this is essential to marital quality and stability. In this case, the marital satisfaction of rural women will be largely associated with their husbands' dominant role in family affairs. Based on this, we propose the third hypothesis.

H3: The positive association between marital satisfaction and husbands' dominant roles in family affairs is particularly evident among those women living in rural areas.

3 Data, variables and descriptive statistics

3.1 Data source

The paper uses the nationally representative China Family Panel Studies (CFPS) for econometric analysis. The CFPS is a longitudinal survey of Chinese communities, families and individuals updated every two years. Launched in 2010, it aims at collecting the latest information on China's socio-economic, demographic, educational, and health changes (*Xie/Lu* 2015). The CFPS is drawn through a stratified three-stage sampling method, covering 14,798 households in 162 counties and 635 villages in 25 provinces in China. The CFPS respondents are tracked through 2-year follow-up surveys, with an average response rate of 79 percent (*Xie/Hu* 2014). So far, the latest CFPS survey has been updated in 2018, with a collection of some newly added variables. Nevertheless, only the 2014 CFPS survey contains the variables needed for the paper, such as marital satisfaction, dominant role in family affairs, gender role beliefs. Even though the 2014 CFPS survey has no advantages over later rounds of surveys in terms of timeliness, the paper identifies further research needs. And thus, the findings would lay the foundations for future search in related fields. Given some control variables are missing in the 2014 CFPS, we also use variables in the 2012 CFPS adult and family relationship datasets in econometric estimations. Meanwhile, to obtain a causal effect of husband's dominance, the paper finds an instrumental variable in the 2010 CFPS family relationship dataset.

Considering that husband's dominance in family affairs is built based on marriage, we constrain the dataset to individuals in marriage. There remain 9,186 observations in the survey sample. After deleting the variables with missing values, non-response items and outliers, we finally get 7,240 observations for econometric analysis. According to our balance test, the variables used in the study have similar means and standard deviations between the analytical sample and the original sample.[1]

---

[1] Results of the balance test are not shown here but it is available on request.

3.2 Variable selection

The dependent variable is wife's marital satisfaction (*Marital_satisfaction*). It is assessed by the question of "to what extent are you satisfied with your current marriage?" The respondent can choose between 5 options: *very dissatisfied*, *quite dissatisfied*, *neutral*, *quite satisfied*, and *very satisfied*, with assigned values of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. A higher value indicates the wife has a higher level of marital satisfaction.

The major independent variable is husband's dominance in family affairs (*Husband_power*). It is assessed by the question of "who plays a dominant role in five important family matters": household expenditure allocation (*Expenditure*), household saving and investing (*Save_investment*), house construction and purchase (*House_purchase*), children's education (*Child_edcuation*), and high-priced consumer goods purchase (*High_priced_purchase*). The variable is equal to 1 if the husband plays a dominant role in the specific family matter, 0 if it is negotiated together, and -1 if the wife plays a dominant role. Each variable has the value of -1, 0 and 1. Then, we sum the scores of the above five sub-items to construct a comprehensive indicator, which reflects the husband's dominant power. The variable of *Husband_power* ranges from -5 to 5, and a larger value indicates that the husband plays a more dominant role in major family affairs. However, the five items are heterogeneous, which becomes particularly evident when referring to children's education and household financial affairs. To solve this issue, this paper also examines the five aspects separately in the following econometric analysis.

Additionally, this paper controls for a series of potential confounding factors, which are associated with both husband's dominance and wife's marital satisfaction. They include individual characteristics of women, i.e., whether she lives in an urban area (*Urban*, 1 if urban, 0 if rural), years of education (*Education*), natural logarithm of annual income (*Income*),[2] age (*Age*), age squared (*Age^2*), type of job (*Occupation*, 0 if unemployed, 1 in case of an agriculture-related job, 2 if employed in companies, 3 in case of entrepreneurship and self-employment). In contemporary China, entrepreneurship and self-employment is the most valued occupation, and employment in companies is more valued than agriculture-related jobs, and unemployment is the least valued, so, *Occupation* is an ordinal variable from the perspective of social prestige. Considering that gender ideology may directly affect wife's attitudes towards husband's dominance and her perceived marital quality, wife's gender ideology (*Gendernorm*) is controlled in the model. It is assessed by the following four questions: "1. Do you agree that men focus on the career and women focus on the family?" "2. Do you agree that marrying well is better for women than financial independence?" "3. Do you agree that women should have children throughout their life?" "4. Do you agree that men should do half of the housework?" The respondent has 5 options, for the first three questions, with 1 representing *strongly disagree* and 5 representing *strongly agree*; for the last question, with 1 representing *strongly agree* and 5 representing *strongly disagree*. Then, the scores

---

2 Considering the zero point of annual income, *Income* = log(1 + annual income).

for the above four questions are summed to construct a variable reflecting attitude toward traditional gender norms. A higher value indicates more traditional gender role attitudes. Additionally, non-cognitive ability (personality traits) is found to explain about 50 percent of individual differences in life satisfaction (*Diener* 1984). So, non-cognitive ability measured by the Big Five personality traits in the CFPS 2012 is further controlled. Among them, *Neuroticism* is assessed by the following four statements: "I feel depressed", "I feel down", "I feel scared", "I feel sad"; *Agreeableness* is assessed by the following two statements: "I don't think people are nice to me", "I don't think people like me"; *Conscientiousness* is assessed by the statement: "I have trouble concentrating when I am doing things." For each statement, the respondent has 4 options: *most of the time*, *often*, *sometimes*, *almost never* with assigned values of 1, 2, 3, and 4. Then, we sum the scores of all statements to construct a variable of non-cognitive ability (*Noncognitive*). It ranges from 7 to 28, and a larger value indicates a stronger level of non-cognitive ability. Meanwhile, a significant spillover effect in individual well-being is found within the family (*Wang et al.* 2019), so, some family-level factors are also controlled. They include educational difference (*Education_diff*, the difference between years of education of husband versus wife), income difference (*Income_diff*, the difference between husband's annual income and wife's annual income), non-cognitive ability difference (*Noncognitive_diff*, the difference between husband's non-cognitive ability and wife's non-cognitive ability), husband's type of job (*S_Occupation*, same definition with *Occupation*) and the family's social status in local community (*Family_status*, 1-5, a larger value indicates a higher family social status). Considering regional differences, we further add provincial dummies to the model.

