Transition into marriage in Greater Jakarta: Courtship, Parental Influence and Self-Choice Marriage[1]

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Abstract: This paper challenges the idea that a shift to self-chosen marriage partner means that the traditional cultural norms stressing family influence on spouse selection have been weakened by inroads of modern norms of greater individual autonomy in the marriage process. Using a representative sample of married young adults (aged 20-34) in Greater Jakarta, we explore the courtship processes, and the degree of parental role in spouse selection. While only four per cent of the respondents cited that their marriage was arranged by others; over half of the respondents reported their parents or in-laws played a major role in their marriage decision. Our multivariate analysis suggests that tertiary educated respondents are those most likely to report their parents playing a major role. We reflect on the prevailing cultural norms to discuss the centrality of family in studying the interactions between marriage, education, and social mobility in modern Indonesia.

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Introduction

The rise in age at first marriage and the accompanying shift to self-choice marriage are two noted aspects of the rapid change in the patterns of family formation in Asia (Jones, Hull, and Mohamad 2011; Malhotra and Tsui 1996). On one hand, the interrelationship between development and social change in facilitating the increasing age at marriage is well researched (Jones, Hull, and Mohamad 2011; Malhotra 1997; Situmorang 2011; Thornton and Fricke 1987). However, less is known on the societal dynamics and the cultural specificities involved in the shift towards self-choice marriage.

The degree in both the historical and current practices of family influence on spouse selection varies across the many societal contexts in Asia. For example, there is long and persistent tradition of arranged marriage in Hindu areas in South Asia. A study on recently married 15-24 year old women in six states India conducted in 2006-2008 suggested that 70 per cent of respondents had family-arranged marriage with no effective say in choice of spouse and a further 24 per cent reported having semi-arranged marriage (Jejeebhoy, Santhya, Acharya, and Prakash 2013). In contrast, in Malay Southeast Asia, the broad trend indicates a 'revolutionary' departure away from family-arranged marriage (Jones 2004) . As Jones pointed out about 40 to 50 years ago, 'very early, universal and family-arranged marriage' was the dominant marriage model in Malay Southeast Asia, yet the current trend suggest the prevailing practice of self-choice marriage among young adults (Jones 2004:14). However, while scholars are in consensus that a remarkable transformation in regards to young people's agency in marriage in Indonesia has been taking place, statistics on the prevalence of arranged versus self-choice marriage in urban Indonesia remain scant.

At the macro level, the literature has pointed to the extended duration between puberty and entry into marriage as one pertinent explanation behind the diminishing parental control over spouse selection (Ghimire, Axinn, Yabiku, and Thornton 2006; Smith-Hefner 2005; Thornton and Fricke 1987). As educational opportunities expand for both boys and girls, young people face prolonged duration of schooling, increasing prospects of employment, and tend to live away from the parental home. In this manner, they have more opportunities to meet their future spouse and engage in self-initiated courtships (Thornton and Fricke 1987). These educational and employment trends conducive to delayed and/or self-choice marriage are evident throughout Asia. Beyond the explanation of prolonged transition to marriage however, the shift towards self-choice marriage highlights a fundamental ideational and normative change in

intergenerational relations within the family in Asia.

This paper questions whether the shift to self-choice marriage implies that cultural norms stressing family influence on spouse selection have been weakened by inroads of modern norms of greater individual autonomy in the marriage process. Using a representative sample of currently married young adults in Greater Jakarta (N=1,603), we explore the courtship processes, such as how individuals meet their spouses, duration of dating, and the degree of parental involvement in spouse selection. We hypothesise that although arranged marriage is no longer the norm in urban Indonesia, parental influence in spouse selection remains strong, particularly among educated young adults.

Theoretical framework

> *"….It had already been a great offence against the morals and customs of my country that we girls went out to study and had therefore to leave home every day to attend school. You see the adat (traditional law) of our country strongly forbids young girls to go outside their home. We were not allowed to go anywhere else—and the only education institution with which our little town is blessed is just an ordinary public elementary school for Europeans. In my twelfth year, I was ordered to stay home—I had to be put into the 'box'. I was locked up in the house, totally separated from the outside world which I could not return unless it was at the side of a husband, a complete stranger chosen for us by our parents and to whom we are married off literally without our knowledge" (Kartini in Coté and Mohamad 2005:3)*

The above translated quote from Kartini – the widely acclaimed pioneer of women's rights and the much heralded national heroine in Indonesia, outlines the virtual absence of female agency in the marriage decisions in early 20th Century Javanese upper class. Since Kartini's times, there has been a fundamental shift in young Indonesia's autonomy in their marriage decisions. At first glance, the shift towards self-choice marriage fits in perfectly in the narrative depicting the polarity between tradition and modernity. As societies traverse along the modernisation path, it is depicted that individual-oriented norms gradually supersede the centrality of family in regulating marriage decisions. On one extreme, arranged marriage at younger ages, universal marriage, and extended households are attributes associated with 'tradition' (Thornton, Binstock, Yount, Abbasi-Shavazi, Ghimire, and Xie 2010). On the other, 'modernity' is equated with self-choice and less universal marriage, and nuclear households (Thornton et al. 2010). However, the varying degrees of parental influence over spouse selection that continue to exist in the diverse cultural settings in contemporary Asia provide evidence

against such dichotomy. As argued by Malhorta and Tsui (1996:477) traditional and modern norms 'tend to coexist' in marriage practices throughout Asia.

