

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Divinity

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: PERCEPTIONS OF POLYGAMY AND TREATMENT OF POLYGAMOUS MALE CONVERTS: A MOZAMBIKAN CONTEXT

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Different treatment of polygamous male converts within Christendom, the existence of a first wife and non-defined stances in the absence of explicit local and worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church policy pose a challenge in treating polygamous male converts. Moreover, varied perceptions among members about polygamy and polygamous wives' legitimacy exacerbate the challenge in a country where 19.5% of married women live in polygamous relationships.

Ascertaining which wife ought to remain and understanding members' and polygamous converts' perceptions regarding wives' legitimacy in polygamous marriages and polygamy concerning adultery, the sole biblically sanctioned reason for divorce, is the aim of the research. Answering these questions is crucial in the debate towards a framework to better disciple polygamous men. The researcher surveys the

biblical treatment of first and subsequent wives, the roadmap to any course of action in missions. Also, a literature review, a survey of Pentateuch laws and a study of Abrahams, Jacob's, Elkanah's and royal polygamy aid in forming a holistic understanding of the phenomenon. Besides, 481 church members from Tete, Sofala, and Maputo responded to a questionnaire. A non-probabilistic, purposeful sample of four polygamous male converts share their perceptions of polygamy and polygamous converts' treatment through an interview.

The research concludes that, in contexts permissive of polygamy, none of a polygamous man's wives commits adultery, and all are equally legitimate. Both the first wife and the non-defined stances violate no biblical principle, and neither infringes local legislation. Although the former stance is more prevalent among questionnaire respondents, interview participants base their choice on factors other than the chronological order of acquisition. Additionally, God's treatment of polygamous wives and Ellen G. White's dealing with unbiblical marriages demand a treatment that transcends chronological order. Such treatment calls for flexibility whenever the first wife's stance is unfeasible, assessing and mitigating negative social and missional implications of any stance and follow an adequate cultural exegesis of polygamy in specific communities. Furthermore, this treatment requires effective education and training of church members and guidelines making the wife's choice a results of a contextualized discipleship process.

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presented in partial fulfilment

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by

Silas B. Muabsa

March, 2021

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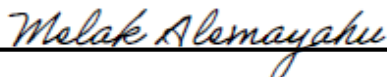


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To God be the Glory

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	VII
LIST OF GRAPHS.....	VIII
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	ix
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	x
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background of the Study.....	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Purpose of the Study	4
Significance of the Study	4
Delimitations	5
Limitations	6
Methodology	6
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
Treatment of Polygamous Converts.....	9
The No Separation Position	9
The Separation Position	12
Evolution of Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Policy on Polygamy	14
Polygamy as a Form of Marriage.....	16
The Etymology and Definition	16
In Biblical Times	17
In Contemporary Africa.....	19
Functions of Polygamy	20
The Mozambican Context.....	22

Polygamy Statistics.....	21
The Legal Framework.....	22
Polygamy versus Adultery	24
Polygamy as Adultery.....	25
Polygamy Different from Adultery.....	26
First and Subsequent Wives	28
Ellen G. White and Polygamy	30
Conclusion.....	32
3. BIBLICAL SURVEY.....	33
Terminologies.....	33
Wife	33
Marriage.....	35
Adultery	36
Laws on Adultery and Polygamy in the Old Testament	37
Laws on Adultery	37
Laws on Polygamy	39
Laws Implying Polygamy	39
Laws Resulting in Polygamy	40
Laws Discouraging Polygamy	42
Laws Regulating Polygamy	44
Difference Between Wives in Scripture.....	46
God’s Treatment of First and Subsequent Wives.....	49
Sarai and Hagar.....	49
Leah and Rachel.....	52
Hannah and Peninnah	54
Royal Polygamy	55
Conclusion.....	56
4. PERCEPTIONS OF POLYGAMY.....	57
Research Methodology.....	57
Research Design	58

Researcher's Worldview	59
Research Setting	59
Population and Sample	61
Validity and Reliability.....	61
Research Instruments	63
Questionnaires	64
Interviews	65
Ethical Considerations	66
Result Presentation and Analysis	67
Questionnaire Results and Analysis	68
Interview Results and Analysis.....	86
Conclusion.....	92
5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....	95
Summary	95
Conclusion.....	96
Recommendations	98
APPENDIXES.....	102
A. Original Questionnaire	103
B. Translated Questionnaire	109
C. Back Translated Questionnaire.....	114
D. Interview Questions.....	119
E. Interview Consent Form	121
F. Authorization Letter	123
BIBLIOGRAPHY	127

