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

- **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)
Gaulin’s and Boster’s Reproductive Model of Bride Price and Dowry

- **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
Polygyny and Dowry: Payoffs to Parental Investment in Sons versus Daughters

- 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.
Comparison of Models

- 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.
Both models are supported by HRAF data, however

- 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