

## Boserup's Model of Dowry and Brideprice based on the labor value of women

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### ➤ **In brideprice societies women**

- make high contributions to agriculture
- have high economic and reproductive autonomy
- and are likely co-wives (polygyny)

### ➤ **In dowry systems**

- low female contribution to agriculture
  - high dependence of women and children on male economic support
  - women are likely to be sole wives (monogamy)
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# Gaulin's and Boster's Reproductive Model of Bride Price and Dowry

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## ➤ In brideprice societies

- males must compete for wives
- wealthy males become polygynous
- wealth generation is labor limited

## ➤ In dowry systems

- wealth generation is capital limited
  - economic stratification among men
  - monogamy is socially imposed
  - it is worth it for women to compete for husbands because their wealth will not be diluted through polygyny (i.e., a husband cannot use his wife's dowry to gain an additional wife)
  - women must compete in order to become more attractive to wealthy men so they may have more or higher quality offspring
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# Polygyny and Dowry: Payoffs to Parental Investment in Sons versus Daughters

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- ❑ In polygynous systems parents invest in **sons** so they have many grandchildren.
  - ❑ In dowry systems parents invest in **daughters** through dowry to insure that daughter's sons (their grandsons) are high status males. They also invest in **sons** through inheritance.
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# Comparison of Models

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- ❑ In the Boster/Gaulin model marriage mode (polygyny/monogamy) and stratification (Goody's complex polity) drive the marriage transaction form.
  - ❑ In the Boserup/Goody model farming system (female or male) & polity drives marriage transaction form.
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Both models are supported by HRAF data, however

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- The Boster/Gaulin model has much stronger statistical support which suggests that marriage form (polygyny versus monogamy) is a more powerful predictor of dowry and bride price than Boserup's farming system model
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