

# Religious, Commercialization, and Gender Discrimination: Study of Polygamy Mentoring KH. Hafidzin on Social Media

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### Abstract

The study aims to uncover forms of gender discrimination in Hafidzin's polygamy campaign on social media, as well as reveal the sacrality of religion as a result of its commercialization. This research employs a qualitative approach, collecting netnographic data. The results showed that Hafidzin's Polygamy Mentoring program contained three types of gender discrimination: marginalization, subordination, and stereotypes. The Hafidzin commercialized polygamy campaign also dismisses religious sacrality values, which are the primary purpose of polygamy to protect the weak, and the purpose of marriage, which may make divorce more difficult.

### Keywords:

Commercialization,  
Gender,  
Discrimination,  
Religion.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap bentuk-bentuk diskriminasi gender dalam kampanye poligami Hafidzin di media sosial, serta mengungkap kesakralan agama sebagai akibat dari komersialisasinya. Penelitian ini menggunakan jenis penelitian kualitatif dengan metode pengumpulan data netnografi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa program bimbingan poligami Hafidzin mengandung tiga jenis diskriminasi gender: marginalisasi, subordinasi, dan stereotip. Kampanye poligami komersial Hafidzin juga menghilangkan nilai-nilai kesakralan agama yang merupakan tujuan utama poligami untuk melindungi yang lemah dan tujuan pernikahan yang dapat membuat perceraian menjadi lebih sulit.

## INTRODUCTION

The digitalization of Islam includes the discourse of religious knowledge presented on social media. One topic that does not escape this discourse is polygamy. The digital age is increasingly reinforcing polygamy conservatism through social media platforms. The polygamy campaign by the new religious authority was delivered by the *Forum Poligami Indonesia* (FPI) through Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and the Web. The community voiced and campaigned for polygamy in a unique interpretation of religion, one of which concerned the suspension of the obligation of polygamy. In addition, women in their view occupy the position of a reproductive "agent", because they can multiply offspring.<sup>1</sup>

Based on the same context, polygamy discourse seen as harming human values was promoted by Hafidin through social media accounts such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, thus reaching the wider public.<sup>2</sup> Hafidin is an educator of the Tahfidz Qur'an Ma'had Yashma Lodge in the Serang Banten area. Hafidin started campaigning for polygamy with a picture of the success of polygamy he was going through. Hafidin then offered to the general public a variety of activities that could support the realization of polygamy practices, such as mentoring or something, under the name of "Polygamist Mentoring." Hafidin through his program always said that polygamy is part of the Shariah that must be a priority of Muslims. The easy justification of polygamy as a core part of the Islamic Shariah should be questioned, because, throughout historical knowledge, polygamous culture originated from pre-Islamic customs.

In historical tradition, polygamy was not only carried out by the Arabs, but also by the Abyssinians, Persians, and Babylonians.<sup>3</sup> Polygamy before the advent of Islam did not limit the number of wives. It allows for marriages between one man and as many women as possible, ranging from hundreds to thousands. Islam exists to limit the existence of polygamy, by setting a maximum number of wives that can be married. The campaign about polygamy as a core part of the Shariah must be judged contrary to the practice of Polygamy experienced by the

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<sup>1</sup>Yuni Asih, "Diskursus Domunan Seksualitasitas Laki-Laki Dan Perempuan Dalam Poligami Di Sosial Media (Studi Forum Poligami Indonesia)" (Yogyakarta, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2022).

<sup>2</sup>Miski, dkk, "Polygamy Mentoring in Indonesia: Al-Qur'an, Hadith and Dominant Discourse Resistance, Millatū," *Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities*. 7 No 1, 2022, hlm. 15–32.

<sup>3</sup>Muhammad Sakeria, *Hermeneutika Musdah Mulia Terhadap Ayat Poligami*, vol. 4, No. 01 2021, hlm. 22.

Prophet Muhammad. Throughout his life, the prophet only lived a period of polygamy for seven years.<sup>4</sup>

The Compilation of the Islamic Law and the Marriage Act of 1974 did not prohibit the practice of polygamy. However, the legal context of the regulations is not intended to facilitate or encourage people to commit polygamy. The presence of a special article on polygamy from a sociological perspective regulates the practice of society's polygamy so as not to harm human values.<sup>5</sup> The practice of polygamy has received much criticism from academics, for being considered inconsistent with the values of gender equality and humanity. What is more, with the presence of polygamy mentoring, of course, this practice is more inconsistent with it, even judged as a means of spreading opportunistic ideas. Sari displays Hafidin's campaign on polygamy based on media reviews. According to him, Hafidin often interprets verses about husband and wife relations in the Koran from a patriarchal perspective. The paid polygamist mentoring provided by Hafidin also often utilizes verses from the Koran to support the practice of religious capitalism.<sup>6</sup>

This research is intended to complement the study of Hafidin's polygamy mentoring in feminist approaches. Sari's research relies on Amina Wadud's feminism to find patterns of religious interpretation, while this study will look in detail at the forms of gender discrimination found in Hafidin's polygamy campaign. The forms of gender discrimination are based on the theory proposed by Mansour Fakih. According to him, there are five forms of gender discrimination: marginalization, subordination, stereotypes, violence, and double burden.

The move was to clearly establish how Hafidin framed polygamy in the form of gender discrimination. The gender bias in polygamy campaigns could potentially lead to a partial understanding of Islamic Sharia. Moreover, with the presence of business space in it, gender bias that favors men will be more attractive to the public who want to combine the concept of patriarchy with the label "Sharia". The sanctity of religious teachings will be worn out by the side of material gain. Hariandja has actually observed about this. The religious commodification seen in Hafidin's mentoring of polygamy can remove the values

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<sup>4</sup>Ismail Marzuki, "Politik Hukum Poligami: Studi Terhadap Peraturan Perundang-Undangan Di Negara-Negara Muslim," *Al-Manāhij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* Vol. XIII No. 1, Juni 2019, hlm. 141–157.

<sup>5</sup>Iskandar, Tb Ma'sum, "Analisis Terhadap Pasal 55-59 Kompilasi Hukum Islam Tentang Poligami Perspektif Pemberdayaan Perempuan Dan Kesetaraan Gender" (Bandung: Masters thesis, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2023).

