

SOME CRITICISM OF ROBERT TRIVERS 1972 PAPER ON SEXUAL SELECTION

ZULFIKAR MOINUDDIN AHMED

Robert Trivers 1972 assumes an extremely free rational agent as the model of human beings engaged in issues of mating and sex. There is some sense to that but unfortunately this is the wrong way to analyse human mating. What's the problem? The problem is that we have extremely strong evolutionary elements in the subcortical brain that has a strong influence in most issues of romantic mating and sexuality. Thus our decisions are rarely quite free in cognitive sense. There extremely strong affective components that are activated in various events of mating. Now in 1972, these were not sufficiently established and rational theories were quite sensible, but in the 1980s we have finer understanding of affective neuroscience and we have to have a finer understanding of the actual distribution of decision-making. Human beings are rarely able to reach decisions about mating by rational faculties alone. The three systems of lust, attraction, and attachment are subcortical and affective and are not directly controlled by cognitive processes.

Here we do need to review the actual possible choices to determine the distributions possible for human mating decisions and outcomes.

These are broad concerns. I have been using Buss et. al. mate preferences and translation between Big Five Personality vectors and Davis-Panksepp vectors for association to biological (emotional) basis.

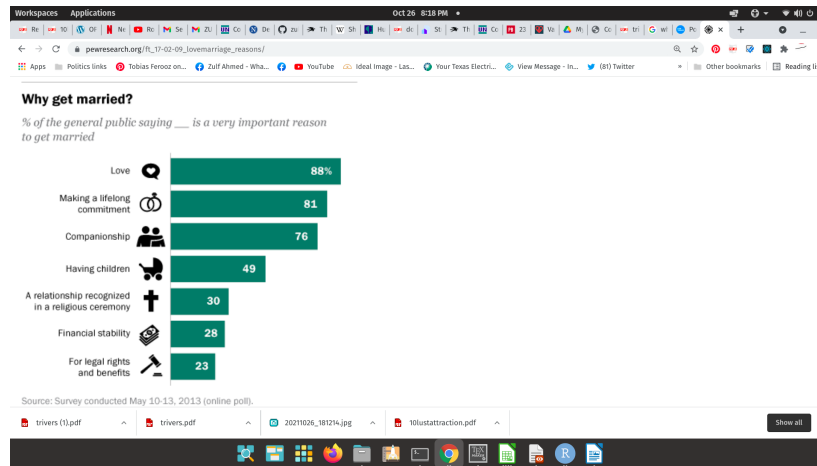
There is a rational freedom of will that is also present, but it is not as free as we would like. When we choose to do things against the affective pressures, there are are consequences as well. I will think about this further.

It is rather rare that we have pure rational agents involved in human mating; we consider these people psychopaths when they go against emotional expectations.

1. POLL DATA 80% MEN WANT TO BE FATHERS

A poll shows 80% men want to be fathers [1]. This is pseudo-human nature by my accounting, as 95% would produce human nature. One has to ask what is the evolutionary explanation for the desire here, since regardless of their actual success in paternal care, there is clearly a natural biological demand, and given that 75% of the men were married during the birth of their first child, this is not a sort of rush by men to impregnate and abandon that is human nature.

A Pew poll of 2013 shows 88% of married people in America cite love as the reason for their marriage [2]



Now 88% is reaching human nature potential. Now this does not necessarily tell us something about evolutionary impulses directly, but it does suggest that theories that ignore the affective components for human mating are not likely to be correct. Our 'rational options' today are much more than 4 million years ago. Why should we then rationally choose 'love' as the reason for decision to marry now?

REFERENCES

- [1] <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/06/15/poll-most-men-aspire-to-be-dads/2427123/>
- [2] https://www.pewresearch.org/ft_17-02-09_lovemarriage_reasons/