LIST OF TABLES

1. Methodology triangulation	61
2. Data collection triangulation	61
3. Respondent's Gender Profile.....	67
4. Respondent's Age Profile.....	69
5. Respondent's Educational Profile	70
6. Respondent's Marital Status.....	71
7. Main Reason for Polygamy	73
8. Main impediment to Polygamy	76
9. What the Bible says about Polygamy	77
10. Condition for Baptism	79
11. Which Wife Should Remain.....	81
12. Wives' Legitimacy	83
13. Caring for Separated Wives.....	85
14. Respondents' Relation to the Church.....	87

LIST OF GRAPHS

1. Respondent's Gender Profile.....	67
2. Respondent's Age Profile.....	68
3. Respondent's Educational Profile	70
4. Respondents' Marial Status.....	71
5. Main Reason for Polygamy	73
6. Respondents Associating Practice to Sexual Desires.....	74
7. Main impediment to Polygamy	75
8. What the Bible says about Polygamy.....	77
9. Condition for Baptism	78
10. Which Wife Should Remain.....	81
11. Wives' Legitimacy	83
12. Caring for Separated Wives.....	85
13. Respondents' Relation to the Church.....	87

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACMS	Adventist Church Management System
<i>b.</i>	Babylonian Talmud
CE	Common Era
cf.	Confer
<i>Git.</i>	<i>Gittin</i>
HALOT	Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament
JAMS	Journal of Adventist Mission Studies
<i>Ketub.</i>	<i>Ketubbot</i>
<i>m.</i>	Mishnah
NBD	New Bible Dictionary
NET	New English Translation
NIDOTTE	New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis
<i>Qidd.</i>	<i>Qiddushin</i>
<i>Yebam.</i>	<i>Yevamot</i>

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In the effort of obeying the Great Commission of making disciples of all nations, missionaries confront cultural practices that may be at significant variance to theirs and seek to provide biblical answers which, may prove challenging to find. One such cultural practices is polygamy, a form of marriage involving multiple partners that differs from the first marriage in the Bible. Mozambique is one of the African countries where polygamy is still prevalent, with 19.5% of women in marital unions being in polygamous relationships in rural and urban communities and across diverse ages and religions.¹

Three are the significant responses towards polygamist converts among Christianity. The first requires that the polygamist convert puts away all his wives and retains only one before his acceptance into full church membership through baptism. On this approach, some open the possibility of the man choosing the wife he intends to keep as the official policy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on polygamy² would seem to imply. Others, and it seems a good number of Africans require that, at all times, only the first wife remains.³ The second approach denies baptism to any

¹Ministério da Saúde (MISAU), Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE) and ICF International (ICFI), *Inquérito Demográfico e de Saúde* (Calverton, MD: MISAU, INE and ICFI, 2011), 62.

²General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Working Policy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists*, 2018-2019 ed. (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2019), 154-155.

³Josephat R. Siron, "Polygamy: An Enduring Problem," *Ministry*, April 1991, 23-24.

polygamist shunning away from demanding the separation from his wives purportedly because doing so would be tantamount to sinning to correct another sin while accepting him as a “catechumen.”⁴ The third position accepts the polygamist into partial church membership where the man is baptised but withheld the right to any church ministry or office.⁵

While the Christian Church may have hoped for a future where polygamy would disappear with time as western cultural ideals and laws became the norm and postponed an exhaustive study of the issue, missionaries have scanty aid in making such decisions in the few cases polygamists accept the gospel. Moreover, even in modern days, some countries, have legislation that allows the practice of polygamy,⁶ not to mention the fast expansion of Islam⁷ and other world religions that seem not to be against polygyny. These trends may prove the hope of a worldwide monogamy a utopia. It is probably the risk of either perpetuating polygamy contrary to God’s ideal for marriages or promoting unbiblical dissolution of reasonably happy and stable unions with the social and community disruptions that bring such varied sentiments and practices in Christianity. Also, assumptions that God only recognises the first as the only and legitimate wife and the presupposition that polygamy constitutes

⁴South African Institute of Race Relations 1892-1974, *Polygamist Converts: Shall we Baptise and Receive them into Christian Fellowship?* AD1715 (Johannesburg, ZA: Historical Papers Research Archive, 2013), 1-5.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Lea Mwambene, “What is the future of Polygyny (Polygamy) in Africa?” *Pioneer in Peer-Reviewed/Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal* 20, no. 68 (2017): 4-7.

⁷“Mozambique: The World Factbook,” Central Intelligence Agency, last updated May 04, 2021, accessed May 07, 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mozambique/#people-and-society>. Using a 2017 estimate, the World Factbook indicates that 18.9% of the Mozambican population is Muslim.

adultery⁸ may inform the requirement of dissolving subsequent marriages. The variance in treatment within Christendom, presuppositions and perceptions of polygamy leave missionaries encountering other world religions and church members with mixed sentiments towards the treatment of polygamous male converts. Moreover, such perceptions may result in a conflict between what members believe and established worldwide church policies regarding the treatment of polygamous converts.

