

# Child Marriage, Poverty and Education

## Facts:

- Everyday about **39.000 girls** worldwide are married at a very young age.
- **One in three girls** worldwide marry before they turn eighteen and almost **one in five girls** have their first child before this age.
- Child marriage is a huge violation of human rights with tremendous consequences.



## The impact of poverty and social norms regarding female education on the expected age of marriage of girls in Pakistan

### Theoretical Framework:

- Countries in which child marriage is most appearing belong to the poorest and most unstable countries in the world. Due to poverty and poor living situations, parents consider child marriage to be a solution to assure their own future and the future of their children.
- Due to severe economic circumstances and to keep the value of the marriage payment low, parents decide to invest in their son's education rather than in their daughter's education.
- However, this does not explain why girls do not return to school once they got married. This could be explained through strict traditional gender norms. Therefore, the practice and the consequences of child marriage are largely rooted in the idea that girls are inferior to boys. Which results, among other things, in the fact that there are extensive differences in educational attainment between women who are married as children and women who are married later on.

### Data:

- This study uses data from the Amsterdam Institute for Global Health and Development (AIGHD), Oxford University and the Centre for Economic Research in Pakistan (CERP).
- Their ongoing research project started in 2018 and focuses on the role of social norms in the persistence of child marriage in various villages in Pakistan.
- The original datasets contain 754 households and surveys were conducted among men, women and unmarried adolescents. This study focuses on the male dataset which, after merging and transforming, provides data on 361 male household heads with adolescent daughters.

Figure 1. Histogram expressing the expected age of marriage for girls according to their fathers opinion.