3.3 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 lists the descriptive statistics of the main variables. The mean of *Marital_satisfaction* is 4.395, indicating that women in the sample are generally satisfied with their marriages. The mean of *Husband_power* is 1.201, indicating that in most cases, the husband is the decision maker of important family affairs. For the mean value of 1.201 (with SD of 3.689), it is worrying that one could also conclude that in Chinese society, husband's dominant power is non-existent given the *Husband_power* ranges from -5 to 5. Regarding this, we display the distribution of *Husband_power* in Table 2. The percentage of husbands dominating in all the five family matters is about 34.65 percent, which is twice larger than that of wives' dominance (about 16.53 percent). So, it further indicates that the husband plays a dominate role in major family affairs in Chinese society. For other sub-indicators of husband's dominance, their mean values are greater than zero. It indicates that the husband also dominates in the five specific family affairs. However, the mean of *Child_education* is the smallest, but that of *House_purchase* is the largest, *Save_investment* is the second largest. So, the husband has the greatest decision-making power in house purchase, then, saving and capital investment. However, the wife also actively participates in the children's education despite husband's dominance. Additionally, 48.5 percent of the women live in urban areas. The average years of education are

Tab. 1:   Summary statistics of key variables

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	p50	Max
Marital_satisfaction	7,240	4.395	0.933	1	5	5
Husband_power	7,240	1.201	3.689	-5	2	5
Expenditure	7,240	0.229	0.890	-1	1	1
Save_investment	7,240	0.274	0.876	-1	1	1
House_purchase	7,240	0.398	0.818	-1	1	1
Child_education	7,240	0.072	0.912	-1	0	1
High_priced_purchase	7,240	0.228	0.883	-1	1	1
Urban	7,240	0.485	0.500	0	0	1
Education	7,240	6.157	4.891	0	6	22
Income	7,240	3.287	4.065	0	0	12.61
Noncognitive	7,240	24.830	3.151	7	26	28
Occupation	7,240	1.143	0.890	0	1	3
Gendernorm	7,240	14.00	2.542	4	14	20
Age	7,240	48.94	13.39	19	49	89
Education_diff	7,240	1.765	4.303	-16	0	16
Income_diff	7,240	1.379	4.793	-12.61	0	12.35
Noncognitive_diff	7,240	0.835	3.341	-18	0	20
S_Occupation	7,240	1.458	0.879	0	1	3
Family_status	7,240	3.193	0.947	1	3	5

Note: N: the number of observations, Mean: mean value, SD: standard deviation, Min: minimum value, p50: median value, Max: maximum value.

Source: Own calculations based on CFPS 2014, 2012

Tab. 2:   Distribution of *Husband_Power*

Husband_power	Frequency	Percent
-5	1,197	16.53
-4	61	0.84
-3	359	4.96
-2	78	1.08
-1	441	6.09
0	834	11.52
1	628	8.67
2	153	2.11
3	799	11.04
4	181	2.50
5	2,509	34.65

Source: Own calculations based on CFPS 2014

about 6; The average age is about 49 years. In terms of gender difference, it is shown that men have more advantages in education, income, and non-cognitive ability

than their counterpart women. These are roughly in line with the actual situation of Chinese society in 2014,[3] thus ensuring the representativeness of the sample, and laying a foundation for empirical analysis.

4 Econometric analysis and interpretation

4.1 Econometric model

In order to examine the relation between husband's dominance in family matters and his wife's marital satisfaction, we take *Marital_satisfaction* as the dependent variable and *Husband_power* as the main independent variable to establish an econometric model as follows:

$$Marital\_satisfaction_i^* = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * Husband\_power_i + Covariates * \beta_3 + \mu_i \quad (1)$$

$$Marital\_satisfaction_i = \begin{cases} 1, & Marital\_satisfaction_i^* \leq r_1 \\ 2, & r_1 < Marital\_satisfaction_i^* \leq r_2 \\ 3, & r_2 < Marital\_satisfaction_i^* \leq r_3 \\ 4, & r_3 < Marital\_satisfaction_i^* \leq r_4 \\ 5, & r_4 < Marital\_satisfaction_i^* \end{cases} \quad (2)$$

Among them, $Marital\_satisfaction_i^*$ is the latent variable of female marital satisfaction, r_1, r_2, r_3, and r_4 are the cut-off points, with $r_1 < r_2 < r_3 < r_4$, $Husband\_power_i$ is husband's dominance in family affairs, *Covariates* are control variables, and μ_i is a random error term. Due to the ordinal feature of marital satisfaction, we mainly use an ordinal response model to estimate the parameters in formula (1). To enhance the robustness of the conclusion, we also use ordinary least squares (OLS) as the baseline regression. In the OLS regression, the estimated coefficient is the marginal effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. So, β_1 in formula (1) is the parameter of interest to be estimated, that is, the coefficient of husband's dominance in family affairs. Similarly, for the five sub-indicators reflecting husband's dominance in a specific family matter, we replace the independent variable of $Husband\_power_i$ with $Expenditure_i$, $Save\_investment_i$, $House\_purchase_i$, $Child\_edcuation_i$, and $High\_priced\_purchase_i$ to estimate the parameter of β_1 accordingly.

