

# Well-being premium to marriage

## Time trends and macro processes involved

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but...

USA studies:

- ▶ evidence of some decrease of the happiness gap between the married and the never married (Lee et al 1991)
- ▶ growth of marital discord (Rogers, Amato 2000)

Broader social processes:

- ▶ individualism = more fragile family bonds
- ▶ geographical mobility, women's employment
- ▶ **demographic changes:** lowering marriage and fertility rates, increasing frequency of divorce and cohabitation

Did the happiness premium of marriage really decrease?

Which macro factors affect the happiness premium to marriage?

# Who cares?

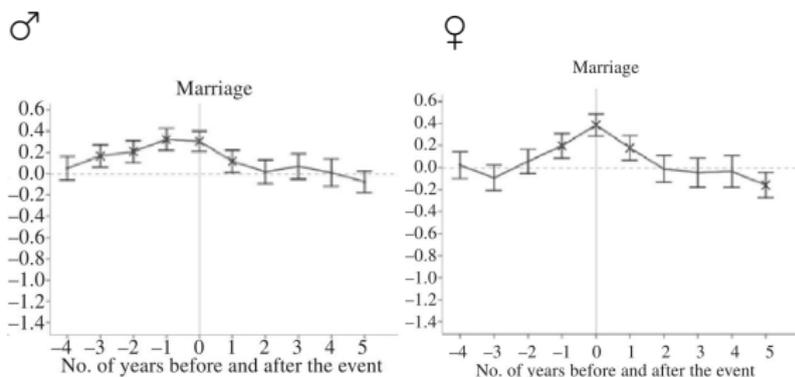


PL: tax exemptions & joint taxation; tax-free transfer of property, loans & inheritance

# What do we know about marriage and well-being?

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- ▶ direct effect
- ▶ indirect effect
- ▶ selection
- ▶ heterogeneity

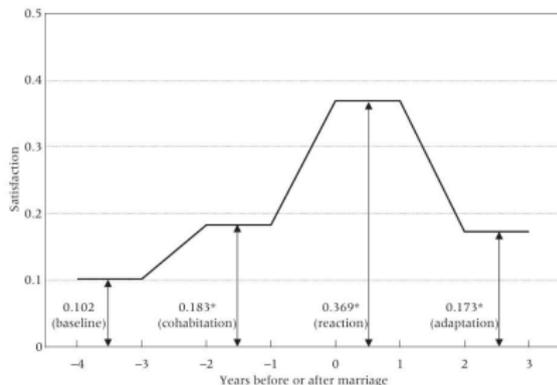


(Clark et al 2008)

- ▶ anticipation!
- ▶ adaptation? satisfaction treadmill?

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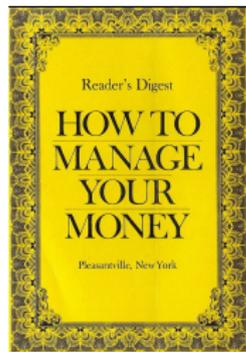
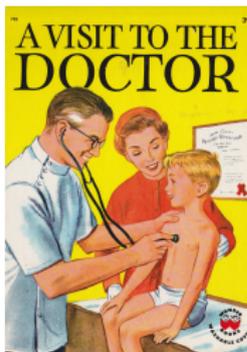


(Zimmermann & Easterlin 2006)

- ▶ supportive intimate relationship
- ▶ partial adaptation?

# What do we know about marriage and well-being?

- ▶ direct effect
- ▶ indirect effect
- ▶ selection
- ▶ heterogeneity



- ▶ economies of scale, economic specialization
- ▶ health, longer life, less depression

# What do we know about marriage and well-being?

- ▶ direct effect
  - ▶ indirect effect
  - ▶ selection
  - ▶ heterogeneity
- ▶ the happy have higher chances to marry (not confirmed by Zimmermann & Easterlin 2000)
  - ▶ the unhappy – higher chances of divorce (Stutzer & Frey 2006; Zimmermann & Easterlin 2000)

# What do we know about marriage and well-being?

- ▶ direct effect
  - ▶ indirect effect
  - ▶ selection
  - ▶ heterogeneity
- ▶ various trajectories:  
75.9% high stable, 9.1% decreasing-increasing, 6% decreasing 5.2% increasing (Mancini et al 2011)
  - ▶ couples with large income differences benefit more; specialization + children increase marriage premium (Stutzer & Frey 2006)
  - ▶ happiness premium to marriage in higher in religious countries ( $\sigma$  &  $\rho$ ) and in more gender-traditional contexts ( $\rho$ ) (Lee & Ono 2012)

# Hypotheses

The happiness premium of marriage decreased over time

The happiness premium of marriage is higher, when the economic specialization of spouses is stronger (evidence of Stutzer & Frey 2006)

The decline of economic specialization between spouses is related to decreasing happiness premium of marriage

# Method

## Data

WVS + EVS, all waves → limit / split the sample?