By and large, the demise of arranged marriage has been attributed to the trends in education and employment patterns in Asia. However, it veils a more complex and overarching ideational shift in female agency, gender relations and intergenerational dynamics within the specific cultural contexts of the region.

At the societal level, the degree of individual autonomy in marriage practices is subject to class, ethnic, religion, and regional variations. Among Javanese Muslims, the shift to self-choice marriage particularly reflects an important change in the role of children, particularly of daughters, in the marriage process. Smith-Hefner (2005) points out that in the 1950s and 1960s, middle and upper class adolescent girls were subjected to strict parental confinement until their parents found suitors who ticked all the boxes in the three requirements broadly described as *bibit, bebet, bobot* (pedigree, social rank, and personal quality). In this period, popular practice did not require daughters' consent for parents to marry them off. Daughters were often subjected to varying degrees of parental pressure to marry the chosen suitors. A study of marriage and intergenerational dynamics in Central Java in mid 1980s found that a considerable 20.3 per cent of women felt that they had no input in their marriage decision (Williams 1990:71).

At the individual level, Williams' study further found that higher education of individuals and of parents, urban residence, more recent time of marriage, second or higher order marriage, age at marriage, and sex, were found to be significant predictors of greater individual autonomy in spouse selection. Such findings are in line with the general consensus in the literature suggesting a positive relationship between education and individual autonomy in spouse selection (Thornton and Fricke 1987).

However, the positive association between education and *self-choice* marriage becomes less clear cut when the term self-choice marriage does not necessarily imply a complete removal of parental influence in spouse selection. Recall that Smith-Hefner's review of changes in the historical courtship and marriage patterns in Muslim Java emphasises that the practice of strict parental control in spouse selection was particularly relevant for the middle and upper class. In the contemporary settings of urban Java, arranged marriage is no longer popular. Yet, cultural norms that highly value family's consent in spouse selection are still widely practiced. Young couples in courtship tend to consult their parents and extended families, and seek for family

approvals of their chosen romantic partners prior to proceeding into marriage.

For example, in the contemporary urban middle-class context, factors that are commonly deemed as important by parents when considering their children's choice of partners in their first marriage include: professing the same religion, having similar or same ethnic backgrounds, having reputable parents, coming from a 'good' family, having completed similar education levels as one's own child, for male suitors – having a steady job and being financially responsible, and because of the stigma attached to divorcee, have never been married. Sometimes physical attributes (e.g long haired males), fashion style (e.g. tattoos), work environment (e.g. working in the entertainment industry as a celebrity), and lifestyle choices may incite objections from parents that eventually jeopardizes the union of young couples. Couples who did not attain the blessing of their parents but still insisting on marrying are referenced as those who performed *kawin lari*. Similar to eloping, the literal translation for *kawin lari* is getting married on the run. Parental *influence*, in contrast to *control*, continues to shape the marriage decision of young people.[2] This places a new meaning for the term *self-choice* marriage.

On one hand, we might expect that respondents with higher levels of education would have more 'autonomy' in the spouse selection process. This is because their age at marriage is likely to be older, at which stage they may have become more financially and emotionally independent from their parents. Older age at first marriage further implies that an individual would have spent longer time in the marriage market and may have had multiple romantic unions before marrying. In addition Malhotra (1997) suggest that higher education might lead to a greater tendency to self-choice marriage as education may impart modern ideas, including ideas about romantic love. However if we were to acknowledge that strong parental influence or the need to get their blessings for spouse selection would somewhat limits one's autonomy in the marriage process, then, in the cultural specific context of Indonesia, higher education and older age at first marriage may not necessarily lead to more 'autonomy'.

In the context of urban Java, we hypothesise that the degree of parental influence in spouse selection is expected to be positively related to education. Parental influence on spouse

[2] For empirical perspectives on how parental influence shape the romantic courtship processes in other parts of Indonesia, see Bennett's work on Lombok (Bennett, Linda Rae. 2005a. "Patterns of resistance and transgression in Eastern Indonesia: Single women's practices of clandestine courtship and cohabitation." *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 7:101-112, —. 2005b. *Women, Islam and modernity: Single women, sexuality and reproductive health in contemporary Indonesia*: Routledge.)

selection is expected to increase with education levels because first, it is common for young people to stay at their parental home until they get married, and second, there is a positive association between age at first marriage and education levels. In addition, when education is interpreted as a proxy for social class and/or as a tool for upward social mobility, and when the costs of investment in education are largely borne by parents, it is expected that parents have a role to play in shaping the process of assortative mating among young educated adults. Furthermore, the parent-child relationship among families of different socio-economic background may also be mediated by the family size differentials across socio-economic groups.

