

Female marriage-based international migration and its impacts on sending households

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INTRODUCTION



Background

- Past decade:
 - Increasing numbers of women from Southeast Asia migrated within the region through marriage;
 - Men from East Asian countries (Korea, Taiwan, Japan) resort to marriage brokers to marry internationally.
- This study examines the social and economic impact of female marriage-based international migration on sending households.



Sample and Methods

- The study was conducted in August 2007 in three communes of Thốt Nốt District in Cần Thơ City.
- **Questionnaire Survey**: 250 bride-sending households and 150 non-bride-sending households (used as reference group)
- **In-depth interviews**: 4 mothers & 3 sisters of brides; 3 local government officials
- **FGDs**: 9 members of non-bride sending households; 7 local young single women; 7 local young single men



PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

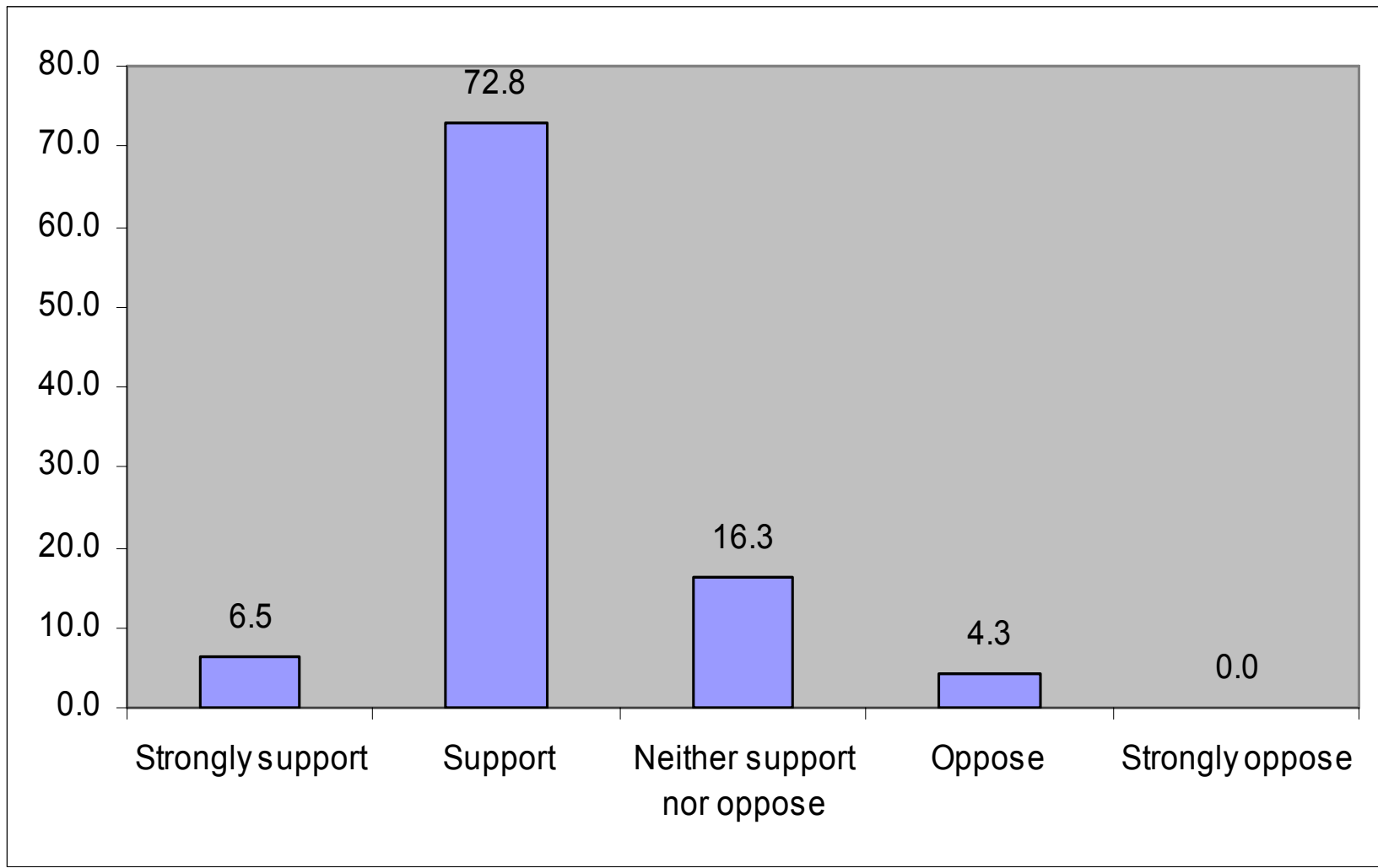
Socio-demographic characteristics of Vietnamese brides and their foreign husbands

<i>Socio-demographic characteristics</i>	<i>Emigrant spouses</i>	<i>Foreign husbands</i>
<i>Mean age at the time of marriage</i>	21.15	36.11
<i>Education at the time of marriage</i>		
<i>Illiterate/lower than primary</i>	13.2%	6.1%
<i>Primary</i>	59.5%	1.5%
<i>Lower secondary</i>	19.3%	31.8%
<i>Upper secondary</i>	6.6%	30.3%
<i>Higher</i>	1.5%	30.3%
<i>Occupation prior to international marriage</i>		
<i>Peasant</i>	13.0%	11.3%
<i>Technical worker</i>	12.3%	30.9%
<i>Manual worker</i>	24.3%	18.4%
<i>Commercial/Service worker</i>	22.1%	20.3%
<i>Professional/Managerial/Office worker</i>	0.4%	15.2%
<i>Homemaker/Unemployed/Student</i>	27.5%	2.0%
<i>Others</i>	0.4%	2.0%

