



Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam
Volume 7, No. 1, March 2023
ISSN: 2549 – 3132; E-ISSN: 2549 – 3167
DOI: 10.22373/sjhk.v7i1.15874

Pragmatism of Polygamous Family In Muslim Society: Beyond Islamic Law

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Abstract: Pragmatism has become a common motive in polygamous marriages, despite ignoring the principles of Islamic law. Issues ranging from unfair treatment and dishonest attitudes towards wives to the rejection of polygamous pregnant wives have colored the attitudes of pragmatic polygamous life. This article reveals pragmatic motives that become the reasons why a woman is willing to be istri selir-sirri (concubine) in polygamy. This research uses a qualitative approach in which data was collected from observation, interviews, and library studies. The findings of this study suggest that pragmatic motives exist in polygamies, such as the husband's economic stability accompanied by lust satisfaction, the woman's needs for social-economic improvement, and the need for comfort and security. The lack of power among women in relation to men of high social and economic status causes them to agree to be the second wife (selir) despite the sirri marriage status, which is officially unregistered and sometimes unknown even to their own family. As the article sees only the pragmatic sides of polygamy, it still needs further development.

Keywords: Pragmatism, Polygamous Family, Muslim Society, Islamic Family Law

|| Submitted: December 03, 2022 || Accepted: March 28, 2023 || Published: March 31, 2023

<http://jurnal.ar-raniry.ac.id/index.php/samarah>

Abstrak: *Pragmatisme telah menjadi motif umum dalam pernikahan poligami, meskipun mengabaikan prinsip-prinsip hukum Islam. Persoalan mulai dari perlakuan tidak adil dan sikap tidak jujur terhadap istri hingga penolakan istri hamil yang dipoligami telah mewarnai sikap pragmatis kehidupan poligami. Artikel ini mengungkapkan motif pragmatis yang menjadi alasan mengapa seorang perempuan bersedia menjadi istri selir-sirri dalam poligami. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dimana data dikumpulkan dari observasi, wawancara, dan studi kepustakaan. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa motif pragmatis ada dalam poligami, seperti stabilitas ekonomi suami yang disertai dengan kepuasan nafsu, kebutuhan perempuan akan perbaikan sosial-ekonomi, dan kebutuhan akan kenyamanan dan keamanan. Minimnya kekuasaan perempuan terhadap laki-laki yang berstatus sosial ekonomi tinggi menyebabkan mereka bersedia menjadi istri kedua (selir) meskipun status nikah sirrinya tidak tercatat secara resmi dan kadang tidak diketahui bahkan oleh keluarganya sendiri. Karena artikel ini hanya melihat sisi pragmatis poligami, maka masih perlu pengembangan lebih lanjut.*

Kata Kunci: *Pragmatisme, Keluarga Poligami, Masyarakat Muslim, Hukum Keluarga Islam*

Introduction

Pragmatism has become a common motive in polygamous marriages, despite ignoring the principles of Islamic law. Islamic laws that govern various rules in a family relationship no longer become an end, but a means exploited by short-term interests. Data shows that although the polygamy rate is decreasing, from 794 in 2013 to 643 in 2016,¹ the trend of polygamous practices keeps increasing.² Meutia Hatta Swasono suggested that polygamous practice is confirmed more by invitation to polygamy within society disseminated through social media.³ The polygamy trend has occurred recently along with the trend of *hijrah* and the narrative of Islam revival in Indonesia.

So far, studies on polygamy tend to discuss three points. Firstly, polygamous studies tend to be viewed from a controversial perspective on the law

¹ Najmah Jaman, "Implications Of Polygamy Practices On Positive Law In Indonesia," *Prophetic Law Review*, 2020.

² Nur Janti, "Angka Poligami Dari Masa Ke Masa - Historia," 2019, <https://historia.id/kultur/articles/angka-poligami-dari-masa-ke-masa-vgXwV/page/1>.

³ Deti Mega Purnamasari, "Marak Ajakan Poligami Lewat Medsos, Guru Besar UI: Banyak Masyarakat Yang Keliru Paham Halaman All - Kompas.Com," 2021, <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2021/04/15/13455481/marak-ajakan-poligami-lewat-medsos-guru-besar-ui-banyak-masyarakat-yang?page=all>.

about whether or not polygamy is allowed.⁴ Polygamy generates pros and cons in which one party supports the presence of polygamy based on religion or sharia. At the same time, another sees polygamy as an arbitrary act and the manifestation of men's superiority. Secondly, a study of polygamy can be seen in the Quran⁵ The polygamy issue in the Quran is not defined singularly in which there are pros and cons in determining the preconditions of polygamy.⁶ Third, the study of polygamy is viewed from the perspective of its implications for households, which leads to household disharmony. From the tendency, the study seeing polygamy from the micro and macro dimensions of a woman's motive to undertake polygamy has not been conducted.

