

When, to Whom, and How People Marry in Delhi NCR: Patterns of Intergenerational Change

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Theories of Marital Change

- Marriage changes expected: delayed marriage, increased non-marriage, increased divorce, and self-choice in partner selection
- Early theories of family change predicted global convergence in family form across different societies as countries developed, industrialized, and urbanized (Goode 1983)
- Another perspective emphasizes the global spread of ideas about the ideal family or marriage (Thornton 2005)
- Large role of globalization and mass media in changing family norms (Uberoi 2006)

Evidence of Marital Change in India

- Steep declines in arranged marriage have been documented in other Asia countries such as China, Japan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka
- However, there is debate about just how much marriage patterns are changing in India
- There are clear patterns of increasing **marriage age** but less evidence of substantial changes in rates of **intermarriage** and **arranged marriages**

Innovations of the CASI Data

- The first large metro urban dataset which covers the topic of marriage behavior and attitudes
- The first survey to:
 - Collect more refined measures of arranged marriage
 - Ask about engagement practices (roka)
 - Ask about attitudes towards intermarriage (of 4 types)
 - Collect information about intergenerational changes
- This will help us understand:
 - When residents of NCR marry?
 - Who they marry?
 - How they marry?

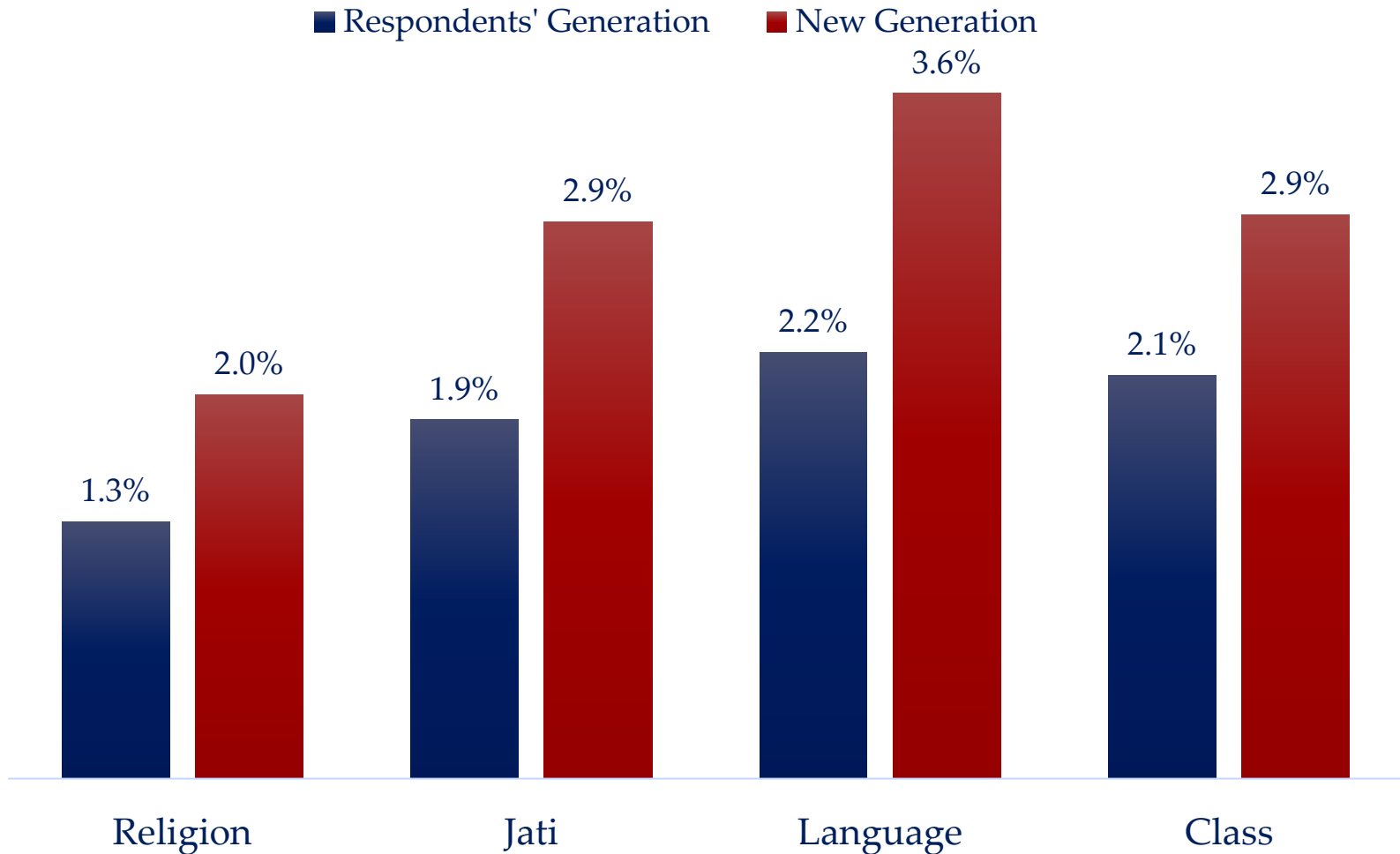
When they marry?

