

Decision-Making in the Household and Material Deprivation*

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Abstract

This study examines how household living conditions are related to alternative allocations of control over decision-making in the household. The degree of control exerted by a particular individual over different decisions and household living conditions are taken from responses to an extensive multi-national household questionnaire. This study has three main findings. First, more equally shared decision-making in a household is closely connected to better household living conditions. Second, while predominant decision-control accrued to any of partners is correlated with worse living conditions, this is more pronounced for women rather than men. Finally, the distribution of the mode of decision-making in households does not strongly predict the regime of family finances. These findings support the notion that effects of social assistance targeted at women might actually not be driven primarily by female empowerment.

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Keywords: material deprivation; intra-household; gender; empowerment

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