

The Rise of Monogamy

This paper offers a new theory that explains why polygyny marriage has almost disappeared in modern industrialized countries although it had been common in most of the societies throughout history. I demonstrate that the increase in labor income through the process of economic development has led to the rise of monogamy. Specifically, I show in a general equilibrium model of marriage market that the increase in labor income improves women's outside option, monogamy mating. This, in turn, reduces polygyny by increasing the cost of polygyny mating for men. This theory is the first one to explain the phenomenon with emphasizing cost-side changes and complements previous demand-side theories. Moreover, my theory points to a supply-side mechanism of the negative correlation between the quantity and quality of children.