

# Polygamy

Literature



Polygamy quite simply means " many marriages" (Robinson, 2008, Introduction). When one thinks of polygamy, one conjures the images of a sexual orgy involving one man, many women, or many men and one women, or combinations or permutations, thereof. The very definition of polygamy, however, belies this notion, as polygamy is not group marriage, nor polyamory having multiple sexual relationships. There are two categories of polygamy, polyandry or having multiple husbands and polygyny or having many wives (Robinson, 2008, Introduction).

Ahmad Sheriff explains further that polygamy is not practiced to fulfill sexual urges, but to stop promiscuity and stem the degeneration of society. It keeps both men and women happy while keeping society safe (Sheriff, undated, foreword). This paper will delve into why polygamy should be considered to be natural.

\* \* \* Polygamy or more appropriately, polyandry, has existed and practiced even by current and civilized people. There is considerable literature that suggests that man is by nature polygamous.

Will Durant writes that man, by nature, is polygamous and cannot be satisfied by one woman due to his incurable taste for variety. In fact, Durant adds that only the extra vigilance of the wife and strongest moral limitations can make man monogamous. Robert Kinsey have reported that Americans, both men and women, are the most unfaithful people worldwide. Kinsey also recounts biological proof that man is polygamous while women are monogamous: women only produces one egg cell while men produces millions (Woman and her Rights, undated, p. ).

With man being polygamous by nature, it will be unnatural to force him to be monogamous. It is like making a dog hate bones, or a cat hate licking its paws. At some point, the cat will lick its paws and the dog will try to find bones, play with it, eat it and bury it. The same is true with men, at one point of his married life, he will seek another's companionship. With the prevailing notions of monogamy, it will be wrong, it will be a sin to do what comes to him naturally.

Also, because American society has frowned upon polygamy, making it illegal in every state (even though it is not strongly nor widely enforced) the polygamous man will do more damage to his family, loved ones and society in general by turning to women who are available and convenient, which are more likely to be prostitutes, rather than entering into another fruitful relationship with another wife. More than the polygamous nature of men, depicting polygamy as unnatural also goes against culture, laws and religion.

Culture, laws, and religion are a vital part of our daily lives, and these dictate the norms and values that we hold true. If polygamy is unnatural as its critics say, it should stick out like a sore thumb when one discusses it along with these three. But, in reality, polygamy is a strong feature in all three. Jonathan Turley, writing for USA Today, states that while individuals have a recognized right to participate in whatever form of consensual sex with one or more partners, and even have children with one or more partners. This constitutional privilege, however, is encumbered when one gets married.

The sad reality is, in the United States, it's hypocritical to keep polygamy illegal, while seeing most everybody marrying one partner, divorcing, and marrying again, sometimes in rapid succession (Turley, 2004, para. 3-4). And <https://assignbuster.com/polygamy/>

while the Catholic church has been seen as the staunchest opponent of polygamy, its Bible has given the opposite teachings. The fact of the matter is, the Old Testament has some guidelines on how to divide property in a polygamous marriage, and was peppered with polygamists in the persons of David, Jacob, Solomon and Abraham, all viewed to be men of God. Especially Solomon, who had 700 wives.

Other religions, most notably, Islam advocates polyandry, or allows a husband to have many wives. Polygamy is also currently practiced among Israeli, Mediterranean and Yemeni Jews. Polygamy is present in 78% of the world. While illegal, there is an estimated 50, 000 polygamists in the U. S. (Turley, 2004, paras 4-7). Polygamy, as can be seen, is an essential component in religion, and an integral part of the way of life of a majority of the world's people. If one terms polygamy as unnatural, does it mean that 78% of the world's 7 billion people are living an unnatural life, or at least believing in unnatural concepts?

Most arguments against polygamy is rooted in morality and the welfare of children living in a polygamous household. Earlier this year, with all the media circus surrounding the removal of 440 children from a ranch in El Dorado, many news stories bannered the words polygamist, sect, sexual abuse in the headlines. A report from the New York Times, however, clarifies that the accusations are of sexual abuse and neglect involving under-age marriages (Kovach, 2008, para. 3). More than the term " polygamist," news sources should have carried " statutory rape" and " pedophiles" in its news stories.

The confusion, however, has painted a bad image for polygamists and their families in the mainstream psyche. As Americans, we grew up in homes that had a father, a mother, brothers, and sisters. But even that core concept of family is changing. Whether it's a single parent household, or sharing your home with relatives, the patterns of family that we know is changing. America has long allowed divorces, giving rise to half- and step-relationships. For some, they have grown up with three different dads, or four different moms, at different points of their lives.

The sad fact is, most children in these kinds of families grow up with one of their parents not around. Polygamy, on the other hand, allows for both parents to be around for the child in a kind of extended family not joined by blood but by marriage, while still ensuring that both parents are happy. This set up works best for everyone involved. How anybody could term an extended family, or being with your parents, unnatural is beyond me. What is more immoral and damaging? Two adults in an open and consensual relationship, even when married to another? Or two adults trying hard not to kill each other while making the other more miserable?

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The question of what is natural or unnatural is a difficult thing to answer, as we are all dictated by what our religion, morals, culture says. We all have our own separate norms, ideals of what is right and wrong. However, as has been seen, polygamy is a way of life for more than two-thirds of the world's people, and it's an idea that is subscribed to by the world's major religions. Polygamy is natural for men and women alike.

If one discounts the argument of joining the bandwagon, so to speak, maybe one can be persuaded by the contradictions that the arguments against polygamy raises. Legally speaking, the prohibition on polygamy has run contrary to the basic laws that protect our rights to choose our mates, the liberty to live our lives as we see it fit, and to practice our religion, and promote our own individual cultures. It has also come to a point that when we argue against polygamy, we end up arguing against prevalent events in everyday life: morality, divorce, happiness.