Data and Methods

Our paper is based on 2010 Greater Jakarta Transition to Adulthood Study. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 3,006 men and women aged 20-34 living in Jakarta and in the adjacent cities of Bekasi and Tangerang. The interviews used a standardized questionnaire to collect a wide range of information on young adults' demographic and social characteristics, as well as information about their past and current education and work experience. In addition, information was also collected on attitudes and values, as well as use of Internet and other media.

To ensure a representative sample, the sampling procedure involved a two-stage cluster sample using the Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) method. First, 60 Kelurahan (Urban Villages) were selected using PPS and then 5 neighbourhoods (Rukun Tetangga) were chosen within each selected Kelurahan by systematic random sampling. The 300 selected RT were then censused and a sample of eligible respondents (aged 20-34) was selected by random sampling from this census. Following the survey, in-depth interviews were conducted with 81 of the survey respondents selected through a stratified random sampling process by age group, sex, and highest educational attainment.

In this paper, we focus on the survey component of our study, and use both the complete survey sample and a sub-sample of 1,552 currently married respondents for some of the analyses. Initially, we use survival analysis on all respondents to compare and contrast the rate of progression into marriage and into leaving the parental home among young adults in different education categories. To follow, we examine whether patterns in pre-marital courtship are also distinct between education groups among currently married respondents. We use descriptive statistics to depict the dating process and duration among young adults, the prevalence of

self- choice and arranged marriage, and the degree of 'autonomy' in the process of spouse selection in non-arranged marriages.

We use step-wise logistics regression to explore the predictors of individual autonomy in spouse selection. The questionnaire included a range of questions regarding the respondent's autonomy in spouse selection. Two questions were used to construct our dependent variable. The first question asked respondents what role their own parents during the spouse selection process, with the possible answers being 'no role', 'minor role', or 'major role'. The second question asked the same thing about the role of the parents-in-law. Our binary dependent variable is coded 1 if either the parents or parent-in law had any major role in spouse selection and 0 otherwise. More than half of our respondents reported that their parents or in-laws had a major role in spouse selection (56 %) (Table 1). Controlling for sex, age group, and religion, we test the hypothesis that higher levels of education is associated with a higher degree of parental influence in spouse selection.

Table 1 Percentage distribution of respondents by own parents' and in-laws' influence in spouse selection (cell percentages)

		Own parents		*Total*
Parent-in-laws	No role	Minor role	Major role	*N*
No role	27.8	0.6	2.1	*472*
Minor role	1.4	14.4	2.7	*288*
Major role	4.8	5.7	40.5	*792*
Total	527	322	703	*1,552*

Source: The 2010 greater Jakarta Transition to Adulthood Survey

Table 2 outlines our analytical sample characteristics. The largest educational category is senior high school (52%). This is interesting given that the largest educational group for the respondents' parents is primary schooling. The mean age at marriage for young adults in our sample is 24. Muslim is somewhat over-represented in our analytical sample, with data from the Population Census 2010 indicate that 87 per cent of young adults in Greater Jakarta were Muslims (Statistics Indonesia. 2010). Further, as our analysis focuses on currently married young adults only, our sample is skewed on young adults n the oldest age category in the data set (30-34).

Table 2 Sample characteristics

	Male	Female	Total	Total N
Dependent variable	%	%	%	%
Parents and or in-laws played a 'major role'				
Yes	55.8	55.8	55.8	866
No	44.2	44.2	44.2	686
Independent variables				
Highest education level				
Primary or less	12.7	21.9	19.1	297
Junior secondary school	19.5	22.8	21.8	338
Senior secondary school	52.9	39.2	43.4	673
Post-secondary	14.9	16.1	15.7	244
Age group				
20-24	10.0	14.3	13.0	202
25-29	34.0	36.4	35.6	553
30-34	56.1	49.3	51.4	797
Religion				
Muslim	91.3	93.5	92.9	1441
Non-Muslim	8.7	6.5	7.2	111
Mean age at first marriage	24.1	21.1	22.0	
Father's education level				
Primary or less	52.0	51.1	51.4	797
Junior secondary school	15.1	14.0	14.3	222
Senior secondary school	17.4	19.3	18.8	291
Post-secondary	7.4	5.7	6.3	97
Unknown	8.1	9.9	9.3	145
Mother's education level				
Primary or less	65.8	64.7	65.0	1009
Junior secondary school	11.9	13.8	13.2	205
Senior secondary school	11.7	12.1	12.0	186
Post-secondary	4.5	2.3	3.0	46
Unknown	6.2	7.1	6.8	106

