

The Dialectics of Polygamy and Feminism: An Analysis of Mentoring Polygamy by Coach Hafidin and Musdah Mulia's Thoughts

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Abstract

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The practice of polygamy in Muslim life still attracts an intense debate regarding the way women are viewed. Although the teachings of Islam allow and have determined the rules for those who are polygamous, problems often arise when a Muslim man enters into a polygamous marriage. Polygamy is currently still a pro-con in society. In fact, a negative stigma is often given to the perpetrators. Polygamy is considered detrimental to women and only benefits men. In modern feminist discourse, there is a perspective that polygamy is an act that deprives women of their rights and freedom. This research focuses on Hafidin and Musdah Mulia's dialectic on polygamy. This research is a qualitative-descriptive research. The data sources used are several YouTube videos of Hafidin's polygamy coach class and Musdah Mulia's arguments. The data collection method used in this research is the listening method with note-taking technique. The data analysis method used in this research is descriptive comparison method, namely by describing the data findings contained in coach Hafidin's class and comparing them with Musdah Mulia's thoughts. The results of this study can be concluded that polygamy is not a simple problem, but rather a complex problem and requires a lot of consideration, including whether polygamy can have a positive or negative impact on the couple.

Keywords: *Dialectics, Polygamy, Thought.*

INTRODUCTION

In the complex discourse surrounding polygamy in Indonesia, a shocking revelation emerges as Coach Hafidin, known for his polygamous lifestyle, not only gains public attention but also conducts paid training sessions on polygamy. While Islam places a high priority on equality and justice (Fajar, M. Samson, 2014: 33–34). There are two opposing parties in society regarding polygamy, which makes it an intriguing topic of discussion. In Indonesia, the discussion about polygamy has never completely stopped. Each side, pro and

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con, also "boils down" the elements that support their respective claims. The Latin verbs polygamia (poly and gamia) (Morris, 1979: 1016) or a combination of the Greek words poly dan gamy (polus, many) (Rohman, 2013: 68) and gamos, married (Jones, 2006: 2), are the source of the term polygamy. A wide range of individuals, including common citizens, religious authorities, female activists, artists, and even public servants, have voiced their opinions over marriage. Some argue that polygamy is acceptable based on religious principles, while others object because they feel marginalized. This demonstrates how the debate over polygamy is no longer limited to religious settings and has evolved into a social issue that affects the entire society. Many oppose polygamy because they view it as unfair, unequal, and discriminatory against women (Fadri, 2017). Additionally, they view polygamy as a bad deed, with those who practice it frequently receiving unfavorable stigma. because it is believed that polygamy primarily benefits men and harms women. Religious leaders, sometimes referred to as kiai in Java, are responsible for a large number of polygamous behaviors in Indonesia.. Given the Qur'anic scriptures and the desire to abstain from adultery, polygamy appears to be a very simple practice in Indonesia. Similarly, the existence of the Indonesian Polygamy Club, which bases its adherent's actions on religious grounds, broadens the range of allusions to polygamy debates that result in aspects of advantages and disadvantages. The fact that polygamy is the Prophet's sunnah is the main factor contributing to its increased prevalence in society. Therefore, proponents of polygamy argue that banning it contradicts God's will and the Prophet's sunnah since it's something permitted by God. To them, opposing polygamy is to oppose Allah and His Messenger.

Islam places a heavy emphasis on the ideas of justice and equality in polygamy, which go beyond the idea that a husband should give younger wives more attention than other spouses. In actuality, it happens frequently after marriage when a male deserts his women and children from a prior union. Then, he will break up with his first wives and children. This will undoubtedly result in significant social issues within the community (Husain, T. Rahmin, et. al., 2019: 100–101) Another common argument regarding the overabundance of women is that should there be a higher proportion of women than men of marriageable age, then outlawing polygamy would be a betrayal of humanity and a violation of women's rights. In these situations, polygamy needs to be viewed as both a married man's and woman's obligation and as a "right" for single women. This implies that monogamy violates a person's

inherent rights. This is the pro-polygamy group's argument, and on the surface, it sounds plausible. However, the fact is that till now, especially in the territory of Indonesia, there are facts that shatter the argument, it is known that the results of the 2020 Population Census provided by the Central Statistics Agency reported that the population of Indonesia reached 270,203,917 people. There are more men than women in the world. This data indicates that men make up the majority of Indonesia's population, which is estimated to be 136.66 million, or 50.58 percent of the total. In the meantime, 133.54 million people, or 49.42 percent of the total population, are female (Direktoral Jendral Kependudukan dan Pencatatan Sipil, 2023). According to Al-Sharfi, Pfeffer, and Miller (12), although not everyone practices polygamy, several middle eastern, Asian, and African nations have legalized it.

