

## THE ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTION OF WOMEN IN NIQAB AGAINST POLYGAMY PRACTICE

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### ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of veiled women in Indonesia has significant development. The use of the niqab is a symbol of the rise of Islam in the post-modern era. A niqab is also an anti-thesis of modern lifestyles that tend to be hedonistic and completely open. This research focuses explicitly on ethnographers working models using the phenomenology paradigm. This research explores women who cover their faces, why they are more accepting of polygamy. The author found reasons for men to do polygamy and why women in Indonesia reject polygamy practices. The results found that women wear the niqab because, first, as orders from their husbands, second because of inner awareness caused by their understanding of religious education. The practice of women in niqab becomes a kind of artifact of the loyalty of a woman and is directly proportional to the issue of polygamy. The modes used as the legitimacy of men for polygamy, among others, are secret marriage, falsification of self-identity, second marriage without the first wife's consent, coercion of the granting of permission, and consent of the first wife by the husband with various forms of violence and intimidating force.

**Keywords:** *Polygamy, women in niqab, legitimacy, perception analysis, Indonesia*

### INTRODUCTION

Postmodern philosopher Jean Baudrillard states that the world's fever of globalization has implications for value shifts. The disappearance of normative boundaries marked this era, so that taboo or sacred also faded. All problems and information are no longer secrets to the public. The socio-religious issues that belong to the taboo and sacred areas have a gradual degradation currently. Humans are a symbol of statistical figures presented and explained without feelings and conscience. The human soul becomes meaningless in such a way as a mechanical robot that is subject (deterministic) to market forces, industrial machinery, and bureaucratic mechanisms (Sahide et al., 2019).

Religion, from a normative point of view, always teaches harmony, affection, and harmony among fellow religious communities, internally and externally. Internally manifested in harmony and tolerance among fellow adherents and externally, there is a harmonious relationship between followers of other religions. Steenbrink implies that religion is a "wishful-thinking" even though the belief in the truth is considered zero . However, it is still positive, which can help frustration and yet have the potential to realize social unity. In the Durkheim language, that "religion as a societal glue" (Steenbrink, 1998). The function of religion as an adhesive can maintain integration, integrity, and social order so that conflict, riots, and mass violence are unavoidable. Religion can be a spiritual, ethical foundation for human life in the modern world, as Daniel Bell said that religion is required to provide mathematical and practical answers clearly cannot (Engler & Miller, 2006). Still, religion has responsiveness morally on recent problems today.

Intrinsic religion is a way of making religion a comprehensive commitment and driving integrative, which governs all human life. In religion, there are several dimensions of diversity, one of which is the experience dimension or religious experience (Tratner et al., 2020). Religion becomes an integrating factor, a unifying factor, which can establish harmony in the life of religious, national, and state communities and becomes a spirit for the struggle to break the brotherhood, unity, and national unity. In reality, the history of society is multi-complex, religious-pluralism, various religions (Chan, 2018; Felix, Hinsch, Rauschnabel, & Schlegelmilch, 2018). The diversity of religions is a reality because inevitably, we have to adjust to recognize religious-pluralism in the Indonesian community. Thomas Merton, in *Mysticism in the Nuclear Age*, argues that one cannot bring peace without virtue deeds and the inevitability of the harmony of social order with the existence of mystics, saints, and prophets.

Merton's opinion above shows that in religion, demanding - the presence of - behavior following the values of his religious teachings. Religion cannot exist without being, morality, and godliness because religion and deeds are a unified whole, interrelated in human's life. Religion means the combination of harmony between faith and human behavior that is intact in all aspects of life that is free conscious actuality (Fromm, 1972). In other words, religious activities not only occur when someone performs ritualistic behavior but also when doing other activities driven by supernatural powers (Ancok &

Nashori, 2000). It is not only relating to visible activities but also activities that are not visible and occur in one's heart.

