

# Marriage markets in developing countries



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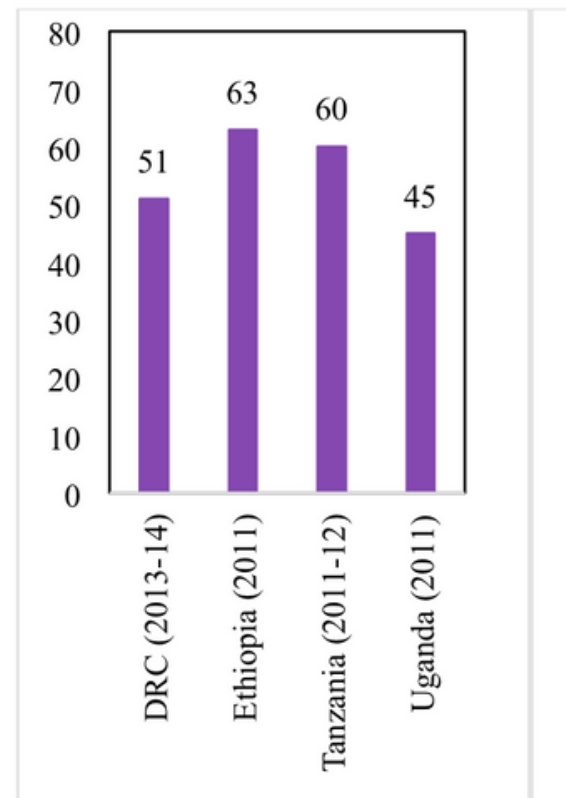
Part 7: Conclusion