The polygamy coach Hafidin engaged in is one case that has garnered a lot of media and public attention. In addition to his polygamous lifestyle, he arranges training sessions for polygamy at a cost. Hafidin is reported to have had four wives and twenty children. He was previously married six times, but he divorced each of them for the first time due to menopause, a cause that some people find offensive but others find valid. Feminists contend that polygamy is an injustice against women since it views women as nothing more than objects of passion for men. The patriarchy views women as cheap commodities that may be bought, sold, and traded. This paper aims to demonstrate how patriarchal culture influences the rise of polygamy in religious and social contexts, leading to various adverse effects. Additionally, it discusses feminist Muslim Musdah Mulia's views on polygamy

This research uses qualitative research methodology, specifically content analysis. The main data source for this research is a video from the Narasi Newsroom event entitled 'Revealing the Other Side of Paid Polygamy Mentoring' uploaded on YouTube on 16 November 2021. Content analysis involved a thorough examination of the video content, focusing on Coach Hafidin's polygamy mentoring activities, community reactions, and depictions of gender dynamics. Secondary data was collected through the analysis of relevant documents, including academic articles, books, and Musdah Mulia's statements or writings on polygamy. In addition, insights from social media platforms, podcasts, and websites that discuss polygamy in Indonesia were also considered to capture the wider societal discourse. The data collection method in this research uses the listening method with note-taking technique. While the data analysis method used in this research is descriptive analysis method

by comparing the views of coach Hafidin and Musdah mulia to identify the main themes and patterns related to polygamy, feminism, and gender equality.

By employing content analysis, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the polygamy debate in Indonesia and contribute to the ongoing discourse on the intersection of religious practices and feminist perspectives. This study seeks to understand the impact on society, how gender roles come into play, and how religious practices intersect with feminist perspectives regarding polygamy. We explore how polygamy is seen and how it affects how men and women interact. We also look at Musdah Mulia's opinions against polygamy and how it might impact women's rights and freedom in Indonesia. Moreover, we examine the role of influential people, like religious leaders such as Coach Hafidin, who support polygamy through mentoring for a fee. We seek to understand how their support influences what people think. Finally, we look into the role of digital media, especially platforms like YouTube, in shaping how people talk about polygamy and how it's shown in today's society.

DISCUSSION

Polygamy in Muslim-majority Countries

In Muslim-majority countries, polygamy exists in a relatively small set of legal frameworks that reflect the diversity of views on this multifaceted phenomenon. The permissibility of polygamy is remarkably tied to the intersection of religious traditions, legal systems, and social norms. In many Muslim-majority countries, including Indonesia, the legal status of polygamy can be divided into three broad categories (Anderson, 1976; Mahmood, 1987), (1) Prohibition, some countries like Turkey and Tunisia have chosen to ban polygamy altogether through their family laws. This position emphasizes the monogamous institution of marriage, consistent with a philosophy of law that seeks to overcome the potential social and familial complications associated with polygamous unions; (2) Provision of Conditions, other countries including Pakistan, Egypt, Morocco, Indonesia, and Malaysia take a middle ground by allowing polygamy but with slightly more stringent conditions. In these circumstances, permission from the court must be agreed upon by both spouses and ensured. This approach seeks to strike a balance between recognizing religious freedoms and creating protection against potentially abusive practices of polygamy; (3) Acceptance, in contrast, countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Qatar entertain polygamous marriages with fewer

restrictions. While such countries might also have felony frameworks acknowledging polygamy, the social and prison dynamics surrounding these unions can nonetheless vary extensively, influenced by using cultural, religious, and societal elements.