<sup>6</sup>Qorir Yunia Sari, " Kampanye Poligami Coach Hafidin Dalam Perspektif Feminisme," *Jurnal Kajian Islam Interdisipliner*, 7 No. 2, 2022.

of religious sacrality because religion is conceived as a commodity that can be traded.<sup>7</sup>

This research is also focused on highlighting the commercialization of religion as well as Hariandja's discourse. One thing that Hariandja hasn't talked about is the reification that must be seen in the commodification process. Reification is the transformation of abstract values into concrete forms.<sup>8</sup> If it is related to the commodification of religion, these abstract values can be the essence of the glory of Islamic law contained in every goal of the law. When these values have become a concrete form that can be used in a business field, it is very likely that the pure religious essence can be eroded, or even lost. Regarding polygamous mentoring, the nobility of polygamy will be lost if it is widely commercialized, as Hafidzin did. Because, however, efforts to commercialize polygamy will justify various methods, one of which is showing the pleasures and momentary benefits of the practice of polygamy.

The excavation of Hafidin's idea of polygamy is done by observing the content he spreads on social media. Hafidin personally owns a YouTube channel called Robbanian Family. In addition, Hafidzin has also expanded its commercialization efforts on the Facebook and Instagram platforms of the same name. The polygamy mentoring instigated by Hafidizin was initially only local: not national attention. In the end, Newsroom's narrative highlights the controversial side of Hafidin's campaign in its video entitled "*Menguak Sisi Lain Mentoring Poligami Berbayar* (Revealing the Other Side of Paid Polygamous Mentoring)." To date, the video has been viewed by 2.6 million people. The video presented by Narasi is also the subject of this research. The main objective of this study is to (1) Excavate the forms of gender discrimination in Hafidin Polygamy Mentoring and (2) Discover the sacred values of religion that have been lost as a result of the commercialization of polygamy by Hafidin.

In This Study, Researchers Found Several Related Studies, Including One Conducted By Sofiatun Nikmah And Risma Hikmawati Entitled A Critique Of Polygamy Coaches' Interpretations And The Reproduction Of Gender Inequality On Social Media. Which Found That Polygamy Coaches' Interpretations Of Polygamy Have Shifted From Its Original Purpose In The Quran, Namely As A

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<sup>7</sup>William Christopher Hariandja, "Komodifikasi Islam Oleh Kyai Hafidin Dalam Mentoring Dan Webinar Poligami," *Jurnal Filsafat Dan Teologi Kontekstual*, Volume 1 Nomor 2, Juli 2023.

<sup>8</sup>Pratama, A. P. A, "Konsep Reifikasi Menurut Georg Lukács Dalam Buku History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialektics" (Doctoral dissertation, Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University, 2021.

Solution To Certain Social Problems, To Become An Instrument Of Domination That Ignores The Principles Of Equality And Justice.

Furthermore, Research Conducted By Anisa Isdiyanti Isdiyanti Entitled Polygamy Class Campaigns And Mentoring In The Case Of Trends In Indonesia. (Analysis Of Accommodating Protest Social Movements). The Polygamy Community Believes That Polygamy Is Vital In Achieving The Pinnacle Of Piety, While Critics Assert That Polygamy Is A Form Of Violence Against Women. Therefore, Based On The Previous Research Studies, The Researcher Is Interested In Delving Deeper Into The Paid Polygamy Mentoring Conducted By Kh. Khafidin Through Social Media, Focusing On A Gender Perspective.

## METHOD

This study uses the netnography method. Netnography is a research method used to explore social interactions that occur in online social networks, such as social media, discussion forums, or online communities. Netnography was introduced by Robert Kozinets (1998) and defined as "the study of social networks through online interactions." Ethnography (netnography) is a qualitative research method developed by Robert V. Kozinets to study culture, social practices, and community interactions that take place in digital spaces, such as social media, online forums, and instant messaging platforms. In the context of this study, netnography is used to understand: Polygamy mentoring patterns, Constructed religious narratives, Mentor-participant relationships, Values, ideologies, and the legitimacy of polygamy disseminated through social media.

Netnography is a way of digging data that exists in a digital platform that focuses on virtual space activity.<sup>9</sup> Based on this article, the netnography method is used to study and collect data from the Robbanian Family's social media accounts on YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook which is related to the paid polygamist mentoring carried out by Hafidzn. To supplement the research data, the author also examined the Narasi Newsroom channel specifically discussing the practice of Hafidin polygamy. The netnography method is relevant because: Polygamy mentoring often takes place online, behind closed doors, and within digital communities; social media is the main space for discourse production, preaching, and identity formation; researchers can observe social practices without direct intervention; this method is suitable for examining sensitive issues (such as polygamy) with a non-invasive ethnographic approach.

Data collection techniques through online participatory observation involve observing interactions between mentors and participants, communication

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<sup>9</sup>Robert V Kozinets, *Netnography: Redefined* (London: Sage Publications, 2010), hlm. 58.

patterns (advice, questions and answers, testimonials), religious language, and Islamic symbols. Researchers can act as lurkers (passive observers) or observer-participants in accordance with research ethics. The next data collection technique is through documentation obtained from text posts, images, and videos. Data Analysis Techniques. Analysis was conducted thematically in the following stages: Data immersion: repeated reading and viewing of data. Coding: grouping themes (religious legitimacy, gender roles, ideal family). Cultural interpretation: understanding the meaning of mentoring practices. Contextualization: linking to the socio-cultural and legal context of Indonesia.

