



The sins of Polygamy

The Harrowing Tendencies of Marriage

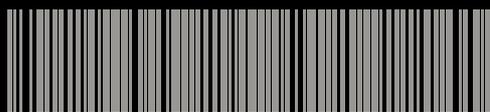
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THE SINS OF POLYGAMY

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Editors' Note

Polygamy has been a controversial topic, with arguments for and against its practice. This issue digs deeper into the major impacts of polygamy and explains why polygamy should be banned worldwide.



In this issue, we aim to explore the complexities of polygamy, examining its historical and cultural contexts in Imperial and Modern China, as well as in Africa. Additionally, we delve into the negative psychological, social, and socioeconomic effects associated with the practice, and examine the legal and ethical frameworks surrounding polygamy.

While some argue that polygamy is a personal choice and cultural tradition, we believe that the negative consequences of the practice outweigh any perceived benefits. Through our exploration of the topic, we assert that polygamy should be banned worldwide. We hope this issue of the magazine provides a comprehensive and distinct examination of polygamy and contributes to the ongoing discussion around polygamy's adverse impacts around the globe.

Our Editors

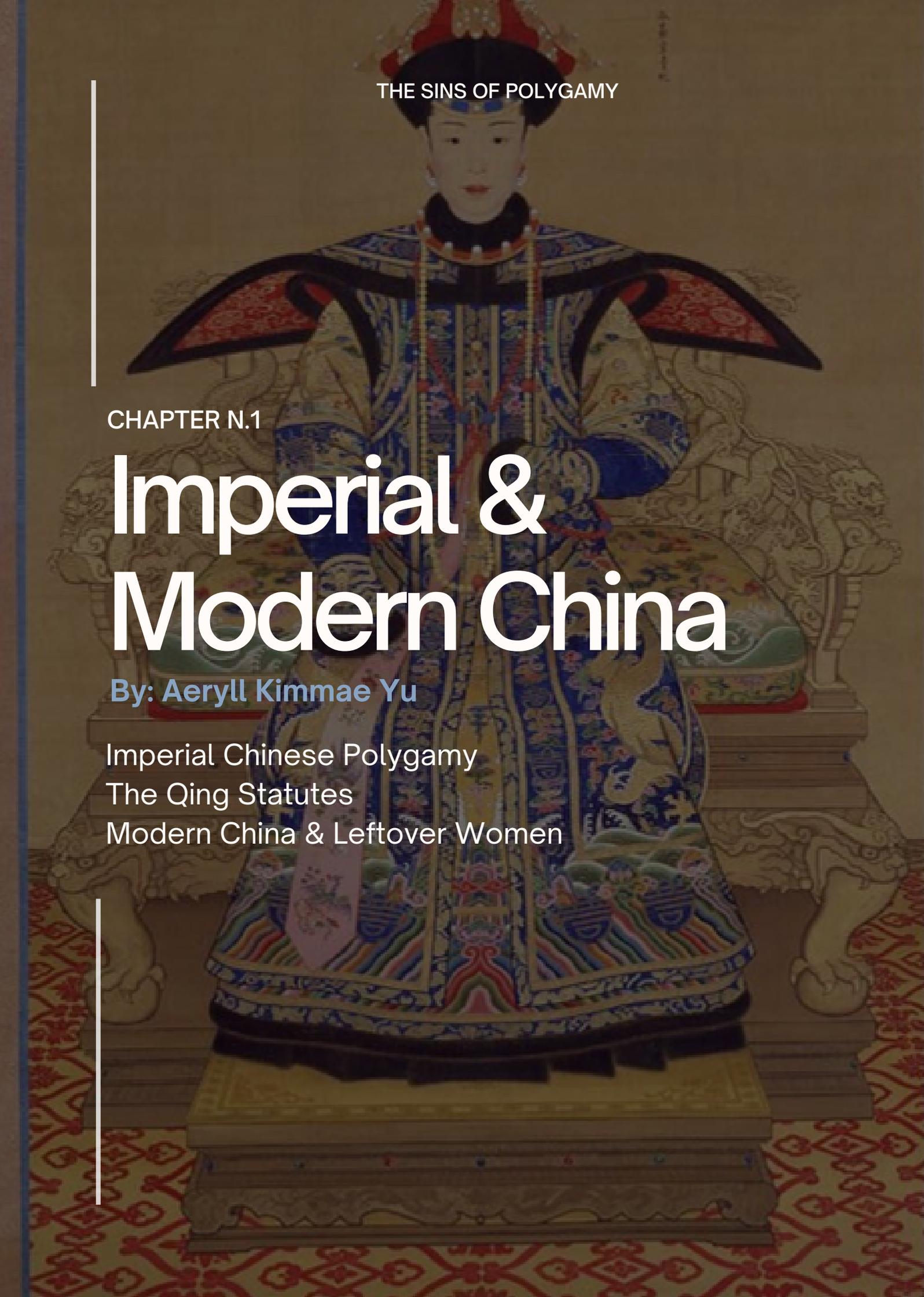
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THE SINS OF POLYGAMY

CHAPTER N.1

Imperial & Modern China

By: Aeryll Kimmae Yu

Imperial Chinese Polygamy

The Qing Statutes

Modern China & Leftover Women



Image 1.1: Su, n.d.

The Institution of Imperial Chinese Polygamy

It has been recurrent in Chinese history for dynastic founders to appropriate concubines for the survival of the nation. As such, imperial polygamy was the law, and its institutionalization underpinned its role as a social belief system.

It was founded on the Confucian belief that emphasized men's ability to manage a family, and in the case of an emperor, his sole duty was to guarantee a successor. The fulfillment of this obligation gave the emperor his right to rule or in political terms, his legitimacy (McMahon, 2013).



Image 1.2: Decker, 2017

Handmaid's Tale?

The Concubinage System

Imperial Chinese society dictates that emperors should be polygamists, such that they appropriate as many concubines as possible through a nationwide selection process.

No unmarried woman was exempted from this selection process, and if one was to be appropriated as a concubine, she was coerced to obey the imperial order (McMahon, 2013).



Image 1.3: Holmes, 2016

Oppressed Objects of Reproduction

This leads to the idea that concubinage was an oppressive system, as it deprived women of their freedom and denied them any sense of individuality. Moreover, concubines lived with their psychological needs constantly neglected, as they were under constant surveillance by higher authorities to ensure they adhered to proper models of polygamy. On the other hand, polygamy was a form of objectification such that a concubine's reproductive abilities were constantly exploited to produce heirs and fulfill national objectives. As such, concubines were treated as mere vessels of reproduction. In addition, women were viewed as mere ornaments that further exemplified an emperor's image. McMahon (2013) substantiates this claim by stating that, "Taking another man's wife or concubine was a way of establishing dominance and claiming legitimacy" (p.920).

Despite the vital role concubines play within the imperial palace, polygamy nevertheless persisted in producing a "pyramid-like structure with polygamists on top and other women surrounding" which dictates the lifelong subordination and gender inequality that Chinese women have to face in an inherently patriarchal society (McMahon, 2013).

"For Forbidden City concubines in imperial China, beauty was more of a curse than a blessing."