One of the symptoms or social phenomena that arise in Indonesia is the difference in appearance seen in a Muslim woman. The difference in the dress with Muslim women, in general, gives a new perception to the group of individuals. The difference in appearance is the use of the veil or hijab on Muslim women. The headscarf or hijab called niqab in Arabic has the meaning of women's clothes covering their faces. Hijab is one of the characteristics of Muslim women's clothing from the Middle East. The use of the niqab (Yeste, Zeguari, Álvarez, & Folch, 2020) for Middle Eastern women or better known as the Arabs or Egyptians is due to various reasons such as to protect her face from exposure to the heat and avoid dust even to defend themselves from people with bad intentions. Some scholars in Indonesia consider that hijab is mandatory for every Muslim woman, and some others do not.

Society considers that women in niqab as an exclusive group of people and are not too interested in new technologies like social media. Their exclusivity to the outside world usually makes others assume that they are not easy to communicate with and socialize in the community. For some Muslims, wearing a niqab is a logical consequence of a more intense learning process about the nature of Ratri's women (Ratri, 2011). However, it depends on each other's beliefs. The problem is that niqab is often associated with the attributes of fanatical, fundamental, and extreme Islamic organizations. Devotional behavior performed by individuals in a religious group becomes a ritual of intimacy that serves to strengthen one another among the group members (van Prooijen & Kuijper, 2020), and has made distancing with other groups around them.

The phenomenon of women in niqab in Indonesia experiences significant development seen from reality in a society where there are currently many women who wear it. Niqab becomes a symbol of the rise of Islam in the pre-modern era (Aryanti, 2015). Besides, it also becomes an antithesis to a lifestyle that tends to be hedonism and completely open. Women with a niqab are the transformation of the development, experiencing a turning point in the early 80s. Niqab, aside from being a form of protest from women, is also a legitimacy instrument from people who claim the niqab as a symbol of restraint to women. The issue of women in niqab is increasingly interesting when connected with the issue of polygamy. If the niqab becomes a kind of a woman's religious artifacts, it might be directly proportional to the problem of polygamy. Thus,

this study seeks to find reasons why some women in Indonesia choose to wear niqab and see how their perceptions of polygamy practice.

## **METHODS**

This research is a qualitative research that explores qualitative data from respondents, namely veiled women who live in Ngawi. The data collection on the veiled women was carried out by visiting their communities, especially at the study sites and their respective homes. Sampling was done by selecting women who had worn the veil and had husbands. Research data in the form of language, action, experience and history. Language data in the form of expressions or conversations of veiled women. In the study of meaning, language is the main data, because language is the primary evidence for cultural categories or representations which are sometimes referred to as native terms, or original concepts (Shiraishi, 1997). Sayings and expressions of veiled women are also included in the language category. The choice of words and sentences spoken is a reflection of the veiled women's thoughts on the status and value of understanding the Islamic religion they believe in.

Action data are all behaviors that are considered important and meaningful by researchers carried out by veiled women during their daily activities. Experience data relates to the experience of those involved in the procession of wearing the veil. The historical data referred to here, apart from being in the form of documents, also includes oral history that has been passed down from generation to generation in the community. This may be obtained if the oral history tradition does exist and develops in the community. The historical data is useful to see the historical background of the development of veiled women in Ngawi Regency.

Data was collected by means of in-depth interviews. The problem that will be studied in depth is related to their perspective on polygamy. In addition, data triangulation is also used to strengthen existing data. analysis with interpretive analysis method, namely data obtained from informants will be classified according to what they say. Furthermore, the data were analyzed interpretively.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### **Niqab: Religious Entities in Indonesia**

The niqab is clothes to cover the face, at least to cover the nose and mouth. In Arabic, it is an-Niqab to cover the entire face of a woman, except the two eyes or something that looks around the eyes (Garcia Yeste, El Miri Zeguari, Álvarez, & Morlà Folch, 2020). An-Niqab is also known as al Barqa 'or al-Qina, which means cloth that covers the entire face of a Muslim woman, except for her two eyes. Other terms for the face-covering other than An Niqab are Al Qina, and Al Barqa 'or Al Burqu. Muslims outside Arab recognize niqab from one interpretation of the verses of al-Quran in Surah An-Nur letter, and Al-Ahzab described by some of the Companions of the Prophet. Thus, the discussion of the niqab in Islam belongs in one analysis of Islamic disciplines, including fiqh and social. Quraish Shihab reveals that covering the body, including wearing a niqab, is not the monopoly of Arab, and it is also their culture. Niqab in Islam is an advanced version of the use of the hijab. Muslim women add a face covering so that people can only see their eyes; even they have to cover their palms too. Wearing a hijab also requires long clothes. A niqab is followed by wearing the robe, long and wide skirts, and usually, all accessories are black or dark colors.