Source: The 2010 greater Jakarta Transition to Adulthood Survey

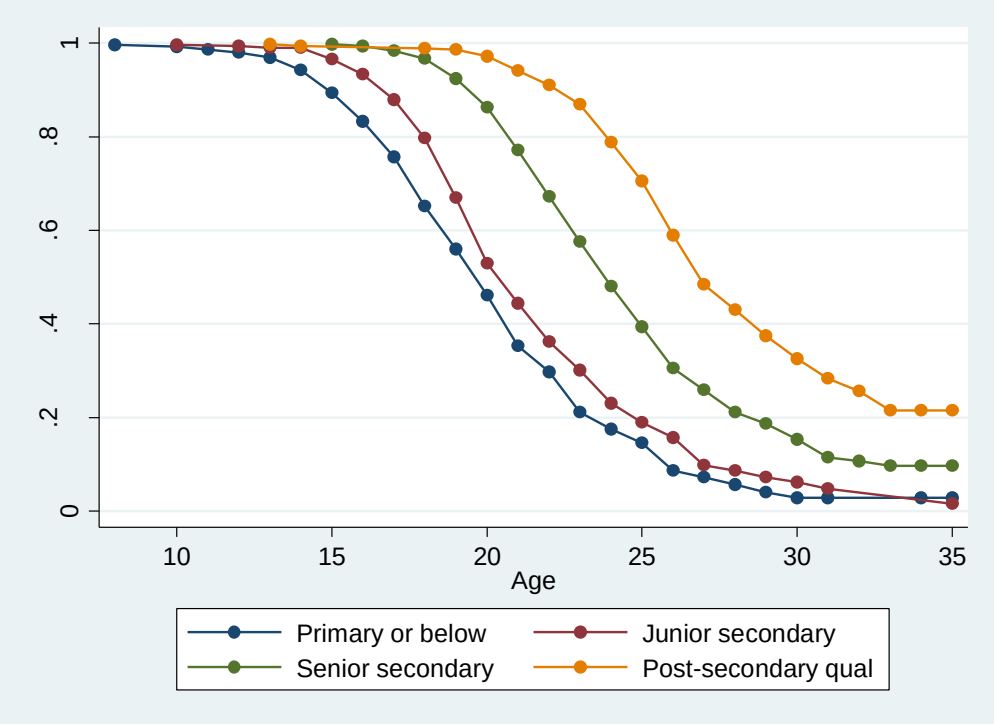
Findings

Survival analysis: transition into leaving parental home and first marriage

Figure 1 – 4 outlines the progression into first marriage and leaving parental home by education levels for all females and males in our survey sample. A number of key findings emerged from this analysis. First, as expected, our survival analysis indicates that tertiary educated young adults experience the slowest rate of progression into marriage. Second, while the graduation of survival curves by education in regards to transition to first marriage is clear (Figure 1 and 2) , this is not the case for the survival curves for leaving parental home (figure 3 and 4). For example, at age 25, 60 per cent of women with senior high school qualifications have already married compared to only 30 per cent of tertiary educated women. The gap by education level in the proportion who had left their parental home is smaller at age 25, 58 per cent for senior high school and 49 per cent for tertiary graduates.

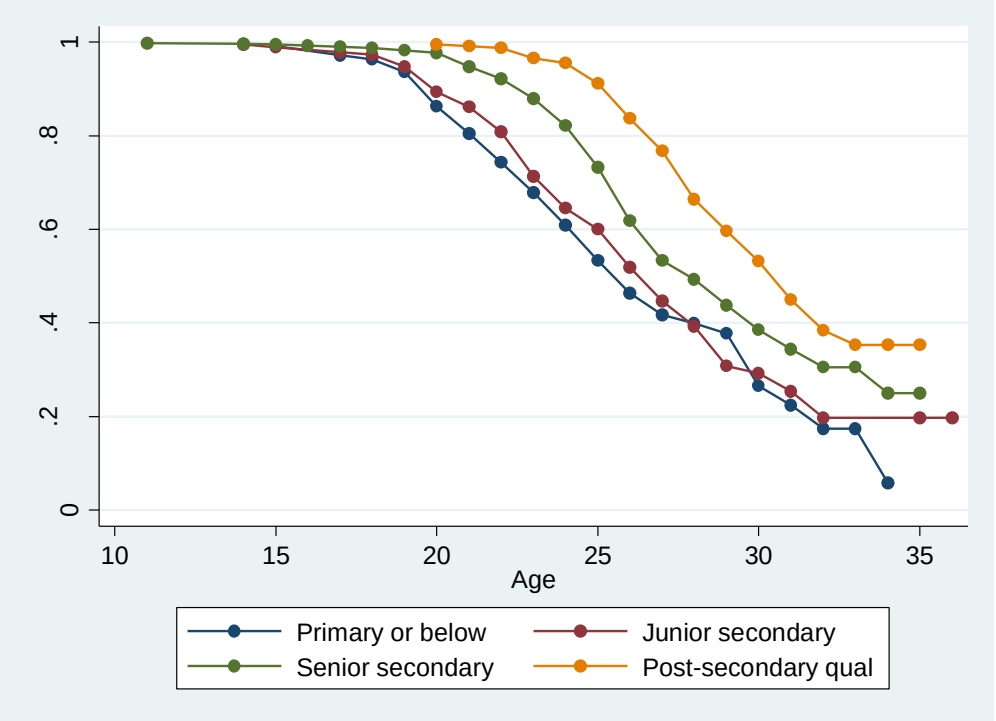
In general, the sequence of leaving parental home and first marriage is not clear cut among young adults in Greater Jakarta. Some people left home before marrying. Some couples continued to stay with parents for financial reasons, but young couples may also do so because of cultural preference and norms regarding filial living arrangements. A closer examination of our data set suggests that among females, 44 per cent left home before marriage, 21 per cent left home the same year they got married, and 35 per cent left after marrying. For males the equivalent percentages, are 60, 21 and 20 per cent. In other words, women were more likely to spend some time living in their parental home (with their spouse) after their first marriage. In practice, it is not that uncommon for both men and women co-reside with their parents or in-laws' house following marriage. Men and women with lower levels of education were more likely to have left home before marriage. This could be partly explained by a selection effect. Those with lower levels of education are also more likely to be migrants to Jakarta, who left their home to migrate during their teens or early 20s (McDonald, Utomo, Utomo, Reimondos, and Hull 2013).