4.2 Baseline regression

Table 3 reports the OLS and ordinal probit regression results. Whether the covariates are controlled or not, the independent variable *Husband_power* is positive at the

---

3 According to the statistical yearbook in 2014 from the *National Bureau of Statistics of China*, retrieved from http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/2014/indexch.htm.

Tab. 3: The impact of husband's dominance in family affairs on wife's marital satisfaction

	(1) OLS	(2) OLS	(3) Ordinal probit	(4) Ordinal probit
Husband_power	0.018***	0.015***	0.023***	0.019***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)
Urban		0.101***		0.135***
		(0.025)		(0.033)
Education		-0.001		-0.006
		(0.003)		(0.005)
Income		0.004		0.005
		(0.003)		(0.004)
Noncognitive		0.041***		0.051***
		(0.005)		(0.006)
Occupation		-0.000		0.001
		(0.014)		(0.019)
Gendernorm		0.027***		0.043***
		(0.005)		(0.006)
Age		-0.002		0.002
		(0.005)		(0.007)
Age^2		0.000		0.000
		(0.000)		(0.000)
Education_diff		0.004		0.005
		(0.003)		(0.004)
Income_diff		-0.003		-0.003
		(0.003)		(0.003)
Noncognitive_diff		0.006		0.008
		(0.005)		(0.006)
S_Occupation		0.025*		0.024
		(0.015)		(0.020)
Family_status		0.138***		0.196***
		(0.013)		(0.017)
Provincial effect	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adj/Pseudo R^2	0.018	0.063	0.011	0.036
N	9,495	7,231	9,495	7,231

Note: Robust standard error in parentheses, and *, ** and *** indicate significance at the 10 percent, 5 percent and 1 percent levels respectively, and number of observations is 7,231 due to 9 missing points in provincial dummies.

Source: Own calculations based on CFPS 2014, 2012

1 percent significant level. It indicates that wife's marital satisfaction is positively associated with her husband's dominant role in family affairs. Further, five separate

analyses are performed for the five sub-indicators in Table 4. The results show that wife's marital satisfaction remains positively associated with her husband's dominance in household expenditure allocation, household saving and investing, house construction and purchase, children's education, and high-priced consumer goods purchase. Nevertheless, we find that the coefficient in OLS regression has the largest value in the aspect of household saving and investing, and the second largest value in the aspect of house construction and purchase. In Chinese families, decisions on household financial activities and house purchase are more influential compared to the other three family matters. So, the positive association between wife's marital satisfaction and her husband's dominance in family affairs is relatively stronger in traditionally male-dominant family affairs.

Tab. 4: The impact of husband's dominance in five dimensions of family matters on wife's marital satisfaction

Five dimensions	OLS	Ordinal probit
A: household expenditure allocation	0.051***	0.068***
	(0.013)	(0.017)
B: household saving and investing	0.059***	0.081***
	(0.013)	(0.017)
C: house construction and purchase	0.053***	0.065***
	(0.014)	(0.018)
D: children's education	0.046***	0.056***
	(0.012)	(0.016)
E: high-priced consumer goods purchase	0.046***	0.056***
	(0.013)	(0.017)

Note: Robust standard error in parentheses, and *, ** and *** indicate significance at the 10 percent, 5 percent and 1 percent levels respectively, the covariates controlled in the Table are same with Table 3.
Source: Own calculations based on CFPS 2014, 2012

From the above, the family power relation is an important determinant of wife's marital satisfaction. In contemporary China, traditional gender norms remain dominant in deciding women's marital quality, more broadly, women's well-being. Although socio-economic reforms have been greatly influencing people's behaviours and attitudes towards gender roles, most women are unable to get rid of the gender norm constraints of men being the heads in Chinese families (*Li* 2022). Instead, these women are inclined to support the idea that men are the backbones of the family, and women are subordinate to their counterpart men. So, Hypothesis 1 that wife's marital satisfaction is positively associated with husband's dominance in family affairs is empirically confirmed.

4.3 Gender ideology and rural-urban differences

To examine possible heterogeneities of the relation between husband's dominance and wife's marital satisfaction, we conduct some sub-sample regressions based on wife's gender ideology and living regions. Specifically, according to the 50 percent quantile of wife's gender ideology (*Gendernorm*), the full sample is divided into two sub-samples: less traditional women and more traditional women. When it is less than its 50 percent quantile value, a woman is classified as less traditional. In contrast, when it is greater than its 50 percent quantile value, a woman is classified as more traditional. Similarly, according to women's living regions, we divide the full sample into two sub-samples corresponding to rural areas and urban areas.

Table 5 displays sub-sample regression results by using both ordinal probit and OLS methods. *Husband_power* is significantly positive at the 1 percent level in Column (2), but insignificant in Column (1). Setting aside the significance of *Husband_power*, its coefficient approaches to zero in Column (1). It means that the positive association of wife's marital satisfaction with her husband's dominance exists among those women with traditional gender ideology. However, for other women with modern gender ideology, their marital satisfaction is not associated with husbands' dominance in family affairs. So, Hypothesis 2 that the positive association between marital satisfaction and husbands' dominant roles in family affairs is particularly evident among those women with traditional gender norms is empirically confirmed.[4] Meanwhile, *Husband_power* is significantly positive in

Tab. 5: Sub-sample regression according to gender ideology and rural-urban areas

	(1) Less traditional	(2) More traditional	(3) Rural	(4) Urban
		Ordinal probit		
Husband_power	0.007	0.027***	0.026***	0.012**
	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)
		OLS		
Husband_power	0.005	0.020***	0.022***	0.008*
	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Provincial effect	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pseudo (Adj) R^2	0.040 (0.080)	0.037 (0.055)	0.041 (0.071)	0.034 (0.047)
N	2,553	4,678	3,721	3,510

Note: Robust standard error in parentheses, and *, ** and *** indicate significance at the 10 percent, 5 percent and 1 percent levels respectively.
Source: Own calculations based on CFPS 2014, 2012

---

[4] When the sample is divided according to the mean value of *Gendernorm*, it reaches the same conclusion.

both Columns (3) and (4), but heterogeneities exist there. It passes the significance test at the 1 percent level in Column (3), but only at the 5 percent or even 10 percent level in Column (4). Moreover, the size of coefficient in Column (3) is twice even thrice than that in Column (4). It indicates that the positive association is much greater in rural areas than in urban areas. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 that the positive association between marital satisfaction and husbands' dominant roles in family affairs is particularly evident among those women living in rural areas is confirmed.