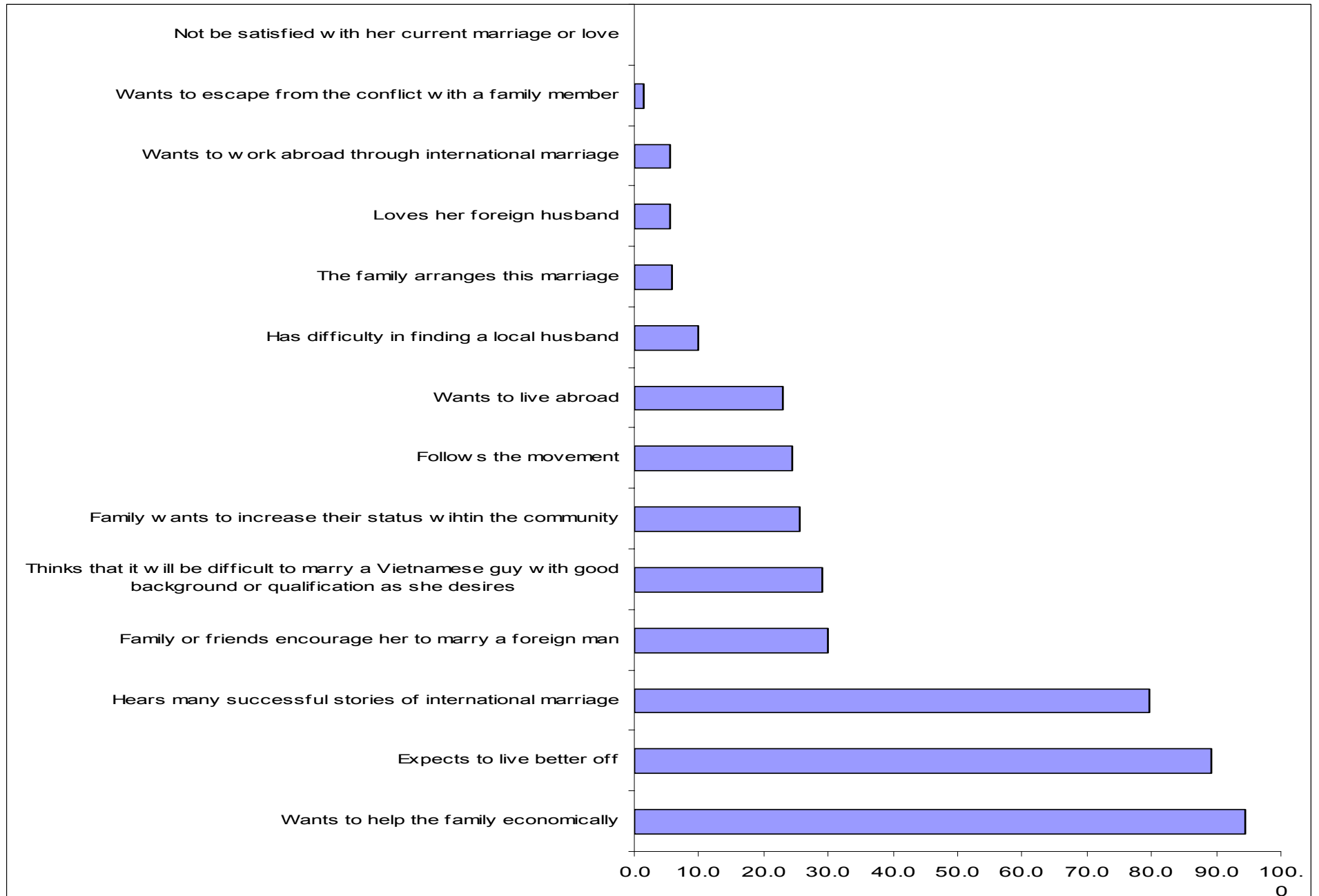
Vietnamese brides' characteristics after marriage

Characteristics	Proportion/Mean
<i>Residence after marriage</i>	
<i>In the capital</i>	11.9
<i>In another large city</i>	25.0
<i>In a small city/town</i>	42.9
<i>In the countryside</i>	20.1
<i>Living arrangement after marriage</i>	
<i>By her own (or with her children)</i>	1.1
<i>With her husband and children</i>	31.0
<i>With her husband's family</i>	67.9
<i>Current occupation</i>	
<i>Peasant</i>	5.2
<i>Technical worker</i>	24.7
<i>Manual worker</i>	9.6
<i>Commercial/Service worker</i>	13.5
<i>Professional/Managerial/Office worker</i>	2.8
<i>Unemployed/Homemaker</i>	44.2

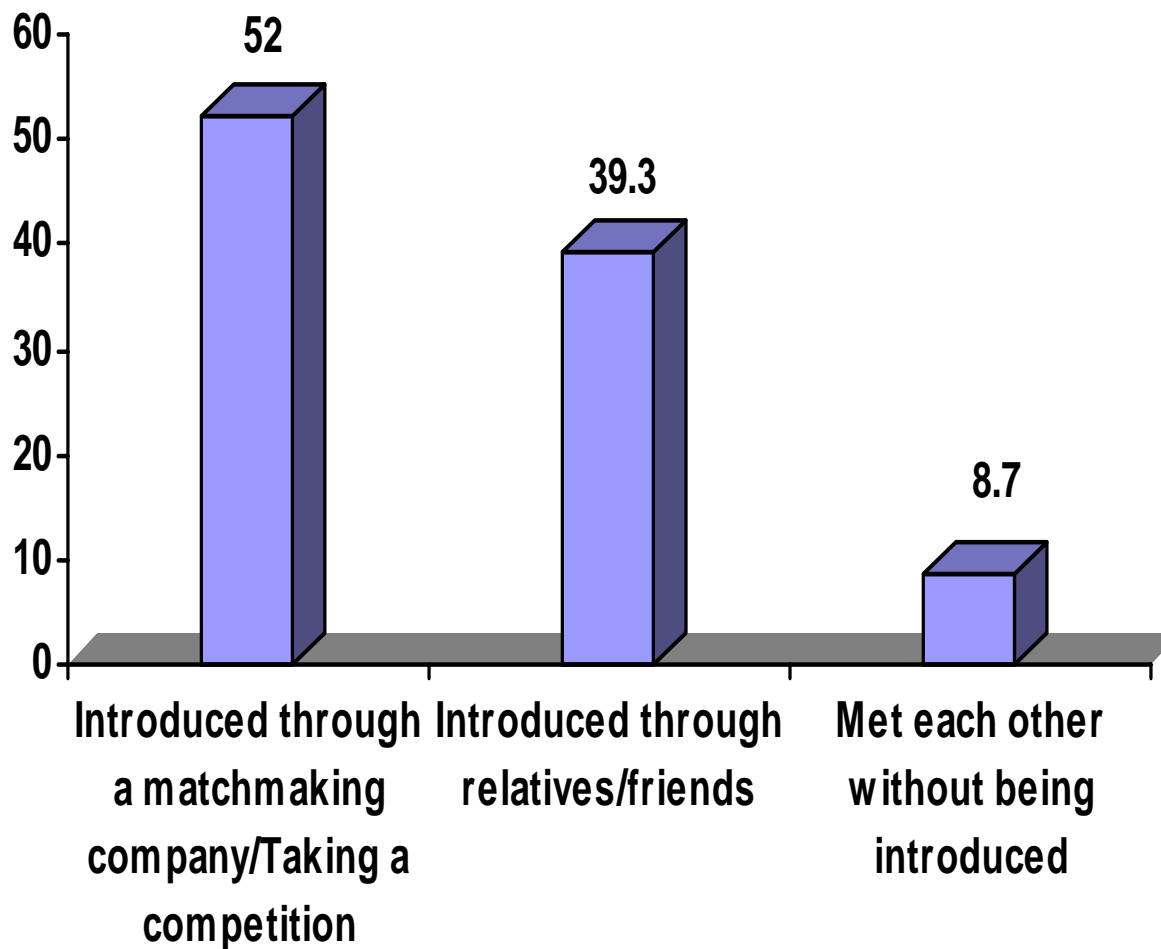
Response of family to international marriage