Figure 1 Transition to first marriage by education level (Females)



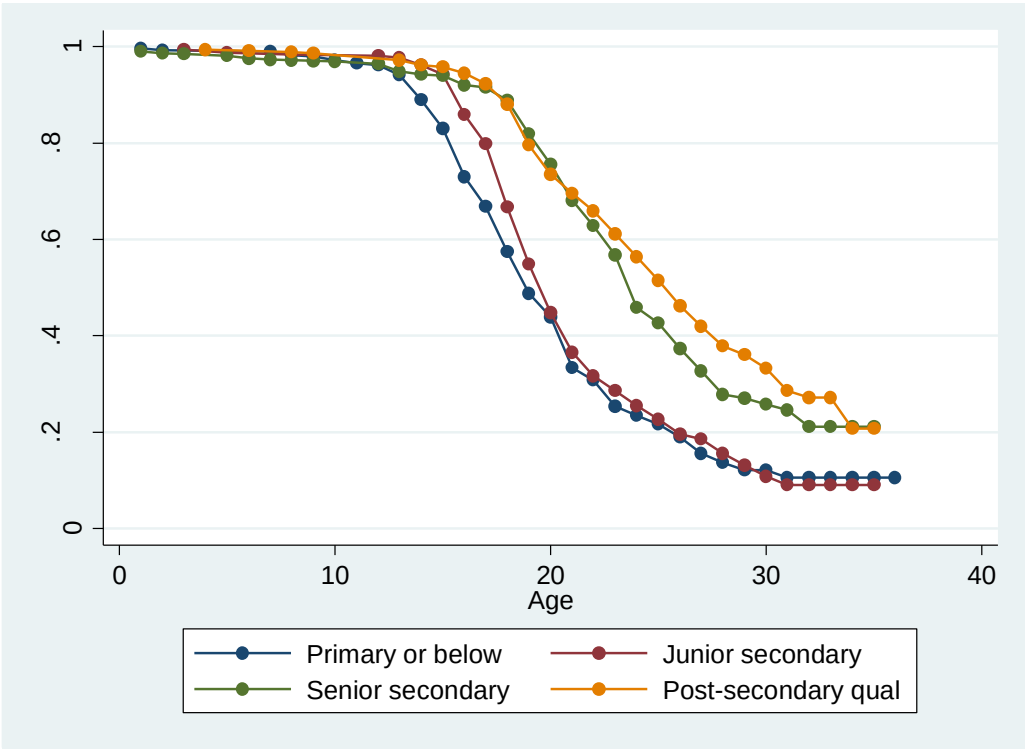
Source: The 2010 greater Jakarta Transition to Adulthood Survey

Figure 2 Transition to marriage by education level (Males)



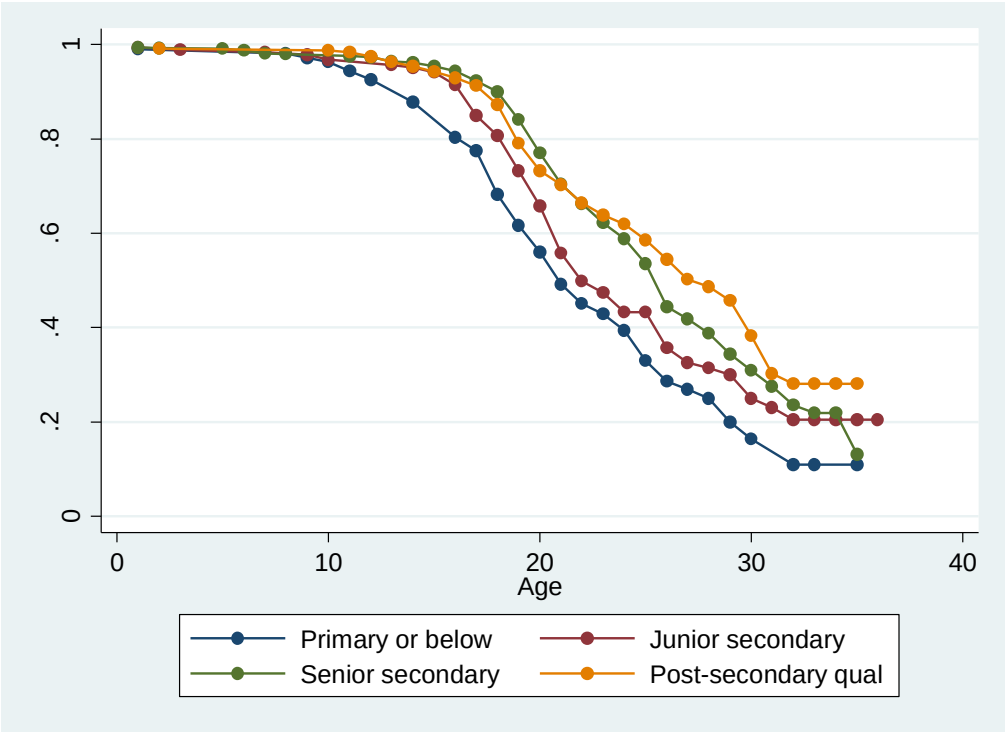
Source: The 2010 greater Jakarta Transition to Adulthood Survey