Age at Marriage over Time

- Increases across cohorts:
 - For those married in the 1980s, the mean age at marriage was only 20.8 for women and 30.3% were underaged
 - For those married between 2010-16, the mean age had increased to 22.6 with only 1.6% reporting underage marriage
- Much of the change over time is due to decreases in child marriage
- Respondents expect boys today to marry at 25 and girls to marry at 23

Who they marry?

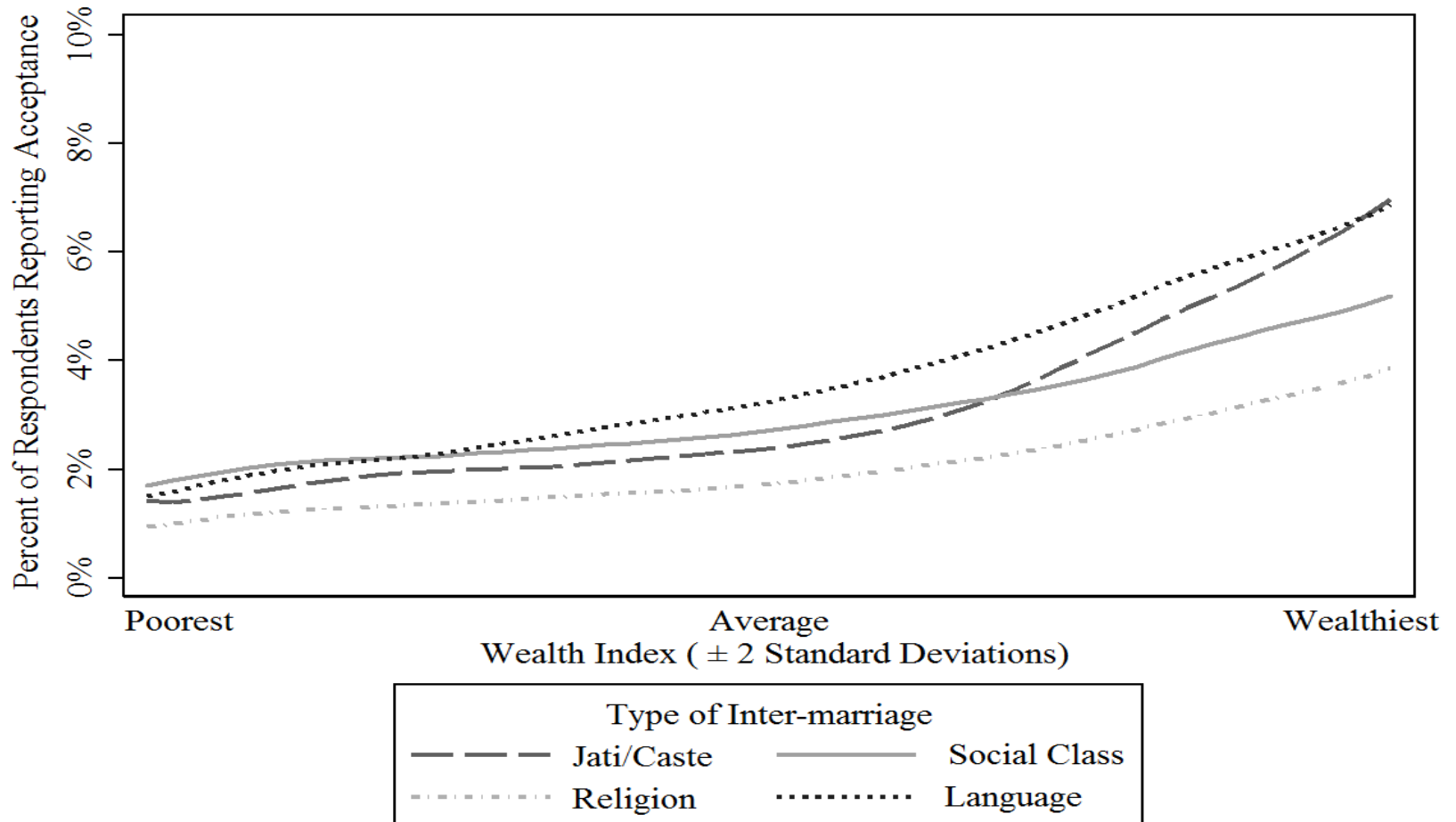
Percent of Respondents reporting that Intermarriage is/was Acceptable by Type and Generation