Statement of the Problem

The different treatment of polygamist converts in Christian missions, owing to perceptions and interpretations of polygamy concerning adultery,⁹ raises the question of whether only the first or any of the wives should or can remain upon the conversion of a polygamous man. Moreover, God's attitude towards divorce, adultery and polygamy in the Old Testament may arouse concerns that attainment of a monogamous state through putting away some of the wives, risks committing a greater evil to correct a lesser one. The question about which wife should remain becomes a challenge for the church that needs to ascertain the conversion of polygamists while ensuring that such a choice does not consist or reveal sinful tendencies in itself.

⁸Tom Shipley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Law: A Patriarchal Manifesto* (Baltimore, MD: Institute for Christian Patriarchy, 2010), 84.

⁹Russell L. Staples, "Evangelism Among Resistant Peoples with Deeply Entrenched Polygamy," *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies (JAMS)* 2, no. 1 (2006): 5. Staples asserts that missionaries' treatment of polygamous converts after the Anglican Lambeth Conference of 1888, rested upon regarding polygamy as "institutionalized adultery," not marriage, and as such, separation in such cases did not amount to divorce. This rationale justified requiring polygamous converts to attain monogamous status through putting away of their wives save one before baptism and acceptance into Christian membership.

Purpose of the Study

This study endeavours to determine whether only the first wife or any of the wives should or can remain upon conversion of a polygynist. The study will determine the assumptions underlying the different positions in dealing with polygamist converts among Christendom and God's attitude towards polygamous wives and dissolution of such marriages. In such a quest, the paper seeks to:

1. Establish whether the first, is the only legitimate wife in a polygamous arrangement.
2. Establish whether any of the wives in a polygamous setting commits adultery and thus requiring the dissolution of such relationship.
3. Determine the perceptions of Seventh-day Adventist Church members and polygynist converts regarding polygamy and the choice of the wife to remain upon conversion of a polygamous man.

Significance of the Study

Much research addresses polygamy through theological, missiological, historical and ecclesiastical lenses. However, most of the studies limit themselves on whether polygamy is right or wrong. For example, Davidson,¹⁰ Staples,¹¹ and du Preez,¹² are among the prominent Seventh-day Adventist scholars who analysed the topic and recommended what should be the response of the Church in such cases.

¹⁰Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of YAHWEH: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 178-212.

¹¹Staples, 1-25.

¹²Ronald A. G. du Preez, *Polygamy in the Bible* (Barrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 1993), 16-116.

Gane¹³ engages the Christian responses towards polygynist converts evaluating polygamy against adultery without engaging fully the Christian bias towards the first wife stance. This paper will contribute to the debate evaluating the Church's response against God's attitude towards polygamy and adultery, the sole biblical ground for dissolution of a marriage. Thus, attempting to provide a biblical basis informing missionary practice on which wife should or can remain. Moreover, the paper will bring perceptions of polygamy from church members and polygamist converts that may shed light into aspects of the phenomenon that other authors may not explicitly unveil.

As members, frontline mission workers and pastors confront the challenge of discipling polygynist converts. It becomes clear that a simple policy statement without addressing the perceptions about polygamy is insufficient. Therefore, this study will contribute to a better presentation of the gospel requirements to polygynist converts while identifying deficiencies in the biblical understanding of the phenomenon among believers. Further, the study presents an opportunity to survey the evolution of the church policy on the treatment of polygamous converts that may strengthen the current position or continue a dialogue in refining the practice according to Biblical teachings.

Delimitations

The researcher approaches the study assuming that polygamy is not God's ideal for marriage. As such, the study does not delve into the debate of whether God approves or not of polygamy, even if alluding to such. The scope of the study only relates to polygyny, not including polyandry since the latter is rare and has little

¹³Roy E. Gane, "Some Biblical Principles Relevant to Evangelism Among Polygamous Peoples," *JAMS* 2, no. 1 (2006): 29-43. In his exegetical study, Gane looks into terminology related to polygamy against the context of marriages in the Old Testament.

coverage in the Bible. While the research may include and refer to polygamy and polygyny in Africa and other countries with similar documented aspects of the phenomenon as in Mozambique, the study focuses on the Mozambican reality.

Limitations

Due to travel and church gathering restrictions as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher will have to enlist the assistance of local church pastors and elders to distribute and collect questionnaires from members. Moreover, relying on online survey methods will reduce the involvement of elderly church members, who have more cultural and historical insights on the phenomenon, and those who have no access to such online tools. Remote interview with the assistance of local church pastors through WhatsApp and Zoom calls will replace face-to-face interviews, preventing the researcher from grasping respondents' non-verbal cues fully. Besides, the scarcity of polygamous converts within the Seventh-day Adventists will reduce the interview sample size to the minimum possible.