Taking Indonesia as a case study, the legal form of polygamy is described in the Marriage Law No. 1 of 1974. According to Article 3, the general principle is established that a man must have monogamy and a woman has only one husband. However, recognizing the potential complexity of individual cases, the court may allow the husband to marry polygamy, if all parties involved wish to do so (Ardhian dkk., 2015). The legal frameworks for polygamous marriages in Muslim countries remain dynamic, reflecting an evolving understanding of this complex and multifaceted phenomenon. As the discourse on polygamy unfolds, the mentoring sessions performed through figures like Coach Hafidin contribute to the evolving know-how of this complex and multifaceted phenomenon, highlighting the intersection of personal alternatives and felony frameworks within Muslim societies.

A Mentoring of Polygamy by Coach Hafidin

The research employed in this study is a qualitative method of content analysis. The primary data source is the video from the Narasi Newsroom show titled 'Revealing the Other Side of Paid Polygamy Mentoring,' which was uploaded on YouTube on November 16, 2021. The show extensively covers the life of a polygamous mentor named Kiai Hafidin, who actively engages in polygamous mentoring activities and has four wives. Polygamy is a sensitive topic, touching on religious beliefs and gender equality (Narasi Newsroom, 2021). The Narasi Newsroom's presentation, 'Revealing the Other Side of Paid Polygamy Mentoring,' sheds light on the negative aspects of polygamy. There exists a widespread misunderstanding within the Muslim community regarding the concept of polygamy in Islam. The form of polygamy advocated by Coach Hafidin, which appears to demean and subordinate women, coupled with the promotion of the husband's absolute power over his wife, is now targeting the middle class in Muslim society. With the advancement of technology, polygamy activists or mentors have become more confident in publicly revealing their existence through paid mentor classes. Polygamy, once a private matter, is now being presented for public consumption (Khafsoh, 2022: 20).

A consensus among many individuals and religious leaders supports the belief that polygamy is permissible, and this perspective is easily found on social media, in polygamous family discussions, podcasts, and with the emergence of polygamous mentors in Indonesia.

Those who advocate for the permissibility of polygamy actively strive to spread their viewpoint, using digital media such as websites, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and other platforms. Currently, there have been contestations among Muslims in interpreting various Islamic issues through social media (Anoraga & Sakai, 2023: 209–230). One notable example is the polygamy seminar conducted by Coach Hafidin (Syam & Haitomi, 2020: 67–84).

Hafidin S.Ag, commonly known as Coach Hafidin, is a polygamy coach who offers paid mentoring services. Born in Serang in 1970, he is currently 52 years old and has gained prominence for his role as a trainer and practitioner of polygamy. Coach Hafidin, formerly recognized as the founding Kyai of Ma'had Yashma Islamic Boarding School in Banten, has 6 wives, with 2 of them having been divorced due to menopause. He is also the father of 25 children, of which 20 are his biological offspring.

Coach Hafidin became well-known for promoting his expertise in polygamy and conducting paid online webinars on the subject, charging approximately 3-4 million for participation. He actively advertises these webinars through paid advertisements and has become a sought-after teacher for those interested in practicing polygamy. The discussion around paid polygamy mentoring classes gained renewed attention when the YouTube channel Narasi covered the practices of such mentoring. The Narasi team presented a show that generated varied public reactions, bringing forth new issues related to paid polygamy mentoring. In essence, Coach Hafidin's actions added to the negative perception of polygamy. The Narasi broadcast aimed to reveal another side of polygamous mentoring, and during the video, Coach Hafidin's narration surprised many, as it seemed to deviate from the values and goals of Islam that emphasize the dignity of women.

Various points promoted by Coach Hafidin were deemed in need of critical examination. *Firstly*, Coach Hafidin asserted that when he decided to marry, he did not seek permission from his wives beforehand. Instead, he informed them when it was time for the marriage contract, stating, "Does my wife, the head of the department, have to ask permission first? No, she just obeys." This statement indirectly appears to endorse violence against women and disregards women's rights, as it suggests that women's voices are merely dismissed. Such an attitude is not in line with Islamic teachings, which emphasize great respect for women. In Islam, a husband cannot ignore the voice and considerations of his wife, as marriage is a partnership where both spouses' happiness is interconnected.

Secondly, Coach Hafidin disclosed that he divorced one of his wives due to menopause. Public figure Prilly Latuconsina commented on this statement in the Narasi Newsroom YouTube channel's comments section, expressing concern about divorcing a woman solely because of menopause and implying that women are used only for reproductive purposes. This perspective tarnishes the dignity of women as human beings.