## RESULTS

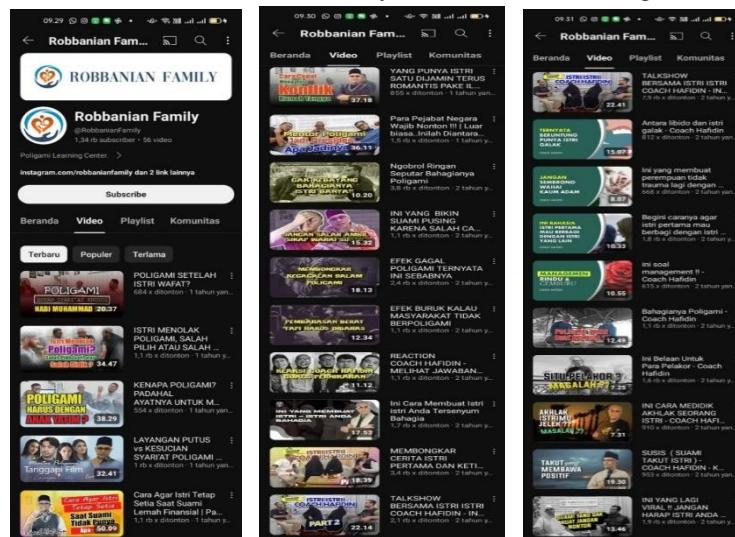
### Examining KH Hafidin's Digital Activities in Polygamist Mentoring

Kh. Hafidin is a 52-year-old religious figure. Hafidin was born in Waringinkarung Village, Waringin Kurung District, Serang Regency, Banten Province. In his opinion, in 2020, Hafidzin had 4 wives and 25 children. His practice of polygamy has been going on for 20 years. He used to call his first wife Neng, while Hafizin's second wife was Ummu Naila, his third wife was Amirah Salsabila, and his fourth wife was Fidah.

Hafidin studied at Waringin Kurung State Elementary School, Waringin Kurung State Middle School, and continued at Serang State Madrasah Aliyah. Then Hafidin graduated with a Bachelor of Religion at the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Sunan Gunung Gunung Djati Bandung in 1995. Hafidin also continued his master's studies at IAIN Sunan Gunung Djati with a concentration in Islamic Studies. Hafidin, who used to be a *santri kobong* (non-resident Islamic boarding school student), has now transformed into an extraordinary figure. Currently, he is the caretaker and founder of Ma'had Yashma. Besides that, Hafidin is also active as a Koran teacher, manliness coach, and entrepreneur. Not only that, he also has a polygamist mentoring program, and has a number of published books, especially regarding polygamy and householding, including "45 Hari Sukses Poligami (45 Days of Successful Polygamy)" and "19 Bekal Suami Mengubah Amarah Istri Menjadi Senyuman (19 Provisions for Husbands to Turn Their Wives' Anger into a Smile)."

The polygamy campaign conducted by Hafidin is easily accessible through various digital platforms, including YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. The Robbanian Family YouTube account, which is the main channel of information delivery, has managed to gain support from 1,34 thousand subscribers with a total of 56 videos uploaded.

Picture 1. Robbanian Family YouTube Account Image



Through the Robbanian Family YouTube account, it is clear that various polygamy study videos have been presented to educate and arouse public interest in studying it. With a series of informative and educational materials, the account is committed to presenting in-depth content on the topic of polygamy. On his YouTube channel, Hafidin actively invites men to practice polygamy and provides understanding to women so that they are interested in polygamous partners. Through its content, Hafidin acts as a successful polygamy perpetrator, giving inspiration and positive insights about this practice.<sup>10</sup>

In the account, there is an in-depth study of the fundamentals of polygamy, which emphasizes that every Muslim has the right to practice Polygamy as illustrated by the Prophet Saw and his friends. The video titled "Poligami setelah Istri Wafat? (Polygamy after Wife's Dead)?" stresses that this mentoring is presented as a gateway to understanding the science of polygamy. At 3:00 in the video, there was a statement stating that "if you want to learn about the science of polygamy then attend Hafidin's polygamic workshop in January or any other month". In the presentation of the videos, Hafidin's colleagues informed that the workshop is not only public but also available as a private session. The purpose of this private session is to provide facilities for men who want to practice polygamy but may not have adequate knowledge.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Nur Afni Khafsoh, dkk, "Praktik Poligami Di Indonesia Dalam Perspektif M. Quraish Shihab, Husein Muhammad, Dan Nasaruddin Umar, *Jurnal Sosiologi Reflektif* Vol. 16 No. 2 (April 2022), hlm. 20.

<sup>11</sup>"Poligami Setelah Istri Wafat ?," [https://www.youtube.com/redirect?event=video\\_description](https://www.youtube.com/redirect?event=video_description)

## DISCUSSION

### Social Media and the New Religious Authority: "Religious" Business Opportunities in the Da'wah Label

The existence of social media in the framework of the development of communication technology has changed the face of the institutions of religious authority. In the Islamic world, this creates a "separation and conflict between political and religious authorities," where traditional authorities compete with modern ones.<sup>12</sup> The use of the Internet as a tool of Islamic worship has changed with the growth of digital platforms, mainly through social media. If compared to Muhammadiyah and NU, now many Islamic groups, both new and old, use new media in their activities.

As the population of Indonesia increases, especially among muslim communities, and with the increasing use of the Internet, there is a shift in power where new religious authorities take place, both individually and collectively. In a positive context, their presence gives democratization to all Muslims in Indonesia to choose Islamic references from their chosen websites. Indirectly, it challenges Indonesian fundamentals, especially Pancasila as a symbol of national integration, while on the other hand, they trigger different Islamic ideologies in the name of the ummah, the Islamic state, and conservative tendencies.<sup>13</sup>

Research on religious authority in Islam, especially among Sunni, is not new. The endless differences come from the authority that was originally spread in the Sunni tradition, unlike the centralistic approach in the Shia tradition, which focuses on the priest as the sole authority in the religious and political aspects. In classical and medieval Sunni traditions, religious authority was at least divided into two axes: the authority of scholars, which was divided into various madhabs and currents, and the political authority such as the sultan or king<sup>14</sup>, who often used political power to control religious authority for personal political interests. In Indonesia in particular, religious authority has become complex and diverse,

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<sup>12</sup>Merlyna Lim, "Archipelago Online: The Internet and Political Activism in Indonesia", (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Twente, The Netherlands, 2005), hlm. 14-15.

<sup>13</sup>Wahyudi Akmaliah, "The Demise of Moderate Islam: New Media, Contestation, and Reclaiming Religious Authorities," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 10 No. 1 2020, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v10i1.1-24>.