Main reasons for marrying foreign men (n=276)



Ways of meeting between Vietnamese brides and their foreign husbands





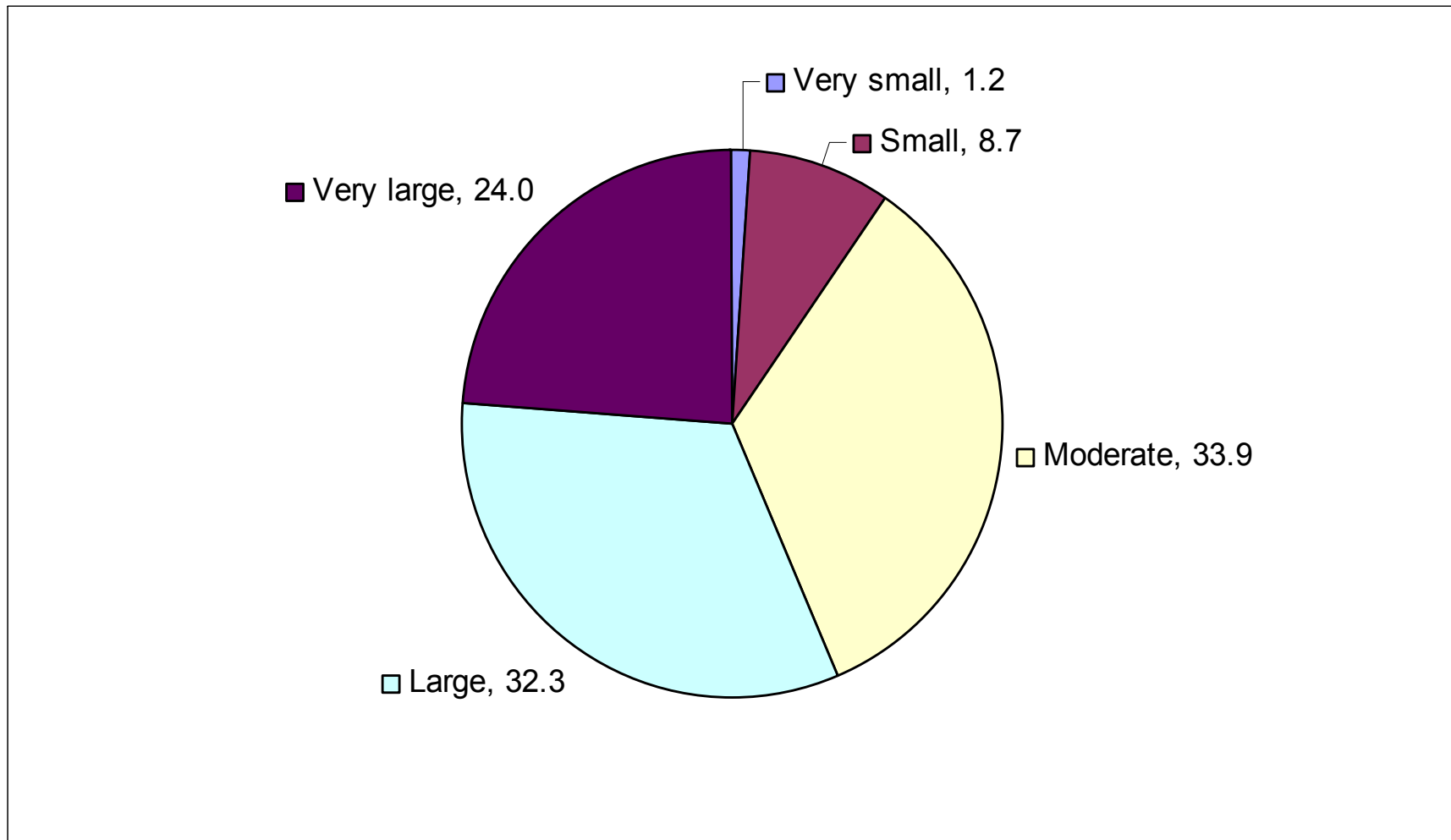
Receiving remittances from Vietnamese emigrant spouses

	Number of cases	Percent
<i>Receiving money</i>	233	85.3%
<i>Receiving both money and goods</i>	21	7.7%
<i>Receiving nothing</i>	19	7.0%
<i>Total</i>	273	100.0%