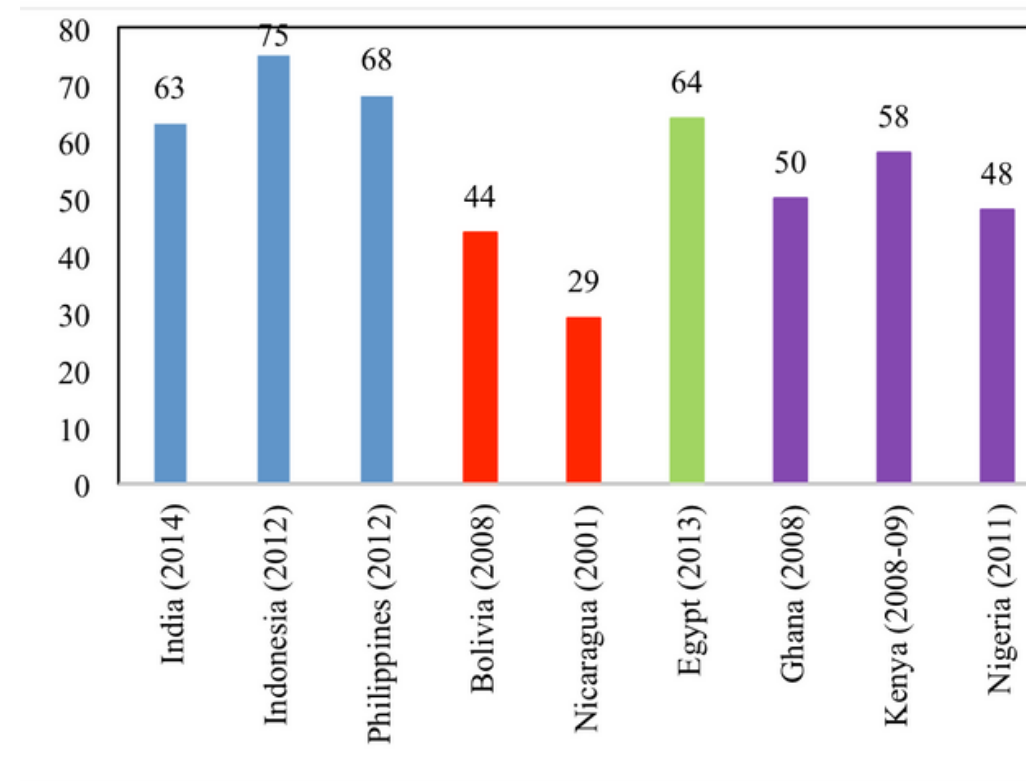
# Introduction

## 3 Reasons that marriage markets in developing countries differ from those in high-income countries

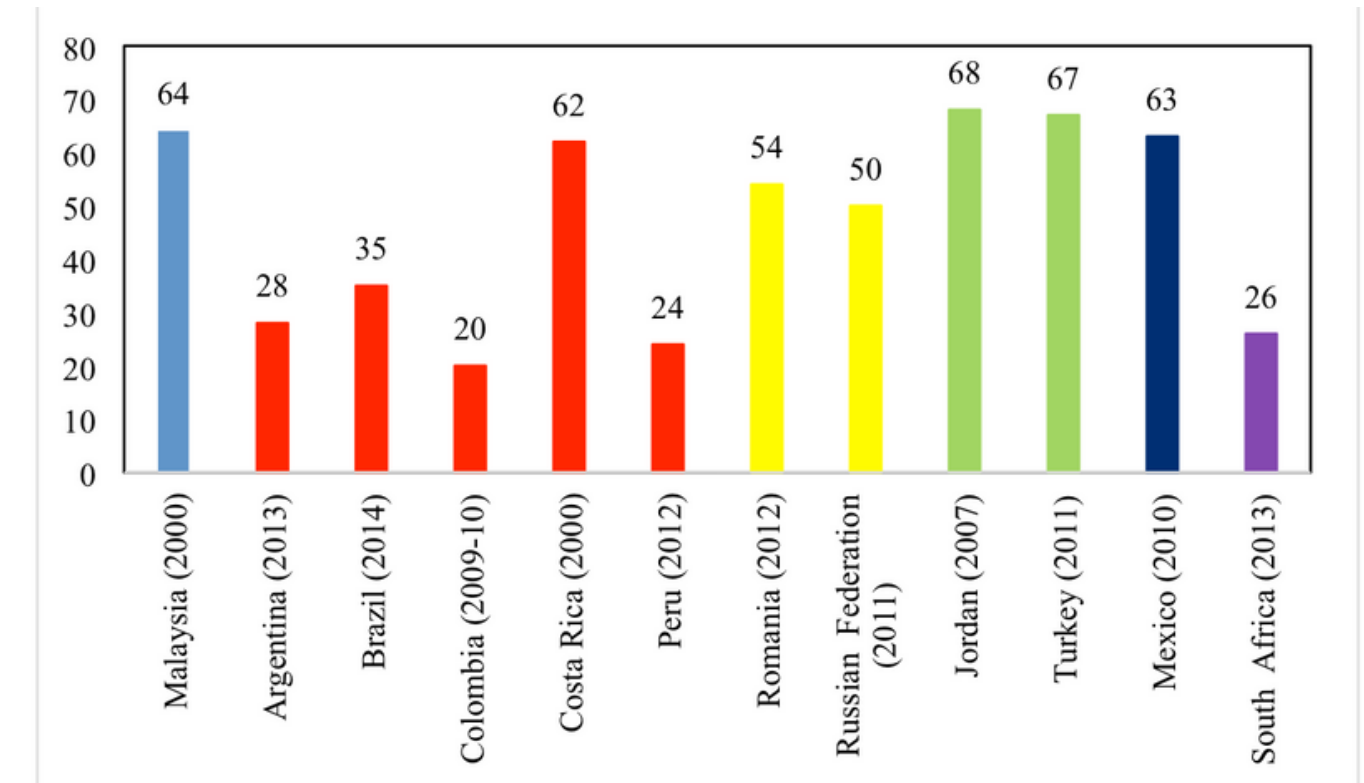
### 1. Differences in the prevalence of marriage and cohabitation



(a) Low-income countries



(b) Lower-middle-income countries

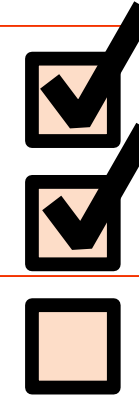


(c) Upper-middle-income countries

Fig.1: Prevalence of marriage by Region and Income



## Introduction (Cont.)



2. The process of mate selection takes the form of matches arranged by family members and involves a transfer of resources between families at the time of marriage

3. The laws governing marital dissolution are not well established and cultural norms, and gender roles are strong determinants of spousal interactions in low-income countries that are characterized by underdeveloped and missing markets.