This article responds to the shortage of studies indicated. The study of polygamy from the perspective of women willing to be concubines (non-first wives) through *sirri* (underhand, silent, non-registered) marriage has not been widely conducted. This article reveals the pragmatic motives underlying a woman to be a *selir-sirri* wife in polygamy. Therefore, this study reveals the micro and macro dimensions of social and economic status that women take into account in polygamy. This article indicates three shreds of evidence about the women's motives for being polygamous the *selir-sirri* wives: economic status, social status, and security.

This article builds on the argument that the rationale of women willing to be polygamous underhand second (*selir-sirri*) wives is not always religion. Pragmatic motives related to women's economic status, social status, and security are also considered by a woman to agree to be a *selir-sirri* wife in polygamy. Women's social and economic demand is one of the pragmatic reasons for her to undergo polygamous marriage. Polygamy is committed by a man out of love and a woman out of financial necessity.⁷

This research used the Pekalongan region, Indonesia, as the locus of research. Pekalongan is known for its jargon "Kota Santri" (the city of strict adherents of Islam) . The jargon "Kota Santri" reflects the common assumption that many Pekalongan people come from santri Muslim society and Muslims familiar with the religious norms, religious activity, and religious action and

⁴ Bennion, "Polygamy and the Law." In Polygamy in Primetime, (2022).; Chusnayaini, "Dynamics Of Tunisian Polygamy Law In Gender Perspective." JURISDICTIE (2017).; Jaman, "Implications Of Polygamy Practices On Positive Law In Indonesia." *Prophetic Law Review* (2020).

⁵ Ademiluka, "'Be Fruitful and Multiply': Examining Genesis 1:28 as a Basis for the Adoption of Polygamy as a Solution to Childlessness amongst Nigerian Christians." *Verbum et Ecclesia* (2020) ; Husain et al., 2019; (Moqsith, 2015).

⁶ Abd. Moqsith, "Tafsir Atas Poligami Dalam Al-Qur'an," *KARSA: Jurnal Sosial Dan Budaya Keislaman*, 2015.

⁷ Nova Yohana, "Representasi Poligami Dalam Film ' Berbagi Suami ,'" *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 2, no. 2 (2013), p.47–56.

behavior. It is interesting because, in reality, many attitudes and behaviors wrapped in religion are only an excuse to disguise pragmatic goals. Polygamous marriages done by a husband without the wife's knowledge or women willing to be polygamous selir-sirri wives for the sake of money and quasi-comfort without marriage registration are the pragmatic reasons for polygamy. They can ignore justice values in polygamy and women's protection.

This research used a qualitative approach in which the data was collected through observation, interviews, and library studies. The observation was conducted by observing the daily lives of polygamous families in Pekalongan. An in-depth interview was conducted with ten polygamous actors. Five people were interviewed directly, and the other five via phone and chat. A library study was carried out by reading pieces of literature according to the research topic, particularly literature talking about the pros and cons and regulations of good polygamy in religious law and state law. The literature used comes from journal articles, marriage law, Islam Law Compilation, Turost Book (Classical Islam Scholars' Opinion), and dissertations related to polygamy. Works of literature successfully collected were read and reduced by summarizing, sorting, and focusing on important points and disposing of unnecessary points according to the problem to be addressed. The collected data was then classified into data categories. After categorizing the data, it was reduced and analyzed using an interpretive analysis technique.

Pragmatism

The term pragmatism derives from the words *pragma* meaning action or deed, and *ism* meaning conception or tenet.⁸ Pragmatism is a philosophical school of thought changing the direction of American philosophy, with Charles Pierce, William James, and John Dewey being its founders.⁹ Pragmatism is also viewed as an original American philosophy.¹⁰ Pragmatism prioritizes a perspective on action that should be viewed from the point of practical effect: to achieve the objective or to solve the problem encountered by the actor. Pragmatism refers to realistic action in facing a practical situation in which theoretical guidance is not

⁸ Erin McKenna and Maurice Hamington, "Pragmatism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Philosophy*, 2021. David L. Morgan, "Pragmatism as a Basis for Grounded Theory," *Qualitative Report*, 2020.

⁹ David Sidorsky, "Pragmatism and New Directions for American Philosophy: A Turn to the Future via Commitment to Scientific Method," *Filosofskii Zhurnal*, 2019.

¹⁰ Siti Maslakhah, "Penerapan Metode Learning By Doing Sebagai Implementasi Filsafat Pragmatisme Dalam Mata Kuliah Linguistik Historis Komparatif," *Diksi*, 2019.

too useful.¹¹ Furthermore, pragmatism is a viewpoint that examines or determines whether existing truths or theories have a practical function for humans.¹²

The pragmatist viewpoint can be found in family life. A modern society free of religious values tends to think pragmatically, leading to a pleasure-, sexual-, and reproduction-oriented marriage.¹³ study found that wives with high education tend to be pragmatistic and accept the policy of limiting children. It is because they understand better the advantage of limiting the number of children. According to Zhou, Chinese wanderer ethnicities are generally pragmatic and output-oriented, which is reflected in business operations. The Chinese wanderer ethnicities generally run large businesses catering to the needs of the local ethnicities, greatly influencing the local economy.