Thirdly, the issue of forced marriage was raised in the video, where Coach Hafidin's wife claimed that their marriage was arranged by their families. Some wives, on average, refuse to be second, third, or fourth wives. This is particularly concerning in the current context of Indonesia, where high divorce rates are often linked to mothers who are not emotionally and psychologically prepared for marriage.

Fourthly, Coach Hafidin advocated that polygamy does not require wealth. However, upon closer examination, it becomes apparent that the term "wealth" refers specifically to material possessions. This contradicts the principles of polygamy, where those engaging in it should be capable and willing to support multiple households, especially in meeting the financial needs of their wives. This applies not only to polygamous but also to monogamous households.

Fifthly, Coach Hafidin suggested that the sole reason for polygamy is sexual. He claimed that individuals seeking polygamous relationships often have a high libido and fear committing adultery, seeking his guidance for this reason. This statement has sparked controversy, with many criticizing the view that marriage is solely for fulfilling men's sexual desires.

Commissioner of Komnas Perempuan, Ms. Arianti, shared her perspective on paid polygamy mentoring, stating, "Polygamy should be a private matter and not campaigned or exaggerated. I am very saddened by the current situation where many people are advocating for polygamy, which will inevitably influence the perspectives of today's youth regarding marriage. Additionally, the notion that polygamy does not require economic stability indirectly contributes to men marrying women without ensuring financial stability, potentially leading to a high divorce rate in Indonesia" (Narasi Newsroom, 2021).

Muslim Feminist's View on Polygamy through the Case of Musdah Mulia

Prof. Dr. Siti Musdah Mulia, M.A. born on March 3, 1958, in Bone, South Sulawesi, is a prominent figure known for several groundbreaking achievements. She holds the distinction of being the first woman to attain a doctoral degree in Islamic political thought at

IAIN/UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta in 1997. Her dissertation focused on "The Islamic State: The Thought of Husain Haikal" (Narasi Newsroom, 2021). Musdah Mulia further solidified her pioneering role by becoming the first woman confirmed by UPI as a Research Professor in the field of Religious Lectorate at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in 1999. Her inaugural speech, titled "Portrait of Women in Religious Literature," emphasized the reconstruction of Islamic thought toward achieving an egalitarian and democratic society (Emma, Syifa Nayly, 2018: 38).

In addition to her academic accomplishments, Musdah Mulia, who is married to Prof. Dr. Ahmad Thib Raya, MA, a Postgraduate Lecturer at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, has received numerous national and international awards. Notable accolades include the Yap Thiam Hien Human Rights Award in 2008, the Plangi Tribute to Women from Antara News Agency in 2009, and the International Women of the Year 2009 award from the Italian Government. Recognitions for her advocacy for women's rights, such as the NABIL Award in 2012, highlight her persistent efforts in promoting diversity and nationhood. In 2013, she received an award from the Indonesian Association for Social Sciences for her influential contributions to the field. The Anand Ashram Foundation honored her with The Ambassador of Global Harmony 2014 award for her unwavering commitment to defending pluralism and the right to religious freedom in Indonesia (Emma, 2018: 38).

Jonas contends that the practice of polygamy undermines women's self-esteem and is in violation of human rights (Mulia, 2014: 129). The term "polygamy" originates from the Greek words "poly" or "polus," meaning many, and "gamos," meaning marriage. Linguistically, polygamy refers to many marriages, specifically when a husband has more than one wife. It can also be interpreted as a wife having more than one husband, known as polyandry. In Arabic grammar, polygamy is referred to as "ta'addud al-zawjat" (Akhwaludin, 2022: 255). The practice of marriage, according to Jonas, is solely directed at fulfilling biological interests and ensuring the continuity of offspring. There is an assumption that women are always ready to fulfill these interests; otherwise, it becomes an excuse for the husband to remarry another woman (Jonas, 2012: 142–149). Additionally, the viewpoint that men have a greater potential for sex than women, based on the assumption that women generally go through a menstrual phase every month, leads to the solution of marrying more than one woman (Syamsiatun & Qitbiyah, 2006: 56).