The lexical meaning of niqab is "cover," in the sense of "covering" or "hiding," or "disguising." In Arabic, there is no exact word. The Encyclopedia of Islam mentions hundreds of terms to denote parts of clothing, mostly used for the equivalent of many terms mentioned. They include "who am I?" who we are, who we are in relationship to others, how identity is formed and maintained, how we negotiate within varying contexts, and how our identities can lead to struggle, resistance, and solidarity—self group, veil, voile veil, veiling, abaya, burqu, burnus, disydasya (Glapka, 2018). Aristocratic women have worn niqab in Persian means tents in public places since the Hakhamanesh Rudianto dynasty, then followed by some royal traditions under the kingdom of Persia in 500 BC.

The development of headscarves in Indonesia began in the early 1980s, and soon after, they became known in this country. Two factors support the emergence of headscarves, which later became a trend in local schools and campuses (Daud, 2013). First, external factors or the international situation at that time helped influence it. Among those that were quite dominant were the influences of al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin thinking in Egypt and the Iranian revolution. The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in

1928 in Egypt with its founder Hasan al-Banna. In the early 1970s, people translated several books by Ikhwan al-Muslimin into Indonesian. The thoughts of caliber figures Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb at that time seemed to inject Islamic ideals and become an inspiration for the Islamic movement on campus.

Along with the ongoing process of democratization, the Islamic movement on campuses is increasingly free to develop their work. This fact conditions the continuing transmission of Hasan al-Banna's thoughts with high intensity. It then underlies the forerunner to the existence of a Salafī campus movement in Indonesia. The incident occurred after there were on-campus prohibition residents to carry out many political activities, which were reflected in the expression back to campus and since then also began to bloom many Islamic studies on several local universities. From here, the Islamic students on campus have started to grow, with a marked group of men with beards and those who were obliged to wear long black hijabs.

On the other hand, in the early 1980s, the influence of the Iranian revolution flowed quickly into Indonesia. It is possible because the conditions of government are almost the same. At that time, this country was also controlled and led by a regime that was less aspirational towards Muslims. For this reason, some circles explicitly associated the trend of black veils as the rise of Islam in Iran at the time. There was a significant revolution taken place in Iran in 1979, led by Imam Khomeini, and practically achieved victory. Black veil (called chador in Iran) when it was a symbol of resistance to the Western world and its puppets in Iran, a regime represented by Shah Reza Pahlavi, later overthrown through the revolution.

In Indonesia, the 1980s hijab began to flourish everywhere, along with the rapid rise of students on campus who appeared as religious movements. This phenomenon had similar identities to other Muslim countries. Starting on public universities; such as ITB, IPB, UGM, UII, and other universities, including later, became a trend in the full circle. This phenomenon was an extraordinary sight and a significant change, unlike the previous decade. Related to the phenomenon of headscarves in Indonesia, coincidentally in the 1980s, the Darul Arqam (DA) movement in neighboring countries (Malaysia) was also flourishing, which obliged its female followers to wear hijab and all-black robes. At that time, the Darul Arqam missionary movement was so massive and intense, which has spread in several countries of the world, not least in Indonesia<sup>7</sup>. Even so, the stretching of the Darul Arqam movement could not have a direct influence from the post-Iranian

revolution. Historically and ideologically, the establishment was much earlier (in 1969) and had different teachings from other mainstreams. However, the Iranian revolution seemed to be new momentum for the glory of Darul Arqam's preaching.