Polygamous family

Polygamy is a marriage practice with more than two couples. Polygamy is classified into two types: polyandry (the marriage of a woman to more than one man) and polygyny (the marriage of a man to more than one woman).¹⁴ In Islam, polygamous (polygynous) marriage practice has been legitimized in Verse 3 of the Quran, Surah An-Nisaa, despite varying interpretations.¹⁵ This verse has become a theological law regulating polygamous practice in Muslim society until today. Nevertheless, polygamy is perceived differently by people, either as pros or cons.¹⁶ The perception of polygamy is inseparable from the local cultural perspective. study, for example, revealed that polygamy occurring in the Acholi community of Uganda is an ordinary practice and not considered barbaric, cruel, or unjust.

Polygamous marriage, in addition to affecting wives, also affects children. The effect of polygamy on a wife has been indicated by study in Senegal,

¹¹ Ari Ganjar Herdiansah, "Pragmatisme Partai Islam Di Indonesia: Pendekatan Tindakan Sosial," *Sosioglobal : Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Penelitian Sosiologi*, 2017.

¹² Lawrence Cahoon, "Pragmatism as a Way of Life: The Lasting Legacy of William James and John Dewey," *Metaphilosophy*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1111/meta.12422>; Henri Bergson, "On the Pragmatism of William James: Truth and Reality," in *Key Writings*, 2021.

¹³ M. Saeful Amri and Tali Tulab, "Tauhid: Prinsip Keluarga Dalam Islam (Problem Keluarga Di Barat)," *Ulul Albab: Jurnal Studi Dan Penelitian Hukum Islam* 1, no. 2 (2018).

¹⁴ Abdur Rohman, "Poligami," *AGENDA: Jurnal Analisis Gender Dan Agama*, 2020. Theresia Dyah Wirastri and Stijn Cornelis van Huis, "The Second Wife: Ambivalences towards State Regulation of Polygamy in Indonesia," *Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law*, 2021. Jaman, "Implications Of Polygamy Practices On Positive Law In Indonesia."

¹⁵ Sukring Syamsuddin, "A Legal Debate on Polygamy: Classical and Contemporary Perspectives," *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin*, 2018. Rohmansyah, "Polygamy in the Text of the Qur'an, Hadith and Bible: Theory Systems Approach of Jasser Auda," *Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum Dan Pranata Sosial*, 2019.

¹⁶ Erma Pawitasari, "Manfaat Pernikahan Poligini Bagi Kaum Perempuan," *Al-Tahrir: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam*, 2015.

revealing that polygamous marriage has an impact on the increase of the first wife's saving amount due to the reduced expenditure for consumptive needs, either food or non-food. Meanwhile, in the Arab Emirate Union, the wife whose husband gets married again will take two stances: filing for divorce, particularly for those still young and having a career, or staying with her husband but not happy.¹⁷ Meanwhile, in relation to children, administratively unregistered polygamous marriage will lead to children's negligence.¹⁸ In addition, polygamous marriage results in mental health disorders, social problems, and decreased academic achievement among children.¹⁹ Thus, polygamous marriage has adversely affected the lives of wives and children.

Muslim society

The term "Muslim society" refers to an order of community adhering to Islam controlled by a political institution or state. Because it is under political control, Muslim society should obligatorily obey regulations and restrain them from taking actions that endanger the harmonious life of the nation.²⁰ One of Muslim society's obligations is to ensure the safety and security of non-Muslims who live in Muslim countries.²¹ It is in line with view that the principle in civil society is also a part of Muslim society. In addition, the term "*Muslim society*" is paralleled with "*ummatan wasaʿatan*".²² Therefore, Muslim society should have an insight into justice and moderate characteristics.²³

The family, as a component of Muslim society, has faced various problems. revealed changes in gender dynamics and family relations in the Maldives as a result of globalization. In the families of Malaysian Muslim society, mediation is used to solve family problems, such as preventing disputes and even divorce. However, in the case of divorce, mediation is done to solve disputes concerning

¹⁷ Khawlah M. Al-Tkayneh and Khaled Khamis Nser, "Emirati Women's Perceptions of Polygamy According to Age, Employment, and Educational Level," *Humanities and Social Sciences Reviews*, 2019.

¹⁸ Novita Dewi Masyithoh et al., "Unregistered Polygamous Marriage of Civil Servants and Its Implication for Wives' Financial Problem, Social Fate and Loss of Children's Welfare," *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education* 13, no. 2 (2021).

¹⁹ Mohammad Al-Sharfi, Karen Pfeffer, and Kirsty A. Miller, "The Effects of Polygamy on Children and Adolescents: A Systematic Review," *Journal of Family Studies*, 2016.

²⁰ Rusdiana Navlia Khulaisie, "Hakikat Kepribadian Muslim, Seri Pemahaman Jiwa Terhadap Konsep Insan Kamil," *Ejournal.Idia.Ac.Id* 2016, no. 11 (2016), p. 1

²¹ Abdel Wadoud Moustafa Moursi El-Seoudi, "Rights of Non-Muslims in the Muslim Society," *Social Sciences (Pakistan)*, 2012.