## 2. How do people get married?



### Modes of mate selection



### Love Marriages

Young people choose their own spouse based on mutual compatibility, romantic love, and affection.

**Western Societies**



### Arranged Marriages

Parents and extended families exert significant control and influence over the mate choice of the prospective bride or groom.

**Asia, Africa and Middle East**



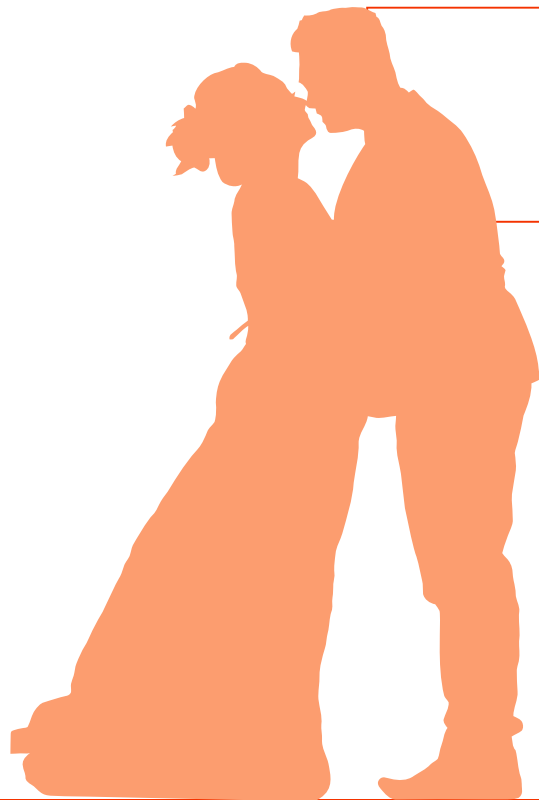
## 2. How do people get married? (Cont.)

Rubio (2014) examines the trends in arranged marriages by cohort for eighteen countries.

Approximately three-quarters or more of the marriages taking place in Asia and Africa at the beginning of the twentieth century were arranged.

Younger cohorts are more likely to choose their own spouses and move away from arranged marriages.

In South Asia (India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh), 95% or more of all marriages continue to be family-arranged.



## 2. How do people get married? (Cont.)

- War disruptions
- Spatial indicators of schooling supply as instruments for education



*Emran* finds a negative relation between schooling and arranged marriages

All these factors are positively correlated with the probability of women having arranged marriages (in Mumbai, according to *Mathur*)



- Living in a joint family
- Owning a family business
- Lower educational attainment
- Lower levels of labor force participation
- Traditional values and lifestyle



## 2. How do people get married? (Cont.)

Worldwide decline in arranged marriages is positively correlated with:



Education



Urbanization



Female employment  
outside the household



Decline in the importance  
of agriculture

**What determines selection into arranged marriage?**

- Monetary interests
- Agricultural issues
- Distribution of resources
- Inheritance distribution
- Female chastity