<sup>14</sup>Abdul Mufid, Thomas Djamaruddin, "The Implementation of New Minister of Religion of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore Criteria towards the Hijri Calendar Unification," *HTS Teologiese Studies* 79 No. 1, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i1.8774>.

unlike other Muslim countries that combine the role of state authority and religion.<sup>15</sup>

The religious authority in Indonesia for decades has been dominated by various religious institutions and Islamic organizations with diverse movements and ideologies, including those of a radical, moderate, and liberal nature. The Islamic organization has a strong influence in giving instructions to its members, so there are often disagreements with the government. Regarding authority in the realm of fiqh, for example, each organization has its fatwa institution which is not bound by one another, and there are often significant differences in religious views that are *ijtihadiyah* in nature. Since the beginning of independence, Indonesia has become an environment that supports the development of religious authority without direct connection with the state or institutions of authority already existing.<sup>16</sup> The spread of religious authority has become widespread and more dynamic in the last two decades, especially with the expansion of Islamic higher education resulting in graduates who are deeply trained in Islam. Besides, political liberalization and globalization have also had a significant impact, gradually wiping out traditional religious authority.

A study conducted by Kaptein shows that Muslims in Indonesia tend to rely on legal views issued by certain institutions. Usually, the authority of the fatwa begins at the national level and then decreases to the regional level.<sup>17</sup> However, it should be noted that Kaptein's study needs to be understood in the context that the digital age has become a new arena for seeking legal advice. With advances in information technology, legal opinions are now easily accessible through various digital platforms. The monopoly of authority previously held by certain religious organizations is no longer absolute. This role is now taken over by popular religious figures on social media. Being popular gives these religious figures certain advantages because they can easily be identified, followed, and watched through the use of smartphones. As a result, legal opinion seekers can access the views of religious figures on a case without having to meet them in person.

According to the latest research, religious authority can now be distinguished into two main categories, the traditional and the newly emerging.

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<sup>15</sup>Azyumardi Azra, Kees van Dijk, dan Nico JG Kaptein, "Varieties of Religious Authority: Changes and Challenges in 20th Century Indonesian Islam," *Singapore: ISEAS*, 2010, hlm. 3.

<sup>16</sup>Mhd Yazid, "Neglecting Women's Rights: Indonesian YouTube Preachers' Legal Opinion on Polygamy," *Al-Ahwal: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* Vol 16, No 1 (2023).

<sup>17</sup>Nico J G Kaptein, "The Voice of Theulamâ': Fatwas and Religious Authority in Indonesia," *Autorités Religieuses En Islam* no. 125 (2004): 115–30, <https://doi.org/10.4000/assr.1038>.

In this context, it is necessary to clarify the definitions of "religious scholar" and "religious entrepreneur". Religious scholars refer to people who have undergone formal education in the field of religion, in particular studying the Islamic Scriptures through educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools and Islamic universities. In general, religious scholar is often associated with traditional religious authority, as described earlier. On the other hand, religious entrepreneurs, who are the new religious authority, are individuals who can package religious messages through various means such as writing, training, and short videos delivered through new media to reach a wider audience. Although not always, they generally acquire their religious knowledge through easily accessible sources such as translations, or the internet.<sup>18</sup>

The emergence of new ideas of religious authority became an opportunity for religious entrepreneurs. With an exciting jargon display, accompanied by a reward offered in the name of "Sharia they easily do certain businesses to make money. As in Muttaqin's study, religious figures who convey religious opinions on social media often insert business advertisements, thus making people interested in joining or simply enjoying the business products, because they are wrapped in religious commodification.<sup>19</sup> Not only that, Munirah also found more specific "religious" business practices, namely the use of Tibbun Nabawi's hadith to support the marketing of honey and *habbatussauda* produced by certain groups.<sup>20</sup>

### **Gender Feminist Approach**

The feminist approach is applied as an analytical framework to explore and analyze forms of gender discrimination in the context of the study of paid polygamy mentoring managed by Hafidin through social media. Feminism, which comes from the Latin word "femina" which means "have a feminine character," creates a perspective to evaluate and understand gender inequality. In this sense, feminism emerged as a response to the perception that men and women experience injustice in various aspects of society's life. The feminism

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<sup>18</sup>Kailani, N., Ikhwan, M., & Suhadi., "Preface: Meneroka Wacana Islam Publik Dan Politik Kebangsaan Ulama Di Kota-Kota Indonesia." (Yogyakarta: Puspdiep, 2019).

<sup>19</sup>Ahmad Muttaqin, "Women's Identity in the Digital Islam Age: Social Media, New Religious Authority, and Gender Bias", *Qudus International Journal Of Islamic Studies*, Vol 8, No 2, (2020).

<sup>20</sup>Munirah, ""Penggunaan Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis Di Balik Komersialisasi Thibbun Nabawi Di Media Sosial," *Al-Izzah: Jurnal Hasil-Hasil Penelitian*, Vol 18, No. 1, Mei 2023.

movement has developed a variety of strategies and approaches to achieving gender equality in various fields.<sup>21</sup>

The feminist approach represents an analytical framework that focuses on the aspects of injustice in all layers of life. In this area of research, the focus of the approach raised by the researchers is more focused on the gender dimension, which specifically places women in the socio-cultural realm. Advocates of feminism believe that the differences that arise between women and men in society have the negative impact of injustice. Most people argue that gender characteristics can be influenced by social construction. From this understanding, it makes the struggle for gender rights important, in the hope that gender differences in social structures do not become a source of discrimination that ends with the emergence of victims. Sue Morgan's statement confirms that in religion-based gender studies, the main analysis is a feminist approach.<sup>22</sup>

In the context of the Islamic religion, during the classical period, Muslims tended to interpret various religious texts with a patriarchal cultural tendency, which ultimately led to gender differentiation. Nevertheless, reality shows that the Qur'an should be used as a primary source in the struggle for a balanced understanding and pioneering equality among Muslims, not as a justification for a patriarchal culture. The Qur'an should be the guideline for promoting gender equality in Muslim society.<sup>23</sup>

The Qur'an, as a discourse, is able to respond to a tradition that has been rooted. Therefore, in the socio-historical context, the birth of the Qur'an is reflected in its content, its language style, its objective purpose, and the linguistic system used. Although there is a misogynistic tendency in the structure of the Quran and a demand for justice in the social sphere, the Quran as a whole can be seen as a response to the social and historical conditions surrounding the society at that time.<sup>24</sup> The Qur'an not only seeks to remove the cultural influence of patriarchy but also shows that women in the pre-Islamic Arab era underwent reformation and improvement from previous conditions.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>S. Anshori dkk, D, *Membincang Feminisme: Refleksi Muslimah Atas Peran Sosial Kaum Wanita*. (Bandung: Pustaka Hidayah, 1997), hlm. 19.