-Duhalde, 2018

A Pyramid-Like Structure Inside the Imperial Palace

A MANIFESTATION OF
FEMALE SUBORDINATION
& MALE DOMINATION

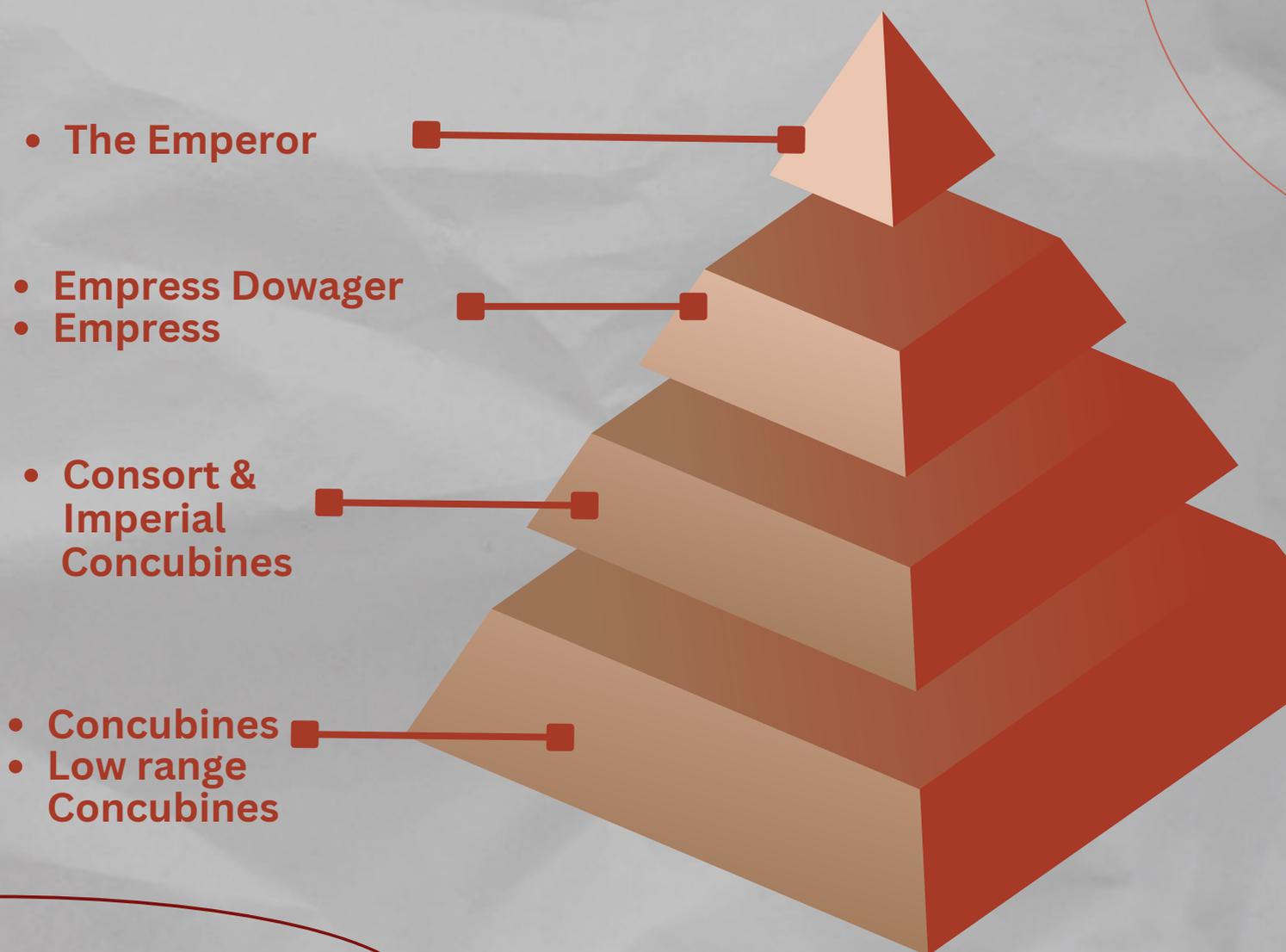


Figure 1.1: Social Structure within the Imperial Palace

The Qing Statutes

A Chance for Change

Contrary to popular belief, a journal by Du (2017) entitled “Concubinage and Motherhood in Qing China” rejects the stereotypical image of a subordinate and powerless concubine. It challenges the notion that concubines were denied legal rights or subservient entities obligated to bear a son for the polygamist. Instead, they were an indispensable part of a polygamous household that held a legally recognized position.



Image 1.4: Pinterest, n.d.

Five Degrees of Ritual-Legal Mourning

The first point of exploration is the Five Degrees of Ritual-Legal Mourning — a system that dictates how long a living person must mourn for the deceased. Understanding a concubine’s position in the mourning obligations paints a picture of her ritual-legal status in a polygamous household. On the left, you can see the different degrees of mourning that range from 3 months up to 3 years. One of the factors that influence how long one must mourn for the deceased was the ritual-legal relationship. The closer the ritual-legal relationship between the deceased and the living, the longer the reciprocal mourning (Du, 2017). Thus, children must mourn until three years for their deceased father as the ritual-legal relationship falls under the first degree.

The Mourning Degrees

- Degree 1 (zhǎn cuī 斬衰) —3 years**
- Degree 2 (zī cuī 齊衰) —1 year**
- Degree 2.5 (jī nián 基年) —Up to 1 year**
- Degree 3 (dà gōng 大功) —9 months**
- Degree 4 (xiǎo gōng 小功) —5 months**
- Degree 5 (sī má 緦麻) —3 months**

(Jordan, 2020)

Concubine-Mothers & Childless Concubines

According to the Qing code, concubine-mothers had their ritual-legal status raised to a secondary wife, while childless concubines were juxtaposed to sex slaves. Consequently, childless concubines received no reciprocal mourning from their husband's children, while concubine-mothers received at least three years of reciprocal mourning from their natural children and one year from their husband's children (Du, 2017).

Matriarchs in Polygamous households

As biological motherhood automatically promoted a concubine's upward mobility in the mourning circle, Qing law also states that widowed concubine-mothers held prestigious custodial rights, which rendered them matriarchs in wealthy households. The Qing law further states that when sons negotiated household division, they drew legitimacy from their mother's authority, which forbade them from selling or making use of family property without their mothers' consent (Du, 2017).

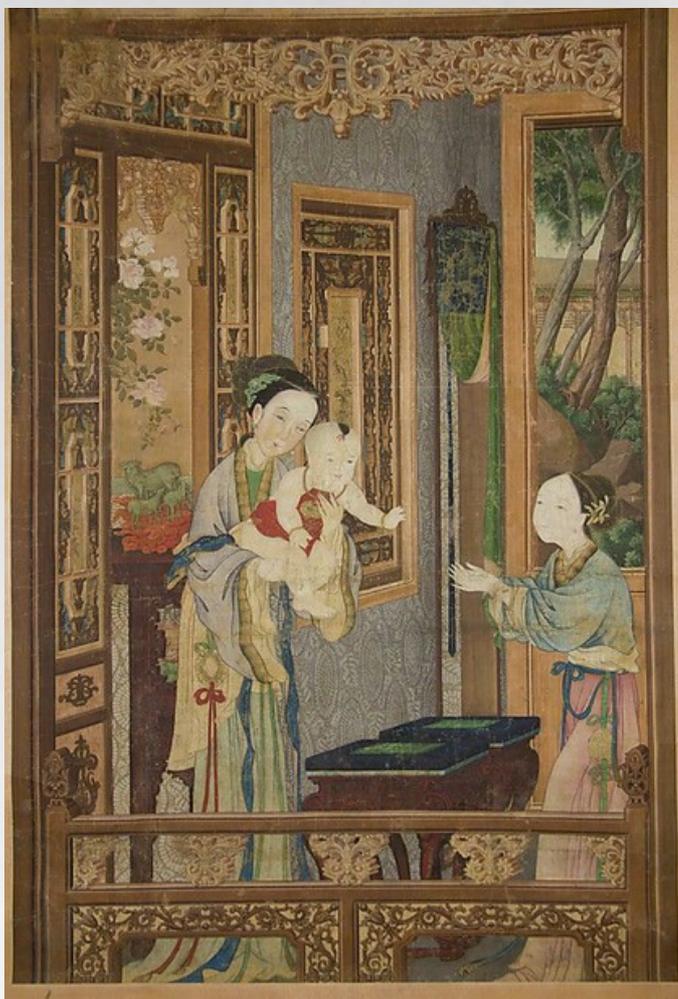


Image 1.5: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, . n.d.