Attitudes towards Intermarriage

- **Hindus** and **Muslims** showed nearly identical levels of approval of intermarriage but **Sikhs** were much more accepting of all types of intermarriage
- **Dalits** were slightly more likely to report that intermarriage was acceptable
- Support for intermarriage was non-existent outside of the **NCT**

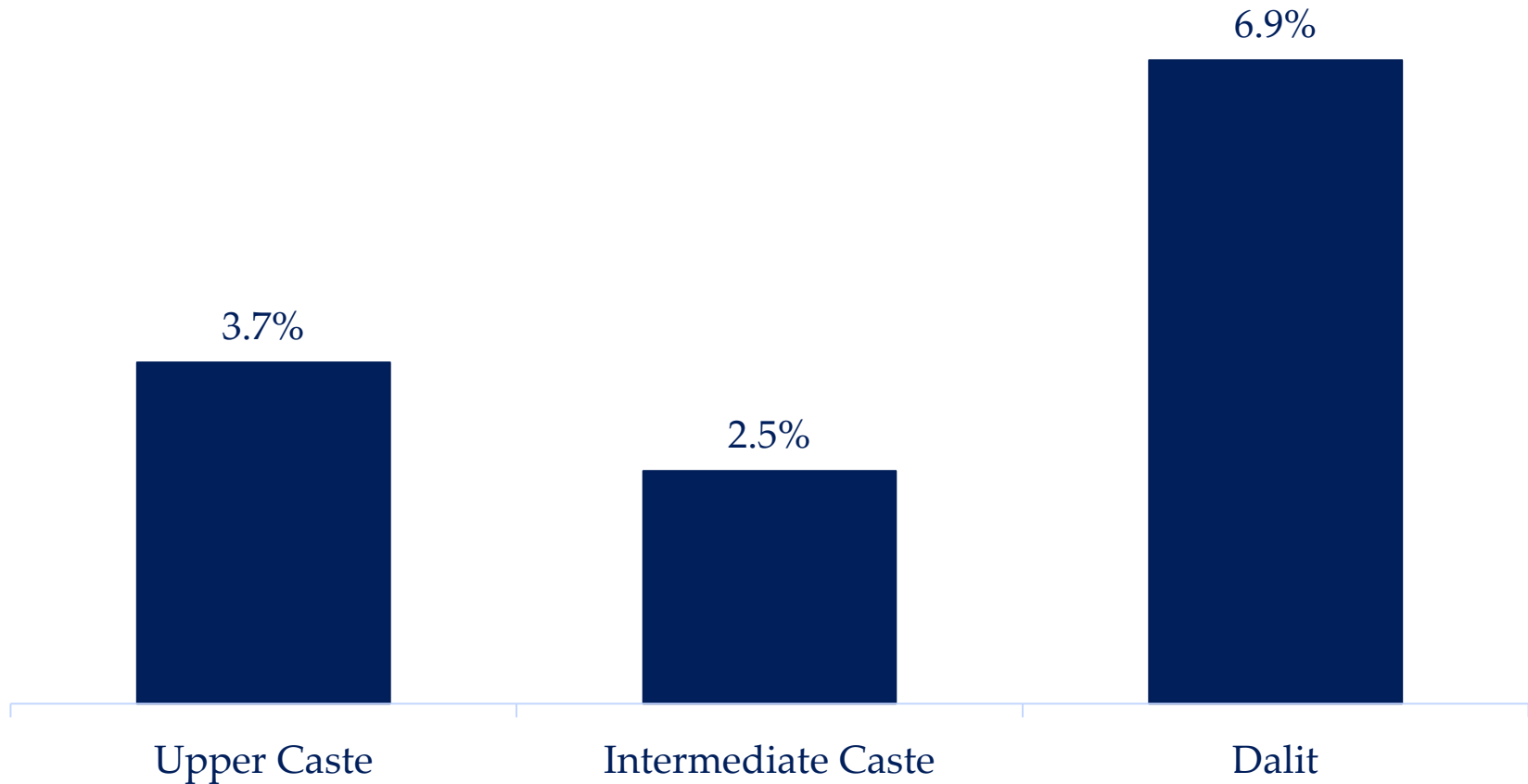
Percent of Reporting that Inter-marriage is Acceptable by Type and Household Wealth