Figure 3 Transition to leaving parental home by education level (Females)



Source: The 2010 greater Jakarta Transition to Adulthood Survey

Figure 4 Transition to leaving parental home by education level (Males)



Source: The 2010 greater Jakarta Transition to Adulthood Survey

Courtship patterns

In general, we found that the courtship and dating patterns of young adults in our sample is indicative of the popular practice of self-choice marriage. Over 85 per cent of currently married young adults had either dated, or had dated and were engaged with their currents spouse (Table 3). Almost a quarter of the respondents met their current spouse at work (Table 5). Other popular channels of meeting spouses are through friends, extended family network, through the neighbourhood, and through chance at a public place. Only around 4 per cent of respondents had an arranged marriage.

Table 3 Percentage distribution of respondents by pre-marital courtship and education level

	Primary or below	Junior secondary	Senior secondary	Post-secondary qual.	Total
Dated & engaged	19.6	25.4	30.2	33.6	27.7
Only engaged	4.1	5.3	2.2	2.1	3.2
Only dated	73.3	68.3	67.3	63.9	68.1
Neither dated nor engaged	3.0	0.9	0.3	0.4	1.0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	296	338	669	244	1,547

Note: Table excludes missing observations

Source: The 2010 greater Jakarta Transition to Adulthood Survey

While the overall trends are indicative of the prevailing norms of 'self-choice' marriage, tabulation of courtship patterns by educational levels suggest different dynamics in the marriage market are at play for young adults at different segments of the society. The survival analysis conducted earlier suggested that tertiary educated young adults are the group showing the slowest progression into first marriage relative to others with lower level of educational attainments. Correspondingly, this is also reflected in the data of dating duration that suggest tertiary educated respondents are the group most likely to date longer. Across the educational groupings, the proportion of respondents who had an arranged marriage is small, ranging from 3.3 per cent for tertiary graduates to 5.4 per cent for primary school graduates (Table 4). Such results support the proposition that extended schooling is in effect prolonging the duration of young people's interaction in the marriage market.

A tabulation showing where the respondents first met the current spouse shows interesting patterns between educational groupings (Table 5). Overall, work and friends network are two

common channels for meeting currents spouses for respondents across educational groupings (18-26 %). However, respondents with primary school qualification of less are those most likely to have met their spouse 'by chance' (28%)[3]. Only 9 per cent of tertiary graduates met their spouses 'by chance'. As expected, the most common way for tertiary graduates for meeting their spouse was through school or university (28%). Across the educational groupings, the proportion of respondents who had an arranged marriage is small, ranging from 3.3 per cent for tertiary graduates to 5.4 per cent for primary school graduates.

Table 4 Percentage distribution of respondents by duration of dating (with spouse of current marriage) and education levels

	Primary or below	Junior secondary	Senior secondary	Post-secondary qual.	Total
<1 month	4.7	2.1	1.0	0.4	1.9
1-12 months	64.3	56.8	47.4	32.0	50.3
13-24 months	11.5	13.6	17.4	20.5	15.9
25-36 months	5.1	8.9	12.0	11.5	9.9
37+ months	8.1	13.3	19.3	28.7	17.3
No dating	6.4	5.3	2.8	7.0	4.7
Total %	100	100	100	100	100
Total N	297	338	673	224	1552

Source: The 2010 greater Jakarta Transition to Adulthood Survey

[3] By chance is defined as having their paths crossed in a market, public transport, the road, and so on.

Table 5 Percentage distribution of respondents in response to the question "how did you meet your wife/husband?", by highest education

	Primary or below	Junior secondary	Senior secondary	Post-secondary qual.	Total
Work	20.5	24.3	26.2	20.1	23.7
Through friends	17.9	24.0	21.5	22.5	21.5
On the road, bus, market	27.6	18.1	13.4	8.6	16.4
From the neighbourhood/childhood friends	13.5	17.2	12.5	4.5	12.5
Family gathering/ through relatives	11.5	8.0	11.6	6.6	10.0
School/university	1.7	1.5	7.3	27.9	8.2
Arranged by family	5.4	3.9	3.7	3.3	4.0
Religious association	0.0	0.9	2.2	2.9	1.6
Internet or phone	0.7	0.9	0.8	2.5	1.0
Nightclub	0.7	0.9	0.5	0.4	0.6
Other	0.7	0.6	0.2	0.4	0.4
Arranged by religious teacher	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.1
Total %	100	100	100	100	100
Total N	297	338	671	244	1,550

Source: The 2010 greater Jakarta Transition to Adulthood Survey

Parental influence in spouse selection

At the outset, the courtship patterns outlined above supports the argument that self-choice marriage dominates transition to marriage patterns among young adults in our sample. However, recall that a tabulation of the respondents' perception of their parental influence in the spouse selection process suggests that more than half of the respondents reported their parents or in-laws as having a major role (Table 2). We test the hypothesis that highly educated respondents are more likely to report major parental influence in their spouse selection relative to respondents with lower education attainments.

