

Polygyny and Bridewealth

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Motivation

- Transfers of resources at marriage (marriage payments) are/were a universal element of societies at present and in the past.
- There is no elaborated theory on the causes of particular forms of marriage payments.
- There is only a small number of comparative, quantitative studies on marriage payments.
- Focus on marriage systems and marriage payments
 - ▶ Polygyny – bridewealth, monogamy – dowry

Different forms of bridewealth



Kongo

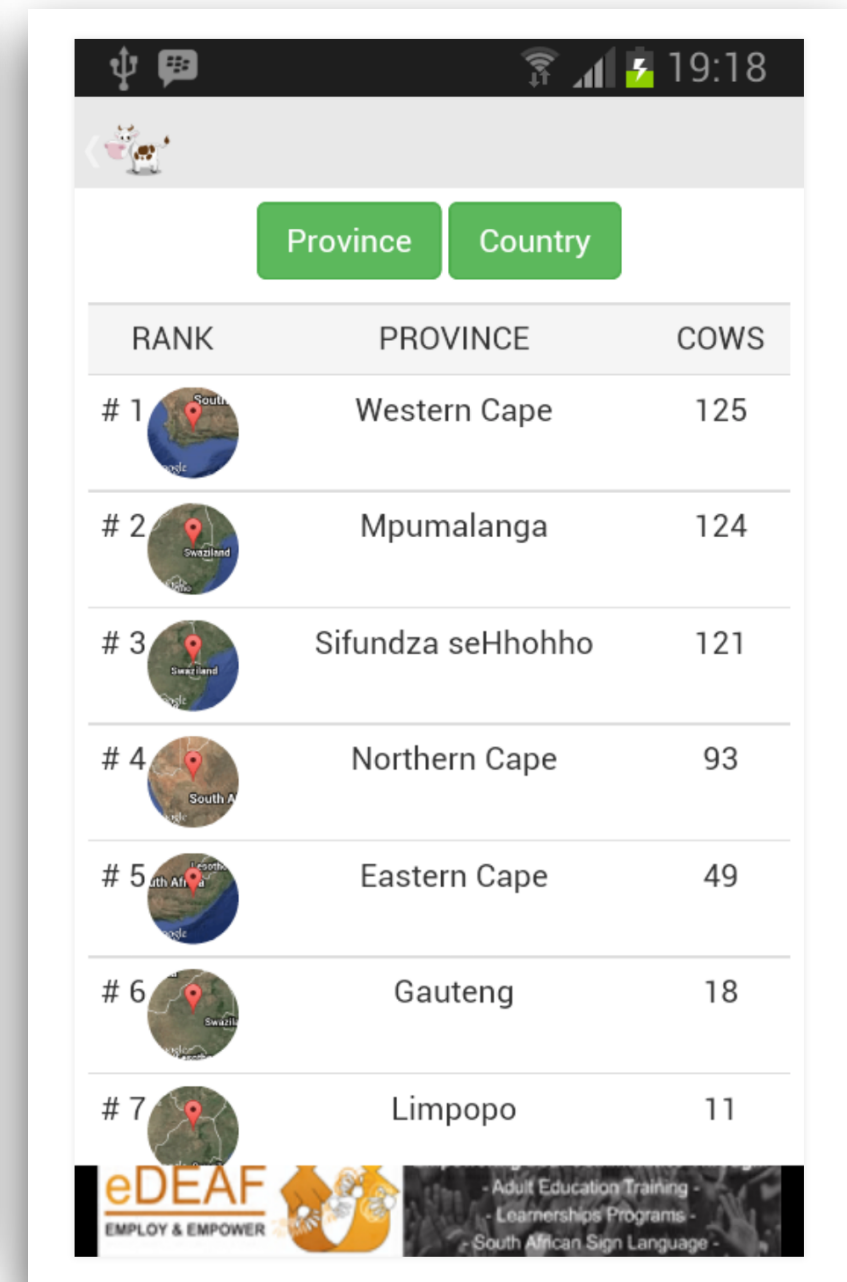
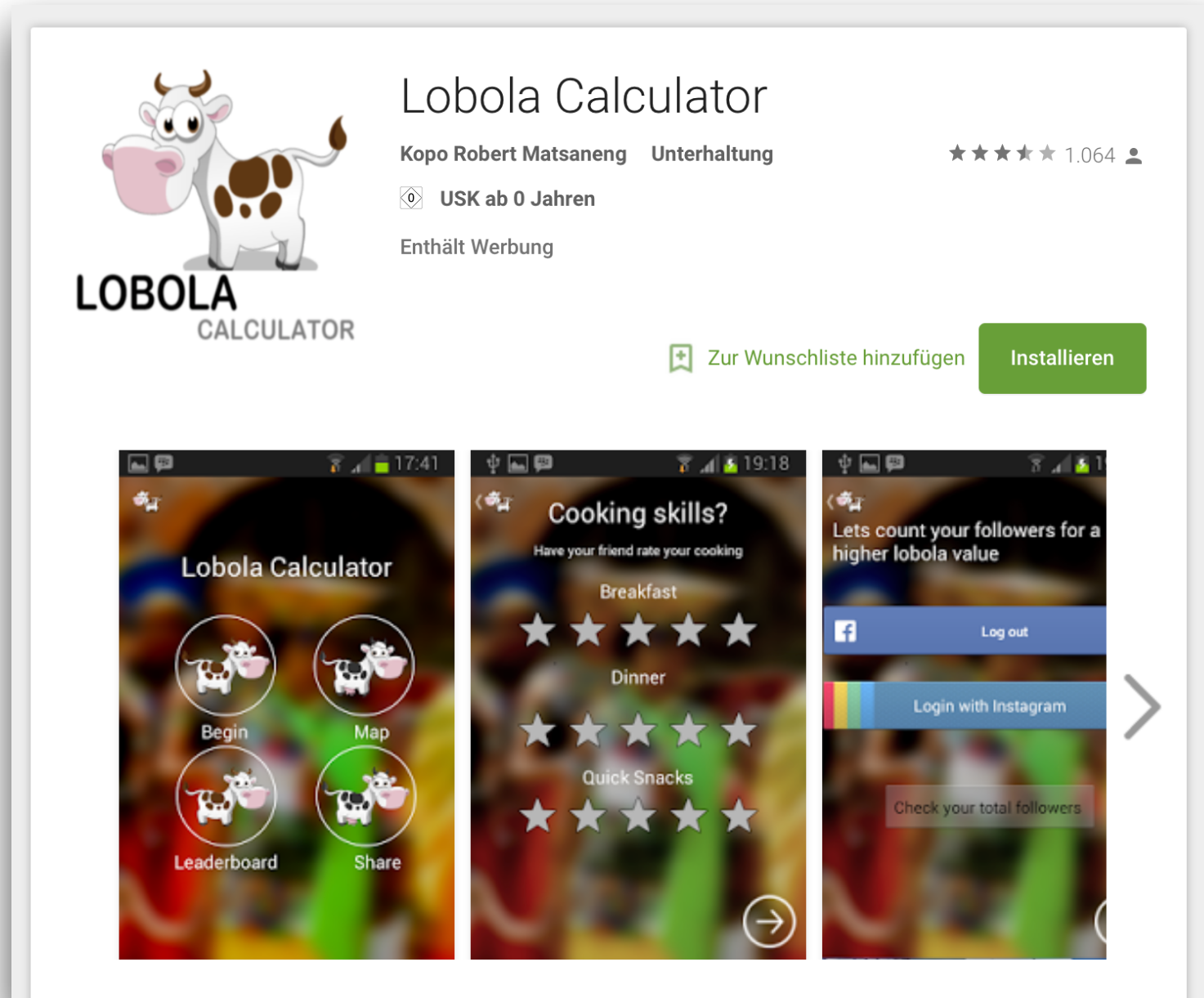