²² Muhammad Mustaqim Mohd Zarif et al., "Creating Creative and Innovative Muslim Society: Bid'ah as an Approach," *Asian Social Science*, 2013.

²³ Sapta Wahyu Nugroho, "Ummatan Wasaʿatan Perspektif Mufasir Kontekstualis Indonesia Sebagai Resolusi Konflik Kekerasan Komunal," *MUMTAZ: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an Dan Keislaman* 4, no. 2 (2020).

the rights to property and children's caretaking.²⁴ Meanwhile, a Muslim family in Islamabad opposes family planning policies on the basis of social and economic reasons, positioning children, particularly boys, as a source of prestige and power.²⁵ Thus, family, as a component of Muslim society in various parts of the world, has responded to problems in varying ways.

Husband's social economic stability status

The husband's economic stability, confirmed by lust among the Muslim men who have had wives, is one of the factors causing the pragmatism in polygamy. The pragmatic polygamous process can start from the well-established men's wish to hunt for women or from the opportunity in the presence of a tempting woman willing to be a concubine (*selir-sirri*). It is in line with SN (52 years old), a husband constituting a rich businessman revealing that he has done polygamy many times silently (*sirri*). SN (52 years old) stated⁴³:

"A man wants to do polygamy bravely due to his economic or monetary stability, desire, and opportunity, i.e., the woman willing to be married or even the woman tempting first, because the man has a lot of money. If I ask my wife for permission, she will not give it, and this may lead to disputes. Instead of having a sexual act out of marriage, we should get married silently. It is just for fun. By using contraceptives, we can prevent our spouses from having children. I want to get married quietly and do not need status. My concubine needs money and sex only, and I will divorce the one who begins to ask for rotation, being waited for, or being socialized, as it is impossible and it will make my wife hungry. Knowing this, I admit that such polygamy cannot implement the religious rule; it just makes our relationship rightful (*halal*)"

What SN (52 years old) has revealed indicates a pragmatism phenomenon in polygamy due to economic stability and biological satisfaction fantasy. SN (52 years old) has done polygamy with some women without telling or asking his official wife for permission because he believes that his wife will give the permit. With the excuse of religion, i.e. to avoid *zina* (doing sexual acts out of marriage) sin, he prefers to do polygamy silently (*sirri*). The status of marriage with his second marriage and so on through official registration is not necessary at all to him, even though he does not expect to get a child from his pragmatic marriage, because he does it just for fun. If his concubine (*selir-sirri*) begins to demand he

²⁴ Raihanah Azahari, "The Development of Family Mediation in Malaysian Muslim Society," *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 2010.

²⁵ Sajid Mahmood Aawan, Syed Ali Shah, and Syed Rashid Ali, "Socio-Economics, Religion and Family Planning in a Muslim Society: A Study of Islamabad (Pakistan)," *Global Economics Review*, 2018.

stay at her home (*mabit*) several times a week just like what religious precept about polygamy has taught or asks him to publish their marriage to the public, SN prefers divorcing her because it will lead to a conflict with his first wife as the one officially registered by the state (Religion Affairs Office).

WL (52 years old), having been successful in his batik production business, said similarly. He admitted that he had ever added two wives all at once without their (his wives') knowledge. In an interview conducted by the author, WL (52 years old) stated that:²⁶

"I did polygamy silently because I had much money and wanted satisfaction. If there is a man said that he does polygamy to help a woman, he is lying, because he actually just wants satisfaction. I have ever gotten married with other two women silently at the same time within four months. My wife and my concubines did not know that I did polygamy. Because the marriage with these two women was just for fun, when they begin to be waited for continuously or to ask for rotation, I divorced them. I could do that fairly just like what the religion has taught. Now I have no concubine. I do not have courage to do more polygamy because I do not have money as much as I did in the past. But if my economic condition has been stable and my family's need has been sufficed adequately, of course I want to do polygamy again".

What the actors of polygamy have said above is also similar to the statement of BN (56 years old), a rich businessman living in a luxurious house because his official wife lives in a different city. BN (56 years old) does polygamy bravely because of his economic stability and his wife's living in a faraway place. Thus, BN (56 years old) admitted that biologically he needs one more wife who can stay with him or at least stay in the same city to meet his sexual needs at any time. He chose a silent (*sirri*) marriage because he did not want his first wife to know it. BN (56 years old) said that:²⁷

"Economic stability is highly needed in polygamy. Polygamy can be done if a man can satisfy both his first and second wife's needs, although this second marriage is done silently (*sirri*). It is impossible to get a permit from the first one".

Social-economic status stability triggering polygamy is also revealed in the author's interview with SC (70 years old). The actor of polygamy comes from a societal leader and a religious leader admitting that he has four wives. His first wife was registered officially, his second wife was unregistered, his third wife

²⁶ Interview with WL, actors of polygamy, Mey 2022.