## SWB measures

Happiness (1-4) → both? only life sat?

Life satisfaction (1-10)

## Strategy

MLM

OLS regression → trends  
analysis of trends

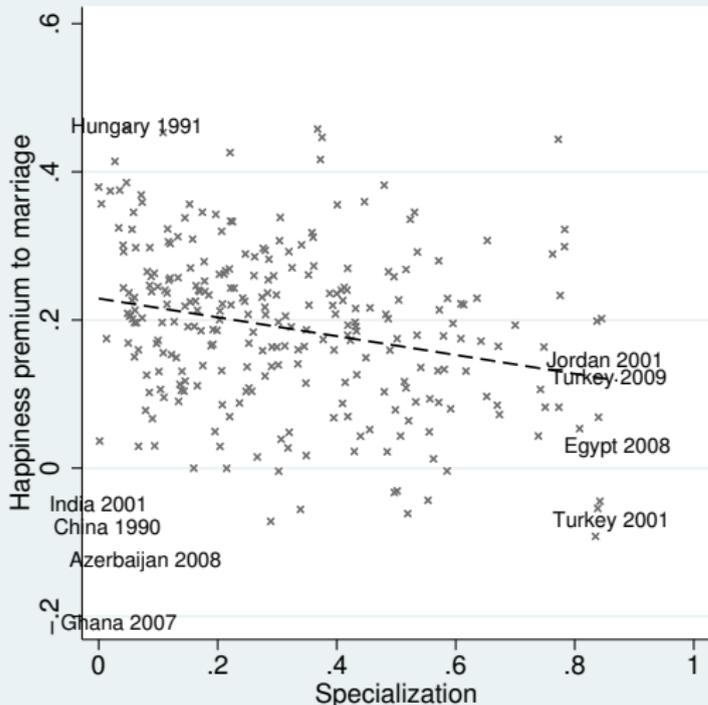


# Decreasing SWB premium to marriage? - MLM

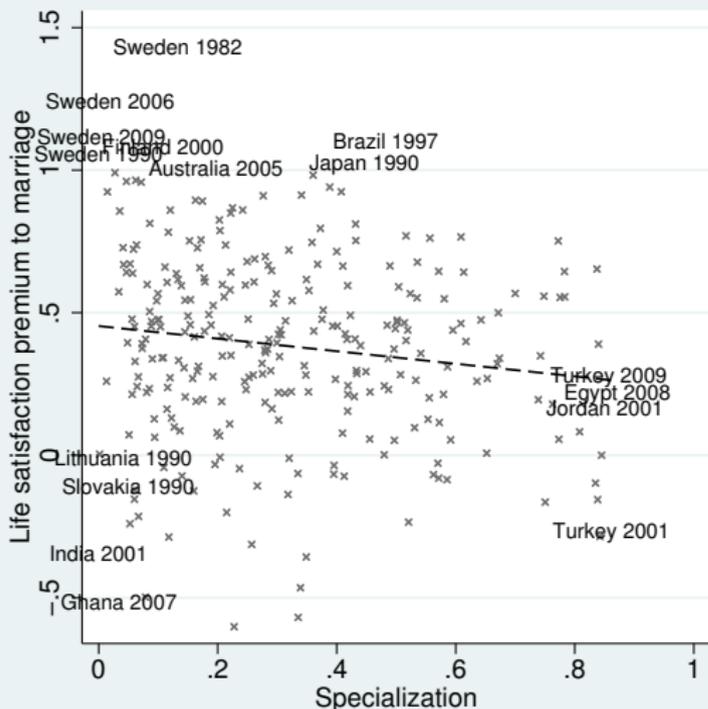
	Happiness			Life satisfaction		
married	0.193	59.98	***	0.415	39.70	***
cohabiting	0.086	15.05	***	0.141	7.61	***
widowed	-0.113	-20.26	***	-0.243	-13.43	***
divorced	-0.092	-14.86	***	-0.271	-13.57	***
other	-0.218	-3.37	***	-0.472	-2.25	*
never married		(ref cat)			(ref cat)	
year	0.011	47.09	***	0.029	36.84	***
married x year	-0.003	-10.38	***	-0.011	-10.91	***
age	-0.007	-68.42	***	-0.016	-47.45	***
age <sup>2</sup>	0.000	36.31	***	0.000	34.34	***
woman	0.026	11.62	***	0.045	6.25	***
unemployed	-0.175	-43.91	***	-0.728	-56.17	***
EVS	0.009	2.69	**	0.409	38.84	***
constant	2.904	113.18	***	6.193	62.27	***
resid indiv. (var)		0.066			4.850	
resid country (var)		0.457	(13%)		0.997	(17%)
N individuals		390.241			391.660	
N countries		102			102	