Thailand



Papua New Guinea

CommerzIALIZATION of bridewealth



The down side of bridewealth

2 Straight Talk, April 2010

End this pain and suffering

► Culture is good but bride price can force girls into marriage so that their brothers can get cows for marriage. Girls can end up as co-wives married to much older men because boys their age can not raise bride price. Boys have to marry late because they can not raise bride price. Read on.

• VIOLENCE

Nabucha Betty, 20, S6 Bumbo SS, Manafwa strongly says something is wrong when men abuse their women in the name of bride price.

Kyasimire Evaline, Ruhaama SS, Ntungamo, says: "Some men think they have a licence to treat women as slaves because of bride price. Parents encourage their daughters as young as 10 years old to get married instead of going to school."

"Recently, in the news a woman in Pallisa was forced by the husband to breast feed puppies. He claimed he had paid cows which used to give milk for his dogs as her bride price," says **Nareeba Kabs, Equatorial College, Ibanda**

• EARLY MARRIAGES

Solomon, Vurra SS, Arua, adds: "Bride price has turned into a money-making business. Many parents look at their daughters as a source of quick money. This has increased early and forced marriages thus girls school drop-out.

Muto Mushabe, St Francis Voc SS, Bushenyi, says: "In our village a little girl whose parents did not want to educate was forced to get married to an old man who paid the bride price immediately. A year later she died while giving birth."

Anayo Loyce, Pingiri SS, Soroti, says: "A friend who lost both parents was forced by her grandparents to

Traditions that view females as subordinate and males as superior hinder the fight to prevent new HIV infections.



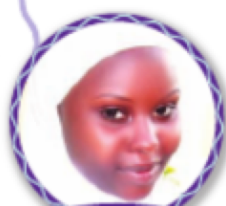
Girls from Mukono HS say hi! to fellow Straight Talkers.

marry an old man who gave a few goats and cows as pride price. She got HIV in marriage."

Early and forced marriages are against the law. Such marriages deny people their right to choose a marriage partner.

"I am a Pokot from Karamoja. In our culture a girl cannot get married without bride price. It is a source of wealth. I know of a girl who was forced to marry at 14. The man was very old but paid 20 heads of cattle."

Amuge Rhoda, Tororo Girls Sch.



Nakanwagi Mastura



Jackie Midiya



Nareeba Kabs



Wanyama Crispus



► According to MIFUMI, an NGO based in Tororo, many Ugandan girls are married off before the age of 18 because parents want bride wealth. Such girls are denied the chance to education and to marry when they are adults.

• DECISION MAKING COMPROMISED

Wanyama Crispus, S5, Busia SS adds that bride price compromises a girl's freedom and decision-making in her own home.

A good marriage or relationship

is built on good communication between two parties.

If a woman fails to express her views freely with their partner, who shuts her because he paid bride price, it fails family development to its fullest. **Auma Winfred, Busia Girls** adds: "Bride price is meant to make a woman powerless. It is a shame."

• OBJECTS OF TRADE

Wawiso Titus, Comprehensive College Kitetikka, Wakiso, says: Compulsory bride price means men and women are not equal as human beings. It devalues girls and reduces them to objects of trade."

Tumwesige Prossy, S6, Trinity College Nabbingo, Wakiso, says: "Bride price makes a woman the property of her father to be 'sold' to another man. She then becomes a 'servant' of the buyer; bearing children, providing sex, and performing household work."

No, no. No human being should be an object of trade.

• FAILURE TO MARRY

Akullo MD, 19, Gulu HS, says: "Bride price still exists in Acholi where I was born. Unfortunately a lot of poor boys can't get married because they can't afford."

• THEFT

"There is a boy who loved a certain girl so much. One day he decided to steal two goats to pay the bride price. After a few months the owner of the goats found them with the girl's parents. The poor boy was arrested and embarrassed. Now he does not want to marry." **OR, Ojigo SS, Nebbi**

Think before speaking

Things come and go

Marriage payments

Beneficiary	Donor			
	Bride's family	Groom's family	Bride	Groom
Bride's family				
Groom's family				
Bride				
Groom				

Marriage payments: bridewealth

Beneficiary	Donor			
	Bride's family	Groom's family	Bride	Groom
Bride's family		Bridewealth		
Groom's family				
Bride				
Groom				

- Transfer of substantive amounts of resources to the bride's parents.
- Motivations
 - ▶ Rights on female fertility and domestic/agricultural abilities, legitimation of marriage
 - ▶ Economic exchange
 - ▶ Social exchange
 - ▶ Rotating fund enabling marriages of sons

Marriage payments: dowry

Beneficiary	Donor			
	Bride's family	Groom's family	Bride	Groom
Bride's family				
Groom's family				
Bride	Dowry			
Groom				

- Wealth, items, jewelry, often no income-generating properties
- Brides have different rights of ownership and utilization
- Motivations:
 - ▶ Pre-mortem inheritance
 - ▶ Maintenance of bride's social status, attracting wealthy grooms
 - ▶ Pooling of resources in neolocal households

Marriage payments: groomprice

Beneficiary	Donor			
	Bride's family	Groom's family	Bride	Groom
Bride's family				
Groom's family	Groomprice			
Bride				
Groom		Groomprice		

- Transfer of substantive amounts of resources to the groom and/or his parents.
- Motivations:
 - ▶ Shortage of marriageable men
 - ▶ Maintenance of bride's social status, attracting wealthy grooms from higher strata
 - ▶ Increasing value of men's work (income), decreasing value of women's work

Marriage payments: dower

Beneficiary	Donor			
	Bride's family	Groom's family	Bride	Groom
Bride's family				
Groom's family				
Bride		Dower		Dower
Groom		Dower		