²⁷ Interview with BN, actors of polygamy, Mey 2022.

was registered officially, and his fourth wife was unregistered. Despite having four wives, SC (70 years old) lives alone at his home with no wife because his wives instead live in different houses. Furthermore, surprisingly, SC (70 years old) said that he often changes his fourth wife (getting married – divorce), while he still maintains his first, second, and third wives. Even his last fourth wife is still a teen (Interview on 18/3/2022).

From the various polygamous cases aforementioned, it can be seen that husbands' polygamy is often due to their stable social-economic status and excessive lust. A man's economic stability has made him subjugate a woman confidently and made a woman willing to marry him as a concubine (*selir-sirri*); even in this case, sometimes the woman tempts the man first. Eventually, the excuse of religion is made a factor to support polygamous behavior implemented pragmatically.

The Need for the improvement of social-economic status among women.

A woman's social-economic status will affect her availability to be a second wife (concubine). Considering SN's (52 years old) experience, the women needing social-economic status will easily accept an invitation to get married as concubines in polygamy. SN (52 years), a husband doing polygamy silently several times, stated that most women are willing to be married in polygamy because of money, despite no time to be waited for. This statement is made based on his personal experience with inviting some women to do polygamous marriages silently (*sirri*) (Interview on 3/4/2022). Some *selir-sirri* wives (concubines) admit to a woman's motive to be a polygamous concubine (*selir-sirri*) to improve their social and economic status. MZ (52), a widow with three children who has decided to become a *sirri-selir* concubine, stated:²⁸

“At that time my parents have been so old that I need a man to meet our family's basic necessities. I need to meet the needs for food, cloth, and shelter and to improve our social status”.

What MZ (52 years old) has stated indicates that the factors making a woman willing to engage in polygamy are meeting her basic needs, including food, clothing, shelter, and improving her social status all at once. MZ (52 years old) was married underhand by a rich businessman (> 60 years old) without his first wife's permit. It is in line with NS (49 years), a widow willing to be married to a batik entrepreneur who had a wife. NS (49 years) hoped that having gotten married, her husband would give her capital to run the business according to her hobby because, as a second wife married illegally or underhand (*sirri*), she

²⁸ Interview with MZ, actors of polygamy, April 2022.

thought that it was impossible to rely continuously on her husband, recalling that her husband had had another wife and family (Interview on 6/4/2022).

Similarly, MN (52 years), also constituting a concubine in polygamy, said that she had been left by her father since she was so young that she needed a guide and protector in her life; she had worked since she graduated from senior high school until her 31st birthday and had not gotten married until that age. During the interview, MN (52 years) said:²⁹

"I am willing to engage in polygamy because I should meet my life's needs. I believe that although he has had a wife and a family, my current husband is able to satisfy my needs and improve my standard of life. If he does not have a stable economic status, I would not want to be married. Although I am a second wife, I was married legally through the first wife's and the religion court's permits. Thus, I get my share justly and proportionally"

This statement confirms that the motive to improve social-economic status is why a woman is willing to be a second wife in polygamy. This reason is even recognized by a man doing polygamy, BN (56 years old), about his second wife, P (26 years old), who was still a virgin when he married her illegally. When she was asked why she was willing to be married illegally at such a young age, BN (56 years old) replied:³⁰

"The main factor is surely her perspective to choose a man with a more stable life compared with her peers. It means that the man will be more accountable. She prefers the older man to her peers because no man her age can live up to her standards.

BN's (56 years old) statement based on her personal experience also indicates that the husband's economic stability is more important for a woman to improve her social-economic status than age equality and even the marriage status itself. In this case, a young girl, SL (28 years old), is found to admit that she is willing to be a pragmatic polygamous wife with secret marriage, the status of which should be hidden from others. SL (28 years old) stated firmly:³¹

"I need neither existence nor marital status. I just need money to meet my monthly needs, at least as much as my salary to support my economic needs, as I have so many needs"

SL's statement confirms that many women prefer pragmatic polygamous marriage with a well-established man who has had another wife, despite his old

²⁹ Interview with MN, actors of polygamy, April 2022.

³⁰ Interview with BN, actors of polygamy, April 2022.

³¹ Interview with SL, a second wife in polygamy, April 2022.

age, to marriage with a single man of the same age and less-stable social and economic status, because of the pragmatic objective of improving social and economic status.

Woman's needs for comfort and security

The woman's need for comfort and security contributes to the case of pragmatic polygamy. A woman, particularly a widow, sometimes feels more comfortable and expects protection from her second marriage, despite an illegal polygamous marriage. It can even be a way for a woman to avoid temptation and violence, physically or psychically. It is in line with the statement of AH (50 years old), a widow who is willing to marry a man with another wife illegally. She admitted that she entered into this polygamous marriage not merely for an economic motive but because she was an employee with an income. AH (50 years old) has done polygamous marriage pragmatically without his husband's first wife for security and comfort reasons related to her heart and environment, in addition to finding the one with whom she can share anything about her life problems. AH (50 years old) stated:³²

"Since I became a widow, many men tempted me through chatting, even though there was a State Civil Apparatus often following me when I walked alone; as a normal woman with sexual needs, I worried that I would be tempted with seduction. Finally, I thought of finding a man to bind me to make me more composed. Why did I choose underhand (*sirri*) polygamy? I should stay in this house with my elderly mother-in-law from my previous husband, and I should take care of her, so it is impossible for me to leave this house. If I married a single man, he would ask me to live with him in his house. In the case of polygamy, my husband continues to live with his first wife. I do not take much time to take care of him. Even *sirri* (underhand) polygamy is more acceptable to the people in my neighborhood. I think my status as a second wife is more composed and safer than my status as a widow within society" (interview on 21/3/2022).