<sup>22</sup>Connolly, *Aneka Pendekatan Studi Agama Terj. Imam Khoiri* (Yogyakarta: Lkis, 2011), hlm. 63.

<sup>23</sup>Abu Zayd, "Status of Women Between the Qur'an and Fiqh." in *Gender Equality in Muslim Family Law: Justice and Ethics in the Islamic Legal Tradition*, Z. Mir-Hosseini, K. Vogt, L. Larsen, C. Moe" (London: I. B. Tauris., 2013), 153–68.

<sup>24</sup>Esack, F, *What Men Own to Women: Men's Voices from World Religions* (Albany: Universitas Negeri New York Press, 2001), hlm.210.

<sup>25</sup>Schimmel, A, *Jiwaku Adalah Wanita: Aspek Feminim Dalam Spritualitas Islam* (Kota Bandung: Mizan, 1998), hlm. 92.

According to Wadud, the Qur'an is considered a form of gradual reformation. If the Qur'an abolishes this habit suddenly, it can create new problems. Therefore, the descent of the Qur'an gradually involves a socio-historical context that requires contextual understanding in order to acquire a dynamic significance of the text. Reform towards gender justice becomes an ideal moral value in the Al-Qur'an, so it can be said that Islam is a form of resistance to patriarchal culture. Based on the study of gender issues in Islam, it is very important to pioneer efforts in the form of a feminist approach. The feminist approach emerged as a response to the forms of injustice that occurred in the social reality practices. Especially in the Islamic context, feminist approaches become a means of criticizing verses often quoted by men as the basis for building inequality, which ultimately gives rise to discriminatory practices.<sup>26</sup>

The feminist approach is believed to support the goal of the Qur'an in strengthening gender equality, in the hope of eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. In the context of the Islamic world, the Qur'an gives signals about the need to establish equality among humans. The Quran affirms that the relationship between men and women must be based on the principle of equality. There are a number of verses in the Qur'an, such as Surah An-Nahl Ayat 97, Al-Nisa Ayat 124, Ghafir Ayat 40, and Ali Imran Ayat 195, which indicate that both men and women have equal rights in receiving the reward for their good deeds. These verses reflect the holistic view of the Quran which is believed to promote the birth of gender equality.<sup>27</sup>

However, it is unfortunate that most interpreters tend to understand the Quran based on patriarchal studies. Therefore, the understanding of the Quran in neo-patriarchal Arab society is often monopolized by textual interpretations that contain the elements of patriarchy. It demonstrates the need for the public to update the interpretation and understanding of the Qur'an by using a feminist approach that can absorb the values of gender equality contained in the sacred text.<sup>28</sup> Based on the object of this study, the feminist approach became a very relevant tool for exploring and analyzing the content of the study presented by KH. Hafidin. According to Mansour Fakih, the feminist approach allows exploration in identifying acts of injustice against gender through five main

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<sup>26</sup>Abu Zayd, N. H, "Reformation of Islamic Thought: A Critical Historical Analysis", (Amsterdam University Press., 2006), hlm. 91.

<sup>27</sup>Abu Zayd, "Status of Women Between the Qur'an and Fiqh," in Gender Equality in Muslim Family Law: Justice and Ethics in the Islamic Legal Tradition, 2013."

<sup>28</sup>Yoyo, ""Neo-Patriarki Dan Masalah Krisis Arab: Studi Kritis Tentang Karya Hisyam Sharabi," *QIJIS: Jurnal Internasional Studi Islam Qudus* 6 No 2 (2018), hlm. 260, <https://doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v6i2.3808,>.

categories, namely Marginalization, Subordination, Stereotypes, Violence, and Double Burden.<sup>29</sup>

## Gender Discrimination in K.H Hafidin's Polygamy Campaign

### a. Marginalization

Marginalization refers to treatment that causes one type of sex to be isolated from access within a group. In the context of gender discrimination, women are often victims of marginalization. Marginalization of women does not only occur in the workplace but can also be born in the life of the household, the community, the culture, and even the country. In his video, Hafidin revealed that a wife should not refuse her husband to be polygamous, because he believed that polygamy was a matter between husband and God in the form of Islamic Sharia. He even to husbands who are going to have polygamy not to discuss anything about polygamy with their wives. He said:

"I have four wives, but I hardly ever talk about polygamy with my wife, not to mention asking for a wife, it's not his business to agree or disagree".<sup>30</sup>

In the quotation above it appears Hafidin does not recommend to his followers to make polygamy decisions as something not to be discussed with his wife. That idea could marginalize the wife in the household. Such marginalization is very detrimental to women because their rights as wives can be denied only to satisfy the wishes of their husbands. Under Article 5 No. 1 of the Marriage Act of 1974, it is stated that polygamy to be committed in Indonesia must take into account the consent of the first wife. In Makka's view, polygamy without discussion and agreement will have many negative consequences, not only for the wife but also concerning the future life of the child.<sup>31</sup>

Marginalizing the role of the wife in the household can be said to violate the principles of marriage. Kodir explained that one of the pillars of marriage is a deliberation process between husband and wife so that they can exchange ideas or discuss various matters in the family. Everything related to the family should not be decided unilaterally, as the marriage communication method offered by Hafidin. Regarding family discussions, such as the *atsar* from *sahabah* is worthy of consideration as a legal basis:

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<sup>29</sup>Fakih M, *Analisis Gender Dan Transformasi Sosial*. ((Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2001), hlm. 13.