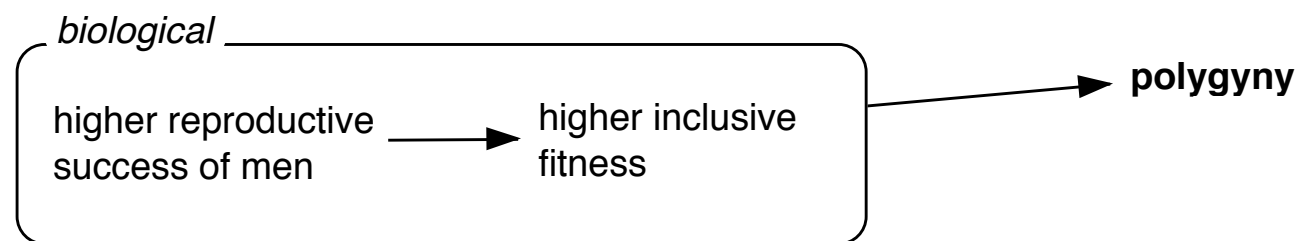
- Motivations:
 - ▶ Direct support of son's family
 - ▶ Wife's insurance in the case of divorce or husband's death

Marriage payments: brideservice, groomservice

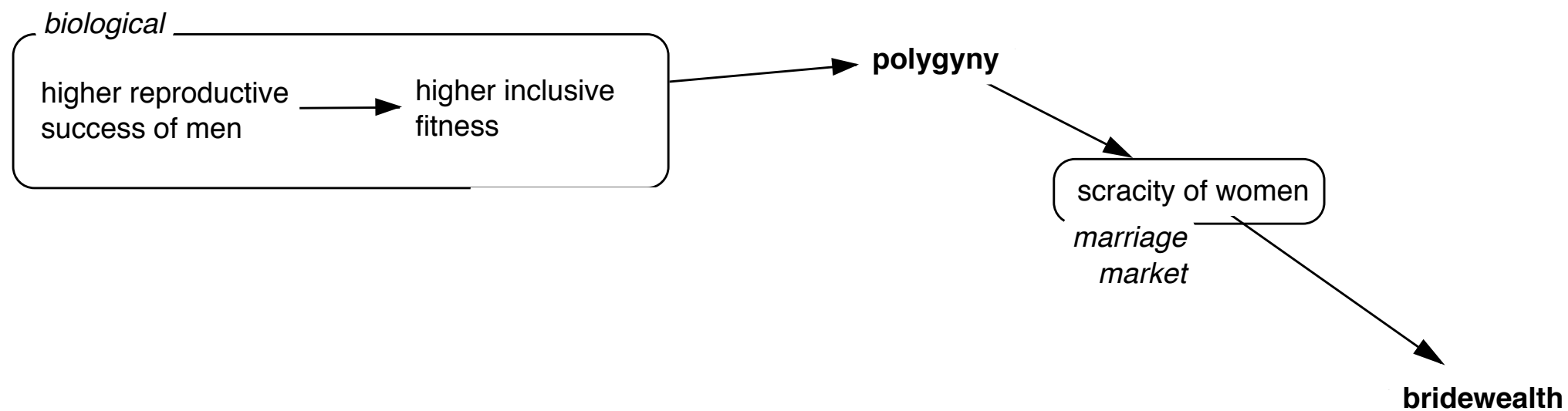
Beneficiary	Donor			
	Bride's family	Groom's family	Bride	Groom
Bride's family				Groomservice
Groom's family			Brideservice	
Bride				
Groom				

- Groom/bride works for the bride's/groom's parents over a longer period.
- Motivations:
 - ▶ Compensation for the loss of a son's or a daughter's work
 - ▶ Screening of marriage candidate
 - ▶ Signaling by marriage candidate