AH (50 years old) indicates that the social system of society sometimes accepts the status of a *sirri* polygamous wife more than the status of a widow. This condition also applies to NS (49 years old) and PH (40 years old). In her statement in Javanese, NS (49 years old) said:³³

³² Interview with AH, actors of polygamy, Mey 2022.

³³ Interview with NS, a second wife in polygamy, Mey 2022.

"Dadi rondo kui kadang gak enak dewe arep ningdi ningdi ngko deloane wong dikiro piye, padahal pancen ono perlu jenenge wong. Metu omah kewengen sitik dikiro model-model dikiro metu karo wong lanang sopopokoe serba salah. Lha nek wes duwe bojomeneh senajanbojo nomer loro ora resmi naming sah coro agomo nek metu-metu wong-wong ora curiga macem-macem." (Being a widow is uncomfortable because people have a negative stigma against widows, so we cannot go anywhere freely. However, they welcome the marriage, even if it is an underhand marriage).

In line with NS (49 years old)³⁴, PH (40 years old) said³⁵:

"With widow status, we cannot go anywhere freely because people will gossip about us when we go out of our home at night. One day, we went back home at night to pick up our nephew. At that time, I was with my brother. Someone spied on us for a long time and waited for us to get out of the car. They perhaps guessed who was with us. They have a negative stigma against widows. That was not comfortable. Therefore, I am willing to be married, even in underhanded polygamy, to find comfort and avoid gossip. Despite no official registration, people know I have gotten married legally in the religious system"

NS' (49 years old) and PH's (40 years old) statements above confirm that the social system accepts more second wives despite underhand marriages than a widow, and they will see her negatively when she goes out at night. Although the state has not yet recognized unregistered "polygamy," people have been able to accept the legality of marriage so that women have been able to feel comfortable within society.

Similarly, MZ (52 years old) also stated firmly³⁶:

"I need protection from a husband figure to protect me because I feel uncomfortable (people always see me suspiciously) and shy about being a widow. I am willing and accepting to be married in polygamy, despite my husband's absence beside me, for he should go to other wives. Importantly, communication keeps working" (Interview on 24/3/2022).

This MZ's (52 years old) statement, just like the previous women's statement, indicates a woman's need for comfort within a society in which the status of the widow will lead to discomfort due to her actions that always become the focus of people's attention. For this reason, a widow is often willing to be the second wife of an underhand (*sirri*) or pragmatic polygamous husband for comfort and safety in all of her activities.

³⁴ Interview with NS, a second wife in polygamy, Mey 2022.

³⁵ Interview with PH, a second wife in polygamy, June 2022.

³⁶ Interview with MZ, a second wife in polygamy, April 2022.

Macro and micro dimensions of woman married in polygamy

Polygamous marriage is due primarily to the social and economic conditions of both men and women.³⁷ From the men's side, husbands with economic stability tend to do pragmatic polygamy bravely just for fun moreover, those with wives living in different places, as shown in the result section. When an individual's needs have been met in the presence of stability, there is a predisposition to meet other higher wishes or needs, such as polygamy. In this context, religion (Islam) frequently serves as a justification to smooth the satisfaction of desire. In the context of needs, Maslow³⁸ states that a human being should first satisfy their lowest need, then the next highest one, and the highest one in order to actualize themselves. It means that those who have been able to meet their basic needs tend to want to meet their higher needs. An individual with stable economic status wants to get married. The one who has married and has a more stable economic status usually want to engage in polygamy. This hierarchy of needs, confirmed by Maslow, is one of the factors triggering a man to do polygamy and a woman to be willing to engage in polygamy.

From a woman's perspective, the willingness to be a second, a third, or a fourth wife in a polygamous marriage is also due to the condition of her **macro** and **micro** social and economic status. In the context of Indonesia, a widow in social life is vulnerable to gossip and negative stigma, and even declination socially by other women when she is considered to tempt their husband. The macro social system may not "accept widows" and discourage polygamy within society, or at least is still tolerant of pragmatic polygamy. It means that a woman's life as a second wife is more acceptable to the public than that of a widower. In other words, being a second woman is more common within society than having widow status. A widow tends to be affected by symbolic violence³⁹ committed by either men or women.