Magnitude of remittances in the past 12 months

	Number of cases	Percent
<i>1 - less than 5 million VND (62- less than 312 USD)</i>	16	7.2
<i>5 - less than 10 million VND (312- less than 624 USD)</i>	46	20.7
<i>10 - less than 20 million VND (624- less than 1248 USD)</i>	65	29.3
<i>20 - less than 50 million VND (1248 USD – 3125 USD)</i>	57	25.7
<i>50+ million VND (3125+ USD)</i>	38	17.1
Total	222	100.0

Proportion of remittances over total household income





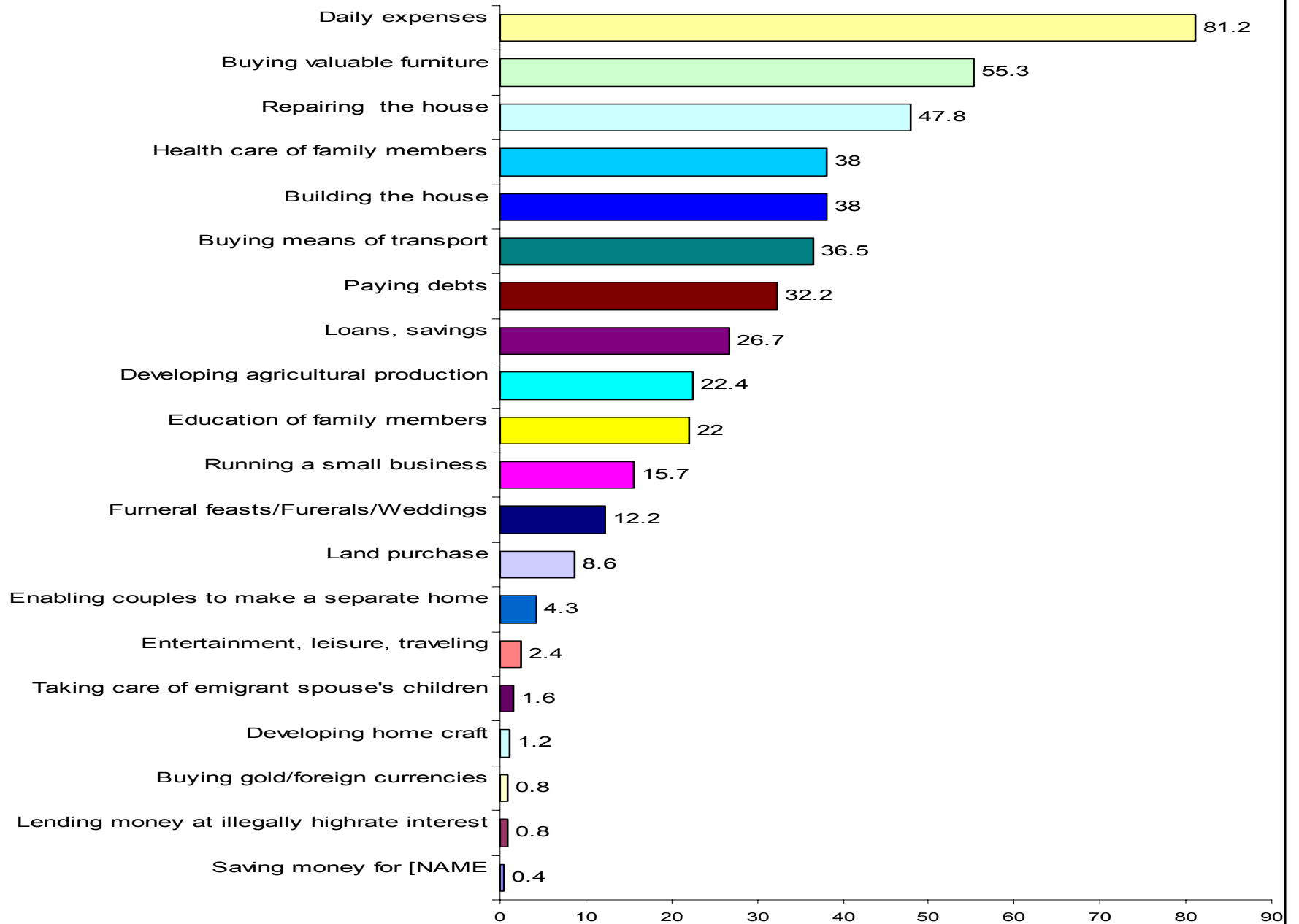
House types

	Bride-sending households	Non-bride-sending households
<i>Permanent</i>	41.8%	31.5%
<i>Semi-permanent</i>	37.3%	62.4%
<i>Simple, temporary</i>	20.9%	6.0%