**What are the differences between these two types of marriage?**

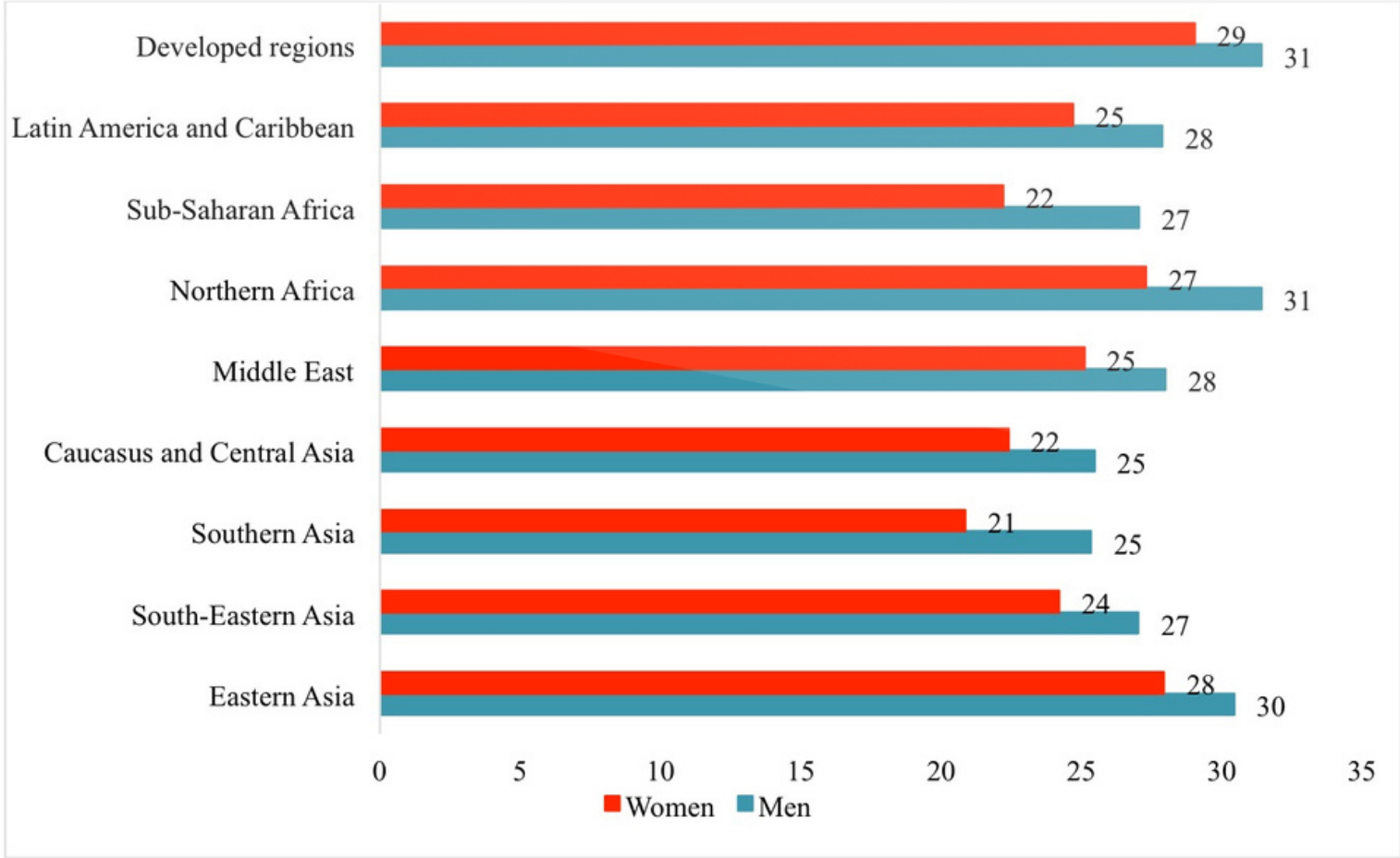
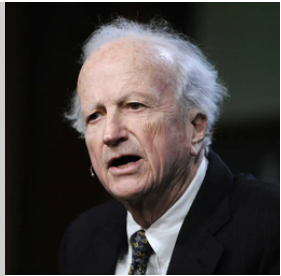
- Fertility
- Son preference
- Mental distress
- Suicide
- Domestic violence
- Divorce Rates



# 3. When and who do men and women marry?

## Age at marriage

Individuals marry when their expected utility from being married exceeds their utility from remaining single.  
**Gary Backer**