In addition to the macro factor, another factor contributing to the event of polygamy is the micro factor coming from a woman, including economic pragmatic needs and protection and security needs. Many women struggle to meet their basic needs and/or self- and family needs, so they are willing to marry to a

³⁷ Inna Fauzi, Lina Ayu Safitri, and Muhahmmad Zainal Abidin, "Tinjauan Hukum Ekonomi Islam Terhadap Kehidupan Poligami Pada Keluarga Miskin Di Boyolali," *YUDISIA : Jurnal Pemikiran Hukum Dan Hukum Islam* 11, no. 1 (2020). Ni Made Widisanti Swetasurya, "Representasi Poligami Dalam Film Berbagai Suami Kajian Terhadap Tiga Tokoh Sentral Perempuan," *Media Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Budaya Wahana* 27, no. 1 (2021), p. 557–65.

³⁸ E. O. Aruma and Melvins Enwuvesi Hanachor, "Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Assessment of Needs in Community Development," *International Journal of Development and Economic Sustainability*, 2017.

³⁹ FX Sri & Sadewo and Galang Kantata Taqwa, "Kekerasan Simbolik Pada Perempuan Janda Di Kabupaten Sidoarjo," *Paradigma* 04, no. 03 (2016), p. 1–8.

man with a wife in order to improve their social and economic status, without considering the conflict and friction that may arise as a result of the polygamous marriage, particularly with the first wife. Many of them are even willing to be the second wife without the first wife's knowledge at all. It is similar to women, who need self-protection and security. A single woman, either a widow or a spinster, is very vulnerable to assault or abuse by men, either physically or psychologically.⁴⁰

The pragmatic reasons for economic stability and security, as mentioned in the result section, indicate that polygamy can be a solution for a single woman finding no single man to meet her economic, protection, and security needs. Nonetheless, the expectation can be ironic because pragmatic rationales in polygamy, whether from the husband or the wife, can disregard legal convention, either state law (positive law) or religious law (Islam fiqh). Pragmatic polygamy, as shown in the cases above, is not registered officially with the religious affairs office (Indonesian: *Kantor Urusan Agama*, thereafter called KUA). Therefore, it is not recognized by the state. It is, in addition to because of its objective to have funds (married and divorced), because they find difficulty in meeting the preconditions of registration when the marriage is done without the first wife's permission and knowledge. Thus, surely it cannot be registered. In Indonesian Muslim society, both monogamy and polygamy marriage registrations are regulated by Marriage Law No. 1 of 1974, amended by Law No. 16 of 2019 about the Amendment to Law Number 1 of 1974 about Marriage. Article 4 of the Law states that a man who wants to marry more than one woman should file an application to the local court, and then Article 5 states that to file an application to the court, the wife or wife's approval is required. These preconditions are also included in the Islamic Law Compilation (Indonesian: *Kompilasi Hukum Islam*, thereafter called KHI), exactly in Articles 56 and 58. An unregistered marriage will, in turn, affect the legal protection of women. In contrast to pragmatic polygamy, the polygamy undertaken by MN (52 years old), as aforementioned, can be registered and get equal treatment proportionally because it got permission from the first wife and the Religion Court. Such polygamy is intended to build a family with wives rather than for pragmatic reasons.

From the standpoint of religious law, particularly *maqasid syariah* (the goal of sharia marriage), pragmatic polygamous marriage frequently disregards religious rules, from its wedding process, which is done silently without the knowledge of family or even more entitled guardians, to rights and obligations

⁴⁰ Danik Fujiati, "Seksualitas Perempuan Dalam Budaya Patriarkhi," *Muwazah* 8, no. 1 (2016); Mutmainah Mutmainah, "Aspek Hukum Islam Tentang Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan," *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Syir'ah* 5, no. 1 (2016). Andi Bini Fitriani and Mia Siscawati, "Posisi Perempuan Bugis Dalam Tradisi, Ritual Dan Norma Budaya Siri'," *Dharmasmrti: Jurnal Ilmu Agama Dan Kebudayaan* 21, no. 2 (2021), p. 1–14.

that cannot be fulfilled by a couple as husband and wife, and the agreement to have no children, as suggested by SN (52 years old) and WL (52 years old). It is, of course, in contradiction with religious doctrine, the objective of marriage in Islam. The appearance of advertisements about the provider of underhand wedding services for those interested in doing pragmatic polygamy on some websites provides a guardian, witness, and guarantee of confidentiality.⁴¹ of course, indicates the ignorance of state and religious rules about pragmatic polygamous marriage. The secret marriages without the wife, family, and community's knowledge will lead to calumny and prejudice.

Viewed from the right and obligation aspect, one of the basic obligations instructed by religion in a polygamous marriage is the husband's equal treatment of his wife or wives. Religion requires equality in terms of material, treatment, and power rather than equality in love. Pragmatic polygamy without a wife's permit, as admitted by the actors of it, cannot meet the law of "equality" specified by the religion and, thereby, will lead to the ignorance of religious norms. Karomi (57 years), an Islamic scholar and an actor of officially registered polygamy, states that being equal in polygamy is a certainty. Karomi declines polygamy done pragmatically without the wife's permit. His disagreement is not due to the validity of marriage but to the impossibility of treating the wives equally as instructed by religion.