For concubines, however, the degree of reciprocal mourning varied according to their ability to reproduce. Concubines were subdivided into concubine-mothers and childless concubines, where the former referred to concubines who bore a child for their husband, while the latter pointed towards concubines who were unable to reproduce.



Image 1.6: Unidentified artist , Qing Dynasty (1644–1911)

Patriarchy & Objectification?

Although concubine mothers enjoyed legal rights in both the custodial rights and five degrees of ritual-legal mourning, the focal point for upward social mobility was motherhood, which remained the most important source of power. As women derived their social value from procreation, it entrapped them in a system that was persistent in objectifying them as vessels of reproduction.

It is crucial to note that the Qing law states requires concubines and wives to mourn for their deceased husbands, yet husbands were not obliged to mourn for their deceased concubines and wives (Du, 2017). This simply illustrates the recurring pyramid-like structure that society during the Qing dynasty assumed, which placed great emphasis on male dominance and female subordination.

The Evolution of Marriage in China



Image 1.7: The Graphic, 1911



Image 1.7: The Guardian, 2016

The Cost of Tradition

The Resurgence of Gender Inequality

Despite its historical significance, polygamy was nevertheless outlawed in 1949 during the Communist takeover, with the objective of promoting a more gender-egalitarian society. However, modern China has witnessed a resurgence of Confucian values that place great emphasis on marriage, where traditional marriage norms have once again prevailed in private family matters (Ji, 2015).

In exploring the historical context, a journal by Ji (2015) entitled "Between Tradition and Modernity: Leftover Women in Shanghai" argues that the dichotomy of modernization and tradition is the root cause of this phenomenon, where China's transition to Western capitalism has forgone egalitarian gender ideologies once promulgated in the 1960s.

剩女 Leftover Women

Popular marital discourse in modern China has persisted in castigating unmarried women over the age of 27 as “leftover women,” associating them with derogatory terms like “shameful” and “flawed” (Ji, 2015). Consequently, Chinese society pressures women to conform to traditional ideals of marriage, which exacerbates their burden of reconciling their independence with familial duties.

Societal pressure is further aggravated by the deepening problem of an aging population and falling birth rate in China, which has prompted the implementation of the three-child policy (Mullen, 2021). This policy further pressures women to embrace their identities as mothers, undoubtedly limiting their identities to reproductive vessels.



Image 1.8: The Guardian, 2014



Image 1.9: The World of Chinese, 2017



Image 1.10: CNN, 2021

A Step Towards Egalitarianism?

Juxtaposing Leftover Women to Concubines?

Concubines and leftover women share the similar burden of objectification and marginalization if they do conform to traditional gender norms. Thus, to what extent did the interdiction of polygamy promote a more gender-egalitarian society?

Well, the interdiction of polygamy implies that women no longer have to face legal consequences for not adhering to traditional marriage norms.

Although constrained by the traditional institution of the family, modern Chinese women have learned to navigate China's traditional mosaic society, opposing orthodox unequal gender beliefs while maintaining their individual identity.

Thus, this proves that polygamy creates more social problems despite its high cultural value in China, leading us to the conclusion that polygamy should be banned worldwide.

CHAPTER N.2

Navigating African Polygamy

By Chester Mong Hei Ho

Cultural Boundaries
Freedom of Choice
Polygamy & Africa

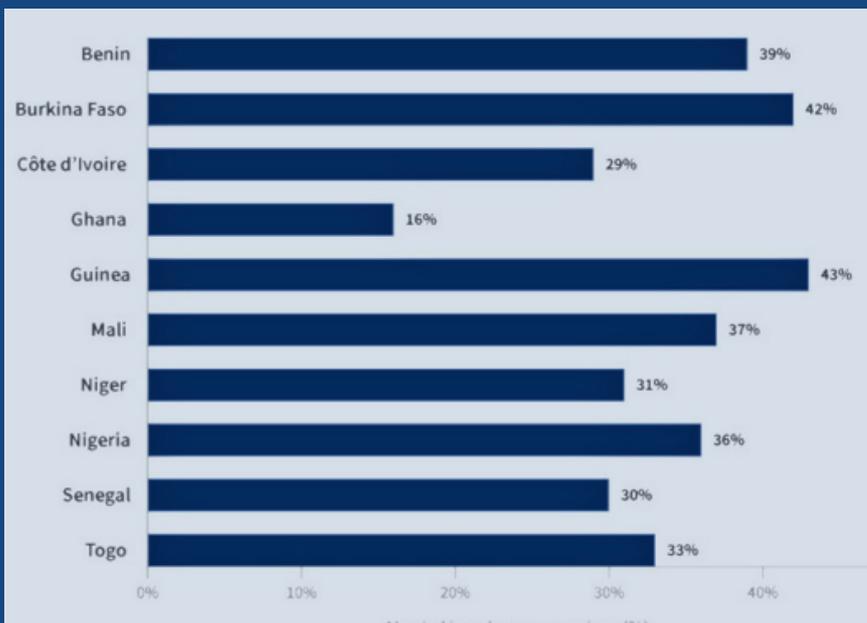
Navigating African Polygamy

To understand the current trend of polygamy, we need to look at Africa. With countries occupying the top of the chart in polygamous rates, could you imagine that in the year 2023, there are still around 20% of the polygamous population in Africa? That means that one out of five Africans was married to or born into a polygamous family. In some extreme cases, the rate went up to 39%, including Benin, the country with the highest polygamous rate in Africa, which has banned polygamous marriage since 2002. These stunning data reveal that there are constraints in regulations and laws. But what are the major obstacles in modernizing monogamous marriage in Africa?



Image2.1: John , 2018

Figure 2.2: Population Reference Bureau, 2019



By comparing Western modernized society with the "modern love" ideas promoted, we can see that romantic relationships are built on the mutual cognitive support of life-long partners. In contrast, the African traditional marriage idea is more duty-based, with the husband as the financial provider and women as housewives responsible for household chores. This has adversely undermined the popularity and spread of monogamous marriage in African areas. To elaborate, here are some real-life examples that illustrate the cultural patterns in Africa. We will investigate the harmful effects of polygamy in modern society.

Cultural Boundaries

Commodifying Children

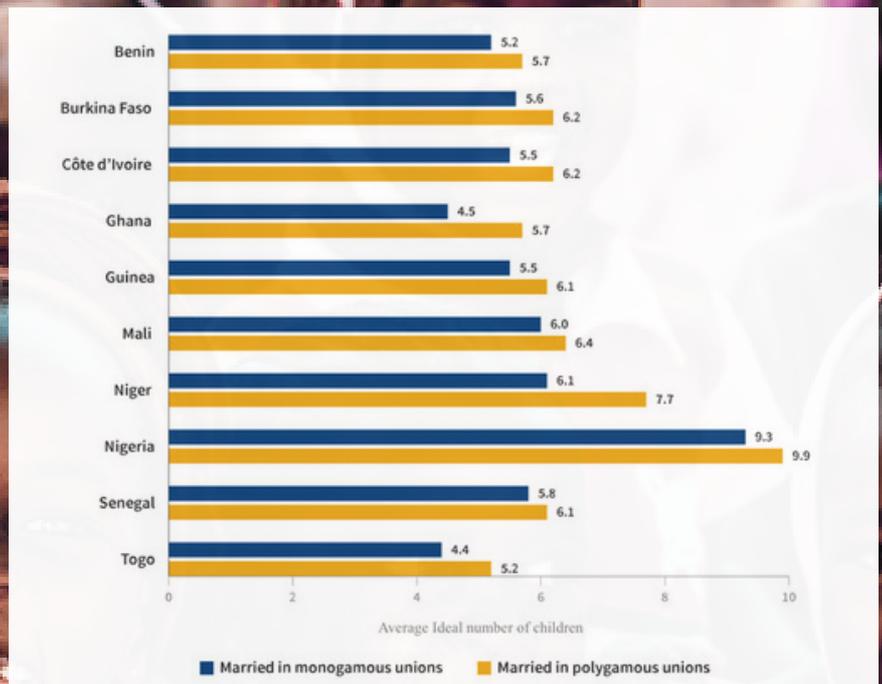
The social stereotypes and traditional values of marriage have been inherited and ingrained in everyone's mind. For instance, in Benin, women without a husband after the age of 25 are considered useless or some sort of social abnormality. Even after marriage, they are obliged to fulfill their roles in families as wives and mothers. So how do these stereotypes correlate to the high polygamous rate? Studies have found that as their family system promotes children as "property," having more children suggests a prosperous and high-quality family unit. And they will receive a higher social status. However, it takes more effort and manpower to take care of the children, and the best way is to marry more wives to take care of the family. (*Polygyny and Alternative Marriage Choices in Contemporary Senegal, Africa Studies Review, Cambridge University Press, Volume 59(1)*)

