



## Jacobs Center Seminar Series

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## The Effect of a Conditional Cash Transfer on Child Marriage: Evidence from Mexico

I study the effect of a conditional cash transfer program in Mexico on early marriage. The program provided monetary benefits to households, conditional on children's school attendance. Leveraging on the staggered implementation of the program, I find that exposure to the conditional cash transfer increased girls' probability of early marriage. After five years of exposure to the program, beneficiary girls were, on average, 7 p.p more likely to be married than the control group. I find no effect for boys. This novel and unanticipated results contrast with the conventional wisdom, that would suggest that conditional cash transfers reduce child marriage through increases in education.

However, I show, through a conceptual framework, that the program can lead to a simultaneous increase in marriage and education if agents treat marriage as a normal good. Finally, I test whether marriage responds positively to income by exploiting the variation in household composition and find that non-eligible children in beneficiary households - who were only exposed to the increase in household income - were between 7 and 20p.p more likely to be married than their counterparts in non-treated villages.

**Friday, December 1, 2023, 10:15 h**

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