<sup>30</sup>Robbanian Family, "[Https://Www.Youtube.Com/Watch?v=E3ofay\\_Wfv7E&list=PLJwqKlgZ-IIIiw4WewQ3lLEP5h6a0FXHi](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3ofay_Wfv7E&list=PLJwqKlgZ-IIIiw4WewQ3lLEP5h6a0FXHi)".

<sup>31</sup>Misbahul Munir Makka, Tuti Fajriati Ratundelang, ““Poligami Tanpa Izin Istri Pertama Dan Dampaknya Terhadap Keluarga”, *Al-Mujtahid: Journal of Islamic Family Law (Iain-Manado.Ac.Id)*.

"Ibnu Abbas R.A. said that Umar bin Khattab said, "By God, we did not count (consider) women at all when Jahiliyah. Then Allah revealed verses to (consider) them and gave them rights. At one point, I was thinking about a problem and trying to solve it. Then my wife said, "Try to do this or that." I asked her, "Why are you interfering with what I decide?" She said to me, "It's strange that you, O Ibn Khattab, do not want to be given an opinion, while your daughter, the wife of the Prophet, is always giving an opinion to the Messenger."

*b. Subordination*

Subordination is a conception that can cause one sex to occupy "the second layer" of society, which in this case is directed to women. Hierarchically, women are under the control of men because the patriarchal constitution considers women as weak and unreliable creatures, while men with their masculine nature are considered to be able to make a major contribution to the structure and order of social life.<sup>32</sup>

Regarding the subject of this study, Hafidin argues that a husband should be a good leader in controlling the course of polygamy in the family sphere. According to him, as a leader, a man should design a household as an institution that can benefit a couple, so that when a wife asks for a divorce because of the element of polygamy he will think twice to do so. The way is by asserting to the wife that the money that the husband makes is not all his wife's. Meanwhile, for the living provision, it is the husband's prerogative. It gives a consequence that there is no divorce settlement after the divorce.<sup>33</sup>

Divorce settlement in a simple sense is described as property acquired during marriage so that when the divorce occurs, the property is divided equally, even though the woman is not involved in the process of seeking livelihoods. This can happen because the household activity of a woman is considered to be a contribution to the fulfillment of the family, then it is said that the joint form of property is an attempt to recognize the contribution of the woman in a family.

The cause of the birth of subordination in Hafidin's discourse lies in the concept of *qawwam*. The word *qawwam* in Q.S an-Nisa: 34 is Hafidzin's main reason for always asserting the husband's leadership. Even in the case of a more well-established financial condition of a wife, the husband must still be positioned as the leader who regulates all aspects of the family order. Because, according to Hafidin, leadership has nothing to do with family livelihoods. Interestingly, the leadership offered by Hafidin is not immediately shown in the

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<sup>32</sup>Al-Bukhari, Abu Abdillah Muhammad bin Ismail, *Sahih Bukhari Bi Hasyiyah al Imam al Sindi* (Libanon: Dar al Kutub al Ilmiyah, 2017).

<sup>33</sup>Fakih M, *Analisis Gender Dan Transformasi Sosial*, 2001.

form of authoritarianism, but in this case, the husband as a leader must know when to be firm and when to lower his ego in the family.<sup>34</sup>

Picture 2. Robbanian Family Instagram Account Image



The picture above is a capture of the idea of *qawwam* according to Hafidin. One thing that is worth noting is the interpretation of the husband's position against the wife who is portrayed as a king. The king has unlimited authority over his decisions and does not need to ask for consideration from others. In another post, he said: "A husband is a leader, so a leader should not be afraid of who is led. Whenever a husband is afraid of his wife, he puts his wife in the wrong position and causes chaos in the household." The husband's absolute authority in the household further emphasizes that the wife's position is not that important in the household because she is under the full control of the husband's leadership.<sup>35</sup>

*Qawwam*'s interpretation in Q.S. An-Nisa: 34 became a serious challenge for gender-based family law. Hafidin's view as the leader of the Islamic Boarding School reflects a "rigid" interpretation of the wife role. However, in Nuroniyah's findings, the concept of *qawwam* cannot always be interpreted only in a conservative way. Based on his search, there are some Islamic Boarding School leaders in Cirebon who tend to interpret *qawwam* in a moderate, even liberal

<sup>34</sup>Ongky Alexander, "Efektivitas Pembagian Harta Gono-Gini Pasca Perceraian Dalam Perspektif Yuridis Sosiologis," *El-Ghiroh* Vol 16 No 01 (2019): Februari 2019.

<sup>35</sup>Robbanian Family, "Begini Caranya Agar Istri Pertama Mau Berbagi Dengan Istri Yang Lain-Coach Hafidin."

realm, which is based on the credibility of interpretation methods. These two patterns give the wife the opportunity to contribute to the household so that her "voice" can be heard.<sup>36</sup>

c. *Stereotypes*

Stereotypes in the discourse of gender discrimination are always associated with the negative labeling of women based on their basic characteristics. For example, women have to be gentle, seductive, and so on. In a society that still adheres to patriarchal values, such attributes are regarded as a natural form by a woman. Regarding polygamy mentoring, Hafidin assessed that women who refused the Polygamy needed to study religion again, because, in his view, polygamy is an Islamic Sharia that cannot be interfered with.<sup>37</sup> The idea affirms that women who want to maintain monogamy in their marriage do not have a good knowledge of religion, so they need to be further educated in order to be able to approve the practice of polygamy in domestic life.<sup>38</sup>

In the Instagram account of the Robbanian Family, it is said that the pious woman is the wife who holds on to the attitude of *qanitat* (completely obedient to her husband). The interpretation is still linked to the willingness to polygamy that Hafidin has always emphasized in some of his YouTube videos. The obedience of the wife to all the decisions of the husband, including in polygamy, is used as a measure of piety for the wife. Therefore, the stereotype that Hafidin wants to build towards Muslim women is piety based on their willingness to be polygamous. It's in line with his opinion in the post he uploaded. He said that the non-implementation of polygamy could mean reducing the number of pious women.