Looking at the example of Senegal, a man would be suggested as a success if he can achieve a successful business career, while a woman will be called loyal if she can fulfill family duties. The contract-based marriage created this kind of social norm, which is hard to evaluate and modernize based on its history and how deeply these ideas have been inherited.



Image2.3: niussp , 2022

Ideal Number of Children among married women by African country and type of union



- FIGURE 2.4 POPULATION REFERENCE BUREAU , 2019

Freedom of choice?

You may ask why the polygamous rate still peaks in Africa in 2023, where free will and freedom of marriage are already a global consensus. Women have the right to choose who they are going to marry, right? In fact, in most cases of polygyny in Africa, it was initiated by women choosing a polygamist man, not the other way around. So what are the causes behind this cultural phenomenon?

If you look at the numbers, 60% of women in Senegal are willing to marry a polygamous man as they are wealthier and can take good care of their wives. This grants women a sense of security rather than marrying a man who is monogamous but cannot satisfy their basic needs. (Polygyny and Alternative Marriage Choices in Contemporary Senegal, Africa Studies Review, Cambridge University Press, 2018)



Image2.5: <https://ichef.bbci.co.uk>, 2017

A Patriarchal African Society

Another factor that contributes to the persistence of polygyny in Africa is the limited access to education and job opportunities for women. In many African countries, women face social and cultural constraints that prevent them from acquiring the necessary skills and education to secure high-paying jobs. As a result, they are often forced to rely on their husbands for financial support.

Moreover, traditional gender roles in many African societies often dictate that women should stay at home and take care of household chores and children, while men are expected to be the primary breadwinners. These gender roles are reinforced by severe sexual stereotypes that portray women as inferior to men and incapable of managing men or holding positions of authority.

As a result, many women in Africa are brought up without acquiring many skill sets or receiving education to get job opportunities.

Even in the real-life workplace, they often face discrimination and barriers to advancement, making it difficult for them to achieve financial independence.

In this context, polygyny can be seen as a rational choice for women who lack the resources to support themselves and their children. By joining a polygamous family, they can benefit from a stable income and the support of other wives in the household. This may be particularly attractive in situations where resources are scarce and social safety nets are weak.



Image2.6: wikipedia common, 1928

Who takes the pain

Polygamy can have numerous negative effects on individuals and families. One of the most significant consequences of polygamy is the potential for marital conflict and the resulting harm to children. For example, in some cases, a husband may abandon his children from his first wife and marry a second wife after the first wife passes away. This can lead to emotional and financial instability for the children and can damage the relationships between the father and his children.

In other cases, domestic conflicts can arise between the wives, leading to one wife taking the children and leaving the household. This can result in the children being raised in suboptimal conditions, with limited access to resources and a lack of emotional support. Moreover, the competition among children from different wives is another issue that can arise. In some African cultures, children from different wives are often referred to as "doomu baay," which means "father's children." This terminology can create a sense of hierarchy and competition among the children, which can be detrimental to their emotional well-being.



Image2.7: niussp , 2022



Image2.8: niussp , 2022

Reinforcing Female Subordination

The practice of polygyny can further reinforce these gender roles by allowing men to have multiple wives and limiting women's access to resources and decision-making power within the household., like a polygamous father may remain the studying opportunities for their sons instead of daughters because of their biased attitude towards women.

In some cases, men may use the threat of taking a second wife as a way to assert their power and control over their first wife. This can result in emotional and psychological harm to the first wife and can damage the relationship between the husband and wife. Moreover, women may also feel pressure to accept polygyny as a way to secure their financial stability and social status. This can lead to feelings of resentment and competition among the wives and their children.



Image2.9: niussp , 2022



Polygamy and Africa

From African studies we can observe that polygamy inhibits the modernisation of African marriage, from traditional marriage ideas, values, to child growth support and gender equality. Polygamy has been damaging cultural modernisation and social equality. It takes years to advocate monogamous ideas through education and social modification to renovate.

THE SINS OF POLYGAMY

CHAPTER N.3

PSYCHOLOGY OF POLYGAMY

By: Daniel Gavra

Animals & monogamy
Repercussions on women
Impact on children and men



Why look at the psychology of polygamy?

By looking at the psychology of polygamy, we can gain insight into what type of relationship humans are hardwired to benefit more from and what mental impact polygamy and monogamy have on the people involved. Through inferring from animals, we can examine what relationship humans are evolutionarily designed to engage in. Through looking at studies conducted on the psychological impact of polygamy and monogamy on those involved, we can conclude if the positive psychological benefits outweigh the negatives.

In this article, we will conduct a deep dive into the psychology of polygamy – specifically when one man has multiple wives - and conclude whether polygamy should be banned worldwide from a psychological perspective.

Animals and monogamy

Different animals exhibit either monogamous or polygamous behavior. Certain characteristics are typically associated with either polygamy or monogamy. Access to resources, parental care, mate availability, and sexual conflict are key indicators of whether animals engage in polygamy or monogamy. (Kvarnemo. 2018)



Image 3.2: Delbert, 2021

Mate Availability

Having many potential mates is shown to reflect more polygamy among animals (Kvarnemo, 2018). Most men, however, do not have access to an abundance of women. On the contrary, there are bride shortages in some countries and finding just one potential wife is difficult (Sharygin, , Ebenstein, & Das Gupt., 2012). Considering low mate availability correlates to monogamy among animals, humans should be no different, hence should be monogamous.

Parental Care

Necessary biparental care for offspring is a dominant indicator of animals being monogamous rather than polygamous (Kvarnemo. 2018). An example would be birds, both the mother and father raise their offspring together; the parents work together to feed and guard their offspring (Kvarnemo. 2018). Humans also require both the mother and father figure to be present in their lives when being raised. Studies have shown that compared to kids from two-parent households, kids from single-parent households do worse in school, are more violent, and suffer more psychologically (Musick, & Meier, 2010). Needing biparental care indicates that being monogamous is engrained in us.



Image 3.3: Al-Thani, 2016

Animals and monogamy

Resources

Animals with access to abundant resources are more likely to engage in polygamy, whereas animals that have less access to resources and endure habitat limitation are more likely to engage in monogamy (Kvarnemo, 2018). When looking at humans, it could be argued that most men are lacking resources, hence should engage in monogamy (Zucman, 2019). With the rising costs of taking care of a family, it is difficult for most men to supply and care for multiple wives and many children ((Harari, Francis-Devine, Bolton, & Keep, 2022), 2022). This indicator in animals reflects that humans are evolutionarily programmed to engage in monogamy rather than polygamy.



Image 3.4: Barras, 2017



Image 3.5: Milius, 2020

Sexual Conflict

Female and male animals typically have conflicting sexual goals. When it is mutually beneficial for both male and female animals to have multiple partners, this results in no sexual conflict when engaging in polygamy; however, if the pregnancy period for the female animals is long and they are unable to produce many offspring within their lifespan, it is more beneficial for them to be selective with their partner and to stick with one (Kvarnemo, 2018). Women need approximately 9 months to give birth, this means that since it is in the best interest for women to stick with one man, there exists sexual conflict if humans were to engage in polygamy.