Incidences of Intermarriage

- Data on the head of household and spouse allowed us to identify intermarriages
- Less than 1% were inter-religious marriages; half of which were **Hindu-Sikh** marriages
- 209 (4.4%) households had an **inter-caste** head and spouse as defined by crossing broad caste categories
- Estimates of intermarriage from this dataset may be an undercount
- Inter-caste households were, on average, **wealthier**

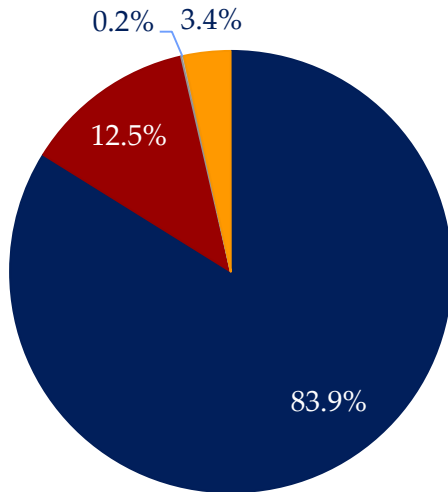
Percent of Male Household Heads in an Inter-caste marriage by Caste



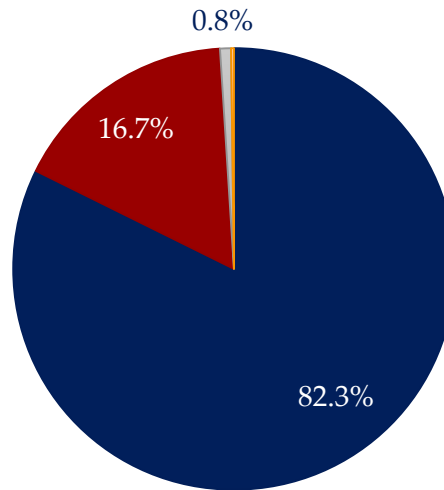
How they marry?