Meanwhile, the second factor is an internal factor. At the beginning of the New Order era, government relations with Muslims were less intimate, with frequent tension. The product of this situation gave birth to a repressive New Order policy towards religious groups. This situation is related to the cultural and political situation at that time. After independence against foreign invaders, this country still had to deal with many separatist groups from the indigenous population, among those who wanted an Islamic State to stand up. Therefore, the ruling leaders in this country are antipathy towards religious movements, such as the right extremists (the DI / TII movement until the Tanjung Priok tragedy). These historical experiences finally brought a fairly strict government policy effect on the supervision of religious activities, and Islamic symbols carried out by many Islamic organizations. The New Order at that time seemed to see Muslims more as a threat to political stability than as partners. By using Islamic discourse and symbols, Muslims become a group that is always under suspicion. Such as fears of the emergence of separatist and fundamentalist movements in this country that oppose Pancasila. For this reason, the New Order was encouraged to protect Pancasila as the State's ideological ideology.

In the late 1980s, situations began to change when Suharto started to rethink his policies. Looking at the population in this country as a Muslim majority, the New Order finally began to accept and embrace the Islamic community to gain political support from repressive to permissive towards the hijab. With Ms. Tutut, President Suharto's first daughter, wearing a hijab, proved that ORBA politics have begun to be accommodating towards Muslims. After that, in 1991, the government issued a regulation that allowed students to wear Muslimah uniforms, hooded, from elementary to the high school level. The regulation was in the Decree of the Director-General of Primary and Secondary Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia No.100 / C / Kep / D / 1991.11.

### **Polygamy Phenomena In Indonesia**

Marriage is the initial foundation for the formation of a family, and in social life, marriage and family are significant institutions. When lowered into a smaller spectrum, the family begins through marriage. Marriage is an agreement between a man and a

woman to have a wife. A marriage is valid in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1/1974. It is if men and women have entered into a marriage, as stated in chapter I, article 1 that "Marriage is a personal bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife to form a happy and eternal family based on the Godhead of the One (Horton, 1999; Shi, 2020).

There are various forms of marriage in society, namely monogamous marriage, polygamy, polyandry, and group marriage. Of the four kinds of marriage, monogamy marriage is considered the most ideal and appropriate to do. A monogamy marriage is a marriage between a man and a woman in principle that the husband has only one wife and vice versa. Even though monogamy marriage is the most appropriate marriage to do, many people do polygamy marriages, seen from the many public figures who do polygamy. Thus, the term polygamy is increasingly sticking out and becoming a conversation in various media, both mass media and electronic media, and also in multiple discussions and seminars. Likewise, among the government bureaucracy, the clergy, NGOs, and the general public, some agree and accept the practice of polygamy with various requirements, and some others reject it.

The phenomenon of polygamy has become more prevalent lately, mainly because it is exhibited in a vulgar manner by role models among the bureaucracy, politicians, artists, and even religious figures. Polygamy is an accumulation of at least three factors: First, the paralysis of our legal system, specifically the Marriage Law. Secondly, the patriarchal culture in a society that still sees a wife is still only a 'follower' which is to join the husband's wishes and not to refuse; and third, reliable interpretations of religion that are gender-biased and not accommodating to human values. Religious presentations that position the wife only as a sexual object do not have independence as a whole human being. The sociological reality in society explains that polygamy is always associated with Islamic teachings.

The practice of polygamy in Indonesia has been rife both openly and legally through marriage institutions registered at the KUA / civil registry or secretly carried out under the hand. The actors who carry out polygamy also have diverse backgrounds, both at the level of education, economic level, and profession, with different intentions and motivations. The case of polygamy, which is quite phenomenal and has become a trending topic in various media and public attention, is polygamy conducted by Puspo Wardoyo, Parto, Syeh Puji, AA Gym, and Anis Mata. The impact of polygamy on women



includes physical, psychological violence in the household, including economic neglect (Alamgir, 2014). Not much different from Nurohmah, that polygamous women experienced domestic violence, many polygamous men did not fulfill the obligation to support their wives and children, and instead of the women even supported their husbands.

Nurmila also studied polygamy on several Javanese polygamy families. She found that Islam has an essential role in how religion shapes the construction of polygamy. Polygamy receives an interpretation, review, and adjustments to be accepted by the community. Polygamy can now be negotiated within Muslim families in Indonesia, resulting in acceptance of polygamy marriages by various parties in Indonesia (Nurmila, 2007). A polygamy is a form of obedience of the wife to her husband. It is also the compliance of the woman herself towards her religion. The study looked at the economic dependence experienced by women on men in the case of polygamy marriage he met. This pattern of dependency often triggers family violence (Heath, Hidrobo, & Roy, 2020). The thick reality of religious and religious nuances is what will become an entry point to uncover women's perceptions of veiling about polygamy.