4.4 Endogeneity problems

The above results are generally based on correlation analysis; however, more meaningful findings should be based on causal analysis. From correlation to causation, we have to remove possible endogeneity bias embedded in the econometric model. The endogeneity arises when an unobserved or omitted variable is confounding both independent and dependent variables. In our case, although a series of variables are controlled, there remain some unobservable confounding variables omitted in the model. Failure to control for them might result in self-selection bias based on unobservables. The endogeneity also arises when there is a reversed relation from wife's marital satisfaction to her husband's dominance. In our case, a wife satisfied with her marriage may gain more self-confidence, which can enhance her bargaining power in family affairs. Thereby, husband's dominant role in the family is challenged to some extent. To further address the endogeneity bias, we use an instrument-based approach to estimate the causal relation between husband's dominance and wife's marital satisfaction.

Before performing instrument variable regression, we first use the lagged independent variable to alleviate the possible reversed relation issue. As a longitudinal survey, the CFPS has advantages in collecting the variable of husband's dominance continuously. If we substitute husband's dominant role in family affairs in 2012 for *Husband_power* in formula (1), the independent variable will appear before the dependent variable in time dimension. It can effectively solve the problem of reversed relation. Huband's dominance in 2012 (*Husband_power_*2012) is assessed by the single question of "who decides the major family affairs?" It has the value of 1, if the respondent replies with husband, 0 if it is negotiated, -1 if it is the wife who decides. Table 6 displays the regression results by using both ordinal probit and OLS. Consistent with the baseline regression, wife's marital satisfaction remains positively associated with her husband's dominant role in major family affairs.

In performing instrumental variable regression, we need to find a valid instrumental variable (IV) for the endogenous independent variable *Husband_power*. The IV should satisfy both correlation and exclusion conditions. First, the IV must be correlated with the endogenous variable; Second, the IV must influence the dependent variable only through its impact on the endogenous variable. The second condition is also called exclusion restriction constraint. It locks other mechanisms through which the IV influences the dependent variable except the endogenous independent variable. The variation of IV will result in variation of the endogenous variable, which is like a seemingly exogenous shock to the dependent variable.

Tab. 6:   Regression results considering the reversed relation

	(1) OLS	(2) Ordinal probit
Husband_power_2012	0.068***	0.080***
	(0.016)	(0.020)
Covariates	No	Yes
Provincial effect	Yes	Yes
Adj/Pseudo R²	0.062	0.036
N	7,231	7,231

Note: *Marital_Satisfaction* is the dependent variable. Robust standard error in parentheses, and *, ** and *** indicate significance at the 10 percent, 5 percent and 1 percent levels respectively.

Source: Own calculations based on CFPS 2014, 2012

From this perspective, the IV approach aims at forming a quasi-natural experiment to evaluate the effect of exogenous policy shock. In this paper, we use genealogy culture (*Genealogy*) as the instrument of husband's dominance. It is assessed by the question of "whether your family has a family genealogy book or not?" in the CFPS 2010 family dataset. It is assigned the value of 1 if the family has a genealogy book, otherwise it is 0.

As to the validity of the instrumental variable, we explain it from two aspects as mentioned above. On the one hand, the genealogy culture has been there since feudal society in China, and it still exerts some influences in many areas today. Family and clan rules are accompanied with genealogy culture, given the family genealogy book aims at maintaining the patriarchal system. In that system, it is told that everything is inherited from the patrilineal blood, so that women are often excluded from the genealogy book. Those families owning family genealogy books tend to respect traditional notions. Often, they believe that men should be the backbones of the family, while women should be inferior and subordinate to their counterpart men. This could enhance men's dominant role in family affairs greatly. So, having a family genealogy book might be positively associated with husband's dominance in family affairs. On the other hand, as a historical book recording the relationship under the same ancestry, for the family genealogy book it is difficult to directly influence wife's marital satisfaction. Therefore, it is a relatively exogenous instrumental variable in the equation of female marital satisfaction. However, it is worrying that genealogy culture may be associated with wife's marital satisfaction by increasing wife's tolerance toward her husband's dominance. So, besides intra-household bargaining power, genealogy culture may also affect wife's marital satisfaction through such channel as wife's tolerance. This will violate the exclusion restriction condition. To cut off the channel of wife's tolerance, the paper controls for wife's tolerance toward husband's dominance in the IV-based regression.

The paper uses wife's gender ideology as the proxy of wife's tolerance toward husband's dominance. A wife with traditional gender ideology tends to believe

that women should be subordinate to their counterpart men, and men should be natural leaders in deciding major family matters. After some time, this idea could subconsciously increase wife's tolerance toward husband's dominance in family affairs. While controlling for wife's gender ideology, Table 7 shows that *Geneaology* is not statistically significant in wife's marital satisfaction equation. So, the exogeneity of family genealogy book is further confirmed.