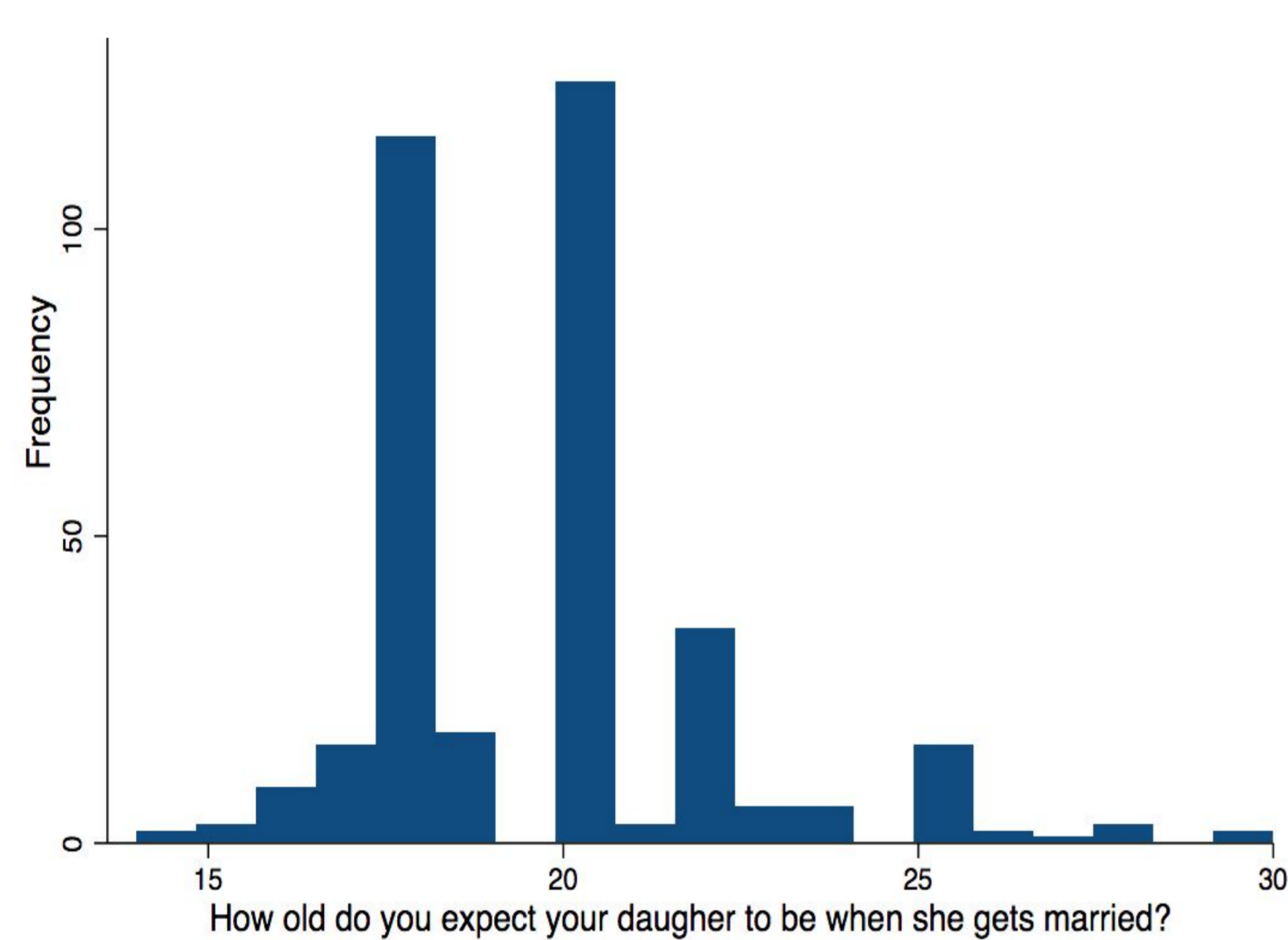
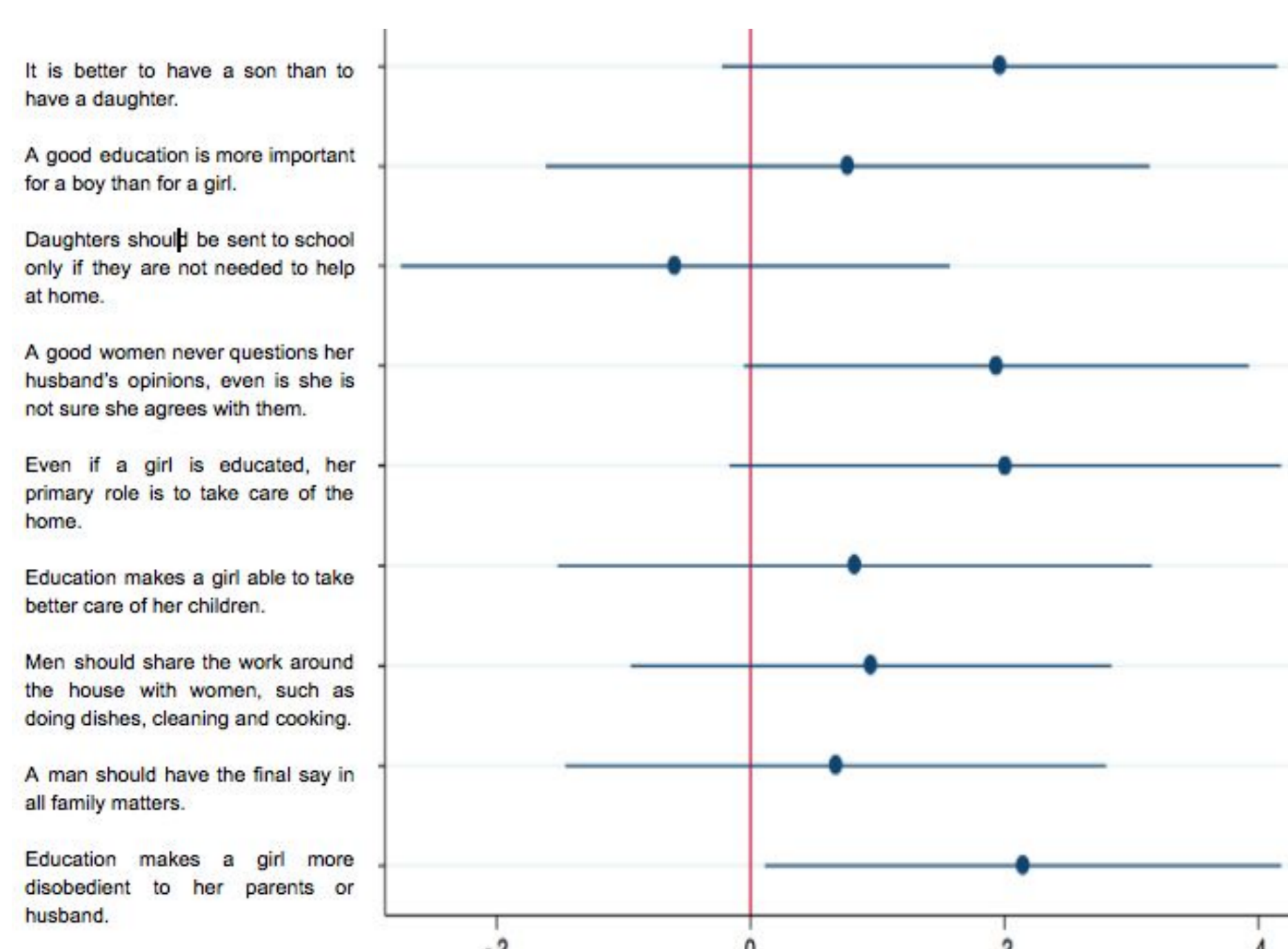
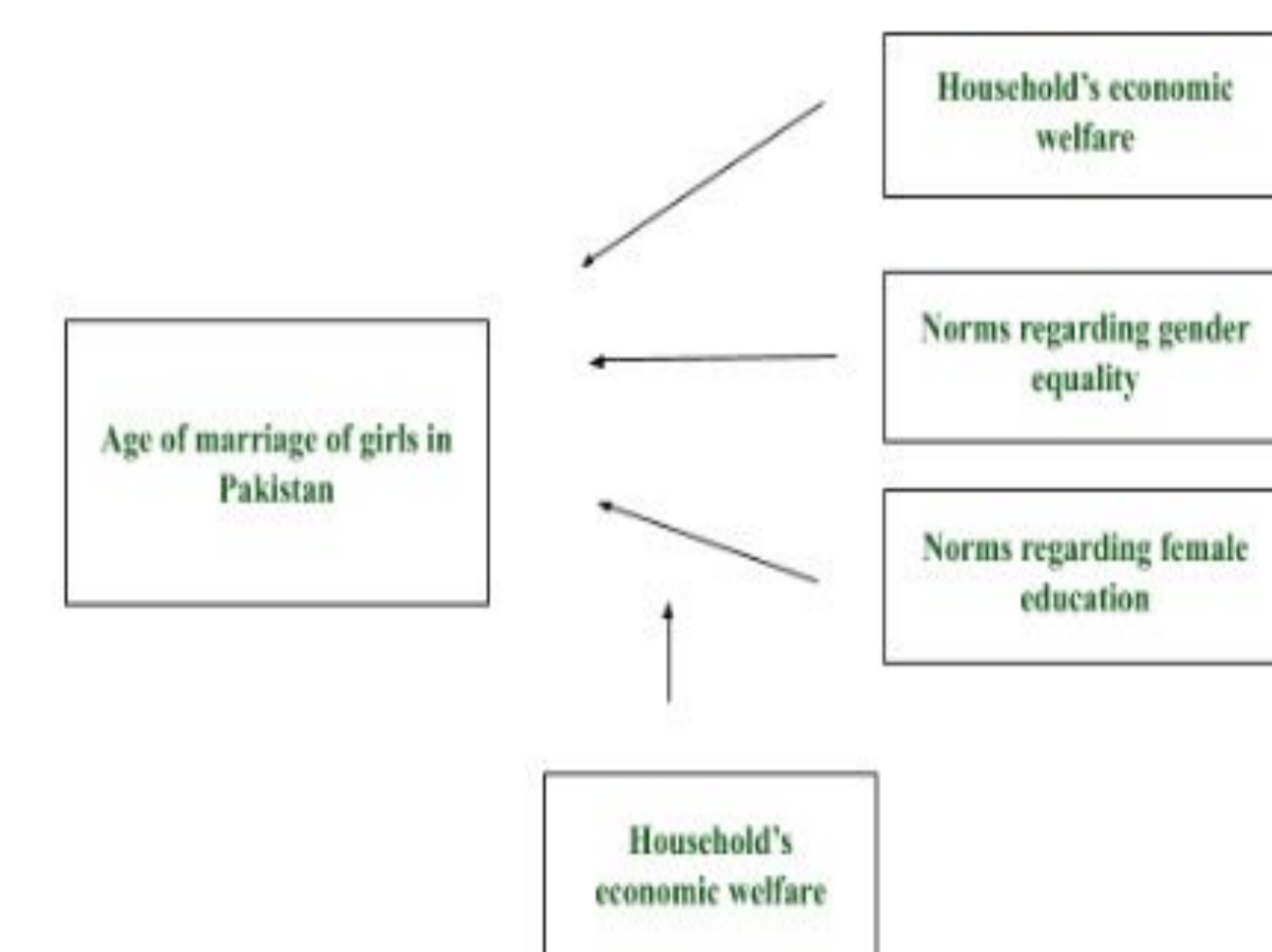


Figure 2. Plot expressing regression results for effect of norms on the expected age of marriage for girls separately and controlled for each other.



### Conceptual Framework:



### Results:

- For the average household the expected age of marriage is 19.7 years.
- An **increase of 1 standard deviation** in the importance of norms leads to an **increase of .22 years** on the expected age of marriage. In other words, an increase in the value of importance of norms results in a higher expected age of marriage.
- At the same time, a positive effect of household's wealth on the expected age of marriage was found: an **increase of 1 standard deviation** in household's wealth leads to an **increase of .66 years** on the expected age of marriage. This means that richer households expect their daughters to marry later than poorer households.

### Conclusions:

- The interaction shows that the positive effects are partly substitutes. **The interaction term reduces this total positive effect with .27 years.**
- The overall finding indicates that the positive effect of an increase of 1 standard deviation of the importance of norms on the expected age of marriage can reduce the negative effect of a decrease of 1 standard deviation of household's wealth on the expected age of marriage.
- Likewise, the positive effect of an increase of 1 standard deviation of household's wealth on the expected age of marriage can reduce the negative effect of a decrease of 1 standard deviation of the importance of norms regarding female education.
- In other words, due to the fact that the variables are substitutes, norms regarding female education could offer some form of protection against lower household's wealth.