Possession of basic consumer durables

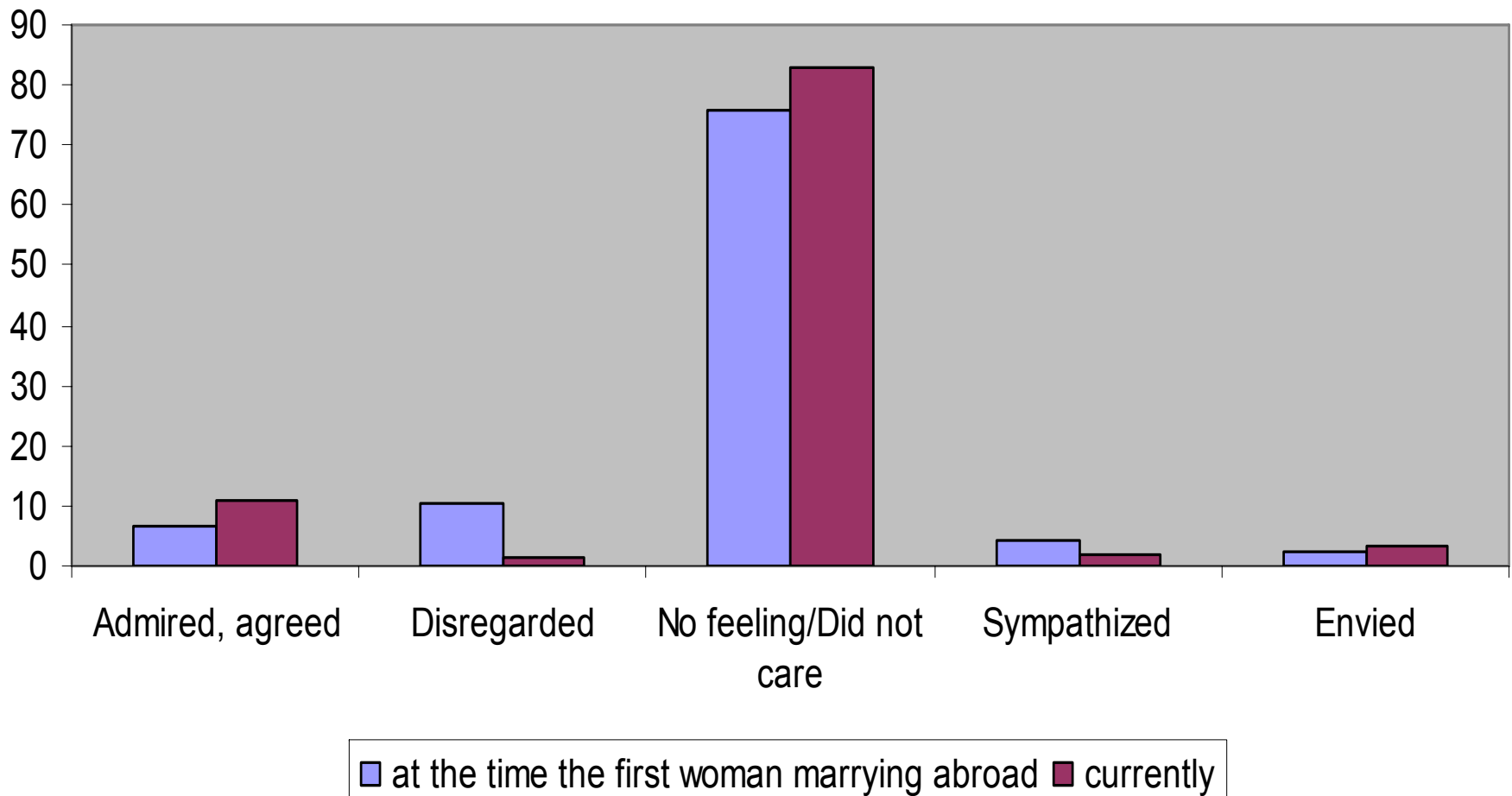
	Bride-sending households	Non-bride-sending households
<i>Television</i>	98.0%	94.6%
<i>Radio/Cassette</i>	78.8%	66.2%
<i>A video cassette</i>	88.0%	79.7%
<i>House-line telephone</i>	81.2%	47.3%
<i>Cellular telephone</i>	54.8%	48.6%
<i>Refrigerator</i>	32.4%	24.3%
<i>Air condition</i>	3.6%	1.4%
<i>Motorbike</i>	80.0%	78.4%
<i>Bicycle</i>	79.2%	85.1%
<i>Motor boat</i>	10.0%	12.8%
<i>Pipe water</i>	66.0%	60.0%