Tab. 7: Regression results of wife's marital satisfaction on genealogy culture

	(1) OLS	(2) Ordinal probit
IV: *Genealogy*	0.041	0.055
	(0.028)	(0.037)
Role	0.031***	0.048***
	(0.005)	(0.006)
Covariates	Yes	Yes
Provincial effect	Yes	Yes
Adj/Pseudo R^2	0.061	0.036
N	6,864	6,864

Note: the dependent variable is *Marital_satisfaction* (wife's marital satisfaction), *Genealogy* is the instrumental variable, the covariates are the same as in Table 3; the values in parentheses are the robust standard errors of the regression coefficient estimators; *p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01.
Source: Own calculations based on CFPS 2014, 2012, 2010

We use the two-stage least squares (2SLS) method to estimate the causal effect of husband's dominance on wife's marital satisfaction. In the first stage, the endogenous independent variable, *Husband_power* is regressed on all of the exogenous variables in the model, including the excluded instrument, *Genealogy*. The predicted values from the regressions are obtained: $\widehat{Husband\_power}_i = Genealogy_i * \theta + error$. In the second stage, the regression of interest is estimated as usual, except that in this stage the endogenous independent variable is replaced with the predicted values from the first stage: $M\_satisfaction_i = \widehat{Husband\_power}_i * \beta + noise$. The parameter of interest is β, which measures the impact of husband's dominance on wife's marital satisfaction.

The IV-based regression results are displayed in Table 8. The findings are summarised as follows. First, corr(e1, e2), alternatively, corr(error, noise) is significantly different from 0. It indicates that husband's dominance is endogenous in the equation of wife's marital satisfaction. So, it is necessary to apply the IV method to handle endogeneity bias. Second, Column (1) shows that *Genealogy* is positively associated with *Husband_power*, consistent with the expectation that genealogy culture is likely to enhance husband's dominance in family affairs. Moreover, the Cragg-Donald Wald F value is greater than 10, indicating that the IV does not suffer weak instrument problem. Third, Column (2) shows that *Husband_*

Tab. 8: Instrument variable regression

	(1) First stage	(2) Second stage
Husband_Power		0.183**
		(0.085)
Genealogy	0.247**	
	(0.108)	
Covariates	Yes	Yes
Provincial effect	Yes	Yes
Cragg-Donald Wald F	24.580	
corr(e1, e2)		-0.593*
N	6,864	6,864

Note: robust standard error in parentheses, and *, ** and *** indicate significance at the 10 percent, 5 percent and 1 percent levels respectively.

Source: Own calculations based on CFPS 2014, 2012, 2010

power is significantly positive at the 1 percent level. So, wife's marital satisfaction is again positively associated with her husband's dominance in family affairs.

Additionally, we use five sub-indicators of husband's dominance as the independent variables for the IV-based estimations. Table 9 shows that in all five

Tab. 9: Instrumental variable regression by five sub-indicators

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Expenditure	1.099***				
	(0.200)				
Save_investment		0.695**			
		(0.347)			
House_purchase			0.900**		
			(0.368)		
Child_education				0.831**	
				(0.349)	
High_priced_purchase					0.704**
					(0.343)
Covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Provincial effect	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
corr(e1, e2)	-0.920***	-0.682**	0.710***	-0.696**	-0.566*
N	6,864	6,864	6,864	6,864	6,864

Note: robust standard error in parentheses, and *, ** and *** indicate significance at the 10 percent, 5 percent and 1 percent levels respectively.

Source: Own calculations based on CFPS 2014, 2012, 2010

models, husband's dominance is positively related to his wife's marital satisfaction. The main conclusion of this paper that wife's marital satisfaction is positively associated with husband's dominance in family affairs is again supported. Therefore, the IV-based estimation results further confirm the main conclusion of the paper.

4.5 Robustness check

To reduce the dependence on a single dependent variable, we also use wife's life satisfaction as the dependent variable for robustness check. Both marital satisfaction and life satisfaction are components of personal subjective well-being, and they are interrelated most of the time. In the CFPS, life satisfaction (*Life_satisfaction*) is measured by the question of "how satisfied are you with your life?" The respondent has 5 options: *very unsatisfied*, *unsatisfied*, *neutral*, *satisfied*, *very satisfied*, with assigned values of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively. A larger value indicates the respondent has a higher level of life satisfaction. We also apply the IV-based regression for estimation of parameters of interest. Table 10 displays the regression results. Whether the *Husband_power* or five sub-indicators is used as the independent variable, husband's dominance in family affairs positively affects wife's life satisfaction.

Tab. 10: Robustness check with wife's life satisfaction as the dependent variable

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Husband_power	0.174**					
	(0.086)					
Expenditure		1.083***				
		(0.231)				
Save_investment			0.656*			
			(0.343)			
House_purchase				0.876**		
				(0.386)		
Child_education					0.799**	
					(0.354)	
High_priced_purchase						0.673*
						(0.347)
Covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Provincial effect	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
corr(e1, e2)	-0.575*	-0.914***	-0.516*	-0.665**	-0.683**	-0.539*
N	6,864	6,864	6,864	6,864	6,864	6,864

Note: robust standard error in parentheses, and *, ** and *** indicate significance at the 10 percent, 5 percent and 1 percent levels respectively.
Source: Own calculations based on CFPS 2014, 2012, 2010

5 Conclusion and discussion

Women's well-being is an important topic because of the strategic role in socio-economic development and human reproduction. Among various types of well-being, female marital satisfaction has attracted unprecedented attentions among Chinese governmental officials and scholars, in the backdrop of a rising proportion of divorce cases initiated by women. Based on a series of previous literature (*Leonhardt et al.* 2020; *Sarantakos* 2000), the paper uses two competing forces as an experiment to explore the relation between family power arrangements and female marital satisfaction. The results show that wife's marital satisfaction is positively associated with her husband's dominance in family affairs. To reduce possible endogeneity bias, the paper employs an instrumental variable regression to estimate the causal effect of husband's dominance on wife's marital satisfaction. The IV-based results corroborate the conclusion. Some heterogeneities exist: the positive association is much stronger among those women who have traditional gender ideology and are living in rural areas. These women hold traditional gender role beliefs of men being the masters of the family in spite of a huge socio-economic transition (*Li* 2022). Although China experienced socio-economic reforms, the traditional social structure and ideology remain intact. Compared to urban areas, remote rural areas continue to follow traditional behaviours and life styles in contemporary China. In a closed community, rural villagers are taught and influenced by their parents and peers not to deviate from the traditional gender norms.