Table 6 outlines the results of a step-wise regression predicting the likelihood of a respondent reporting major parental influence in their spouse selection process. In Model 1, controlling for sex, we found that respondents with senior high school and tertiary qualifications were more likely to report major parental influence than those with primary school education or less. The positive association between higher education levels and parental influence holds after adding age at first marriage as a control variable in the model. There is a negative association between age at first marriage and reporting major parental influence but the association is not

significant.[4]

Assuming that education is a proxy of socio-economic status, we expect that replacing respondents' own education attainment with those of their father's and mother's will generate similar results. Since mother's and father's education are likely to be highly correlated to one another, and they are both likely to be endogenous to a respondent's own education attainment, we run separate models for both father's and mother's education (Model 4 and 5). The direction of the relationship is as expected, but only those whose parents had junior high school qualifications were significantly more likely to report major parental influence than those with parents with the primary school qualifications or less. We note that respondents who reported that they do not know their parents' education level were less likely to report major parental influence. We assume that a respondent who reported 'don't know' in the parental education option would either have a relatively distant or non-existing relationship with their biological parent in question. Under this assumption, we may interpret that respondents with no intimate knowledge of their parents' educational background would correspondingly have a distant relationship to their parents, hence less likely to report major parental influence in their marriage decisions. Alternatively, we could assume that respondents from lower socio-economic families are also more likely to report not knowing their parental education. In this case, the results are supportive of the proposition that higher level of parental education is positively associated with the likelihood of a respondent reporting major parental influence in spouse selection.

[4] We note that age at first marriage is likely to be endogenous in this model. However, excluding respondents' education, we did found that controlling for sex, the relationship between age at first marriage and parental influence is insignificant.

Table 6 Logistic regression of parental influence on spouse selection

	Dependent variable: Major parental influence				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Age group					
20-24		0.14	0.13	0.13	0.13
		(0.169)	(0.171)	(0.171)	(0.172)
25-29 (ref)					
30-34		-0.13	-0.13	-0.14	-0.14
		(0.112)	(0.113)	(0.113)	(0.113)
Age at first marriage			-0.01	0.00	0.00
			(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.015)
Sex	0.04	0.03	0.01	-0.00	-0.01
	(0.113)	(0.113)	(0.120)	(0.120)	(0.120)
Highest educational attainment					
PS or below (ref)					
JHS	0.18	0.15	0.16		
	(0.159)	(0.160)	(0.161)		
SHS	0.38***	0.36**	0.37**		
	(0.141)	(0.142)	(0.149)		
Tertiary	0.34*	0.33*	0.36*		
	(0.174)	(0.176)	(0.192)		
Religion					
Non-Muslim (ref)					
Muslim		-0.12	-0.12	-0.14	-0.13
		(0.203)	(0.203)	(0.203)	(0.204)
Father's education					
PS or below (ref)					
JHS				0.26*	
				(0.156)	
SHS				0.15	
				(0.141)	
Tertiary				0.25	
				(0.225)	
Unknown				-0.33*	
				(0.182)	
Mother's education					
PS or below (ref)					
JHS					0.28*
					(0.159)
SHS					0.18
					(0.167)
Tertiary					-0.03
					(0.307)
Unknown					-0.58***
					(0.208)
Constant	-0.05	0.14	0.27	0.34	0.36
	(0.147)	(0.257)	(0.434)	(0.429)	(0.426)
Observations	1,552	1,552	1,552	1,552	1,552

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

Discussion and conclusion

In this paper, we explore the purported shift to self-choice marriage among young adults in Greater Jakarta. We examine patterns in leaving parental home, transition to first marriage, patterns of courtship, and parental influence in spouse selection among a sample of young adults across education segments.

A number of results emerge from our analysis. First, using survival analysis, we showed that the rate of progression into first marriage among young adults in Greater Jakarta decelerates as education level increases. Respondents at the higher end of the education spectrum were also more likely to leave their parental homes at older ages.

Second, a descriptive analysis of courtship patterns among currently married young adults in our survey suggests the prevalence of self-initiated courtships leading to self-choice marriage. On average, tertiary educated respondents reported relatively longer dating duration. This is in line with the idea that extended schooling and the associated protracted duration in the marriage market would increase young people's chance of meeting romantic partners. Our results suggest that self-initiated premarital courtship predominates across all education segments. The incidence of arranged marriage among currently married young adults of different educational attainments ranged between 3 to 5 per cent.