Consumption and investment of remittances

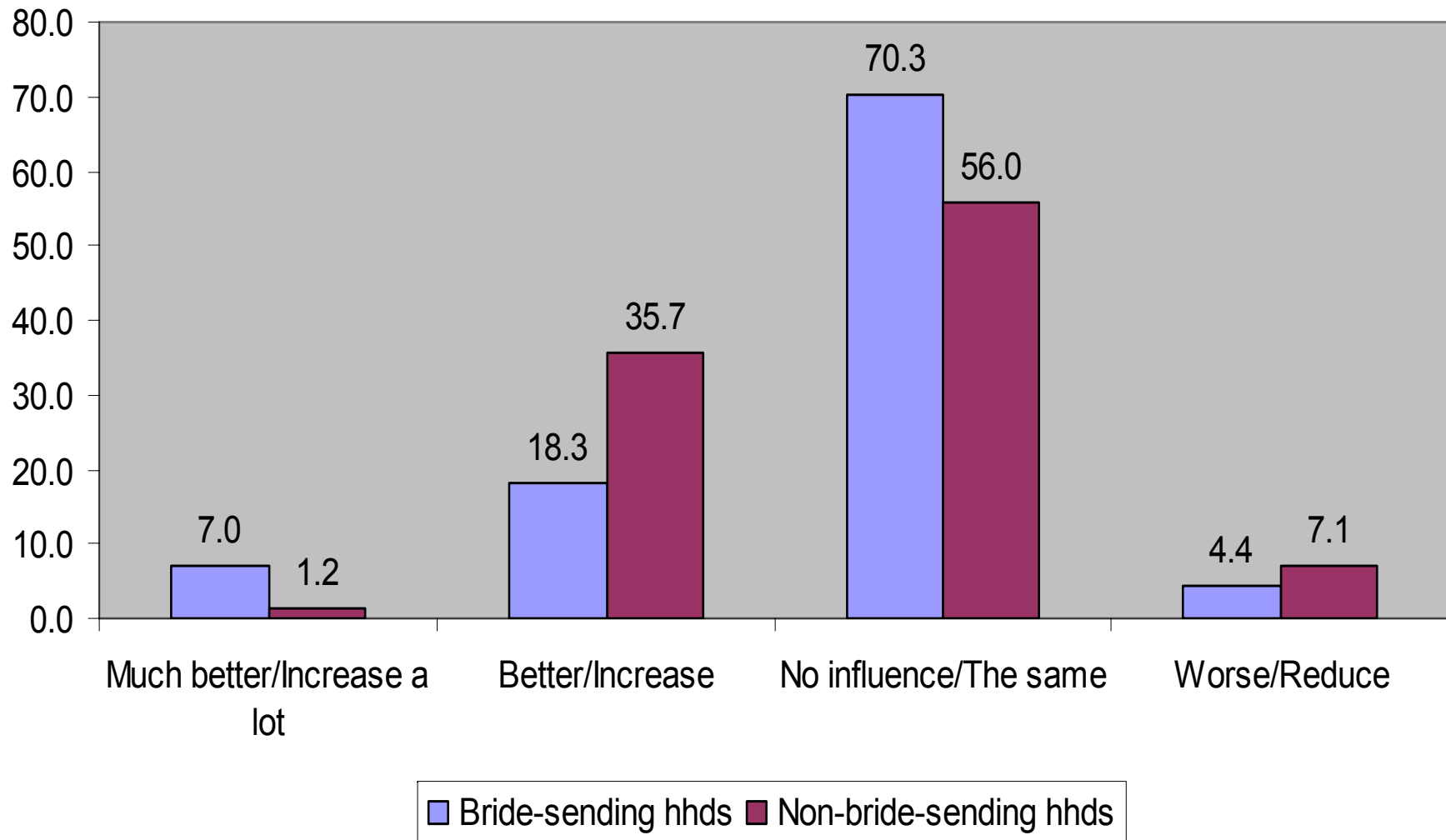


Community's perception & attitudes towards bride-sending households

Feeling of neighbors about bride-sending households



Evaluation about impact of international marriage on status of bride-sending hhds within the community



Qualitative evidence:

- In the past, since we were poor, people contemned us and thought we were **selling our daughter**. We felt a complex [...] Now, people have nothing to say about us because **everybody is doing the same**. Marrying a daughter to a foreigner is becoming normal.

[Mother of an emigrant spouse, 59 years old, Thoi Thuan commune)

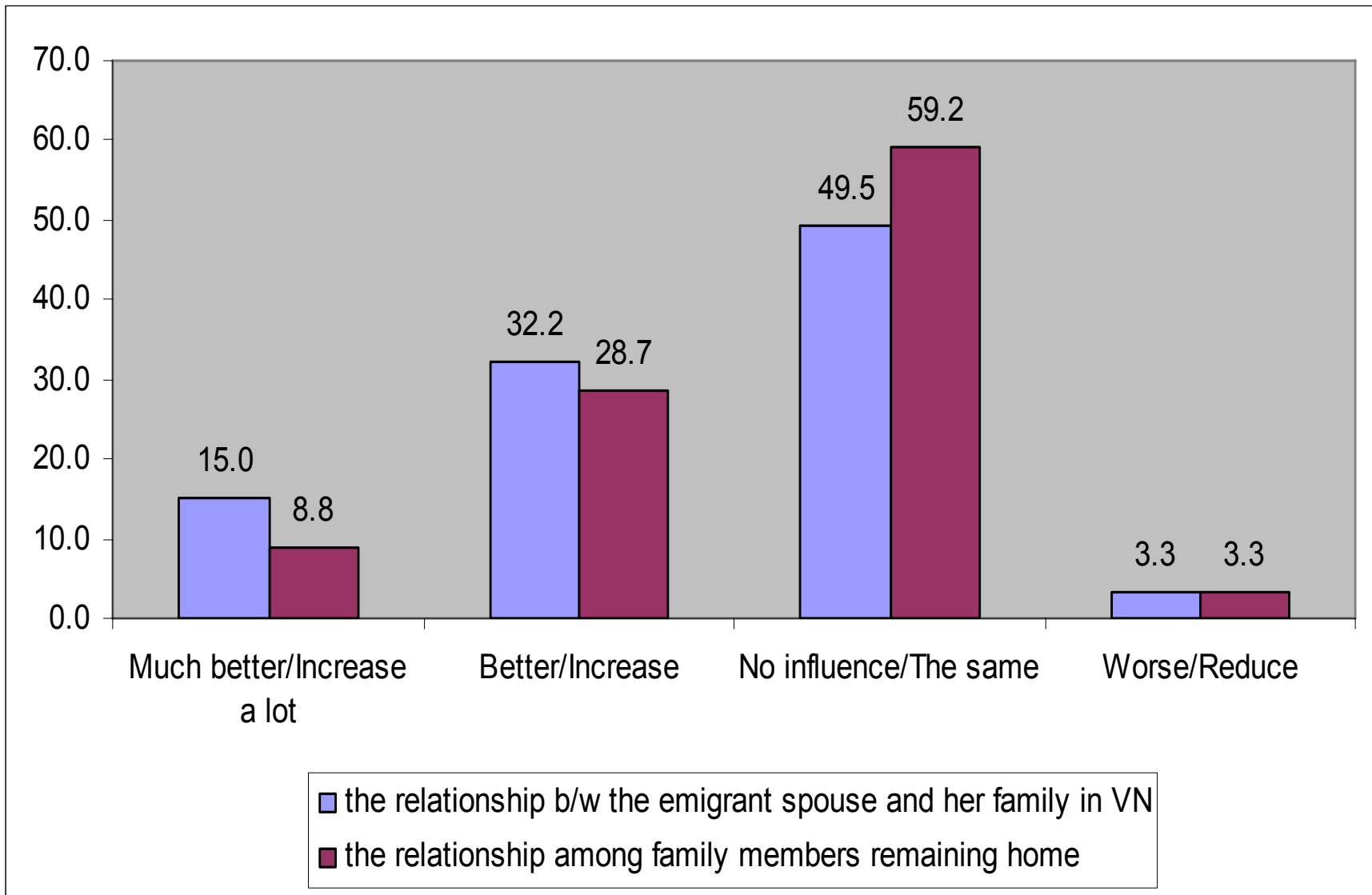
- When my family was poor and my sister hasn't married a foreign man yet, **people seldom allowed me to purchase on credit**. But **now they are very easy-going towards me**. If I don't have money, I can buy their stuffs on credit and repay them later.

[Sister of an emigrant spouse, 18 years old, Trung Nhut commune)

- I find that there have been a lot of whispers and comments about those who have daughters marrying abroad. In general, many families forced their daughters to marry foreign men. I know some women did not want to marry internationally. But because their families were so poor, they had to follow their parents' will [...] However, 1-2 years after international marriage, when the emigrant spouses start to send money back home and those families become richer, **people look at them differently**. Therefore, since 2000, international marriage has become a pervasive movement among young women in the commune. Many even have to solicit to get legal documents to marry Taiwanese men.