Another stereotype that Hafidin labeled to his wives was the primary function of the wife as a "reproductive agent." Hafidin once divorced one of his wives on the grounds that he could not give offspring again because his wife had menopause. In addition to being a reproductive agent, the decision also reflects the perception of women as a service to sexual needs.<sup>39</sup> In Putriana's view, women in classical minds have a stereotype of sexual service. It is confirmed by the findings of the Mercy, which says that one of the forms of the wife's

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<sup>36</sup>Wardah Nuroniyah, "Gender Discourses within Pesantren in Cirebon: Understanding the Typologies of Kyais' Interpretations of the Concept of *Qawwām*," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* Volume 7, No. 2, July 2023.

<sup>37</sup>Fakih M, *Analisis Gender Dan Transformasi Sosial*, 2001.

<sup>38</sup>Robbanian Family, Istri Mendadak Poligami, Salah Pikuh Atau Salah Didik Istri? Haruskah Bercerai !?".

<sup>39</sup>Haryani Putriana et al., "Religion And Patriarchal Culture An Study On Gender Base-Violence," *Acta Islamica Counsenesia: Counselling Research and Applications* Vol. 3, No. 1 (2023), hlm. 21-34.

disobedience (*nusyuz*), which indicates the fall of the obligation of the husband's livelihood in classical fiqh, is the reluctance of a wife to serve biological needs.<sup>40</sup> It is also a challenge for the reform of Islamic law to contain egalitarian principles, as well as to eliminate forms of gender discrimination.

### **Loss of Religious Sacredness in the Commercialization of Polygamist**

Mentoring In the context of commodities, capitalism not only ideologizes about commodities but also commodifies ideology.<sup>41</sup> Religious lectures on social media can be part of a form of ideological commodification that can change the religious entity, not just as a certain form of rituals or rituals, but transformed into visualizations through content in the name of religion so that it is easily accessible by the public. When that happens, religion is treated as a form of commodity that is profitable in the economic sphere, just as other commodities that are valued can also be profitable. The development of social media in modern times allows the public to be able to hang out in the digital world, no exception to religious figures.

Some religious figures consider social media to be an alternative way to convey da'wah without any material benefits, but there are also many of them who do not hesitate to package Islamic da'wah content in hopes of material benefit. This concern increases when they ratify religious ideas that contain injustice against women. Ordinary people tend to swallow this information at face value because every idea is always interspersed with the jargon of Sharia.

Hariandja argues that the form of religious commodification through polygamy mentoring created by Hafidin makes religion just an attractive symbol and image.<sup>42</sup> The visualization of the context of polygamy wrapped in beautiful jargon jargons makes the public interested in joining in it, without having to good consideration. The commodification of the religious-spiritual discourse, which should be accompanied by holiness, is now threatened by the morality of capitalism, which actually degrades religious values.

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<sup>40</sup>Rizal Maulana Rahman, “Transformasi Norma Nusyuz Menurut Kitab Fikih Dalam Kompilasi Hukum Islam Di Indonesia”, *Jurnal Riset Hukum Keluarga Islam* Volume 3, No. 1, Juli 2023, <https://journals.unisba.ac.id/index.php/JRHKI/article/view/1874>.

<sup>41</sup>Lukens-Bull, R, *Commodification of Religion and The 'Religionification of Commodities: Youth Culture and Religious Identity*, (Religious Commodifications in Asia: Marketing Gods. New York: Routledge, 2008, hlm. 220.).

<sup>42</sup>William Christopher Hariandja, “Komodifikasi Islam Oleh Kyai Hafidin Dalam Mentoring Dan Webinar Poligami”, 2023.

Picture 3. Robbanian Family Instagram Account Image



Based on the pamphlet, it is known that there is an interesting sentence of Hafidin to attract sympathetic people "A polygamy workshop was held to organize a happy mindset, so that participants could practice polygamy Sharia in a large family full of blessings ". So the pamphlet appears clearly about the statement to be able to draw the interest of the public to follow the study and practice of polygamy by focusing a number of prices on the mentoring activities that he does.

The workshops offered by Hafidin are not just for men. Fitted with Islamic jargon, Hafidin has also expanded its business network by creating a dedicated workshop for women. The workshop is named "One Day Training–Session The Happy Wife". The unique, workshop is a special training to give women an understanding of how to live a happy life even if "damaged" by a husband. The workshop was done over a very long period, that is, nine hours in a full day. Hafidin acknowledges that he can earn tens or even hundreds of millions a month from his business. Therefore, it is clear that Hafidin is commercializing the polygamy Sharia in commodity form.

Religious commodification is present with a complex pattern of historical background and is closely linked to a cultural construction. The process of religious commodification in this case is born and lives in a specific cultural context as well as in a symbolic and socio-economic framework in the context of a particular social order. Religious commodification is also revealed in market logic, where the spiritual-religious world is no longer seen as something sacred. Beyond its sacrality, nowadays religion is often attached to itself as an identity

ready to be produced in order to meet the demands of the market which is of a commercial nature. To the extent that religion is able to "adjust" to market logic, so quickly religion can be accepted in contemporary public spaces oriented towards a culture of consumerism and commodity exchange.<sup>43</sup>

Commodification can also be closely related to a form of reification. This aspect has not been discussed in Hariandja's research. Hariandja only stated that there were concerns about the transformation of sacred religious values into something that could be bought and sold. In fact, before being traded, the sacredness of religion will first change in its material nature, resulting in a reduction in the essence of human worship. The reification theory coined by George Lucaks is still closely related to commodities. When a social interaction carried out by humans becomes material, the substance of the social interaction, namely sincerity, will slowly disappear. Lucaks' thinking is based on Karl Marx's philosophical concept of materialism.

Concerning the polygamist commodification related by Hafidin, it appears that there is a reification in the portrayal of polygamy only within the limits of the need of the husband to channel purely biological desires. The practice of polygamy as just a form of fornication prevention offered in polygamy mentoring is very visible in some posts. For example, in one of his passages, Hafidin affirmed that unrealized polygamy desire poses the danger of potential adultery that a husband could commit.<sup>44</sup> Still, in the same offer, polygamy should be classified as long as it has had a "meaning", through paid guidance by Hafidin.