Women's age at marriage is the lowest in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, and the highest in East Asia and Western Europe.  
**Women tend to marry at earlier ages than men.**

*Global patterns in the age of marriage among men and women*



# 3. When and who do men and women marry? (Cont.)

## Age at marriage (Cont.)

### Causes of Early Marriage



Men prefer younger brides



Daughter at a young age are viewed by households as an economic burden



Parents struggle to gather the necessary resources needed for their daughter's marriage

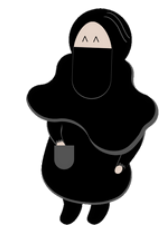


Households view their daughter's marriage as a way to preserve female virginity

*Familial and cultural factors are also important determinants of marriage timing.*



Women with multiple older female siblings



Male-female segregation in the households



# 3. When and who do men and women marry? (Cont.)

## Age at marriage (Cont.)

### Factors Associated with the Change in Age of Marriage

Urbanization



Female labor force participation

Female educational attainment



Excess supply of women/men on the marriage market



Laws and government programs







# 3. When and who do men and women marry? (Cont.)

## Assortative mating

In a marriage market, individuals have a range of potential partners to choose from and it is this competition that leads to the sorting of individuals by **different traits**.



-  Physical assets
-  Human capital
-  Biological characteristic
-  Psychological characteristic



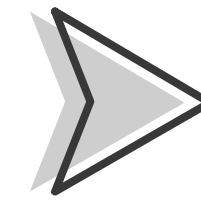
### Pareto-optimal

No individual can improve her marriage outcome without making someone worse off.



### 3. When and who do men and women marry? (Cont.)

#### Assortative mating (Cont.)



*The tendency of positive matching (homogamy) among the least educated will have a propensity to perpetuate inter-generational inequality*

Matching on **education** has received a great deal of attention.

The probability of a higher-caste female considering a lower-caste match increases with an increase in the monthly income of a low-caste male. This suggests the existence of a trade off between income and caste status. (Dugar, 2012)



## 4. Marriage Payments

Dowry: Bangladesh,  
India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka

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### Dowry

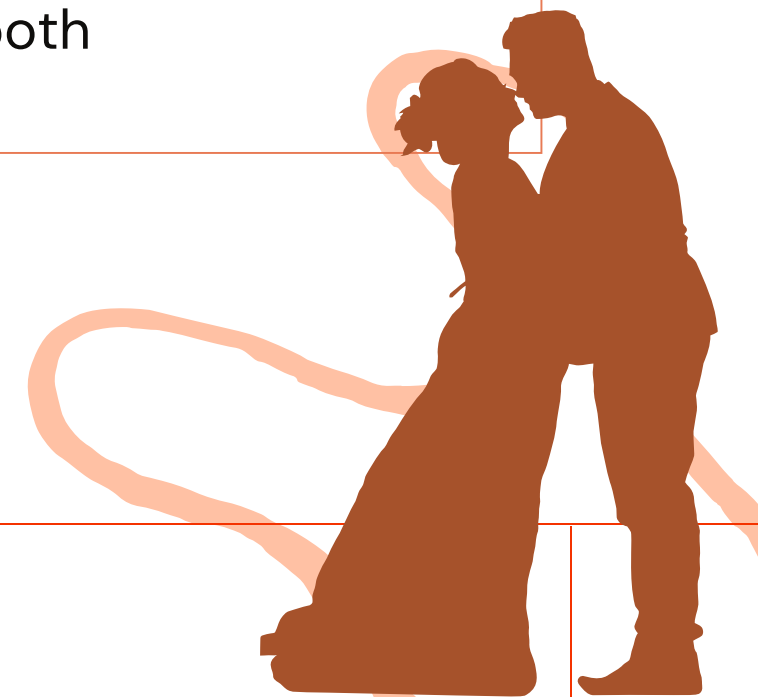
Dowry: is a payment, such as property or money, paid by the brides family to the groom or his family at the time of marriage

