

**Abstract Stefan Klonner's presentation at the DENEb seminar series**

**on Nov. 29th 2018**

*Social Norms, Women's status and Domestic Violence: Evidence from India's Northeast*

It is often argued that improvements in wellbeing and empowerment of women in the process of development are hindered by traditional social norms, which are often patriarchal. We investigate the link between social norms that define women's status in society and the incidence of violence in marriages. The empirical setting is India's Northeast, where there is great variation regarding patriarchal versus matriarchal lineage, residence and inheritance customs. In our econometric analysis, we combine information on traditional social norms from a comprehensive ethnographic atlas with individual-level data on domestic violence from a Demographic and Health Survey. In accordance with established economic theories of the marriage, we find that fewer frictions in the marriage market and greater female control over material resources improve women's physical integrity in the marriage. On the other hand, several seemingly antediluvian social norms that imply greater monitoring of spouses by the extended family and the community also curtail domestic violence significantly.