Seeing that these key, primal indicators point towards humans being better suited to be in monogamous relationships rather than polygamous ones, it can be argued that humans are not designed to handle polygamy. Admittedly, this conclusion is based on extrapolations from research exclusively looking at monogamous animals; ideally in the future we should pursue conducting research that has a focus on looking at the connection between animals to humans.

What do the studies say?

Repercussions on Women

The general narrative is that women in a polygamous relationship often are unhappy. According to a meta-analysis that compiled multiple studies that looked at women who shared a husband, this turned out to be true. (Shaiful Bahari., Norhayati, Nik Hazlina., Mohamad Shahirul Aiman, & Nik Muhammad Arif, 2021)

Emotional Distress

86.8% of women who share a husband suffer from high emotional distress (Shaiful, et al, 2021)

Low Self-Esteem

58.4% of women who share a husband suffer from low self-esteem (Shaiful, et al, 2021)

Loneliness

64.1% of women who share a husband suffer from loneliness (Shaiful, et al, 2021)

Depression

2.25x higher chance of women who share a husband to suffer from depression (Shaiful, et al, 2021)

Women who engage in polygamous relationships, where they share one husband with multiple other wives, tend to suffer significant psychological distress. The reason for this is the need to compete for their shared partner's attention and affection, resulting in the development of psychological disorders (Shaiful et al., 2021). These findings suggest that women may not be mentally capable of handling polygamy, making monogamy the superior choice from a female perspective.



Image 3.6: Uzielli, 2017



Image 3.7: Gissen, 2022



HOW DOES POLYGAMY MENTALLY AFFECT CHILDREN?

An often-overlooked aspect of polygamy is the impact on children. Children, similarly to women, are exposed to a lot of mental repercussions from being part of a polygamous relationship.

Academics

Kids that come from polygamous families score lower in exams and are more likely to drop out. (Shaiful, et al, 2021)

Depression

Kids that come from polygamous families are 22% more likely to be depressed (Shaiful, et al, 2021)

Hostility

Kids that come from polygamous families are 24% more likely to be hostile and exhibit poor behaviour (Shaiful, et al, 2021)

Anxiety

Kids that come from polygamous families are 7% more likely to suffer from anxiety (Shaiful, et al, 2021)

The lack of attention that children from polygamous relationships receive combined with having to face the stigma associated with coming from a polygamous family leads to children suffering mentally (Shaiful, et al, 2021). The lack of mental benefits and the abundance of negative mental consequences reflects that we need to protect kids from polygamy and prevent them from being part of a polygamous family structure.



Image 3.8: Tamburro, 2012

WHAT ABOUT THE MEN?

Men who have multiple wives seem to be living their best lives. Some people would assume that there are only psychological benefits for these men: those people would be mostly correct. (Ekerbiçer, Resim, Efe, Bahar, Altunören, Küçükdurmaz, & Benlioğlu, 2016)

Erectile Function

Polygamous men scored higher on the International Index for Erectile Function Test compared to monogamous men (Ekerbiçer, et al., 2016)

Satisfaction

Men reported engaging in polygamy due to lack of marital and sexual satisfaction (Ekerbiçer, et al., 2016)

Depression

Polygamous men scored lower on the Beck Depression Index compared to monogamous men (Ekerbiçer, et al., 2016)

Alcoholism

Polygamous men are more likely to be alcoholic (Ekerbiçer, et al., 2016)

Despite polygamous men seeming to be more prone to be alcoholic, the overall psychological benefit outweighs the singular con. However, it is important to note that since there are a limited number of studies conducted on the mental health of polygamous men, presumably because everybody assumes that they are doing fine, there was no other choice but to reference a study with a limited sample size. In the future, a greater focus on polygamous men's mental health could uncover new facts.

So what does the psychology of polygamy say?

When considering women, children, and men involved in polygamous relationships, it is clear that the negatives are far worse than the positives. It obviously is not worth sacrificing the mental health of both women and children just for men to enjoy better erections and a better sex life. This paired with evolutionary indicators pointing towards humans being ingrained to be monogamous suggests that we should push for banning polygamy worldwide.

THE SINS OF POLYGAMY

CHAPTER N.4

Socioeconomic Impact

By: Anish Shekhar

The Painful Truths for Spouses

The Multigenerational Impact on Children

The Long-term Effects on Society





THE DARK SIDE OF POLYGAMY

Image 4.1: Pexels, n.d.

Uncovering The Painful Truths for Spouses

Polygamy is a controversial topic that continues to draw contrasting views and opinions. Although several socio-economic factors can influence polygamous relationships, research reveals that polygamy leads to harmful social effects. In general, polygamy has detrimental effects on the social fabric of families and communities.

Initiation

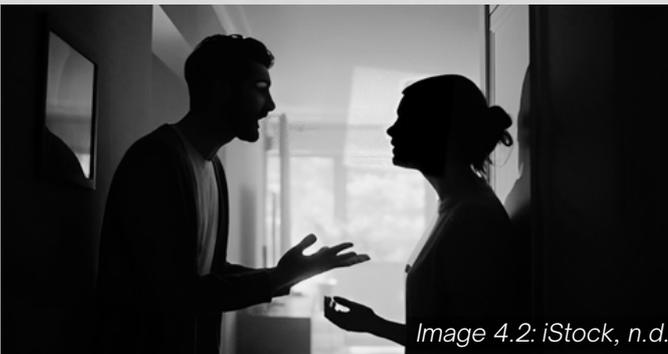


Image 4.2: iStock, n.d.

Usually, polygamy is initiated by the husband, who decides to marry additional wives. The first wife may be unaware of her husband's decision, which leads to mistrust and distant relationships between spouses. According to a study by Hijazi, Khasawneh, and Salman (2011), the decision to practice polygamy is based on the husband's desire for more children and social status (Hijazi, Khasawneh, & Salman, 2011). As a result, polygamy can lead to endless conflicts in the household between the multiple wives and the father.

Conflict

In most cases, the adverse effects of polygamy are most evident among female spouses. Batool and Pervez (2016) suggest that polygamy often leads to resentment, jealousy, and other detrimental psychological effects (Batool & Pervez, 2016). These impacts can be even more severe when the wives feel forced into the relationship, which is the case in rural and low-income areas.

Klomegah (1997)'s research in Ghana found that in rural areas, the status and economic power required to support a family can only be achieved through polygamous relationships, making it a necessity rather than a choice. He discovered that rural residency and poor educational background are two of many reasons why women are forced into polygamy (Klomegah, 1997). Consequently, in these cases, polygamy is no longer a decision but rather a result of the socio-economic environment.

THE MAJOR PROBLEMS

I. Endless Conflict among spouses

Multiple wives in one household must deal with endless competition, like a game of tug of war. Different spouses fight for the husband's attention, affection, and resources. Since the husband cannot satisfy the needs of multiple spouses, multiple wives often feel underappreciated and undervalued, leading to endless conflicts in the household.

II. Unequal resources between wives

In most cases, the husband provides financial support to all his wives, but it is often unable to distribute among them equally. Consequently, polygamy results in "unequal financial division and social privileges among wives" (Naseer, Farooq, & Malik, 2021). This unequal financial division creates a power imbalance among the wives, leading to conflicts and mistrust among them.

III. Interpersonal Issues for the father

The father is unable to fulfill his duties and responsibilities as a husband and father to each wife and child. Such issues can lead to distant relationships with each spouse and resentment from the children towards the father. In the long term, the father also regrets entering a polygamous relationship.



Image 4.3: iStock, n.d.

Overall, polygamy leads to adverse effects for spouses and interpersonal issues within families, such as jealousy and hostility among spouses. The male spouses often feel lonely and distant from their children and wives. Female spouses do not trust each other and often try to do what is best for their families only.