Bride price: Sub-saharan Africa,  
rural China, Iran, Egypt  
Thailand, and Turkey

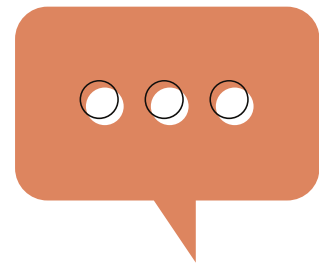
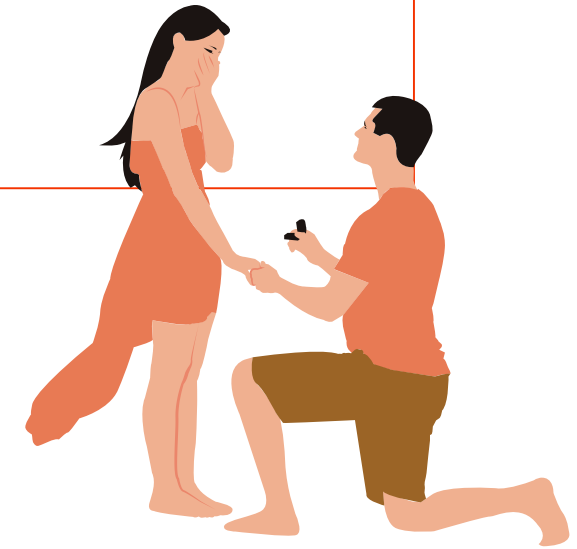
02

### Bride price:

when the family of the groom pay their future in-laws at the start of the marriage. Money, present or a mixture of both



## 4. Marriage Payments (Cont.)



### **MEHR**

***" a payment from the husband to the wife in case of a husband initiates divorce"***

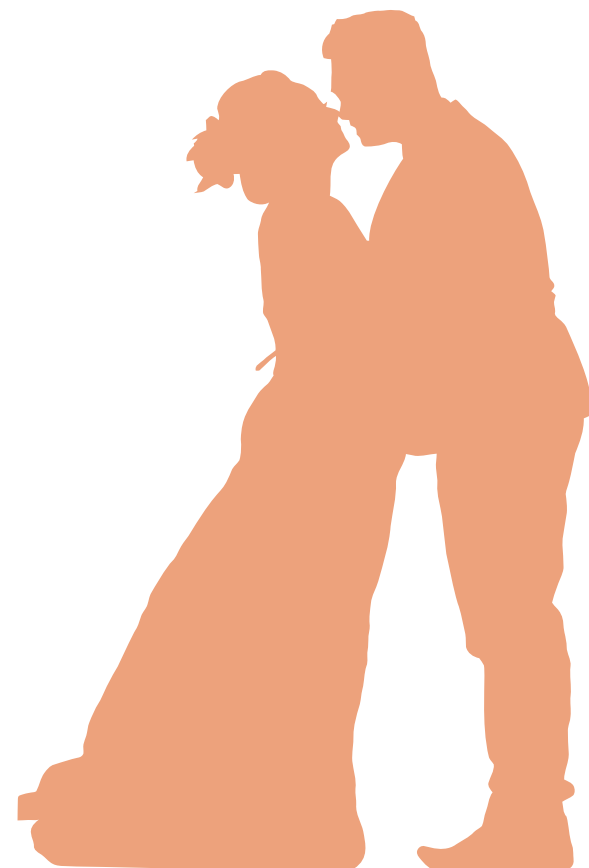
Becker (1981): Marriage Payments are a compensatory transfer

Brideprice: more prevalent in societies where women are economically more productive.

Dowry: more prevalent in societies where relatively homogenous women compete for heterogeneous men who differ in their earning potential



## 4. Marriage Payments (Cont.)



### Anderson and Bidner (2015)

- The quality of grooms improves with economic development
- Increased competition to make daughters more attractive in the marriage market
- Socially inefficient outcome



### Roy (2015)

Examines the impact of legal reforms that improved women's inheritance rights in India on girls education and dowry payment.