Changes in Spousal Choice Across 3 Generations

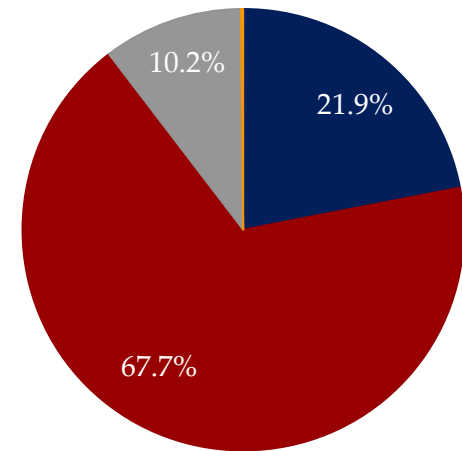
Respondent's Parents



Respondent



Expectation for Next Generation



■ Parent-arranged

■ Self-arranged

■ Parent's with child approval

■ Don't Know/Remember

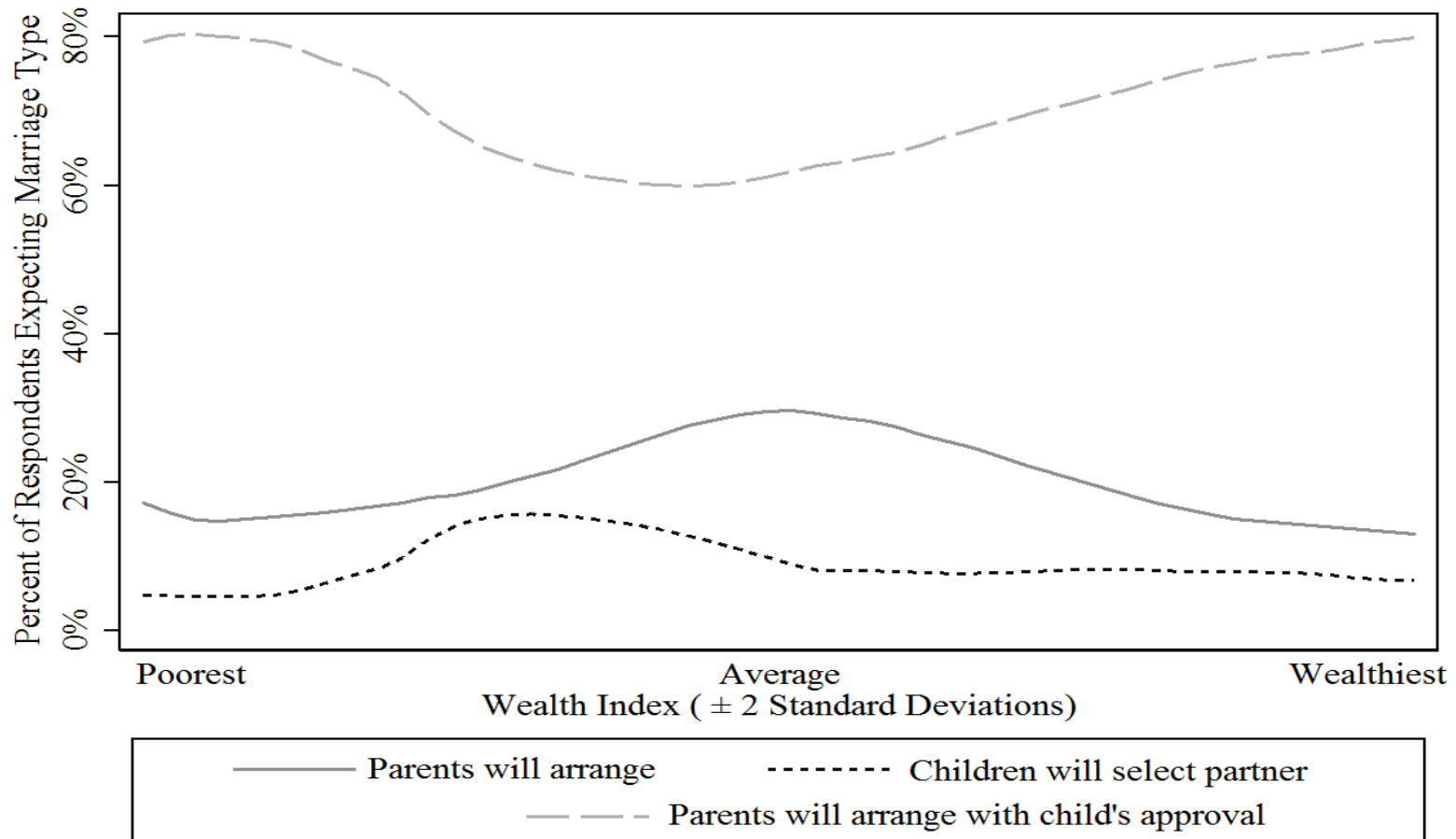
Spousal Choice in NCR Over Time

- Gradual decline in “parent-only” arranged marriage over time:
 - Of those married in the 1980’s, 87.8% of them had parent-arranged marriages
 - By the 2010s, the percentage of respondents who had parent-arranged marriages had reduced to 75.8%
- 61.9% of respondents expect young people today to have more say than they did

What is “self-arranged” marriage?

- The expectation for self-arranged marriages (10.1%) was an amalgam of several responses:
 - “Child chooses as long as the family approves” 9.5%
 - “Love marriage” < 1%
 - “The family will look only if the child could not find a partner on their own” <1%
- Almost no respondents endorsed a system where parents had no involvement in selecting a spouse