The study has strong policy implications. First, pro-women social policies are needed. Women are traditionally in a marginal position in Chinese society, so that they have to rely on men for a better life. This dependence will lead women to develop traditional men-centered gender ideologies, which emphasise men's dominance and women's obedience. Along with the socio-economic transition, women's well-being and status have been better than ever before. In spite of great achievements, the gender gap between women and men remains to be narrowed in many aspects (*Qing* 2020). In a market-based economy, women are often discriminated in the process of job application, given companies worry that women are more likely to retreat to the family after marriage and child birth (*Zhang et al*. 2021). In women's careers, they still face glass ceiling at top levels even if they are more capable than male counterparts, due to cultural constraints and work-family conflicts (*de Jonge* 2014). All these institutional barriers might lead women to again appeal to men for higher socio-economic status and well-being. So, it is important for governmental departments to design related policies to remove the barriers which prevent women from fully utilising their potential. Second, balanced regional development strategies are needed. The urban-rural gap is not narrowing, instead expanding in some regions (*Sicular et al.* 2008; *Zhong et al.* 2022). Compared to urban places, rural villages have less economic opportunities because of the city-centered development policies. Consequently, wife's well-being is more associated with her husband's dominance in rural areas than in urban areas. In less-developed rural areas, women are inclined to marry men with a higher socio-economic status to upgrade their family's social status (*Chen* 2018; *Wei/Zhang* 2016). After

marriage, women are confined to kitchen and trivial housework, and rely on their husbands for livelihood. This greatly restricts women's agency and capability. So, the government should develop both urban and rural areas together, even prioritise rural developments.

The paper has some interesting and insightful findings, but there remain some limitations worth noting. First, the time effectiveness of the dataset is not ideal. The data used in this paper were collected in 2014, so, the empirical findings might not reflect the latest situation in China. It is possible that a positive relation is detected in 2014, but the positive relation disappears in 2022. However, this will not be a big concern, according to previous research, the traditional beliefs in Chinese society have been evolving slowly (*Ji/Yeung* 2014; *Yu/Xie* 2021). Second, it is difficult to detect a dynamic effect in a cross-sectional dataset. We control for a series of confounding factors, but some unobservable time-invariants are left to error terms. Even though the IV method is applied to reduce such omitted-variable bias, we cannot see the dynamic relations between husband's dominance and wife's marital satisfaction. In the future, if panel data are available, we could not only remove time-invariant confounders, but also detect the dynamic relations across different years. Third, there is a sample selection problem. Female marital satisfaction is observable only if she is in marriage or cohabitation with her husband. For unmarried and divorced individuals, the variable is unavailable. In the regression, we want to estimate the effect of husband's dominance on his wife's marital satisfaction. However, due to unavailability of the dependent and independent variables, the analytical sample does not consider the case that women who cannot tolerate husband's dominance, and report very low marital satisfaction may turn to divorce. This may lead to a sample selection bias. However, among the divorced cases, besides the reason of husband's dominance which might cause divorces, there are also other reasons, such as personality differences. It is difficult to differentiate this reason from other reasons. So, the problem cannot be handled easily. Nevertheless, we do not think it is a big concern to our main results. There are only 174 divorced cases in the survey sample, accounting for 1.15 percent in total observations. And we believe that the reason of husband's dominance only accounts for a small proportion of divorced cases.

Based on the current study, we expect future research to be done focusing on China or other developing countries to further investigate gender roles and their meaning for family life. The results suggest that it is worth investigating the latest large-scale panel datasets for empirical analysis on the topic. In addition, future research could consider more heterogeneities between wife's marital satisfaction and husband's dominance in family affairs. This would further support the main assumption that traditional gender norms are overtaking the socio-economic transition in shaping married women's well-being. Furthermore, we may consider the relation between husband's marital satisfaction and wife's dominance in family affairs in future research. It is quite interesting and insightful to know about husband's marital quality in the family, given it will indirectly influence wife's marital quality.

To sum it all up, we use the CFPS survey to study the relationship between marital satisfaction and one's dominance in family affairs. While controlling for relevant confounders, we find that wife's marital satisfaction is positively related to husband's dominance in five important family affairs. This is particularly prominent among those women living in rural areas and with traditional gender ideologies. These women are inclined to embrace traditional gender role division according to which men are dominant in important family affairs, and women follow men's decisions.

References

Agarwal, Bina 1997: ''Bargaining'' and Gender Relations: Within and Beyond the Household. In: Feminist Economics 3,1: 1-51. https://doi.org/10.1080/135457097338799

Akerlof, George A.; Kranton, Rachel E. 2000: Economics and Identity. In: The Quarterly Journal of Economics 115,3: 715-753. https://doi.org/10.1162/003355300554881

Berscheid, Ellen 1995: Help Wanted: A Grand Theorist of Interpersonal Relationships, Sociologist or Anthropologist Preferred. In: Journal of Social and Personal Relationships 12,4: 529-533. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407595124005

Bradbury, Thomas N.; Fincham, Frank D.; Beach, Steven R. H. 2000: Research on the Nature and Determinants of Marital Satisfaction: A Decade in Review. In: Journal of Marriage and Family 62,4: 964-980. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2000.00964.x

Chen, Meng 2018: Does Marrying Well Count More Than Career? Personal Achievement, Marriage, and Happiness of Married Women in Urban China. In: Chinese Sociological Review 50,3: 240-274. https://doi.org/10.1080/21620555.2018.1435265

Cheng, Cheng 2019: Women's Education, Intergenerational Coresidence, and Household Decision-Making in China. In: Journal of Marriage and Family 81,1: 115-132. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12511