### **Women in Niqab and Polygamy Practices**

It is engaging in a society that men who will do polygamy are the most religious ones. Likewise, the wives agreed to polygamy are women who wear large hijab and niqab. Therefore, this research combines the two phenomena and seeks accurate information on some veiled women in Indonesia. The author analyzed the perceptions of women in niqab about the practice of polygamy, whether husbands do justice and the welfare of their wives, about the potential conflicts that arise in polygamy marriages, and finally, the factors that cause polygamy marriages.

### **Community Perception of the Practice of Polygamy**

Based on the results of the study, there were three to one between informants who agreed to polygamy. More of them were “forced” to accept the fact that their husbands had more than one wife and lived together. From the case above, the woman did not want to be the oldest wife. She submitted and could not keep her marriage, while women who accepted the practice of polygamy were the second wives or the younger wives. There are fourth reasons for the helplessness of women in maintaining their marriages. First is religious teachings that provide an opportunity for husbands to have more than one wife. Secondly, they already have children. Thirdly, the reason is the

foundation and the spearhead to make a living for the family (economy). The fourth is because of the wishes of his parents.

The author found some reasons why women in niqab reject polygamy. The first concern is the aspects of justice for women and becomes the primary consideration factor of the informant expressed straightforwardly and firmly by one respondent. She said, “A man can be fair to property, is it possible to be fair with heart? It is merely a theory.” Secondly, some feelings are hurt and betrayed so that it has great potential to damage the integrity of the household. One respondent said that “Polygamy will hurt other women because it only fulfills the will and satisfaction of men, and polygamy can also ruin the integrity of the household besides hurting the feelings of the wife.” The three types of polygamy tend to harass women potentially. “Polygamy is one of the efforts to harass women. Polygamy will only give freedom to men over women to dominate decision making in the household.” Fourth is polygamy as a form of betraying marriage vows. One respondent stated that “In polygamy, there are aspects of denial of a marriage commitment. Polygamy should be eradicated because polygamy will betray love and affection in marriage.”

Although there are informants who agree with polygamy, they underline some reasons. First is an emergency or an emergency. For example, in the absence of a child in a marriage, polygamy is justified if there are strong reasons, e.g., the wife cannot have children, or she cannot serve the husband due to health reasons. Second, polygamy must have the wife's permission. The respondent confirmed the statement that there must be approval from the first or second wife. Third, there is a guarantee that the husband will be able to act reasonably with his wives and children. "Polygamy is allowed as long as the husband can do justice" The four reasons for the factor of religious teachings, the informant said polygamy is allowed because it is part of the practice of Islamic teachings. This religious teaching factor is also related to the prohibition of adultery—the six reasons for the honesty and openness of men.

### **Perceptions about Fair Husbands**

Material justice, such as spending money, housing, is what all husband can do. However, non-material justice such as love, affection, attention-related to heart problems, and feelings are still impossible to realize. Since in practice, husbands are often more fond of young wives compared to older wives. The measure of justice is so far according to the male version, while according to religious teachings, humans cannot do justice. Note

from some respondents that justice here is not merely material, and it has been the argument of men. For some respondents, the justice also involves justice in the aspect of compassion that includes feelings. Justice, in this concept, was raised by the respondents. They said that justice in the form of affection was substantial because marriage was not only a bond of the body but also of the soul.

The housewife respondents informed a clear illustration of the injustice of polygamy men. He said that it was true that her husband gave more spending money to her because her child numbered four people. Still, in terms of shifts, attention, and affection, her husband was more inclined to young wives, for example, when he was sick. Her husband only gave money to medical treatment, without wanting to deliver, but if the honey is sick, her husband painstakingly waits and takes her to seek treatment. His young wife is also often invited out of town for refreshing and invitation (to the celebration). A small number of informants who said that a husband could reasonably act if polygamy has a base on the argument that said that according to him is proportional and not equal, both physically and mentally.