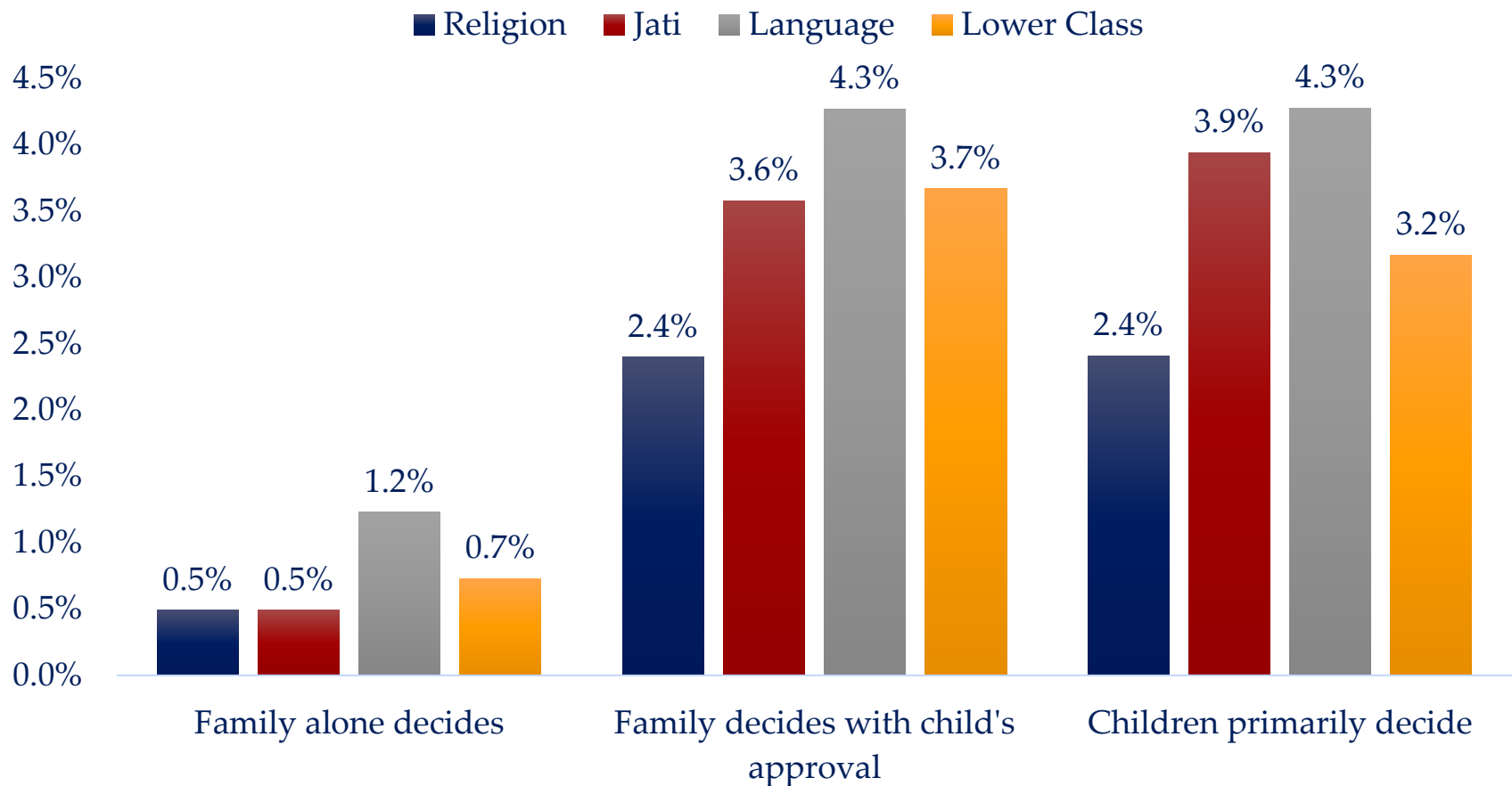
Expected Marriage Arrangement for Girls by Wealth



Predictors of Spousal Choice Type

- Respondents with at least higher secondary level **education** were more likely to expect girls to have a self-arranged marriage
- **NCT** residents were less likely to expect both a parent-only arranged marriage and a self-arranged marriage.
- Respondents who were **born in rural areas** were slightly less likely to expect self-arranged marriage
- Only older **migrant** cohorts were more likely to report a parent-arranged marriage than non-migrants

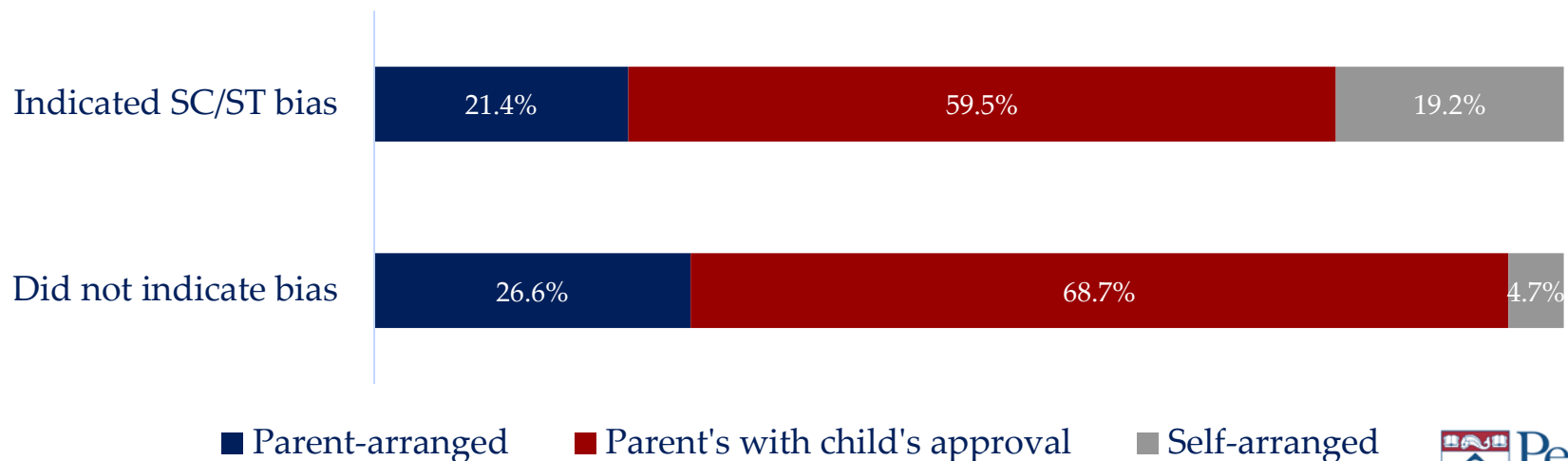
Percent who Say Intermarriage is Acceptable by Type of Intermarriage and Expected Marriage Type for Girls