Cuesta, José 2006: The distributive consequences of machismo: a simulation analysis of intra-household discrimination. In: Journal of International Development 18,8: 1065-1080. https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.1280

de Jonge, Alice 2014: The glass ceiling that refuses to break: Women directors on the boards of listed firms in China and India. In: Women's Studies International Forum 47: 326-338. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2014.01.008

Deere, Carmen Diana; Doss, Cheryl R. 2006: The gender asset gap: What do we know and why does it matter? In: Feminist Economics 12,1-2: 1-50. https://doi.org/10.1080/13545700500508056

Diener, Ed 1984: Subjective well-being. In: Psychological Bulletin 95,3: 542-575. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.95.3.542

Eagly, Alice H.; Wood, Wendy 2016: Social Role Theory of Sex Differences. In: The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118663219.wbegss183

Egan, Susan K.; Perry, David G. 2001: Gender identity: a multidimensional analysis with implications for psychosocial adjustment. In: Developmental Psychology 37,4: 451-463. https://doi.org/10.1037//0012-1649.37.4.451

Endendijk, Joyce J.; Groeneveld, Marleen G.; Mesman, Judi 2018: The Gendered Family Process Model: An Integrative Framework of Gender in the Family. In: Archives of Sexual Behavior 47,4: 877-904. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-018-1185-8

Fincham, Frank D.; Ajayi, Christine; Beach, Steven R. H 2011: Spirituality and marital satisfaction in African American couples. In: Psychology of Religion and Spirituality 3,4: 259-268. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0023909

Gao, Xiongya 2003: Women Existing for Men: Confucianism and Social Injustice against Women in China. In: Race, Gender & Class 10,3: 114-125.

Goetz, Anne Marie; Gupta, Rina Sen 1996: Who takes the credit? Gender, power, and control over loan use in rural credit programs in Bangladesh. In: World Development 24,1: 45-63. https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X(95)00124-U

Ji, Yingchun; Yeung, Wei-Jun Jean 2014: Heterogeneity in Contemporary Chinese Marriage. In: Journal of Family Issues 35,12: 1662-1682. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X14538030

Karney, Benjamin R.; Bradbury, Thomas N. 1995: The longitudinal course of marital quality and stability: A review of theory, methods, and research. In: Psychological Bulletin 118,1: 3-34. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.118.1.3

Kurdek, Lawrence A. 1999: The nature and predictors of the trajectory of change in marital quality for husbands and wives over the first 10 years of marriage. In: Developmental Psychology 35,5: 1283-1296. https://doi.org/10.1037//0012-1649.35.5.1283

Leonhardt, Nathan D. et al. 2020: Longitudinal influence of shared marital power on marital quality and attachment security. In: Journal of Family Psychology 34,1: 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000566

Li, Zhongwu 2022: Does Family Decision-Making Power Improve Women's Happiness? In: Journal of Family Issues 43,8: 2016-2039. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X211030025

Luke, Nancy; Munshi, Kavian 2011: Women as agents of change: Female income and mobility in India. In: Journal of Development Economics 94,1: 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2010.01.002

Luo, Meng Sha; Chui, Ernest Wing Tak 2018: Gender Division of Household Labor in China: Cohort Analysis in Life Course Patterns. In: Journal of Family Issues 39,12: 3153-3176. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X18776457

Mabsout, Ramzi; van Staveren, Irene 2010: Disentangling Bargaining Power from Individual and Household Level to Institutions: Evidence on Women's Position in Ethiopia. In: World Development 38,5: 783-796. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2009.11.011

MacPhail, Fiona; Dong; Xiao-yuan 2007: Women's market work and household status in rural China: Evidence from Jiangsu and Shandong in the late 1990s. In: Feminist Economics 13,3-4: 93-124. https://doi.org/10.1080/13545700701439457

Meng, Lei; Zhao, Min Qiang 2019: Bride Drain: An unintended consequence of China's urban-rural divide. In: Labour Economics 58: 69-80. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2019.04.003

National Bureau of Statistics of China 2014: China Statistical Yearbook [http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/2014/indexch.htm, 14.02.2023].

Nielson, Matthew G. et al. 2020: Investigating the Relation between Gender Typicality and Pressure to Conform to Gender Norms. In: Sex Roles 83,9: 523-535. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-020-01136-y

Nikièma, Béatrice; Haddad, Slim; Potvin, Louise 2008: Women Bargaining to Seek Healthcare: Norms, Domestic Practices, and Implications in Rural Burkina Faso. In: World Development 36,4: 608-624. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2007.04.019

Onyishi, Ernest I. et al. 2012: Children and marital satisfaction in a non-Western sample: having more children increases marital satisfaction among the Igbo people of Nigeria. In: Evolution and Human Behavior 33,6: 771-774. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2012.06.005

Panda, Pradeep; Agarwal, Bina 2005: Marital violence, human development and women's property status in India. In: World Development 33,5: 823-850. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2005.01.009

Park, Bernadette; Banchefsky, Sarah 2019: Chapter One – Women and men, moms and dads: Leveraging social role change to promote gender equality. In: *Olson, James M.* (Ed.): Advances in Experimental Social Psychology 59: 1-52. https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.aesp.2018.10.001

Qi, Xiaoying 2018: Neo-traditional Child Surnaming in Contemporary China: Women's Rights as Veiled Patriarchy. In: Sociology 52,5: 1001-1016. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038516688613

Qian, Yue; Qian, Zhenchao 2015: Work, Family, and Gendered Happiness Among Married People in Urban China. In: Social Indicators Research 121,1: 61-74. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11205-014-0623-9

Qing, Shisong 2020: Gender role attitudes and male-female income differences in China. In: The Journal of Chinese Sociology 7,12. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40711-020-00123-w