Third, using multivariate analysis, we explore the predictors of subjective measures of parental influence in spouse selection. We found that controlling for sex and age group, the likelihood of a respondent reporting that his or her parents/in-laws had a major influence in their spouse selection process increases with education. On one hand, if we were to equate reporting no parental influence in spouse selection with higher individual autonomy in marriage, then such results contrast with the finding that higher education is associated with higher autonomy in spouse selection. On the other hand, such findings support the alternative hypothesis that reporting a higher degree of *parental influence* is not the same as reporting *parental selection* in the marriage decisions among educated young people.

At the outset, our results may seem counter-intuitive since it might be expected that education would have a *modernising* effect and lead to a greater tendency towards 'self-choice'

marriage. However, the results are reflective of prevailing cultural norms in intergenerational relations, and in the persistent centrality of family in key life decisions among the educated middle-class in urban Indonesia. While higher education levels may increase individual's autonomy in spouse selection from the child's perspective, it can also signals higher parental investment in their children. In the context of young adults in Greater Jakarta, higher levels of education are generally associated with a longer time spent dependent on parents for financial support, and as shown by our survival analysis, longer time spent living with parents.

If higher education is taken as a sign for higher levels of parental financial and emotional investment in their children, parents may want to have more say in their child's future, including in their choice of spouse, and accordingly, in ensuring the social standing of the family in generations to come. In this manner, the idea of marriage as a household strategy extends beyond the class-specific context as what had been elicited in past ethnographic studies of in rural Indonesia (see Wolf 1990). From the children's perspectives, the long-standing practice of filial piety would warrant that young adults at the receiving end of a relatively high parental investment are more likely to consider and acknowledge their parents' inputs in making their marriage decisions. On this note, further exploration of our dataset suggests a positive association between subjective measurements of parent-child relationship and education levels. For example, about 28 per cent of respondents with diploma qualifications and 22 per cent of those with bachelor degrees agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that *I am still very emotionally dependent on my parents*. In contrast only 14 per cent of primary school graduates responded so.

Our results suggest that spouse selection among modern young adults in Indonesia is far more complex than the simple matter of arranged marriage in the description of 'traditional' behaviour. The cultural context of Javanese and Sundanese societies in past centuries has always given young women and men some leeway in negotiating marriage arrangements, even when parents exerted executive authority for spousal choice and marriage took place in the early to mid teenage years. The high rates of divorce found in traditional societies are evidence of the ultimately decisive option for unhappy young people to abandon their parents' choice. This did not stop parents from following the social norms for early marriage, nor did it force them to acknowledge teenage preferences. It took the spread of education over the teenage years to place parents in the situation where they were less deciding their offspring's childhood needs and increasingly recognizing the decision-making powers of young adult sons, and even more, daughters. However, although family arranged-marriage is no longer the norm and parents are increasingly taking a step

back when it comes to their children's marriage decisions, the unrelenting importance of parental opinions and approval, and more generally, family endorsement of young adults' union is a normative feature in the current model of 'self-choice' marriage. Our findings are in line with the argument that in rapidly modernising Asia, robust filial obligations and practices of collective familial interests continue to shape intergenerational relations in families (Croll 2006; Frankenberg, Lillard, and Willis 2002).

Finally, we note the limitations of our analysis. First, our exploratory multivariate analysis of parental influence on spouse selection is limited to currently married young adults. We have effectively ignored young adults who are delaying their entry into marriage due to range of reasons, including factors related to family objections. Second, in relation to the sample bias, our measure of subjective parental influence in spouse selection cannot ascertain whether it is merely a formal thing for parents to endorse their child's choice, or is there a real chance that the parent is going to say 'no'. On one hand, we can assume that in many cases it is likely to be a formality than a reality. The idea that obtaining parental endorsement is largely a formality process also resonates well with the idea of class-segmented meanings and practices in transition to marriage. However, we do not know for certain because we did not collect any information on cases where the parent said no and the marriage did not take place.

In the contemporary settings, young adults in romantic relationships were often found living at home, so their parents were aware of the growing ties, and they were also aware of the irrelevance of their own role in their child forming the relationships. Young adults whose parents tried to exert powers of protection over daughters could turn to secret liaisons, sometimes lasting for years. In such cases there might be hope that the arrival of a grandchild would overcome parents' disapproval of a secret union. For marriages to be carried out in the legal institutions of the state there is pressure to ensure that the bride is represented by her parents or guardians, and as marriages take place at older ages, this implies that the more mature groom will be better prepared and more aware of the need to negotiate good relations with the prospective in-laws. The married young adults of Jakarta report a wide range of experiences in their arrangement of unions, and those who remain single often describe the near misses they have encountered as they attempt to find partners. In most cases the role of parents can be far more important than the literature on changing arrangement of marriage may imply. This is particularly the case if the couple are from different religious faiths, in which case their family, and indeed the whole community, may attempt to prevent their marriage. Future research on the dynamics of family influence on young adults'

family formation would benefit from in-depth insights from respondents in marriage market.

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