Spousal Choice and Social Openness?

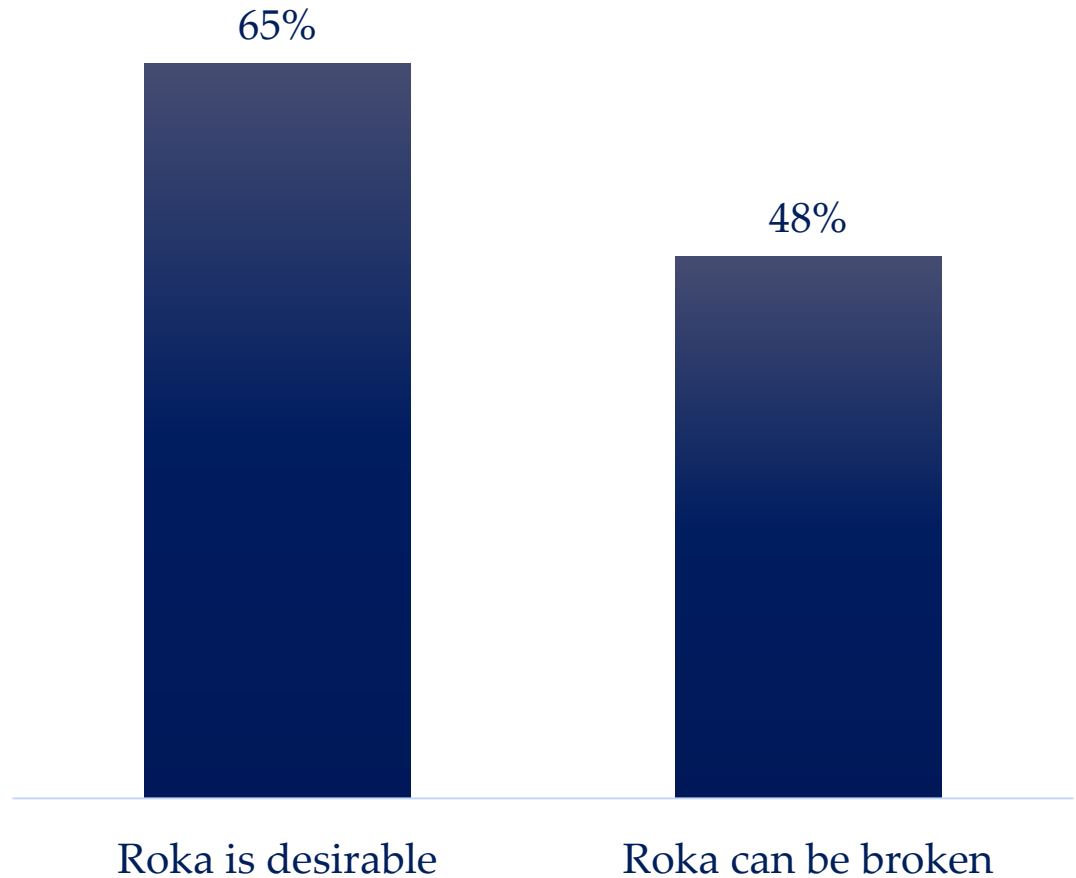
- Individuals who indicate bias against SCs and STs were more likely to report an expectation for self-arranged marriage
- Bias against SCs/STs was measured by whether they would invite a SC or ST person into their home