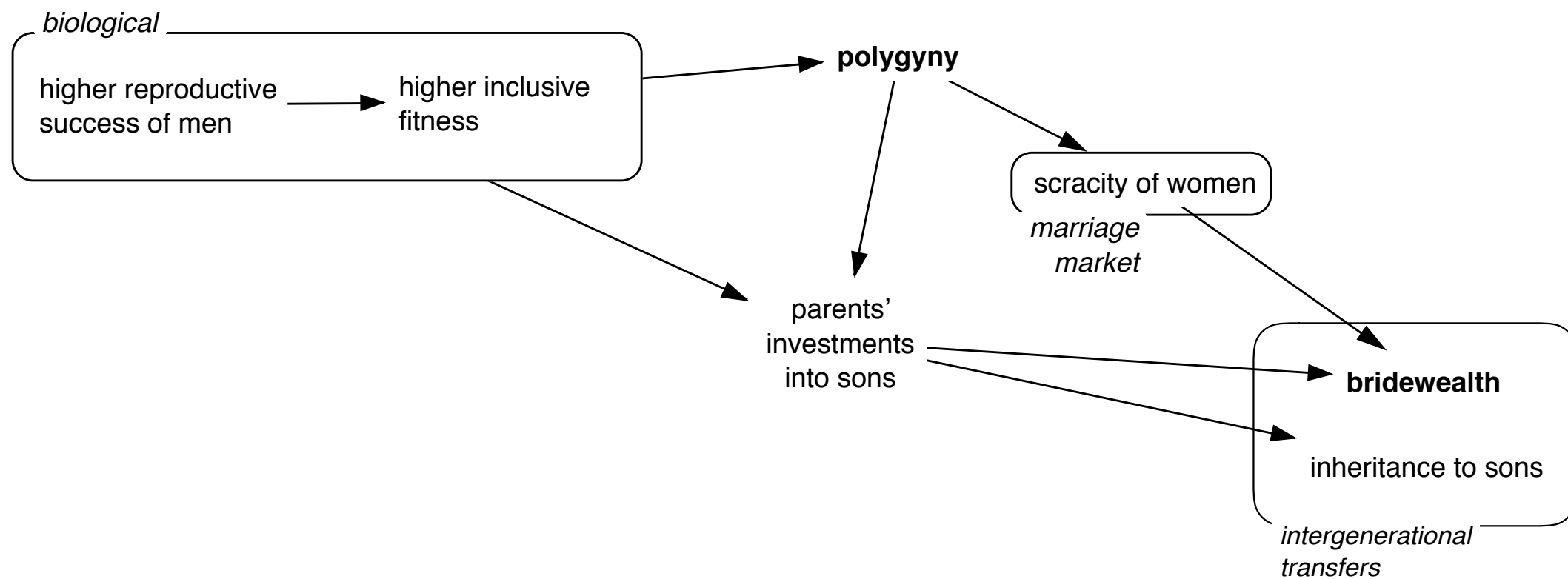
Polygyny and bridewealth



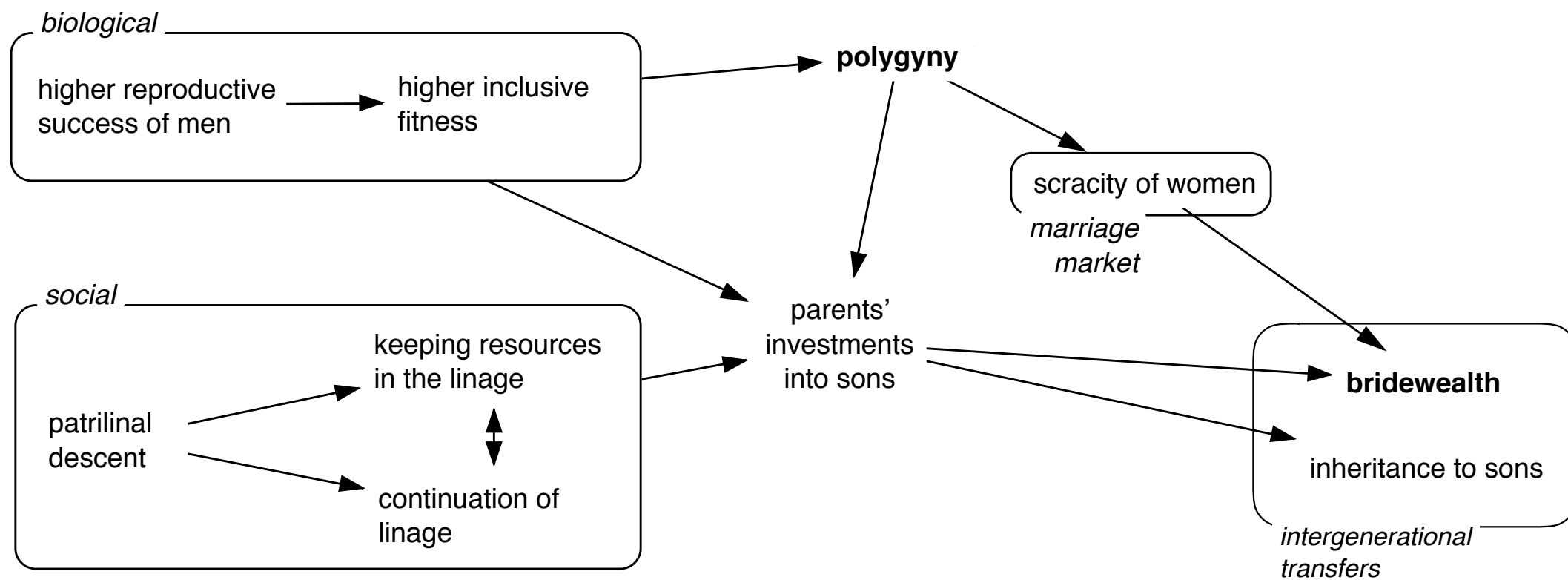
Polygyny and bridewealth



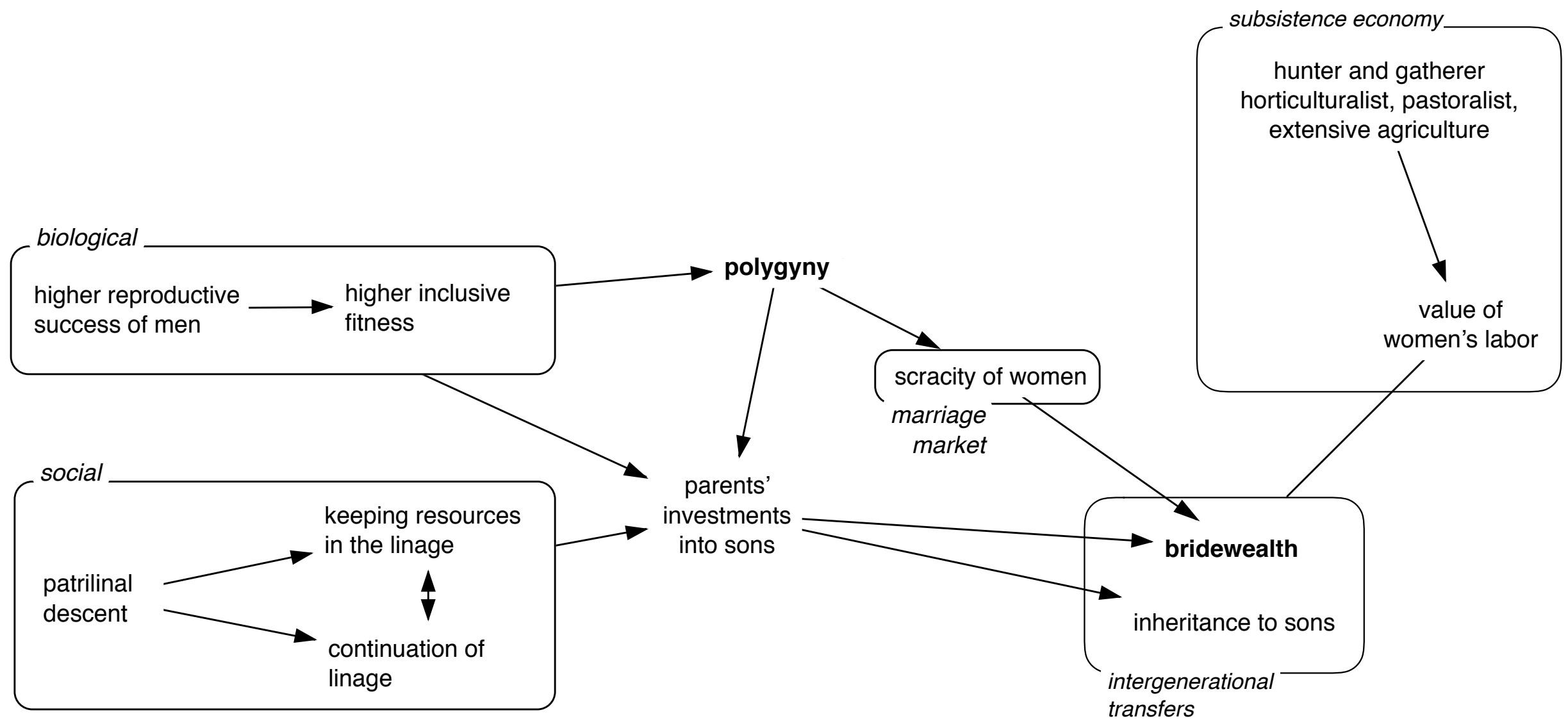
Polygyny and bridewealth



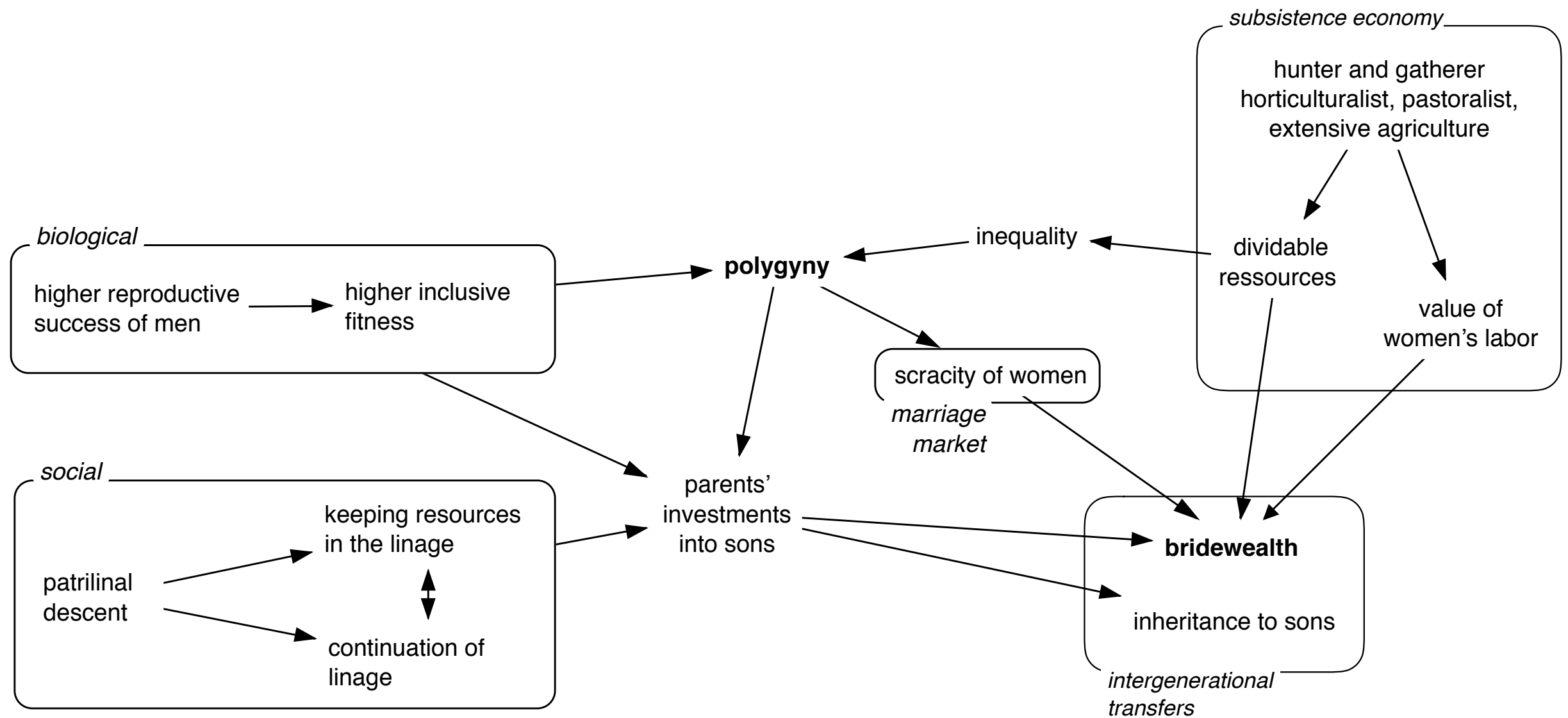
Polygyny and bridewealth



Polygyny and bridewealth



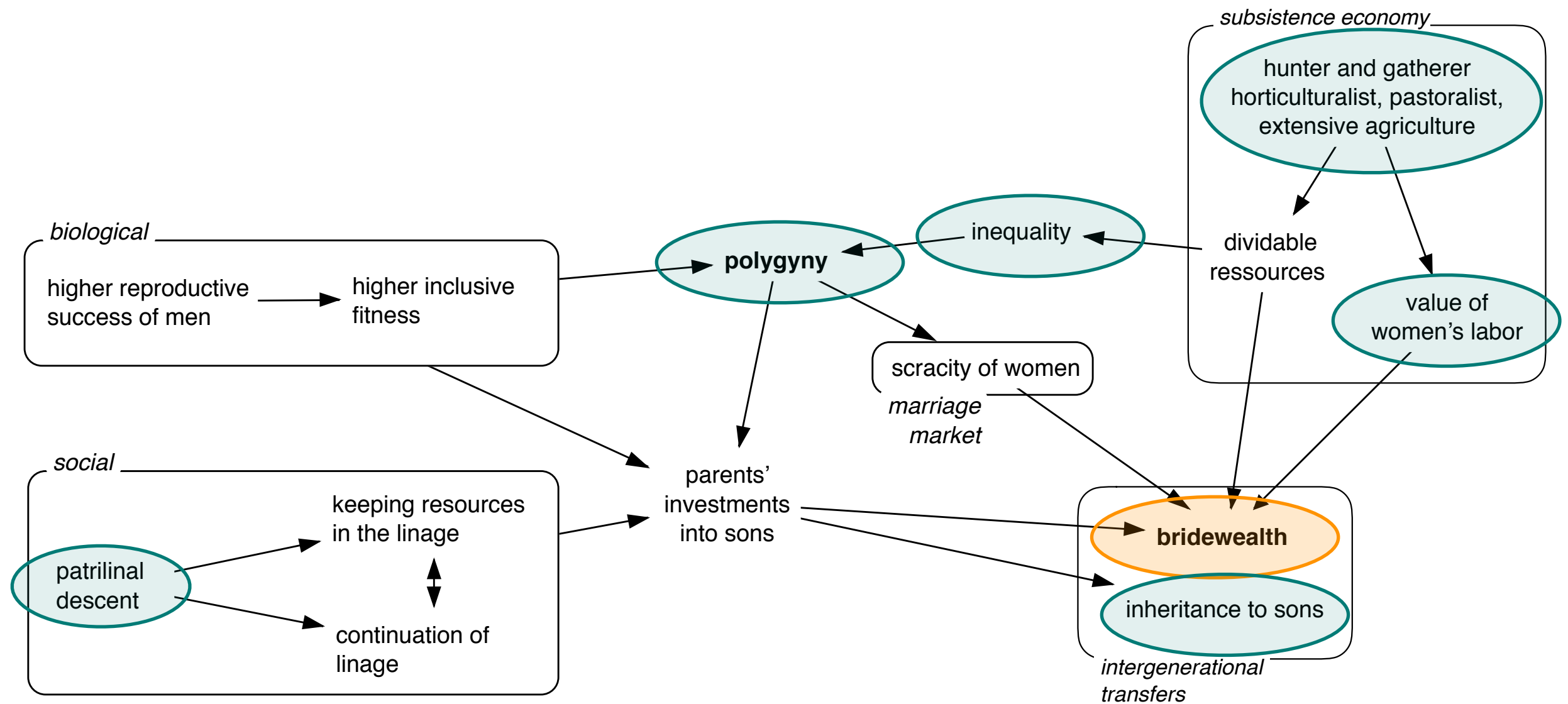