[FGD non-bride-sending households, Tan Loc commune)

Family ties & cohesion



Qualitative evidence

- “Since my sister has gone, I think the **relationships between siblings is becoming tighter**. Moreover, those who remain home have to take turns taking care of our parents”

[sister of emigrant spouse, Thoi Thuan commune]

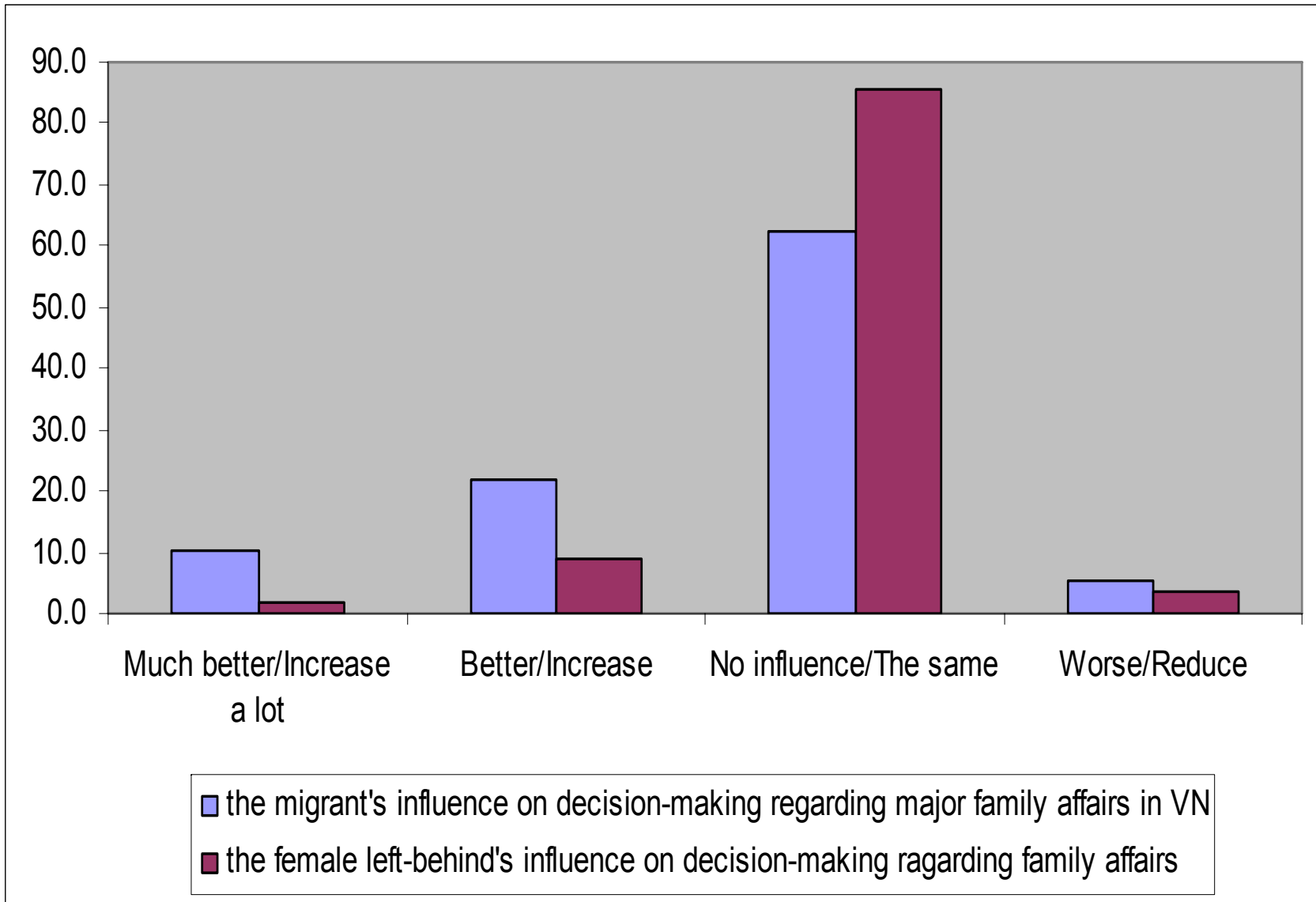
- Q: Is the relationship between you and the emigrant spouse becoming looser or tighter before her departure? Why?
- A: **I have more understanding of her. Our relationship becomes tighter than before.**

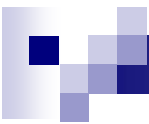
[sister of emigrant spouse, Trung Nhat commune]

- “I find when some women who married Taiwanese men visited home, **they thought that they now have money, thus treating their parents and family badly**”.
- “I know few women crying a lot when they visit home. They ask their parents whether parents know that they have to work very hard in the place of destination in order to have enough money to send back home. But **those remaining home don't appreciate their money**. They have no demand for work, just playing for the whole day and spend thrift their remittances. They never care about saving money...

[FGD – non-bride-sending households]