This overwhelming evidence suggests that polygamy causes harmful relationships between different members of the household. Therefore, it is essential to ban polygamy and enforce the law to protect individuals and families.

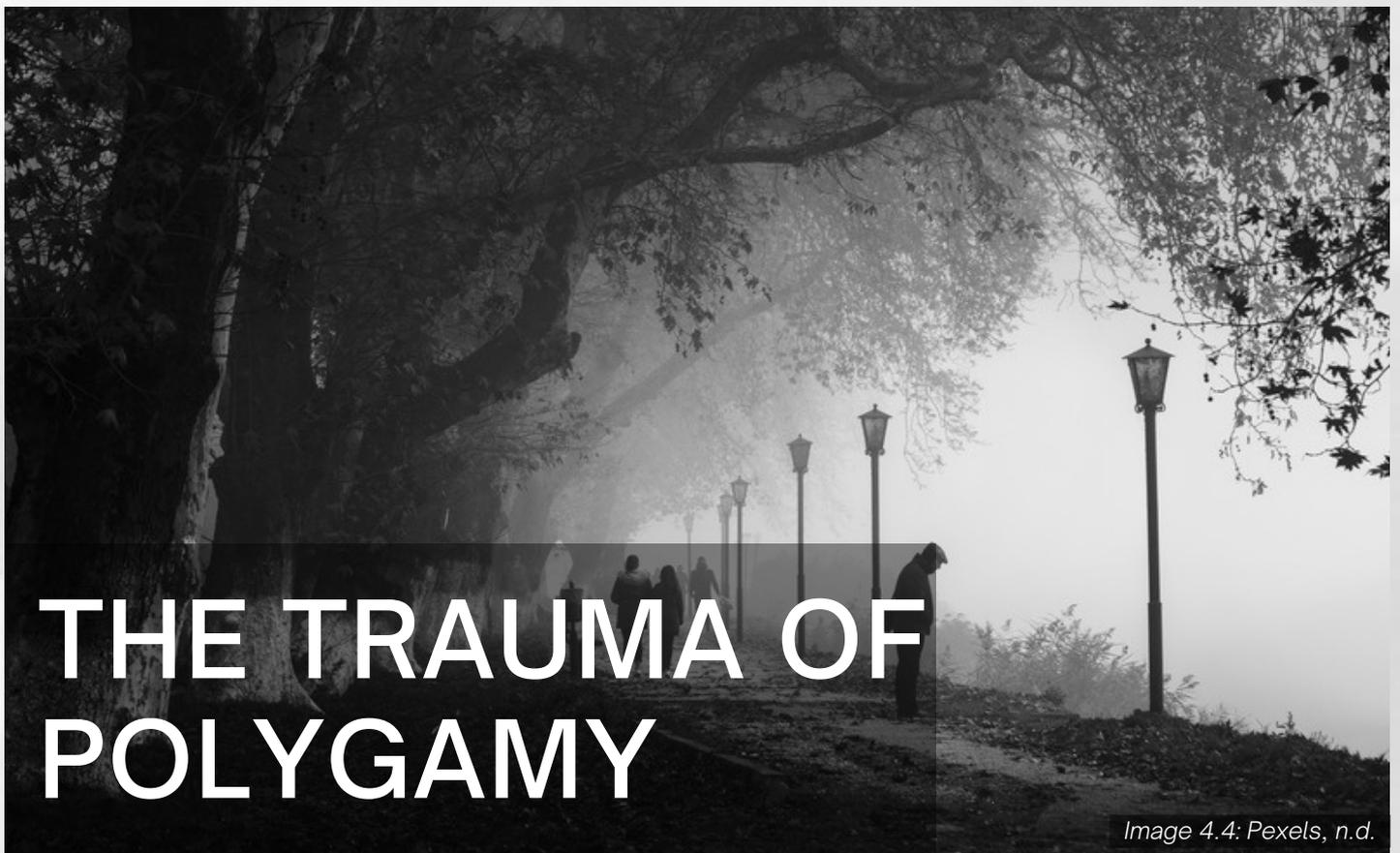


Image 4.4: Pexels, n.d.

Exploring the Multigenerational Impact on Children

Over the last few years, the research behind the impacts of polygamy focused on the impact on families, society, and gender equality. However, many forget that polygamy has detrimental impacts not only on the spouses but also on the children who have grown up in those households.

One significant social impact of polygamy on children is the feelings of mistrust and hate they experience. According to a study by Batool and Pervez (2016), children growing up in polygamous households often feel a sense of mistrust that affects their ability to form healthy and safe relationships in the future. Even if they choose monogamy in the future, they still find it challenging to trust their partner completely (Batool & Pervez, 2016). This difficulty in forming relationships leads to long-term emotional and social issues.

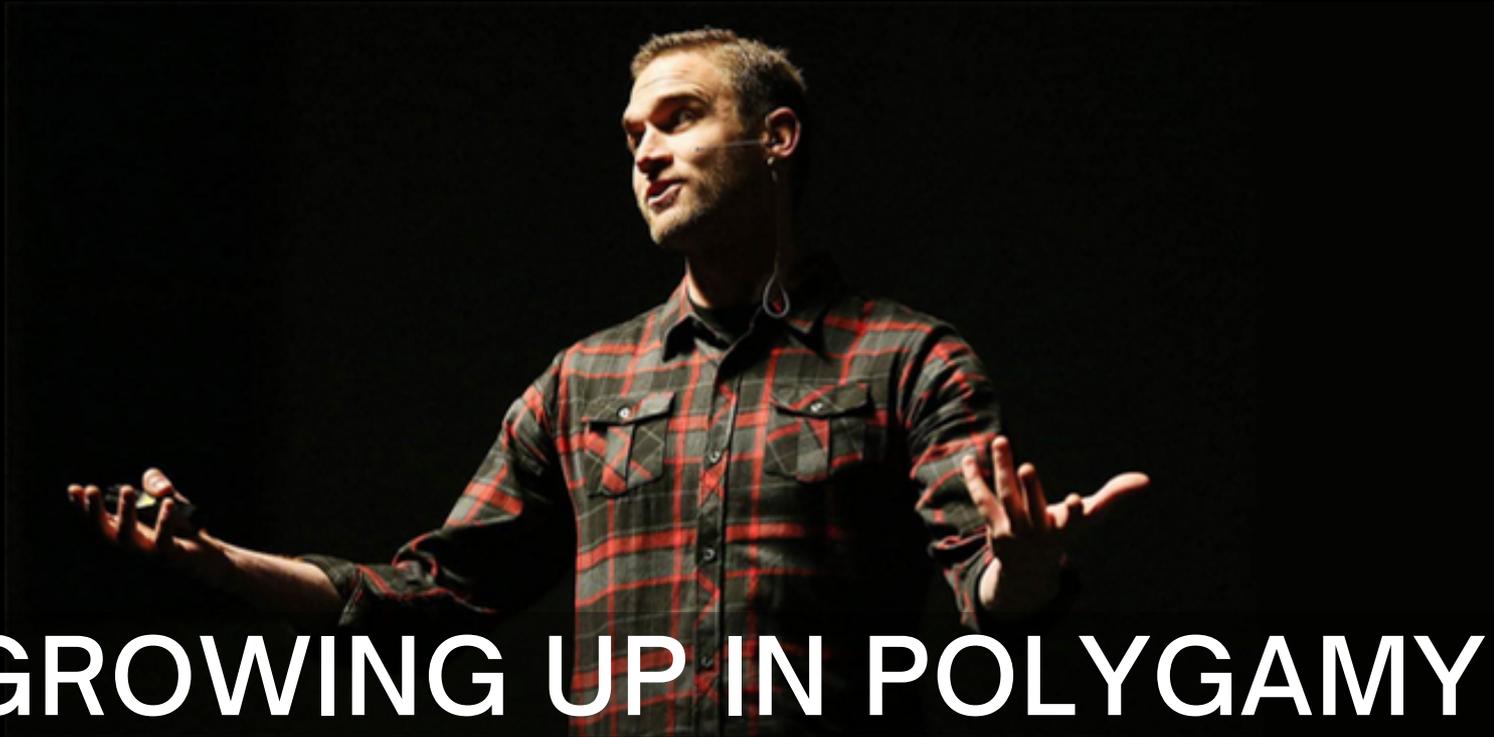
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Physically escaping from polygamy at the age of 13,
for me, was the easy part.