Polygyny and bridewealth



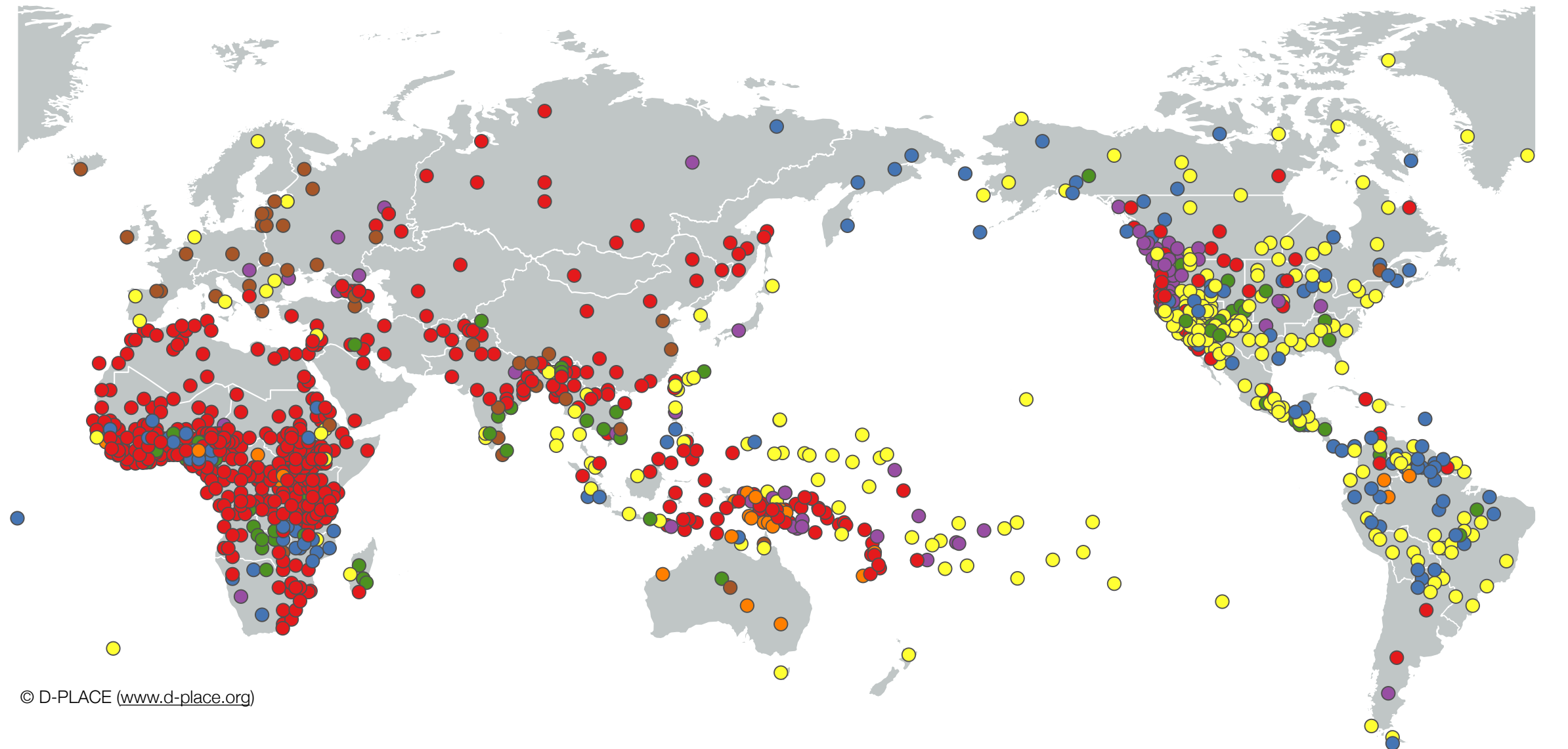
Data

- Ethnographic Atlas
 - ▶ Ethnological information from 1,267 societies (kinship-structure, settlement pattern, marriage systems, subsistence economy, kind of stratification, etc.)
 - ▶ Data were published in Ethnology between 1962 and 1967 and afterwards extended and corrected particularly by Murdock (1967) and (Gray 1999).
