Three Models of Polygyny

1. **Resource defense** occurs when there is variability among males in their ability to defend resources that would enhance female RS.

2. **Harem defense** polygyny occurs when males can coerce females and defend harem against other males.

3. **Sororal polygyny:** Irons suggests that females may be interested in polygyny insofar as co-wife cooperation through sororal polygyny enhances RS. Therefore, they are seen more as choosing co-wives rather than husbands.
Chisholm and Burbank’s “Monogamy and Polygyny in Southeast Arnhem Land: Male Coercion and Female Choice”

Issues

☐ Male coercion
☐ Female choice
☐ Female choice in the context of male coercion

Evidence for Male Coercion

Marriage was gerontocratic with infant and mother-in-law bestowal and the levirate. Young girls had little choice. In Australia marriage is a “male achievement” with mature men manipulating the women and young men in service of their own ends.
Reproductive disadvantages of polygyny

Compared to polygynous women, monogamous women had more:

☐ pregnancies
☐ live births
☐ offspring surviving to five years
In support of the co-wife theory we find

- The co-wife cooperation model suggests that women may cheat on husbands since they do much of the food production. Data indicates that there is considerable extra-marital sex and men do not seem to punish women with divorce for adultery nor are they able to deprive them of resources.
In contrast to the co-wife theory

Women in Australia seem to welcome extra wives who relieve them of labor burdens. About 50-50% for sororal and non-sororal polygyny. However, consistent with co-wife theory, sororal polygyny seems to be limit the number of wives a man has.
Reasons why polygynous women have lower fertility

- By definition, males will have less sex with each as a function of the number of wives they have. [What about Coolidge effect?]

- Polygynous males tend to be older and therefore their sex drive is less (they copulate less frequently than younger males).

- Trevathan argues that early and frequent intercourse may lead to greater fertility by better regulation of the menstrual cycle, facilitates implantation, and delays menopause.
Evidence for lowered sexual activity

- Strong association between number of wives and age difference in marriage.

- Mean IBI strongly associated between number of wives and age difference between spouses.

- Women in the community believe that older men are not as virile as younger men and believe that a younger man is more likely to give them children.

- Mean difference between husbands and wives was 17 years in polygyny and 7 years in monogamy.

- Co-wives compete with one another for husbands sex and because of close quarters it is difficult to have sex.