Viewed from the right and obligation aspect, one of the basic obligations instructed by religion in a polygamous marriage is the husband's equal treatment of his wife or wives. Religion requires equality in terms of material, treatment, and power rather than equality in love⁴². Pragmatic polygamy without a wife's permit, as admitted by the actors of it, cannot meet the law of "equality" specified by the religion and, thereby, will lead to the ignorance of religious norms. Karomi (57 years), an Islamic scholar and an actor of officially registered polygamy, states that being equal in polygamy is a certainty. Karomi declines polygamy done pragmatically without the wife's permit. His disagreement is not due to the validity of marriage but to the impossibility of treating the wives equally as instructed by religion (16/3/2022).

The findings of current research are different from those of previous studies. Previous studies tend to see polygamy construction from a man's perspective, the

⁴¹ Pengadilan Agama Bojonegoro, "Marak Jasa Nikah Siri Di Medsos Klaim Sediakan Wali Saksi Dan Ustad," Pengadilan Agama Bojonegoro, 2021; Yusuf Wibisono, "Analisis Perkawinan Siri Online Di Masa Pandemi Covid-19 (Perspektif Fiqh Dan UU Perkawinan No. 1 Th 1974)," *Investama: Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Bisnis* 7, no. 1 (2022), p. 1–12.

⁴² Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, *Al-Fiqh Al-Islami Wa Adillatuhu*, Juz 7 (Damaskus: Dar al-Fikr, 1989).

reading of which is biased patriarchy⁴³. In polygamous marriages there is a lot of neglect of human rights that should be obtained by a wife and children in the family. What then often arises is the existence of hostility between the families of the wives in polygamous marriages. The reality is that there are many cases of polygamy that trigger other forms of domestic violence (KDRT), including physical, psychological, sexual and economic violence and so on experienced by women and children. This is proof that there should be a review and reconsideration of the practice of polygamous marriages⁴⁴. This study is different from that about women engaging in polygamy and the reasons underlying it. The research we conducted instead revealed the men's social-economic stability status and the women's need for social-economic status, and the issue of women's comfort and security becoming pragmatic motives, making women available to be wives in polygamy. Pragmatic motives originally intended to get religious legality to avoid sexual acts out of marriage (*zina*) are entrapped in the ignorance of religious rules.

Considering the result of research showing some pragmatic reasons for women's motivation to engage in polygamy, some strategies are required to make women aware of polygamy. This action or recommendation is important to show that, firstly, a woman should be an independent person in terms of social, education, social relations, access, and good public space. Thus, the position of women socially still below the wedding age will not occur. *Secondly*, viewed from the economic aspect, a woman should have a job in order to be independent and to have a strong economic status. Thus, she will not be vulnerable to various forms of discrimination and symbolic violence. *Thirdly*, if we will undertake polygamy because Islam allows it, it should not only be intended for pragmatic purposes but also consider religious and state rules, from the process of getting the previous wife's permit and court's permit, and to the process of publishing within society, in order to get proportional equality and legal protection.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the motive of men's and women's polygamous practices is not merely based on religious doctrine; ironically, the practices ignore religious doctrine. It is pragmatism that becomes the main reason for a man to do polygamy and a woman to be available to be a polygamous wife. No bargaining

⁴³ Siti Hikmah, "Fakta Poligami Sebagai Bentuk Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan," *Sawwa: Jurnal Studi Gender*, 2012. Dina Agnia, "Kajian Kritis Budaya Patriarkhisme Dalam Agama Dan Keadilan Perempuan (Studi Ketentuan Poligami Dalam Uu. No. 1 Tahun 1974)," *Pasca Sarjana (S2) Universitas Negeri Lampung (UNILA)*, 2016.

⁴⁴ Hikmah, "Fakta Poligami Sebagai Bentuk Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan"; Dina Agnia, "Kajian Kritis Budaya Patriarkhisme Dalam Agama Dan Keadilan Perempuan (Studi Ketentuan Poligami Dalam Uu. No. 1 Tahun 1974)."

power a woman has before her prospective husband with high social and economic status has made her vulnerably agree to be *istri selir-sirri* (concubine) in polygamy. This article concludes that the motives of pragmatic polygamy are: first, the husband's economic stability; second, the women's need for improving social-economic status; and third, the women's need for comfort and security.

As the current study sees only the pragmatic sides of polygamy, it still needs further development. One of the issues that can be researched further is the psychological review of children born into polygamous families. The psychology of children born from polygamous family traditions needs to be studied because existing studies only look at the legal and caretaking patterns of children born from polygamous families.

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Interviews

Interview with SN, actors of polygamy, April 2022.

Interview with WL, actors of polygamy, Mey 2022.

Interview with BN, actors of polygamy, Mey 2022.

Interview with MZ, actors of polygamy, April 2022.

Interview with MN, actors of polygamy, April 2022.

Interview with SL, a second wife in polygamy, April 2022.

Interview with AH, actors of polygamy, Mey 2022.

Interview with NS, a second wife in polygamy, Mey 2022.

Interview with PH, a second wife in polygamy, June 2022.