 - ▶ Data are from different ethnographic sources (publications, reports, original documents).
 - ▶ Oldest source: 800 BC; youngest source: 2000 AD.
 - ▶ Societies are only considered if they are adequately described.

Variables



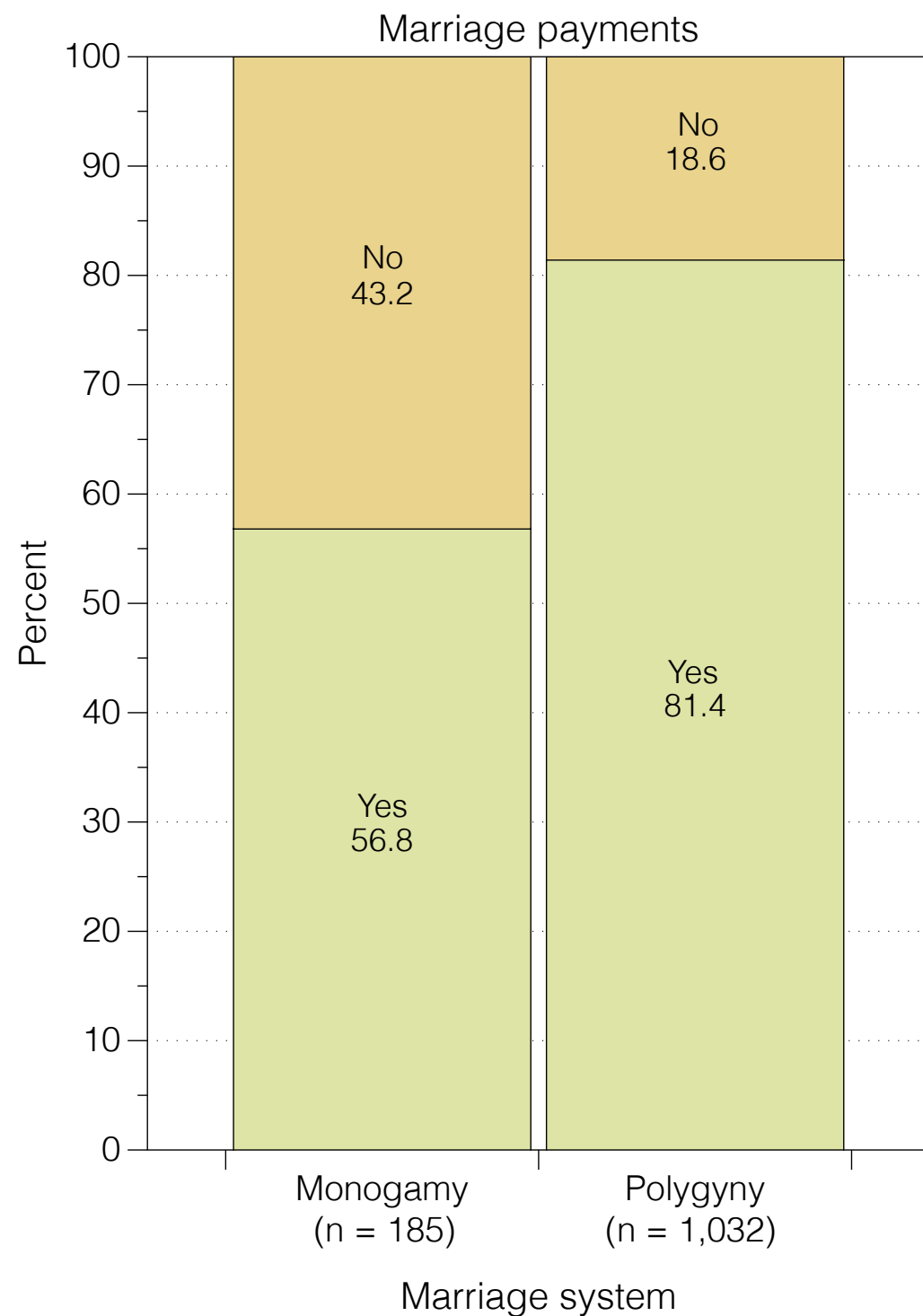
Geographical distribution of marriage payments