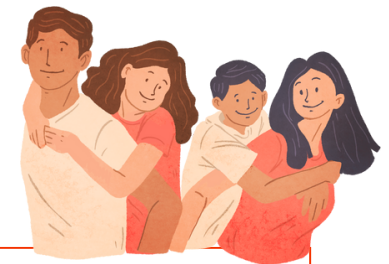
### Strategically

- Gift their land to the sons
- Younger daughters, more education
- Elderly daughters, higher dowry



## 4. Marriage Payments (Cont.)

A few recent studies have attempted to utilize newly available data to test how marriage payments impact fertility, investments in children's health and education and household financial decisions



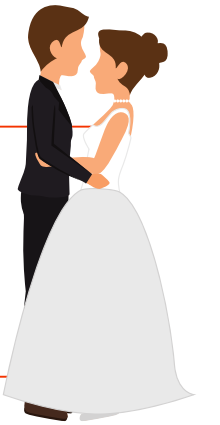
**Bride Price increase female enrollment in Zambia cause more educated brides commands higher bride price.  
(Ashrafet 2016)**

**An increase in the price of gold led to an increase in the mortality of girls relative to boys in India.  
(Bhalotra 2016)**

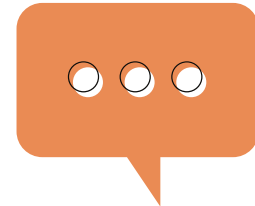
**Harder Indian anti-dowry law leads to a decrease in male-biased fertility behaviors.  
(Alfano 2015)**

**Parents increase savings and fathers work more in anticipation of future dowry payments for their daughters.  
(Anukriti 2016)**





# 5. Marriage quality and divorce



**what determines  
how the couple  
interacts with each  
other?**

**The traditional unitary model treats couples as single decision-makers.**

Distribution factors (sex ratio, relative income, gender of a benefit's recipient, and divorce laws) do not impact the intra-household resource allocation.

**The non-unitary models treat spouses as separate decision makers.**

**Cooperative**

The household decision-making process leads to Pareto efficient outcomes

**non-cooperative**

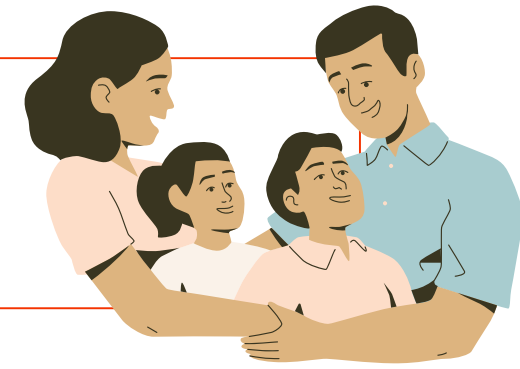
The optimal decisions need not to be Pareto efficient



However, several papers have demonstrated that households are, in fact, not always Pareto efficient.



## 5. Marriage quality and divorce (Cont.)



### Key gains from marriage

The ability of spouses to share risk and insure each other and smooth consumption.

- Pre-marital contracts are one way to achieve commitment and lower inefficiencies within marriage.  
For example, watta satta in Pakistan

Marriages are also often characterized by asymmetric information and limited communication

- Family planning is likely to suffer from moral hazard since spouses typically have different preferences over the number of children and wives can easily hide contraceptive use from their husbands.

### Marriages and violence

Marriages in low-income countries are also characterized by high rates of spousal violence against women. Theoretically, violence against the wife can be modeled as strategic, wherein the husband uses it as an instrument of control, or as a mode of expression.



# 5. Marriage quality and divorce (Cont.)

## Divorce

- Exhibited by the crude annual divorce rate per 1,000 marriages (CDR)
- Divorce rates have been steadily increasing in East Asia since the 1980s (Dommaraju and Jones , 2011).
- Changes in divorce rates tend to be correlated with women's education, female labor force participation rates, divorce laws, and cultural norms surrounding marriage.
- In general, divorced and separated women in developing countries continue to face substantial stigma, making it costlier, especially for women who are financially dependent on their husbands, to leave an unhappy marriage
- However, as these economies develop, and the economic status of women improves along with the legal environment, it is likely that divorce and remarriage rates will go up in the future.

