

# Discussion of “Structural Change and the Rise and Fall of Marital Unions” by Moro, Moslehi, and Tanaka

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# What MMT Do

- ▶ Document two interesting observations:
  - ▶ The marriage rate features a hump-shaped pattern for individual developed countries over time
  - ▶ A positive correlation between marriage rates and the GDP share of manufacturing across countries and for individual countries over time
- ▶ Given these facts, the paper considers the hypothesis that the rise and fall in marital unions is explained by the structural transformation of the economy
- ▶ Develop a model of structural transformation with home produced services and endogenous marital decisions
- ▶ Study if the model can generate the hump-shaped pattern for manufacturing and the marriage rate

## What MMT Find

- ▶ A parameterized version of the model is able to generate the salient features of structural change—including the hump-shaped pattern in manufacturing and the rise and fall in marital unions
- ▶ Key for the fall in unions and share in manufacturing is the growth in home production productivity—no productivity growth of home goods

## Comment (1): Data

- ▶ Are there substantial differences in the patterns of marriage rates versus cohabitation rates?
- ▶ Models seem to be about cohabitation
- ▶ Why focus on GDP shares of sectors as opposed to employment share of sectors? Prices vary systematically with structural change so GDP shares can mask underlined changes
- ▶ Can more direct evidence be brought to bear on the connection between manufacturing and marriages? For example, synthetic cohort analysis with US historical data across broad occupations

## Comment (2): Motivation

- ▶ What is the intuition for the connection to manufacturing?
- ▶ Connection may be related to two independent forces that coincide with manufacturing change, for instance the rise in female labor force participation for the fall in marriages
- ▶ Connection to manufacturing (structural change) can provide strong motivation for model features to consider

## Comment (3): Quantitative Analysis

- ▶ Model has many features, not clear sense of key features, not clear connection with manufacturing share...
- ▶ Build from two standard strands of literature: structural change (allocation of hours across sectors) and marriage market
- ▶ Gender interacts with structural change, gender gaps...
- ▶ Calibration strategy
- ▶ Key discipline for the forces of the model
- ▶ One idea: use cross-sectional variation of individuals (groups of individuals) within an economy to discipline key elasticities

# Conclusion

- ▶ Ambitious paper on an interesting and important subject
- ▶ Paper will benefit from more direct evidence on the connection between structural change—and manufacturing in particular, and the rise and fall of marriages
- ▶ Paper will benefit from a better motivation of model features and discipline in the quantitative analysis