● Bridewealth	(n = 646, 51,8%)	● Reciprocal gift exchange	(n = 63, 5,1%)	● No marriage payments	(n = 276, 22,1%)
● Groomservice	(n = 123, 9,9%)	● Exchange of women	(n = 39, 3,1%)		
● Symbolic bridewealth	(n = 68, 5,5%)	● Dowry	(n = 33, 2,6%)		

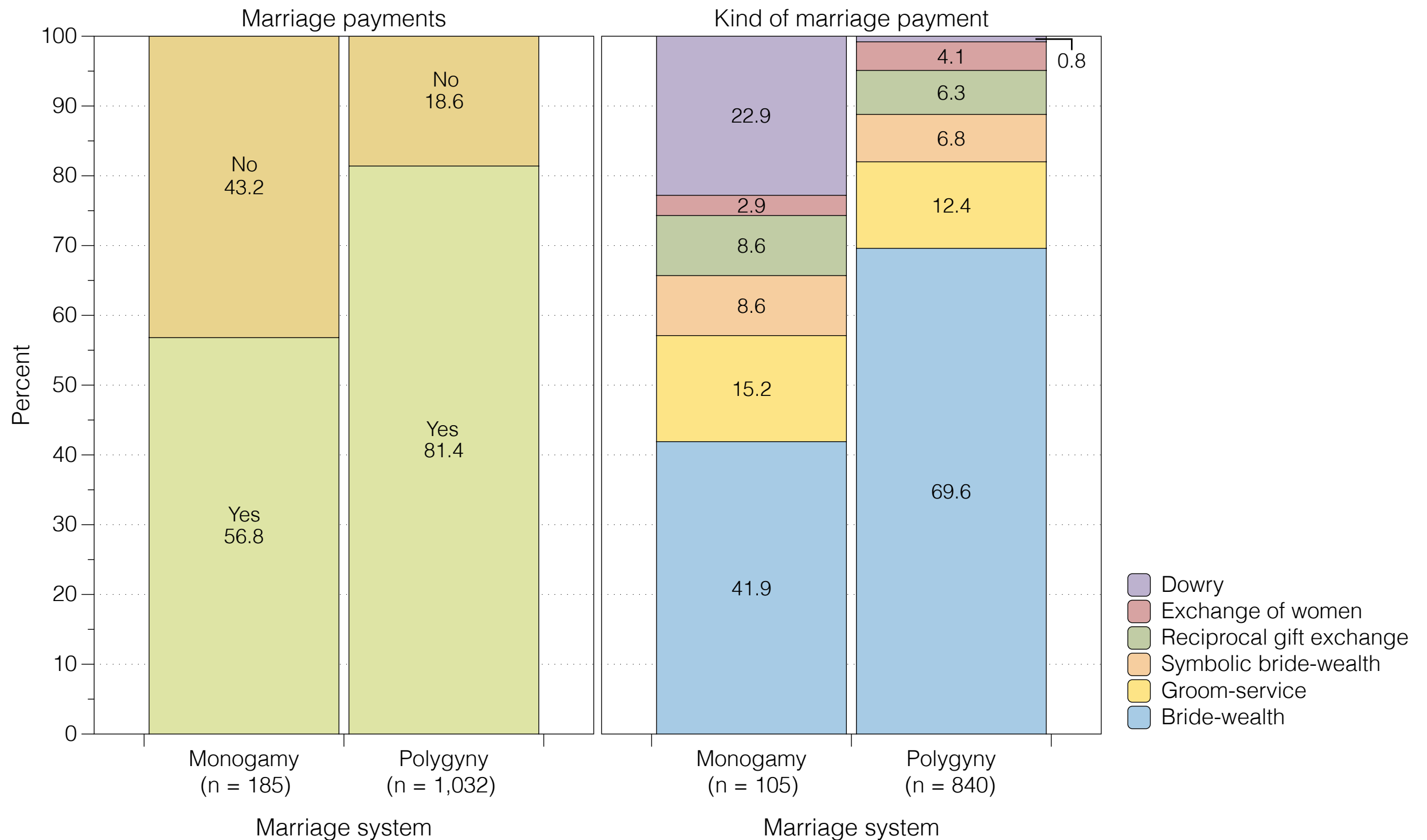
Descriptive results:

Marriage systems and marriage payments

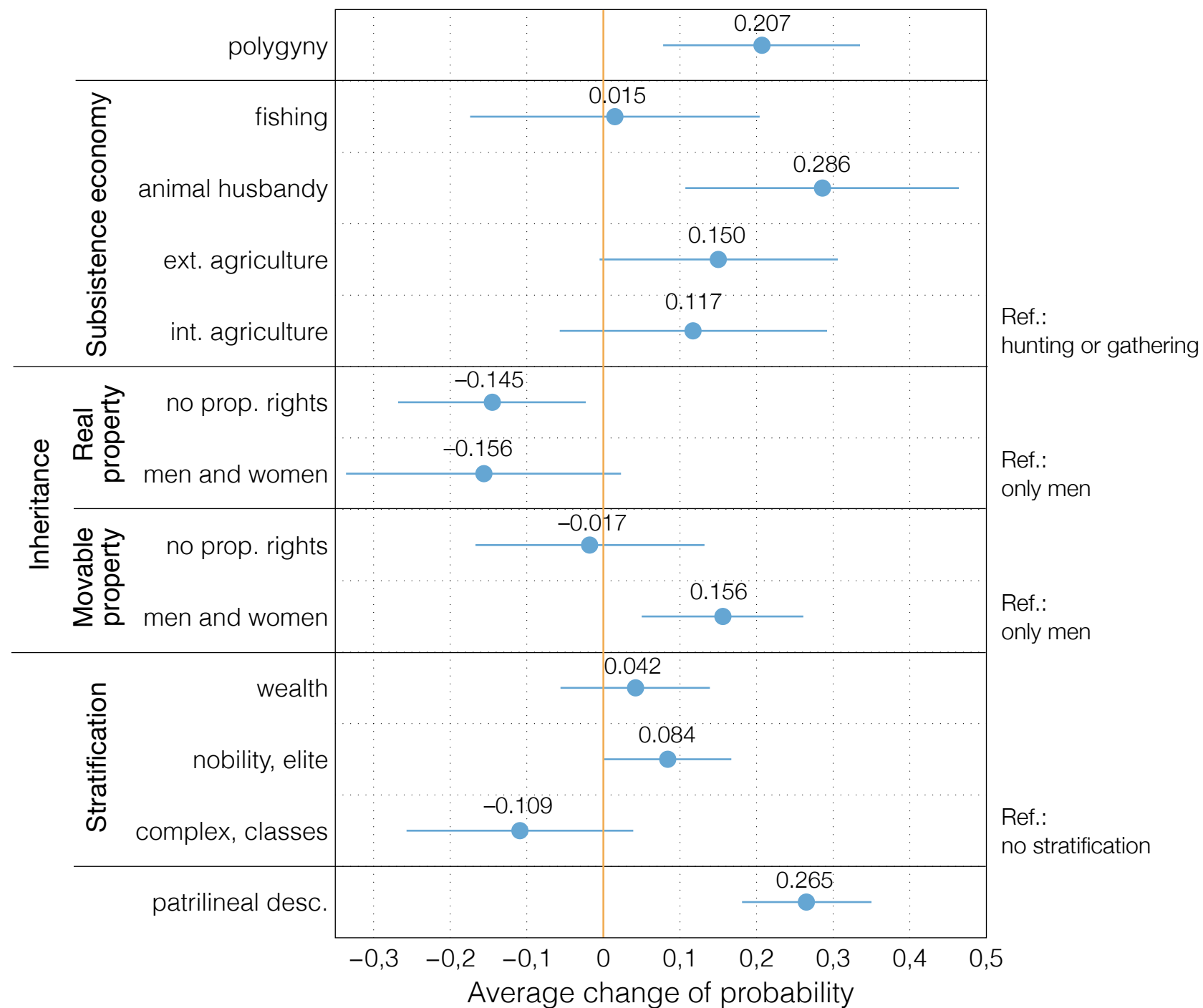


Descriptive results:

Marriage systems and marriage payments

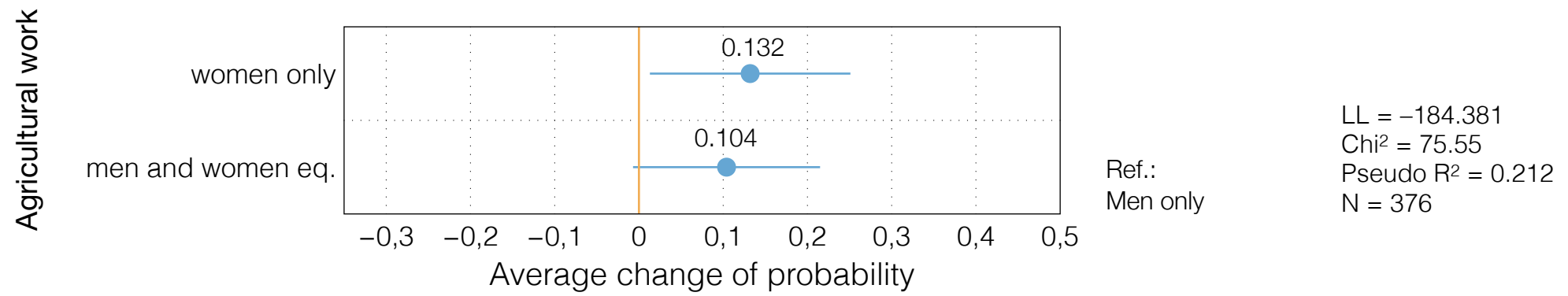


Multivariate logit analysis I



LL = -273.874
 Chi² = 112.54
 Pseudo R² = 0.219
 N = 549

Multivariate logit analysis II



Conclusions

- Q. E. D.: Positive associations between bridewealth and ...
 - ▶ ... polygyny
 - ▶ ... animal husbandry, extensive agriculture
 - ▶ ... inheritance of real property to men
 - ▶ ... simple but fixed stratification by wealth
 - ▶ ... patrilineal descent
- Positive associations to be explained:
 - ▶ Intensive agriculture
 - ▶ Inheritance of movable property to women
- Further steps
 - ▶ Consideration of arranged marriages
 - ▶ Application of a more general theory of social institutions
 - ▶ Multilevel analyses (societies are clustered in cultures, language families)
 - ▶ Structural equation model
 - ▶ Analysis of dowry and groomservice

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION WILL NOT ALLOW THOSE PROMOTING A "GAY AGENDA" TO SUBVERT THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE-- TO CHANGE ITS **TRADITIONAL** DEFINITION:



AN EXCHANGE OF PROPERTY ARRANGED BY THE PARENTS OF STRANGERS!

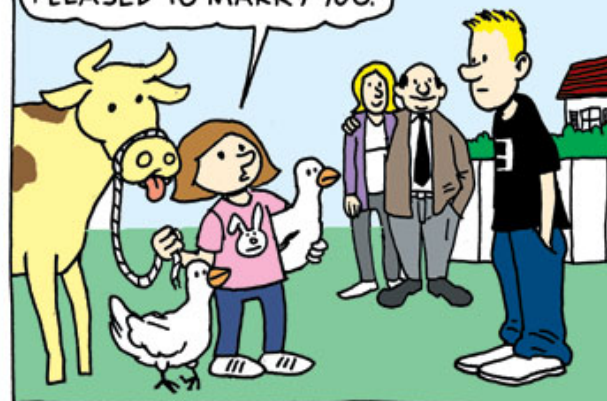
THAT'S WHY WE INTRODUCED
the **DEFENSE** OF
TRADITIONAL
MARRIAGE ACT



THIS IS HOW MARRIAGE STARTED CENTURIES AGO-- AND **THIS** IS HOW WE'RE KEEPIN' IT!

§2.01. The Parents shall arrange for the Bride, no younger than 12 years of age, to become the possession of the Groom, with a Dowry of no less than three livestock animals.

HI. I'M MICHELLE. PLEASED TO MARRY YOU.



§2.02. Marriage by abduction is legally proscribed, although if the Groom later pays a Bride-Price, it will be recognized.



§2.03. Among Nobility, Marriages may be arranged between Reigning Families for the purpose of reinforcing geo-political alliances.

HERE YA GO, PRINCE! SHE'S A KEEPER!

THANK YOU, VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY!

UH, DAD...



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