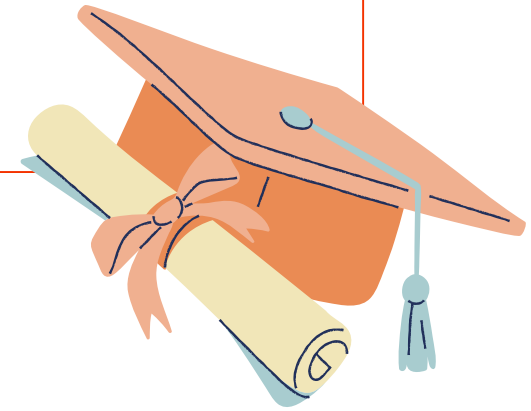


### Marriages and violence

Heath (2014) documents a positive correlation between women's work and domestic violence in Bangladesh suggesting that a woman's bargaining power before entering the labor force is an important determinant of whether she faces domestic violence upon entering the labor force.



## 6. Special Topics

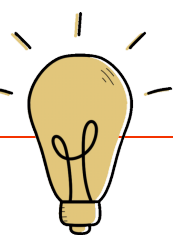
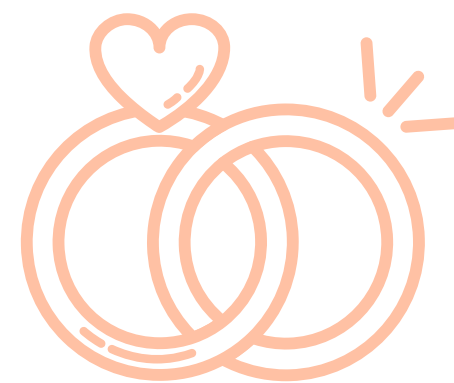


### Consanguineous marriage

Consanguineous marriage can be defined as “the marriage between close blood relatives”.

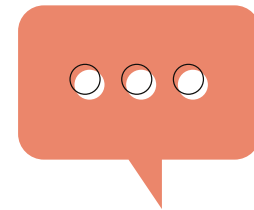
This type of marriage is fairly uncommon, however, is more prevalent in the Middle East, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and South Asia.

Studies from various countries found that incestuous unions tend to occur in poor traditional rural areas. These studies also found that women from these communities generally marry younger, have lower levels of education, and are less likely to engage in economic activity.



## 6. Special Topics (Cont.)

Though this practice is fairly common in some parts of the world, nevertheless it does present various risks. Consanguineous marriage increases the likelihood of developing genetic abnormalities and other complex diseases.



**Why do  
consanguineous  
marriages occur?**

Despite the risks that occur with incestuous union, these relationships persist due to certain speculated advantages:

### **Financial benefits**

- Less expensive spousal search
- Lower dowry/bride prices
- More certain transaction

### **Social advantages**

- Better family relations
- Better compatibility
- Higher family social standing
- Lower risk of divorce
- A closer relationship between in-laws and spouses



## 6. Special Topics (Cont.)

### Polygamy

Polygamy can be defined as marriage between multiple partners. This phenomenon is common in several societies, including many countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

### The determinants of polygamy are understood to be:

- The increase in the labor force (due to spouses and children)
- Higher fertility
- The purchase and sale of wives and daughters are seen as investments

Both consanguineous marriage and polygamy are both largely uncommon from a global perspective, however they continue to occur mainly for economic reasons.



# Conclusion

A selective literature review in economics on marriage in developing countries.

The authors

- highlight the variety of types of marriage market institutions and the modes of matchmaking in these countries.
- convince that family economics in the developed world to low-income settings fail to capture the complexity of spousal interactions in traditional societies.



# Thank You



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