In Indonesia, the ease of practicing polygamy is often justified based on Qur'anic verses and as a preventive measure against adultery. This perspective dismisses reasons such as adultery and prostitution as far-fetched, considering them merely a means to legitimize polygamy by drawing false comparisons. This reasoning, criticized by Khofifah Indar Prawansana, who served as Minister of State for Women's Empowerment from 1999-2001, and the presence of the Polygamy Club in Indonesia contribute to diverse discussions on polygamy, weighing its benefits and harms (Papatungan & Kau, 2020: 123). Muslim feminists are among those who reject and oppose polygamy, categorically forbidding it. Pro-polygamy advocates often argue that polygamy has a clear theological foundation, citing Surah an-Nisa verse 3. However, critics, such as Musdah Mulia, view this argument as flawed and naive. They argue that basing the permissibility of polygamy on just one verse, or a fragment of a verse, disregards thousands of other verses emphasizing the importance of treating fellow humans, especially spouses, with kindness (Papatungan & Kau, 2020: 123).

According to Musdah Mulia, polygamy should be abolished, much like slavery was abolished. According to the text, there are at least 104 verses in the Qur'an addressing marriage. Relying on only one or even half a verse to understand polygamy is deemed nonsensical, given the plethora of other relevant verses that serve as legal sources (Papatungan & Kau, 2020: 128). The discussion of polygamy in the Qur'an is likened to the permissibility of having sexual intercourse with unmarried slave girls, as found in Surah al-Mu'minin verses 5-6. The suggested approach is to treat verses alluding to polygamy and those regarding unmarried slave women with the same attitude. Notably, the Qur'an doesn't explicitly prohibit slavery, including having sex with slave girls without marriage. The text questions why slavery is no longer practiced when the relevant verse is still present in the Qur'an. The answer proposed is that slavery is considered a crime against humanity, contradicting the true teachings of Islam that emphasize the noble and dignified nature of humans. The rejection of slavery is seen as a universal stance rooted in human values (Mulia, 2011: 199). Musdah Mulia poses a critical question about why slavery is prohibited despite the Qur'an containing verses allowing certain practices. The argument asserts that slavery goes against the spirit and essence of Islam, which values the nobility and dignity of all humans, regardless of their status. The rejection of slavery is framed as a reflection of human

values and rational thinking, aligning with the fundamental principles of Islam (Paputungan & Kau, 2020: 128).

In the context of polygamy, the text emphasizes that not only women but also husbands are expected to embody patience and faithfulness. Patience, considered a noble behavior that earns the love of Allah, should be exhibited by both parties in a marriage, not just by women. Therefore, husbands are urged to exercise patience and refrain from choosing polygamy to attain nobility and Allah's favor. Similarly, loyalty, regarded as a virtuous quality in Islam, is not solely the responsibility of women toward their husbands. Men are also obligated to be loyal and serve their wives.

The text argues that Islam instructs people to avoid excesses. Polygamy, a pre-existing tradition in pre-Islamic Jahiliyyah societies and various societies worldwide underwent significant reform with the advent of Islam. Before Islam, polygamy was practiced without specific limits on the number of wives. Islam introduced a radical correction to this entrenched tradition by limiting the maximum number of wives to four, with strict conditions attached. These conditions, such as the ability to treat each wife fairly, were considered challenging and could only be fulfilled by someone at the level of the Prophet (Mulia, 2013: 41).

The prevalent justification for polygamy in society often revolves around its designation as the sunnah of the Prophet. Supporters of polygamy argue that forbidding it denies a practice permitted by God, opposing divine decree. In their view, opposing polygamy is tantamount to opposing Allah and His Messenger, presenting what is criticized as shallow and unsubstantiated logic (Mulia, 2011: 191). The text suggests the need to rectify the public's misunderstanding of the term "sunnah." It emphasizes that the Prophet's sunnah encompasses his entire behavior, including decrees, speech, and actions across all aspects of his life as a Prophet and Messenger. However, in society, the Prophet's sunnah is often narrowly associated with polygamy, leading to a reduction in the broader meaning of the term. The most significant aspect of the Prophet's sunnah, according to the text, is his unwavering commitment to upholding justice and peace in society. Therefore, the argument follows that if Muslims truly aim to follow the Prophet's sunnah, they should prioritize and be more earnest in advocating for the establishment of justice and peace.

