

Original marriage polygamy

[Family](#), [Marriage](#)



Once referred to as the “ original marriage” Polygamy is now an alternative lifestyle lived by many, but is it right? There are multiple countries around the world that believe that this is in fact an applicable way of living. The Origins of polygamy are extremely vast and are practiced all over the world. However, in the United States it is illegal, yet there are many knowing individuals who still partake in this style of living. It is reported that “ there are 40, 000 people living in polygamous families or communities across the Western region of the U. S” (Scharnberg & Brachear, 2006). Should these people be prosecuted? Or are we as Americans pre judging a lifestyle that we know nothing about? In this paper, I will discuss what polygamy is, the controversies surrounding polygamy in the United States, and how polygamy emerged and extended through various cultures and religions globally. In addition, I will further explain if it is still practiced, and if so, is it accepted and acknowledged by their creed. Polygamy consists of three forms; they are polygyny, polyandry, and group marriage. Polygyny is the practice of having more than one wife at the same time. This was the original name for polygamy during the nineteenth century, it later became known as polygamy. The second form is polyandry which is the act of having many husbands at more than one time. Of the three, this practice is rare; it was traditionally practiced among Tibetans in Nepal and parts of China. The final form is group marriage (also referred to as circle marriage) this is the act of multiple women and men forming a single family. All members of the marriage share parental duties of any children they may have or will be created within their circle. Many practitioners feel that they are misunderstood and misjudged and feel that a monogamous relationship is ultimately impossible to maintain

and that polygamy is a culture that is honest and upfront with each other. Amy Kaufman believes that “ The most prevalent objection to polygamy is that it demeans women”. (Kaufman, 2005) It is also argued to be another form of slavery where children are at risk every day because in many cases they are conditioned to embrace a life of servitude. In any event, Polygamy still exists and is practiced around the world. All though there aren’t many cases surrounding polygamy it is a severely controversial topic. In the United States it is difficult to prove that polygamy is of existence. Even though polygamy is considered a crime, Individuals are rarely charged because it is extremely difficult to encourage polygamist or ex polygamist to come forth. Many of them are scared of being barred from their community or even prosecuted for admitting that they’ve partaken in polygamy. Unfortunately, without any choices of their own, children are born in to polygamy and the mental damaged is already done. They see nothing wrong with underage marriage, pregnancy and incest. There are several controversies surrounding this topic one of which is organized under aged marriages. In the case of the State of Utah vs. Holm’s Suzie Stubbs was married to her husband Rodney H. Holm in 1986. Holms a member of the fundamentalist church of Jesus Christ of latter day saints participated in a marriage ceremony (while still married to his first wife) with 16-year old Ruth Stubbs. Ruth claimed that she was forced into marrying her sister’s husband. Suzie Stubbs was later arrested; all though she wasn’t charged for polygamy she was charged with abetting bigamy and illegal sex. One of the largest custody cases in the United States history was the Texas polygamist custody case. It initiated with a 16-year old girl repeatedly calling an abuse hotline, claiming to be beaten and forced to

become a “ spiritual wife” to an adult man. Acting on her calls Texas Child welfare services removed all 439 (ranging in ages from infants to teenagers, and teenage mothers) children from the Yearning for Zion Ranch. The children were placed in foster care until the state Supreme Court ruled. It was later detected that the phone calls were fake. The children were later returned to the ranch. Arguably one of the most controversial polygamy cases in the United States was Warren Jeff’s. Warren Jeff was the president of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of latter day saints (FLDS) from 2002- 2007. Separating themselves from mainstream Mormonism, the FLDS group decided to continue monogamy since Utah denounced Polygamy in 1890. They began building residential structures in El Dorado, Texas, Colorado City and Arizona. In may 2006 Jeff was placed on the FBI’s ten most wanted list for unlawful flight to avoid prosecution on Utah state charges for his arrangement of illegal marriages between adult males and underage girls. He was arrested in August 2006 in Nevada. In May and in July 2007 he was charged by the state of Arizona with eight counts including sexual conduct with minors and incest. On November 20, 2007 he was sentenced to imprisonment for 10 years to life at the Utah state prison. It is estimated that over three billion people around the world still believe in polygamy. And it is civilly recognized in almost fifty countries. Polygamy has been found in more places and more times in history than any other form of marriage.

Historically marriage original purpose was purely for economic and political gain. Love and monogamy was later associated with marriage. In many cultures love is disregarded as brainless and foolish. In Judaism, Hebrew Scriptures document approximately forty polygamists. Polygamy was

considered a realistic, alternative in case of female infertility, famine, and/or widowhood. In Leviticus 18: 18 it states “ you shall not marry a woman in addition to her sister as a rival while she is alive, to uncover her nakedness. ” (Fox, 2000) In this phrase the Hebrew term for “ a woman in addition to her sister” is interpreted by the Jews as co- wives and not necessarily blood relatives. Thus, in modern day polygamy is not heavily practiced, but there is still a small following of the culture. In Islam, polygamy is allowed only for men. However, it is only under the agreement of having up to four wives at the same time. Based on Muslim law, men choosing this route must treat their spouses as fairly as possible. “ A man must spend absolutely the same amount of time with each of his wives; besides treating each wife equally financially and legally, a man must not have the slightest preference for one but must esteem and love them all equally”. (Armstrong, 2003) They each live separate lives of their own, in their own houses, and cities of choice. In certain countries such as Egypt and Libya it is required that a written permission from the first wife (allowing the husband to marry any future wives) must be submitted before they can accept their “ plural marriage”. Unlike Islamic belief, In Africa women are not given the authority to decide whether they’re husbands can have multiple wives. In Africa, polygamy is used to show a man’s wealth and it is also utilized to display a man’s virility and need for sexual satisfaction. Men can also accumulate wives as a result through inheritance. In the unfortunate event of a husband’s passing his brother would take over his household which includes his wife. In instances where there are multiple wives, they would be distributed among the remaining brothers. There is a lot of resentment between the wives. With

hopes to eliminate one another many of the wives performed witch craft on each other. The children are put against each other, and in some severe cases, are encouraged to kill their father with the hopes of inheriting his wealth and status. In ancient India, Polygamy was mainly among warrior's castes and rich merchants, while the sages and seers were strictly monogamous or completely celibate. Although it was never a popular practice in ancient India, It was accepted for the procreation and continuation of family lineage. Polygamy in ancient India was considered a matter of personal choice. Several Hindu gods were often depicted as polygamous. It was noted that lord Krishna had 16, 108 wives. It was tradition that the women in Hinduism never be left alone with males. Similar to African polygamy, in the event of her husband's death she must marry her husband's brother. The Hindu law books later made provisions on polygamy. Present day Hindus consider both polygamy and polyandry archaic and inadequate and no longer practice the belief. In conclusion, whether your views on polygamy are positive or negative, it appears to be a lifestyle that will always exist. Polygamy is a culture that is practiced globally. Initially the reasoning was solely for procreation. It has later become a religious tenet, and a matter of choice. It is arguably compared and associated with gay and lesbian marriage rights. Many polygamists feel that they are being stripped from their right to live freely. However if " living freely" involves sexual assaulting minors, and secluding their young from civilization, then maybe polygamy should stay illegal in the United States.