### **Perceptions about Polygamy Practice based on the Sunnah**

The analysis showed that the practice of polygamy that is currently happening in the community is no longer in line with the Sunnah of the Prophet, because it is more in the context of the interests of the husband, especially in fulfilling his sex. According to the respondents, there is a fundamental difference between polygamy practiced by the Prophet Muhammad with men these days.

"Rasullullah does indeed do polygamy for humanitarian purposes as well as Islamic purposes, whereas men today are only for the needs of satisfying lusts. The respondents considered that polygamy is currently emphasizing the aspect of mere gratification rather than the values and goals of humanity and worship."

The proof is that polygamy men now prefer looking for younger and more beautiful wives. One respondent stated that Rasullullah did polygamy to raise the degree of the woman he married and provide protection. Now the practice of polygamy is only based on the aspect of fulfilling biological needs. Meanwhile, the informant stated that he agreed that polygamy was following the Sunnah. In other words, he would only have four wives like the Prophet.

### **Polygamy Perception, Potential Conflict, and Domestic Violence**

Marriage is not only limited to material, physical, and financial matters. If so, then polygamy can be justified, because many individuals can share material and physical matters. In marriage, the most important and fundamental are the spiritual and emotional aspects of love and feelings (Muthahari, 2004). Love and adoration only know one person and do not recognize partners and rivals. The law of polygamy arises from a progressive and advanced view of solving a major social problem. Thus, inevitably, its promoters must apply it in practice based on a high moral level. The analysis shows that most informants believe that the practice of polygamy indeed has a great potential to lead to many forms of violence and crime for women and children (Chen, Kong, Gao, & Mo, 2018), especially those that are economical, physical, and psychological.

Some respondents disagreed with polygamy, saying that monogamy-based marriages can cause violence, especially polygamy, which involves many parties, both husbands, wives, and children as well, certainly more conflicts arise in domestic life. The basic concept that many women have put forward is that seeing polygamy cannot be fair. It is this husband's injustice to his wives and children that will trigger a form of violence and crime, both physical and psychological. The previous study showed that polygamy marriages could end badly for wives and children. Women in polygamy marriages generally experience layers of layered violence. Wives in this case experience not only the denial of marriage commitments but also psychological pressure, economic shortages, sexual abuse, to physical abuse, and the wives suffer the same pain.

#### **Perceptions about the Factors of Polygamy**

In the case of polygamy, the first wife was shocked after learning that her husband remarried. The mental reaction of the old wife is irritation and heartache. There is nothing more saddening to a woman's feelings when she finds out that her husband doesn't like her anymore, and knows that she cannot keep her heart from other women. However, some women surrender and maintain their marriage. There are also cases of the first wife committing terror and intimidation to the second wife because her husband is not willing to be taken from her side. The factors that support the practice of polygamy to date are quite diverse such as male's lust or selfishness, the absence factor of a child, economic and social factors, Islamic teachings that allow the practice of polygamy. The next factor is the error in interpreting religious teachings that only emphasizes textual

aspects and wife's awareness, who cannot serve her husband well. The last factor is the condition of a wife who is permanently ill so that she cannot do her obligations as a wife.

## CONCLUSION

The perception of women wearing a niqab in Indonesia towards the practice of polygamy is relatively diverse. Most people refuse with various reasons as justification. Most women in niqab agree that polygamy has significant potential to create conflict in the household, which can result in multiple forms of domestic violence. Thus, this research found that why these women accepted polygamy due to religious teaching. However, some refused because of humanitarian reasons, jealousy, and psychological effects on their children. Women in niqab realize that wearing a hijab and niqab add a new attribute implemented into daily activities. Therefore, why polygamy is identical to hijabi women and bearded men in Indonesia due to religious reasons, although later, in reality, not all men who had polygamy were able to do justice. It may be fair in economic terms, but it is difficult to fulfill. This study reminds the author of the particular argument about polygamy in Surah An-Nisa that the main requirement for polygamy is to be fair. The lesson drawn from this study is for men who plan to marry more than one to pay attention to what effects can arise with their actions. For women, it is also necessary to remember that the rules of polygamy exist in Islam. Hence, they better positively think that polygamy can avoid sins in certain parts with a note to help men to do justice.

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