The concept of polygamy as part of the preventive effort of adultery was not only discussed by Hafidin. Lubis has found a decision from the Religious Court which granted the request for polygamy on the grounds of avoiding adultery.<sup>45</sup> However, Lubis' findings cannot necessarily be said to be a form of reification. The rejection of the application for polygamy in the judgment is in accordance with the mandate of the Compilation of Islamic Law that polygamy occurs when in desperate circumstances. In contrast, Hafidin enforced polygamy in all circumstances as if it were a core part of the Sharia, even with the idea, that he dared to commercialize religion in the name of the Sharia by means of unilateral

<sup>43</sup>Pattana Kitiarsa, "Introduction: Asia's Commodified Sacred Canopies" ((New York: Routledge, 2008), 6-7.

<sup>44</sup>Robbanian Family, "[Https://Www.Youtube.Com/Watch?v=E3ofayWfv7E&list=PLJwqKlgZ-IIIiw4WewQ3ILEP5h6a0FXHi](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3ofayWfv7E&list=PLJwqKlgZ-IIIiw4WewQ3ILEP5h6a0FXHi)."

<sup>45</sup>Risanna Aulia Adha Lubis, "'Analisis Putusan Hakim Pengadilan Agama Pekanbaru Klas 1A (NO: 60/PDT.G/2020.PA.Pbr) Mengenai Izin Poligami Karena Suami Takut Zina Ditinjau Dar Perspektif Hukum Islam'" ((Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, 2022).

interpretation. Aini quoted Abduh as saying that polygamy Sharia cannot be carried out easily. Polygamy can be enforced in urgent circumstances, in other words, the capacity for polygamy is limited.<sup>46</sup>

Taking refuge under a "pseudo" interpretation of the Shari'a from polygamy can mean pursuing Islamic law for certain interests. The business potential that is considered tempting by framing polygamy to avoid adultery is a real form of reification. As a result, the values of the interests of polygamy that should be the benchmark for Muslims are gradually disappearing. One of the nobles' values considered in polygamy is the willingness to care for the weak, orphans, and widows.<sup>47</sup> If we look at it from a historical perspective, polygamy did not originate from Islam but from Arab society. In fact, Islam has narrowed the space for men who intend to increase their collection of partners by limiting it to a maximum of four wives.<sup>48</sup>

The biological side of the purpose of polygamy could be seen in Hafidzin's statement when answering questions from Narasi Newsroom. The Narasi team first asked Hafidin, how many times has he been married? He answered, "Six times, I have divorced two of my wives, (one) because of menopause, (and) the other one was not worth continuing." It is obvious how Hafidin describes that marriage is only in a biological context: as long as a wife cannot serve sexual needs, then she deserves divorce. It diminishes the essence of marriage as it should be. In Article 1, paragraph 1, of the Marriage Act, it is explained that "marriage is an inherent bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife with the aim of forming a happy and lasting family based on the supreme divinity." It explicitly explains the essence of marriage, that is, the existence of a lasting relationship, without limitation to the ability of biological service, let alone make divorce easier. Even though the hadith explains that "Divorce is a halal thing that Allah SWT is angry with."

Biological considerations in Hafidin's discourse are reinforced by the presence of the "manliness therapy business" often offended in some of his podcasts. Thanks to the male vital instrument massage offered, Hafidin hoped that the husbands would be able to meet domestic sexual needs, merely as an attempt to curb the practice of polygamy. Hafidin Quedan cleverly filled the business gap in the polygamy mentoring he campaigned for. Starting with

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<sup>46</sup>Supiatul Aini, Abdurrahman, "Rasionalitas Perintah Ayat Poligami Kajian Pemikiran Tafsir Muhammad Abduh," *Al Irfani: Journal of Al Qur'anic and Tafsir* 2 No. 2, (2021) (n.d.), <https://doi.org/10.51700/irfani.v2i2.313>.

<sup>47</sup>Danang Kusmianto, "Poligami Dalam Istri Pemikiran Yusuf Al-Qardhawi Dan Asghar Ali Engineer" ((Thesis UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2009)).

<sup>48</sup>Muhammad Sakeria, *Hermeneutika Musdah Mulia Terhadap Ayat Poligami*, 2021.

polygamy is the core of Islamic Sharia, then polygamy can prevent adultery and ends with the offer of vital tool therapy, which adds to Hafidin's profits in the polygamy business. However, as described at the beginning, it transforms the essence of diversity filled with noble and noble ideals into sexual needs filled with lust.

## CONCLUSIONS

Hafidin's polygamy mentoring contains three forms of gender discrimination: marginalization, subordination, and stereotypes. Marginalization appeared when Hafidin urged husbands not to discuss polygamy with their wives. The form of subordination in the relationship of the husband and the wife also becomes a duty for the spouse, so that the husband is represented as a king who has the right to decide anything for his people (wife). The stereotypes appear in two labels: the pious wife does not reject polygamy and the wife is a reproductive agent. The commercialization of polygamy raises its problems, the marketing of the idea of polygamy in the form of commodities turns out to remove the sacral values of Sharia. Polygamy in the discourse of the "savior of the latter days" that can prevent men from adultery forms a picture of polygamy based on biological interests. It removes the historical essence of polygamy aimed at protecting the weak. The biological path of polygamy in Hafidin's discourse also outlines the purpose of marriage that only ends in sexual pleasure. For when the pleasure is lost, the wife deserves to be divorced. A polygamy campaign wrapped in religious jargon like that carried out by Hafidin certainly harms human values and even reduces the goals of the Sharia. Therefore, such a campaign should not occur because it could tarnish the good name of Islamic Sharia in society. The description of the practice of polygamy as implemented by the Polygamy Community in Indonesia consists of pre-polygamy preparations and activities organized to strengthen and solidify one's resolve to engage in polygamy and maintain it. All activities organized by the Polygamy Community serve as propaganda proclaiming that polygamy is prescribed in religion, wrapped in arguments and as a manifestation of the creation of a peaceful and just polygamous household. Referring to social movements, framing or framing polygamy campaigns, group validation with religious legitimacy (polygamy is no longer based on sociological and political reasons as in the past, but is more often used as a form of male legitimacy under the guise of religion) and "hypersexuality" as a social construct. The polygamy campaign by offering mentoring classes on social media is an effort to sell the image that polygamous marriage is for the benefit of men. Polygamy, which has been made into a trend, will have a lasting impact on social conditions.

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