Rittenour, Christine E.; Colaner, Colleen Warner; Odenweller, Kelly Geier 2014: Mothers' Identities and Gender Socialization of Daughters. In: Southern Communication Journal 79,3: 215-234. https://doi.org/10.1080/1041794X.2014.895408

Rostami, Arian et al. 2014: Marital Satisfaction With a Special Focus on Gender Differences in Medical Staff in Tehran, Iran. In: Journal of Family Issues 35,14: 1940-1958. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X13483292

Rouhbakhsh, Mahdieh et al. 2019: The effect of couples education on marital satisfaction in menopausal women. In: Journal of Women & Aging 31,5: 432-445. https://doi.org/10.1080/08952841.2018.1510244

Sarantakos, Sotirios 2000: Marital power and quality of marriage. In: Australian Social Work 53,1: 43-50. https://doi.org/10.1080/03124070008415556

Sayehmiri, Kourosh et al. 2020: The relationship between personality traits and marital satisfaction: a systematic review and meta-analysis. In: BMC Psychology 8,15. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-020-0383-z

Schmitt, Marina; Kliegel, Matthias; Shapiro, Adam 2007: Marital Interaction in Middle and Old Age: A Predictor of Marital Satisfaction? In: The International Journal of Aging and Human Development 65,4: 283-300. https://doi.org/10.2190/AG.65.4.a

Sen, Amartya 1990: Gender and cooperative conflicts. In: *Tinker, Irene* (Ed.): Persistent inequalities: Women and world development. Oxford University Press: 123-149.

Sicular, Terry et al. 2008: The Urban-Rural Income Gap and Income Inequality in China. In: *Wan, Guanghua* (Ed.): Understanding Inequality and Poverty in China: Methods and Applications. London: Palgrave Macmillan: 30-71. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230584259_2

Song, Yueping; Zhang, Jingwen; Zhang, Xian 2021: Cultural or Institutional? Contextual Effects on Domestic Violence against Women in Rural China. In: Journal of Family Violence 36,6: 643-655. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-020-00198-6

Stanley, Scott M. et al. 2006: Premarital education, marital quality, and marital stability: Findings from a large, random household survey. In: Journal of Family Psychology 20: 117-126. https://doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.20.1.117

Turner, Bryan S.; Salemink, Oscar 2015: Routledge handbook of religions in Asia. Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group.

Twenge, Jean M.; Campbell, W. Keith; Foster, Craig A. 2003: Parenthood and Marital Satisfaction: A Meta-Analytic Review. In: Journal of Marriage and Family 65,3: 574-583. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2003.00574.x

Valutanu, Luciana Irina 2012: Confucius and feminism. In: Journal of Research in Gender Studies 2,1: 132-140.

van Staveren, Irene; Ode bode, Olasunbo 2007: Gender Norms as Asymmetric Institutions: A Case Study of Yoruba Women in Nigeria. In: Journal of Economic Issues 41,4: 903-925. https://doi.org/10.1080/00213624.2007.11507080

Wang, Qunyong; Li, Zhongwu; Feng, Xueliang 2019: Does the Happiness of Contemporary Women in China Depend on Their Husbands' Achievements? In: Journal of Family and Economic Issues 40,4: 710-728. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10834-019-09638-y

Wei, Yan; Zhang, Li 2016: Understanding Hypergamous Marriages of Chinese Rural Women. In: Population Research and Policy Review 35,6: 877-898. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11113-016-9407-z

Xiao, Saizi; Asadullah, M. Niaz 2020: Social Norms and Gender Differences in Labor Force Participation in China. In: Feminist Economics 26,4: 114-148. https://doi.org/10.1080/13545701.2020.1758337

Xie, Yu; Hu, Jingwei 2014: An Introduction to the China Family Panel Studies (CFPS). In: Chinese Sociological Review 47,1: 3-29.

Xie, Yu; Lu, Ping 2015: The sampling design of the China Family Panel Studies (CFPS). In: Chinese Journal of Sociology 1,4: 471-484. https://doi.org/10.1177/2057150X15614535

Xie, Zhenming 1994: Regarding men as superior to women: impacts of Confucianism on family norms in China. In: China Population Today 11,6: 12-16.

Yang, Xueyan; Gao, Chenzhuo 2021: Missing Women in STEM in China: an Empirical Study from the Viewpoint of Achievement Motivation and Gender Socialization. In: Research in Science Education 51,6: 1705-1723. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11165-019-9833-0

Yu, Jia; Xie, Yu 2021: Recent trends in the Chinese family: National estimates from 1990 to 2010. In: Demographic Research 44,25: 595-608. https://dx.doi.org/10.4054/DemRes.2021.44.25

Yu, Linhui; Zhang, Junsen; Wen, Yanbing 2019: Does foreign investment liberalisation enhance women's economic status? Micro-evidence from urban China. In: The World Economy 42,12: 3404-3429. https://doi.org/10.1111/twec.12873

Zhang, Huiping; Tsang, Sandra Kit Man 2013: Relative Income and Marital Happiness Among Urban Chinese Women: The Moderating Role of Personal Commitment. In: Journal of Happiness Studies 14,5: 1575-1584. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-012-9396-5

Zhang, Jian et al. 2021: Gender discrimination in China: Experimental evidence from the job market for college graduates. In: Journal of Comparative Economics 49,3: 819-835. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jce.2021.01.003

Zheng, Weijun et al. 2011: Detraditionalisation and attitudes to sex outside marriage in China. In: Culture, Health & Sexuality 13,5: 497-511. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2011.563866

Zhong, Sujuan et al. 2022: Urban expansion and the urban-rural income gap: Empirical evidence from China. In: Cities 129: 103831. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2022.103831

Zhongwu Li (✉). Zhejiang University of Technology. Hangzhou, China.
E-mail: zhongwulee@163.com
URL: http://www.homepage.zjut.edu.cn/zhongwulee/