Mentally and emotionally escaping?

Far different story.

Allred, 2016



GROWING UP IN POLYGAMY

The Story of Lance Allred

In his TED Talk "[What is your Polygamy?](#)", Lance Allred described his life growing up in a polygamous household (Allred, 2016). He mentioned that his father had four wives and thirty-one children. Allred characterizes his childhood as one filled with neglect, abuse, and a constant struggle for attention and resources. He also speaks about how he was unable to connect emotionally with his family and how he eventually escaped his polygamous household to create a better life for himself.



Image 4.6: Allred, 2016

"But now I choose clarity. I choose to shine a light on the mental prison that is my polygamy."

"I choose to empower myself with the accountability of choice."

-Allred, 2016

Allred's experience highlights the detrimental impact that polygamy can have on children's lives. Growing up in a household where resources, attention, and affection are divided among multiple spouses and children can lead to feelings of neglect, mistrust, and emotional detachment. His story demonstrates how children in polygamous households receive less attention, time, and resources from their parents. The impact of polygamy on the children's financial stability, upbringing, and education can have long-term effects on their ability to thrive in adulthood.



Image 4.7: Pexels, n.d.

Understanding the Long Term Effects on Society

THE FAILURE OF PARENTS

As mentioned previously, children who grow up in polygamous households experience poor parenting and are unable to fulfill their educational requirements. When resources are limited, providing for multiple families can be difficult. Additionally, endless conflicts between parents make it impossible to give each child the attention and support they need. Consequently, poor parenting and lack of education can lead to early substance abuse and risky behaviors among these children (Naseer, Farooq, & Malik, 2021).



Image 4.8: TOI, 2022



Image 4.9: Silva, 2022

POLYGAMY AND SOCIETY

Conflicts among wives and fathers lead to many children being neglected. As a result, this can lead to problems such as substance abuse, crime, and other social issues (Elbedour, Onwuegbuzie, Caridine & Abu-Saad, 2002). Lack of education and proper parenting can have a ripple effect on society. In the long run, polygamy can affect the well-being of individuals and communities in society.

Can the Social effects of polygamy be ignored?

Overall, polygamy has significant negative effects on children, spouses, and society. Research demonstrates that polygamy leads to endless competition, unequal distribution of resources, and interpersonal issues within families. Additionally, polygamy's multigenerational impact on children can result in emotional detachment, mistrust, and difficulty forming healthy relationships in the future. These impacts have the potential to affect society. Therefore, it is essential to ban polygamy worldwide to protect families' rights. We cannot ignore the catastrophic effects of polygamy, and we must take a stance.

CHAPTER N.5

Ethics and Laws

By: Ananya Singhvi

Society & monogamy
Problems with Polygamy
Laws regarding Polygamy



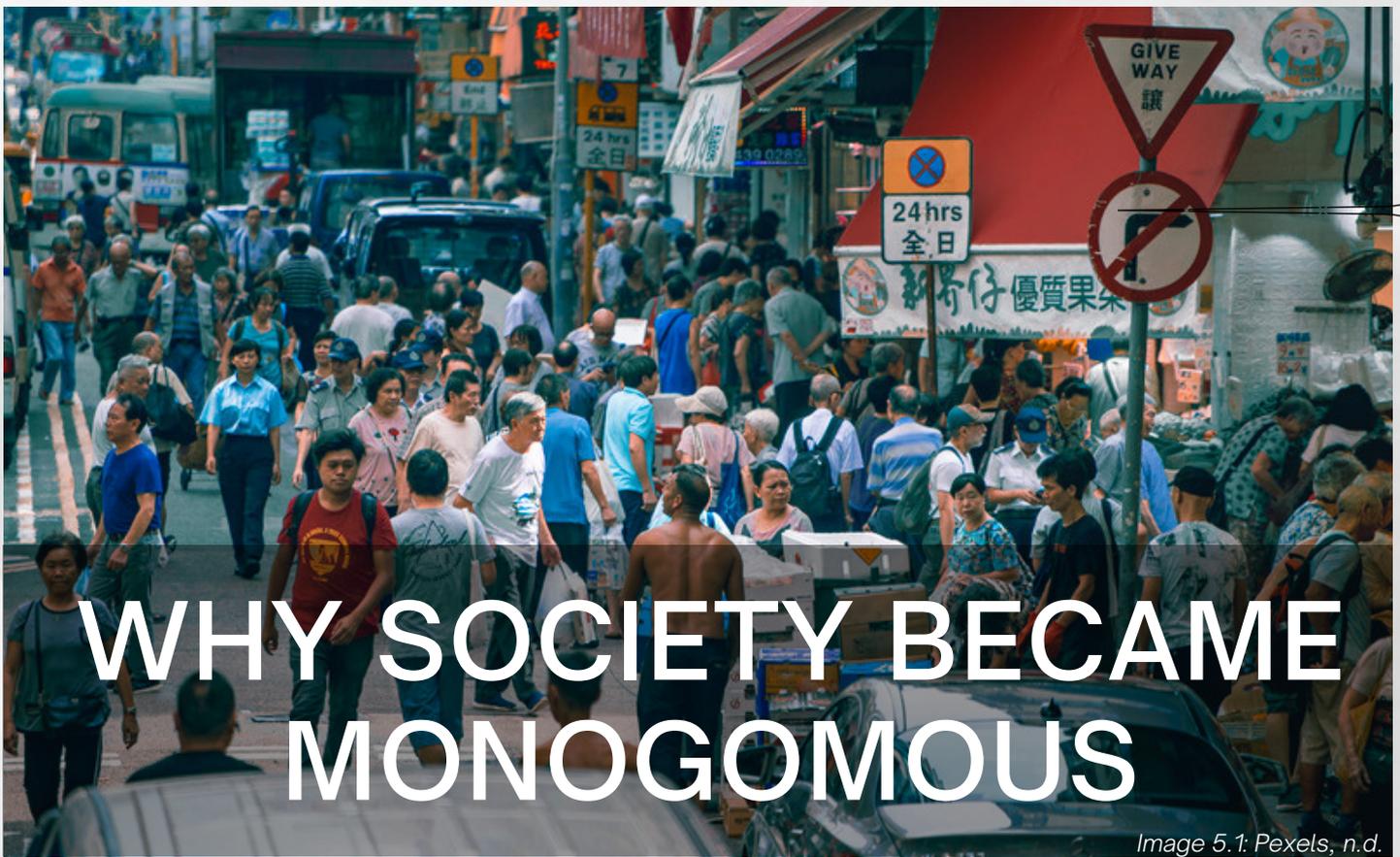


Image 5.1: Pexels, n.d.

Ethics can be defined as the moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or conduct of an activity (Oxford University Press, n.d.). It forms the foundation of our moral compass, guiding us in making decisions that are right or wrong, good or bad. Adherence to ethical principles helps us to be responsible individuals who contribute positively to society. Polygamy, the act of having multiple partners in a relationship (Oxford University Press, n.d.), has been a controversial topic for centuries. Ethics play a crucial role in guiding our behaviour, and we must consider the impact of polygamy on individuals, families, and society at large to determine if it is ethical.

IS POLYGAMY ETHICAL?