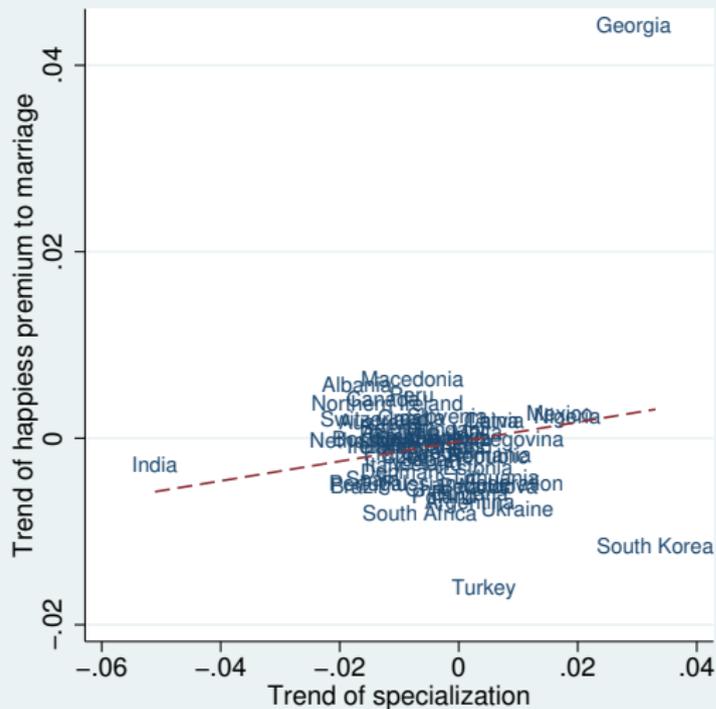
# Does the specialization = SWB premium to marriage?