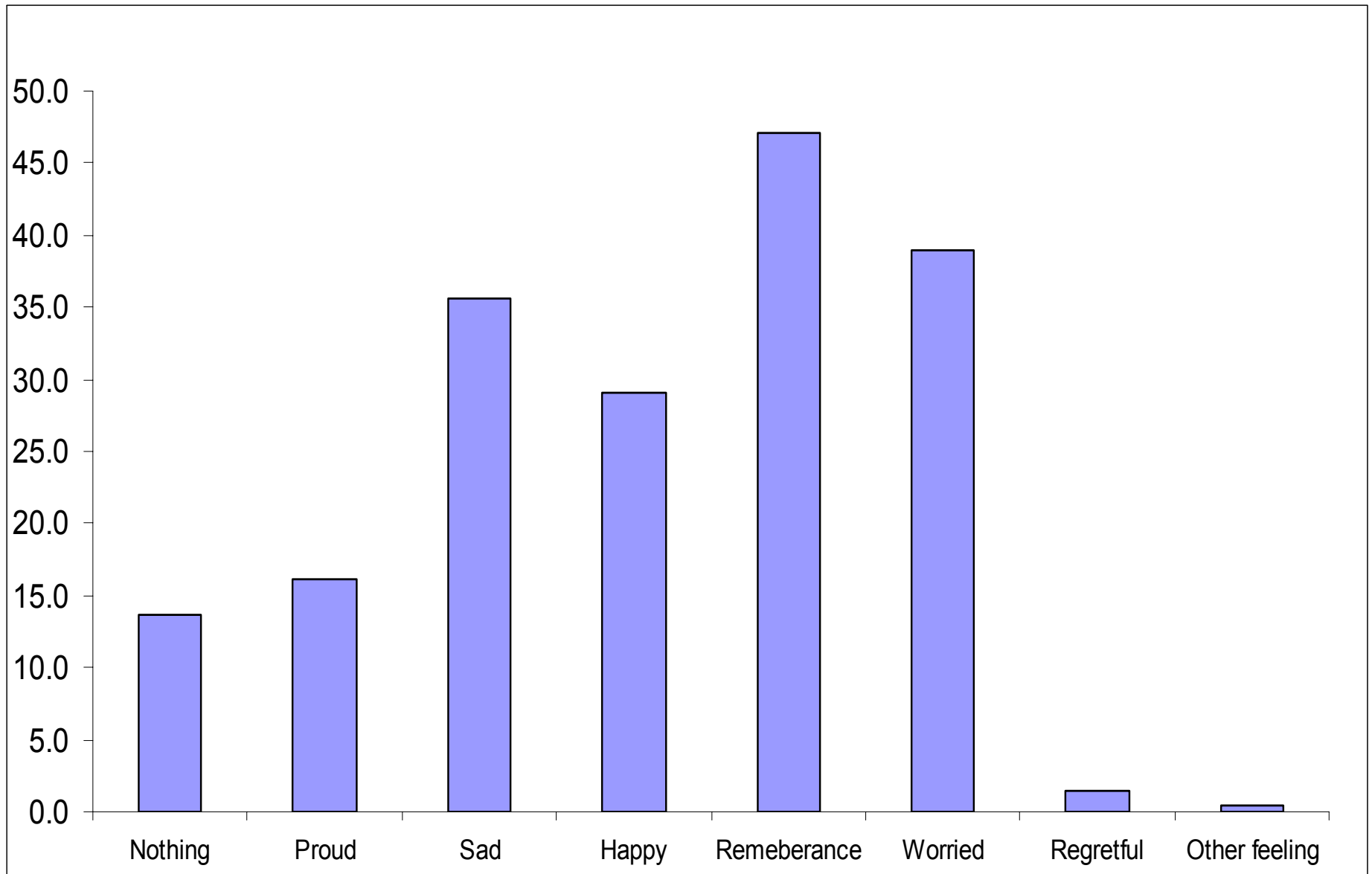
Gender relations




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- “If my mom wants to buy something valuable, **she will ask for money as well as permission from my sister (who married abroad)**... If my sister does not agree, my mom will have to think again and consider buying another thing instead”.
[sister of an emigrant spouse, 18 years old]
 - “Before when my daughter did not earn any money, I never asked her anything. I made decision on my own.... **Now since she is the one who mainly support the whole family, I had to discuss with her about family affairs** such as buying valuable furniture, building a house, organizing a wedding for my son, or opening a small shop... And then she will send money to me”.
[mother of an emigrant spouse, 48 years old]
 - “I know one case that the family, albeit poor, had to rent a car for the whole family clan to go to the city only to receive their daughter who married a foreign man with consideration. They did so just to be proud vis-à-vis relatives and neighbors. [...] When the woman stayed home and did not earn money, she did not have any right at all within the family. Only when she has money, she has the right and prestige. **The family members have to follow what she says.** Whatever the parents want to do, they have to consult her [...] **Some people even say that daughters nowadays are more preferable than sons because daughters can marry abroad and help families economically but sons are more interested in playing than helping families**”.
[FGD with non-bride-sending households]



Socio-psychological effects



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- “...When my sister just moved to the place of destination, my parents and other siblings felt **depressed and worried for a couple of months** because we could not contact her and did not know how she was living with her husband family. ...Literally, **those who felt depressed the most were my parents**. They even could not eat and sleep well for first several months. Moreover, they did not want to go out because **they felt a complex about marrying her to a foreign man.**”

[sister of an emigrant spouse, 20 years old, Thoi Thuan commune]

- “...At first, I felt very sad when my sister emigrated for marriage so far away from home. I felt sorry for her as well. I cannot confine in her as frequently as usual.I am worried that when she is sick, nobody will take care of her”

[sister of an emigrant spouse, 18 years old, Trung Nhat commune]



Marriage prospects

- **Increased desire for marrying abroad among women remaining home**

I would rather marry a foreign man than a Vietnamese guy... Well, Vietnamese men here often play and drink wine a lot. They never care about the family. They even beat their wife and children when they get drunk... Frankly speaking, **if I marry a foreign man, I can have a better life and help my family as well.**

[sister of an emigrant spouse, 18 years old, Thoi Thuan commune]


I feel like my sister is prettier and dressier than before. She told me she has traveled many places to broaden her vision.... **I wish I could do the same as her in the future..**

[sister of an emigrant spouse, 18 years old, Tan Loc commune]

- **Local women – considered to be ‘at a premium’ → changes in criteria in choosing partners and dowry**

I find it is increasingly difficult for local men to get married, since bride’s family might ask for more dowries. For example, they require two taels of gold, rather than one. Before bride’s family accepted any dowry provided by groom’s family. They never required anything. But now they require dowries for their daughter. **Otherwise, they would rather marry their daughter to a Taiwanese man.**

[sister of an emigrant spouse, 18 years old, Tan Loc commune]



Now women are more valuable. No matter how illiterate and poor you are, you can easily marry a Taiwanese man....women can choose either marrying foreign men or Vietnamese men....In the past men who were unemployed still could find wives. **But now women hardly accept those who are poor and unemployed.**

[FGD-young single local women]

■ **Local men have difficulty in getting married**

Almost all young pretty local women already married abroad. We – poor men - really have difficulty in getting married. Many of my friends had to find wives in Dong Thap or An Giang or other proximate communes. I am also thinking about that.

[FGD-young single local men]



THANK YOU!