Expected Spousal Choice for Girls and SC/ST bias for Upper and Intermediate Castes



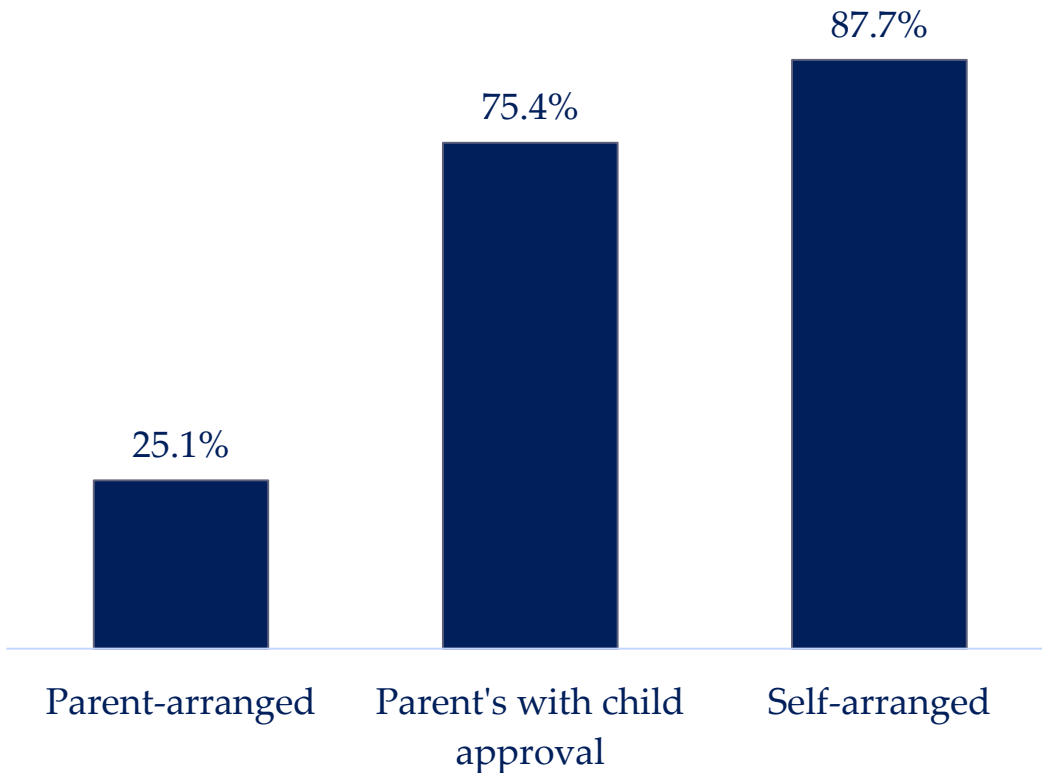
Roka/Sagai Ceremony

Those who supported *roka*, on average, felt that it should come 6.5 weeks before the marriage



Roka and Spousal Choice

Percent who think Roka is Desirable by
Expected Marriage Type for Girls



- Roka was more popular among households that expected self-arranged or joint-arranged marriage
- However, those expecting self-arranged marriage were less likely to indicate that breaking the *roka* is socially acceptable

Summary

- Convergence around an **ideal age at marriage** in the early to mid-twenties
- Few respondents report that **intermarriage** by caste, religion, language, or class would be acceptable but slightly more than in the previous generation
- A growing number expect boys and girls today to play a larger role in their **partner selection**
- It may be incorrect to assume that they decline in parent-arranged marriages will also signal a **decline in the significant of caste and other social boundaries**

Thank You

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National Data on Intermarriage

- National estimates of inter-caste marriage range from 5-11% (Goli et al 2013)
- National data also suggests that inter-caste marriage is no more prevalent in urban areas compared to rural areas (Allendorf and Pandian 2016)
- Recent experimental research by Ahuja and Ostermann (2015) suggests that the importance of class in partner selection may be growing due to decoupling of caste from socioeconomic status

National Trends in Marriage Arrangement

- Self-choice marriages comprised less than 10% of all marriages in India during the 2000s, only slightly more than previous cohorts
- Rise in “joint-arranged” marriage, comprising 2/3rds of marriages in the 2000s
- Parent-arranged marriages were least common in urban areas, especially in the six largest metro regions
- Self-arranged marriages were no more common in urban areas than in villages

Source: Allendorf & Pandian 2016 using IHDS