

# The Rationale of Marriage and the Impact of DNA Test on its Organization

Yoram Barzel

Aurora Stephany

Qing Zhang

## **Abstract**

We argue that the rationale for marriage is to provide paternity assurance to the man and enforcing the man's duties in the up-bring of children. Traditionally, the assurance of the men's paternity is primarily done by imposing constraints on women's activities. For example, historically, married women have limited liberty to travel, limited access to the marketplace, and limited access to social events. On the other hand, enforcing the man's obligations in the up-bring of the children is facilitated by having the two parties register their relationship at the state or religious bodies. Our marriage hypothesis predicts that with the emergency of DNA paternity test, more children will be born to cohabiting partners, and the increase is larger for those of lower standings than for those of lower standings. Our marriage hypothesis also predicts that with the emergence of DNA test, the gain from bearing children in marriage or in cohabitation increases. As a result, we expect that more children will be born in marriage or to cohabiting partners, and fewer to single mothers. We use data from the National Survey of Family Growth to test our hypothesis. And the preliminary results support our hypothesis.