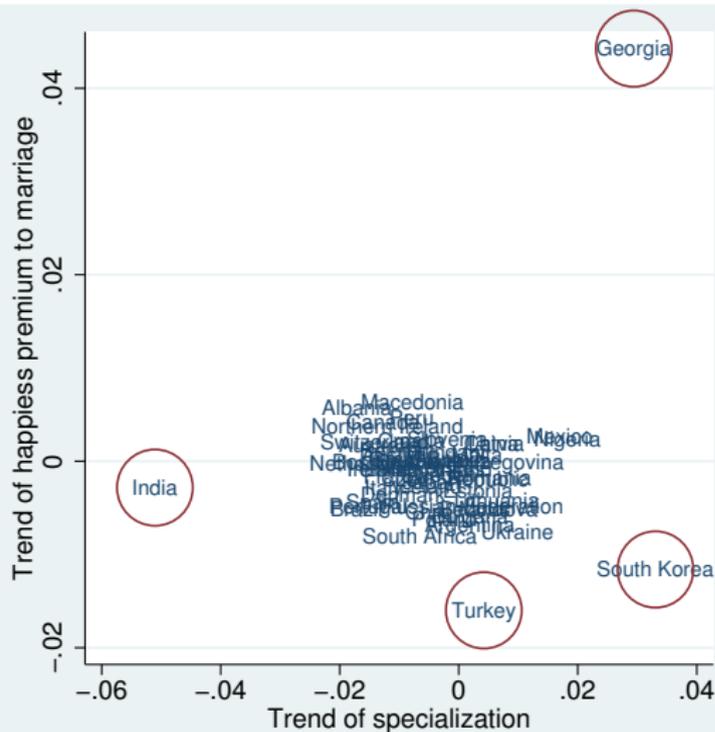
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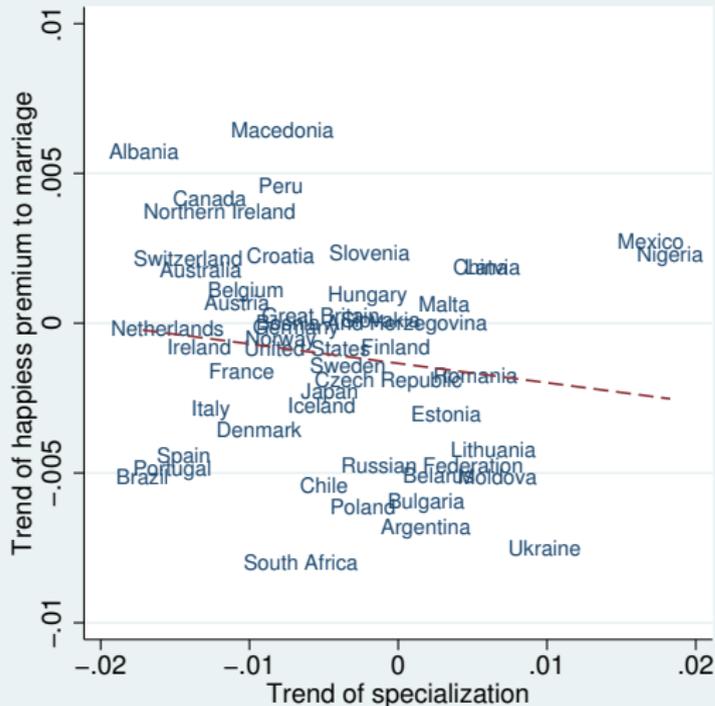
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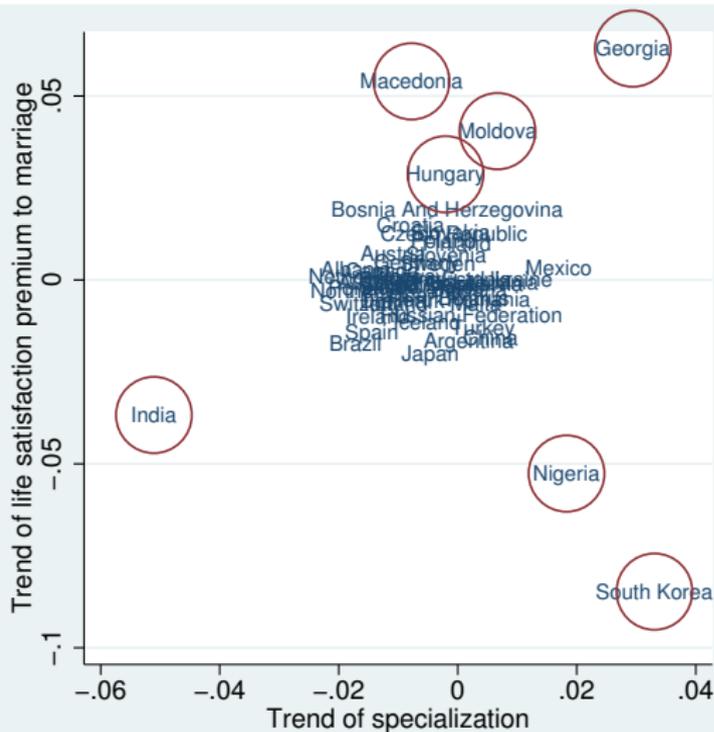


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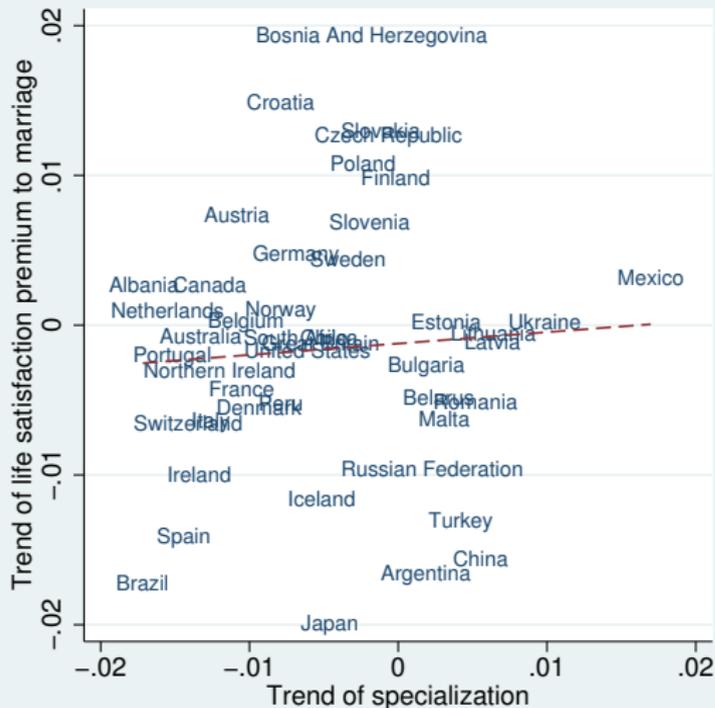




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# The Future

NEXT EXIT



- ▶ control variables
- ▶ subsample?
  - ▶ after 1990?
  - ▶ younger marriages? separate cohorts?
  - ▶ developed / transition / other countries?

Thank you!