While most people see polygamy as a moral dilemma, libertarians, a type of philosopher, advocate it as a matter of personal freedom. Libertarians seek to maximize individual autonomy and political freedom while minimizing the state's encroachment on individual liberties. They oppose anti-polygamy laws, just as they do other non-victim "crimes." However, it is necessary to look beyond the natural desire for polygamy and examine its impact on the individuals involved, the family structure, and society as a whole, to determine whether it is ethical. (Gross P., 1973)

One essential quality that differentiates monogamy and polygamy is the exclusive intimacy granted to one's partner in monogamy. In contrast, a polygamist may have high moral standards in their choice of marital partners, but their love is not the exclusive property of anyone. A conflict of interests is, therefore, the necessary result of non-exclusive intimacy. If polygamy requires a sacrifice of the interests of even one of the partners, it must be considered immoral and unworthy. (Gross P., 1973)

In ideal polygamy no sacrifice would be required. Unfortunately, it only works for rational people in a rational society, it is difficult to apply in the real world. Few people are really free of insecurity or of the monogamous biases of their upbringing. Few real people have the rational selfishness not to make sacrifices for those they love and not to accept them. Few real people have the undeviating respect for their spouse's freedom of choice and freedom of action, which is absolutely necessary. Hence, proving polygamy may be inherently ethical but almost impossible in the real world. (Gross P., 1973)

PROBLEMS WITH POLYGAMOUS MARRIAGES

Marriage is a social construct influenced by various factors such as mating strategies, culture, and social norms. Archaeological evidence shows that 85% of societies were polygamous. However, the shift towards monogamy was largely driven by as research and evidence prove it reduced intra-sexual competition, crime rates, age gap, fertility, gender inequality, and increased GDP. (Henrich, J., Boyd, R., & Richerson, P. J.,2012)

Normative monogamy reduced crimes, as polygamy created an abundance of unmarried men who are more likely to commit crimes such as drugs and gambling. Polygamy reduced supply of unmarried women causing older men to go for younger and younger women, leading to a power imbalance in the household. Women in polygamous relationships were often subjugated, and young girls who refused to marry were sometimes physically abused. With monogamy, women's decision-making power increased as they were older and more educated. Monogamy increased GDP, as individuals spent more on production, save, and consume more rather than family and children. (Henrich, J., Boyd, R., & Richerson, P. J.,2012)



Image 5.2: The Telegraph, 2009

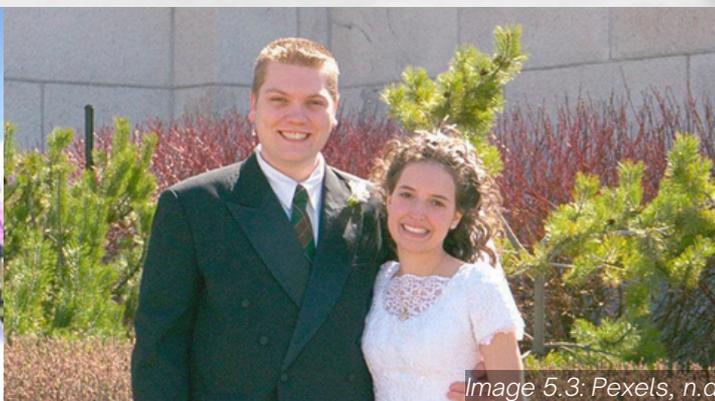


Image 5.3: Pexels, n.d.

IMPACT ON CHILDREN

The impact of polygamy on children is another area of concern. A study in the United States found that children from polygamous families were more likely to experience emotional problems, such as anxiety and depression, than those in monogamous families. Research also proved that monogamous husband spent more money on their children on average than polygamous. Moreover, children in polygamous families may face difficulties with inheritance, as the division of property can be complicated. Polygamy has been associated with various forms of abuse, including underage marriage, child abuse, and incest. While some researchers argue that polygamy can help divide household chores and child-rearing responsibilities, such marriages often engage in welfare fraud. (Henrich, J., Boyd, R., & Richerson, P. J.,2012)

LAWS OF POLYGAMY



Image 5.4: Observer, 2014

ASIA

Polygamous marriages are often associated with religious practices, particularly in Asia. In Islam, polygamy is permitted but is subject to certain conditions, men can have up to four wives who should be treated equally. Countries such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar allow polygamous marriage. However, other Muslim-majority countries, such as Turkey, have banned the practice or only allow it under Islamic law. In Asia, polygamy is also practiced in countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei, where it is legal but regulated. (Ali, 2021, p. 192)



Image 5.4: Britannica, n.d.

USA

Legal history surrounding polygamy has been a contentious issue in the United States. Although it is banned, polygamy is frequently associated with the Mormon Church, which has been known to engage in secret polygamous marriages in Arizona and Utah. They only allowed men to have multiple wives, leading to the subjugation of women. Young girls were coerced into marrying older men. (Rower, A., 2004)

EUROPE

In the legal history of England, polygamy was once punishable by death. (Frost, 2018, p. 77) The law viewed polygamous relationships as a criminal offense. In modern times, laws in Europe related to polygamy vary between countries. In some countries, such as France and Germany, polygamy is illegal, while in others, such as the Netherlands, it is not explicitly prohibited. However, even in countries where polygamy is not explicitly illegal, it may not be legally recognized. (Brouwer, 2017, p. 182)

SAME-SEX LAWS VS ANTI-POLYGAMY LAWS

In recent times, the debate over same-sex marriage has brought up questions about whether polygamy should be allowed. A famous example is “The Lawrence vs Texas” case raised legal questions about the status of polygamous relationships in the United States. The case argued that laws prohibiting consensual sodomy should be overturned, leading to the question of whether such laws could also be used to prohibit polygamous relationships. While the case did not directly address polygamy, it did raise questions about the legality of such relationships. (Rower, A., 2004)



Image 5.5: Daily Mail, 2016

In conclusion, the ethics of polygamy remain a subject of debate, and we must weigh personal freedom against moral responsibility. Our adherence to ethical principles helps us to be responsible individuals who contribute positively to society. Ultimately, we must consider the impact of polygamy on individuals, families, and society to determine its ethicality. The evidence suggests that monogamy is more beneficial and polygamy is detrimental to children and wives. Hence, most countries have enforced anti-polygamy laws to help society as whole.



Image 5.6: NBC News, 2008

End Notes



Overall, our examination of the historical and cultural contexts of Imperial and Modern China, as well as Africa, provides insight into the societal norms and values that have shaped the practice of polygamy. In China, the interdiction of polygamy has led to an improvement in women's legal rights and their ability to maintain their individual identities. Similarly, in Africa, we have seen how polygamy has been damaging cultural modernisation and social equality, from traditional marriage ideas and values, to child growth support and gender equality.

Furthermore, our exploration of the psychological and socioeconomic aspects of polygamy leads us to conclude that it should be banned worldwide. The negative impact on women, children, and men in polygamous relationships is far worse than any perceived benefits. While the ethics of polygamy remain a subject of debate, the evidence suggests that monogamy is a normative practice and is more beneficial for individuals, families, and society.

Overall, we have considered the impact of polygamy on all parties involved and we can conclude that polygamy should be banned worldwide. We hope this issue of the magazine has altered your perception of polygamy.

And Thank you for taking the time to read our magazine.

- From our editors

08



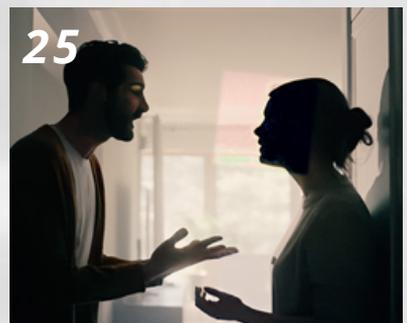
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THE SINS OF POLYGAMY

"POLYGAMY: AN
ENDEAVOUR TO GET
MORE OUT OF LIFE
THAN THERE IS IN IT."

ELBERT HUBBARD, AUTHOR