Researchers sought to ascertain whether Musdah justified polygamy in emergency situations, considering the principle in Islamic jurisprudence that permits the forbidden under emergency conditions. Musdah's response to this inquiry is outlined as follows. Musdah asserts that not everything classified as forbidden necessarily has an emergency condition attached to it. She draws a distinction, using the example of consuming carrion or other prohibited substances. In cases where not consuming such things would lead to death, Islam, as a religion valuing life rights, allows for their consumption, albeit limited to sustaining life. Once the immediate threat to life is averted, individuals are obligated to seek lawful means to continue their lives. Musdah points out that, in contrast, she has not identified any emergency reasons for polygamy. She questions whether anyone would face imminent death if they did not engage in polygamous relationships. She emphasizes that justice should be the cornerstone in evaluating the permissibility of polygamy. According to her perspective, justice in polygamous relationships should be defined by the woman or wife involved, not dictated by the husband, as has traditionally been the case in society (Rifa'i, 2018: 91).

Coach Hafidin and Musdah Mulia's Views on Polygamy

The differing views of Coach Hafidin and Musdah Mulia on polygamy reflect the broader debate in Indonesia on the issue, which includes religious, legal and gender perspectives. The following is an explanation of the differing views of the two figures.

As a motivator and preacher, Coach Hafidin often discusses polygamy from an Islamic perspective. He is generally in favour of polygamy, arguing that polygamy is a legitimate part of Islamic teachings if practised in accordance with the stipulated conditions. Coach Hafidin's views on polygamy usually include; (1) Legality in Islam: Emphasising that polygamy is allowed in Islam and is a sunnah practised by Prophet Muhammad; (2) Justice: Mentioning that although justice between wives is difficult to achieve, it does not mean it is impossible, and men who are able to fulfil the conditions are allowed to be polygamous. Social Advantage: Sometimes claiming that polygamy could be a solution to certain social problems, such as women outnumbering men; (3) Social Advantage: It is sometimes claimed that polygamy can be a solution to certain social problems, such as women outnumbering men (Sari, 2022: 123–128).

Coach Hafidin's opinion differs from Musdah Mulia's, who says that polygamy often harms women and children. Some of Musdah Mulia's main views on polygamy are (1) Gender Injustice, in which Musdah argues that polygamy reflects gender injustice and worsens the position of women in the family and society; (2) Contextual Interpretation: Argues that the Qur'anic verses used to justify polygamy must be understood in their historical context and that the primary goal of Islam is monogamy; (3) Psychological and Social Impact: Highlights the various negative impacts of polygamy on the psychological and social well-being of women and children, including emotional and economic instability. (Rifa'i, 2018).

Polygamy can have a significant impact on the psychological and social aspects of the individuals involved, especially women and children. This can be seen in the reduced interaction with children (Putra, 2023). Communication with children is important in the growth and development of children (Al-Krenawi & Slonim-Nevo, 2008). In addition, there is also a concern that there is no justice for women. There is also concern that there is a lack of justice for women. Islam teaches its followers to honour women (Jayana & Susanto, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The discussion surrounding polygamy encapsulates broader themes of justice, equality, and peace. Analyzed through various perspectives, it reflects a nuanced and multifaceted discourse. While rooted in religious and cultural contexts, certain practices associated with polygamy raise concerns about potential harm to women and violations of their rights. The case of Trainer Hafidin serves as an illustration, shedding light on principles that perpetuate inequality and could undermine women's well-being. Influenced by Western education, Musdah Mulia provides a critical analysis of polygamous marriage, viewing it as a legal arrangement that may cause emotional harm to women.

Her position challenges traditional understandings of polygamous marriage and emphasizes the need for tolerance and fidelity for both men and women. In addition, she advocates the abolition of polygamous marriage, drawing parallels with the abolition of slavery in history. Musdah emphasizes the importance of upholding justice and peace as fundamental principles of Islam. The broader discourse underscores the significance of considering the realities of life and the impact that polygamy can have on individuals, particularly women. However, both also emphasize that polygamy must be based on justice and equality for women. The complexity of the issue necessitates further research into

religious texts and their contextual relevance to better understand the significance of polygamous marriage in contemporary Muslim society.

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