Methodology

The research begins with a literary survey to understand and evaluate the assumptions about marriages, adultery and polygamy, informing the varying Christian responses to the challenge of polygynist converts. A survey on Pentateuch laws explores the relationship of polygamy to adultery, and a study on polygamous marriages of Abraham, Jacob, Elkanah and royal polygamy explores how the Bible portrays the difference between first and subsequent wives and God's dealing with first and subsequent wives in Old Testament polygamous relationships.

A questionnaire (see Appendix A) gathers Seventh-day Adventists Church members' perceptions while a semi-standardized interview¹⁴ (see Appendix D) gathers perceptions of convert polygamists on polygamy and treatment of polygamist converts seeking membership with the denomination. 500 respondents from two churches in the most polygamous regions of the country (Tete and Sofala) and two churches in the Capital City with the lowest polygamy numbers will answer a questionnaire.¹⁵

The researcher will use a nonprobabilistic purposeful unique sample of a minimum of three participants for the interview allowing the researcher to gain insight into what leads to polygamy and what influences the choice of the wife to keep from the perspective of a male polygamous convert with no intention to infer the results to a broader population.¹⁶ A pilot study in similar contexts will assess the research instruments and inform changes before the study. Questionnaires will be translated and back-translated (see Appendixes B and C) to ascertain the accuracy of the translation and all interviewees will sign a consent form (see Appendix E) before offering the interview.

Data analysis will begin with the piloting stage and run through the data collection exercise, which may inform changes to the initial questionnaire and semi-structured interviews and only finish after collecting all data. Interviewees will receive codes as Mr. W and Mr. X, while questionnaires will be coded according to their provenance as Central and South. The secondary questions will shed light on the primary question's answers. The presentation and discussion of the data collection

¹⁴Bruce L. Berg, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, 4th ed. (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 2001), 66-73.

¹⁵*Inquérito Demográfico e de Saúde*, 62.

¹⁶Sharan B. Merriam and Elizabeth J. Tisdell, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, 4th ed. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2016), 96.

results and suggested solutions will make up the fourth chapter of the research paper.

The last chapter will contain a summary, conclusions and recommendation from the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Treatment of Polygamous Converts

During the last 150 years, scholars, pastors, missionaries and Christian denominations have engaged in extensive studies to inform a sound policy on what should happen to polygamists who accept Christ and seeks membership within the Christian church through baptism. It would seem that the apparent agreement existing among early Christian missionaries of the late ninetieth century has degenerated in “a complete Babel” in the words of Staples¹ as scholars, review and grapple with stubborn and everchanging forms of polygamy.

Two major positions exist among Christendom hinging on assumptions about the functions, nature of polygamy, and perceived role of the church in the communities it presents the gospel. One position promotes a no separation policy while the other a separation policy, each with two main variations, as the church decides upon baptism and admission into membership of polygamist converts. The following paragraphs will explore the main assumptions of these views and their variations.

¹Staples, 4.

The No Separation Position

“The Mennonites, Salvation Army, Ghana Baptist Church, African Methodist, Episcopal Zion Church and the Assemblies of God”² are examples of such churches. E. A. Ayandele after indicating that Bishops John William Colenso, Bickersteth of Exeter and the linguist R. N. Cust argue that polygamy is not contrary to the decalogue, calls the church to be lenient to such cultural practices, deeming the ban on polygamy as a “non-Scriptural, man-made doctrine.”³ The primary tenant of this stance is God’s indictment against putting away a wife aside from adultery, whether in polygamy or monogamy marriages, as Stokes argues that no polygamist or monogamist in a lawful union would free himself from such a state without sinning by overriding God’s prohibition against divorce.⁴ Okorie, equates demanding a polygamist to become monogamist to what Judaizers did in demanding circumcision from gentiles as a condition of church acceptance, which Paul refuted, even though, it was God’s prescription in the Old Testament.⁵

Reverend Holm, at the Centenary Conference on the Protestant Missions of the World of 1888 represents the first variation of the no separation policy. Describing the separation policy as “driving out one devil by another,” he argues that the polygamist retains his wives, not receive baptism but remain as a catechumen until such a time

²Josphat Yego, “Polygamy and the African Church: A Survey,” *East Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 3, no.1 (1984): 78.

³E. A. Ayandele, *African Historical Studies* (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1979), 214.

⁴G. G. Stokes, “On the Treatment of Polygamy in Christian Missions,” *The Churchman* 1, no. 5 (February, 1887): 231-35.

⁵A. M. Okorie, “African Polygamy: Church Action, Community Reaction, and Personal Interaction” *Indian Journal of Theology* 36, no. 2 (1994): 8.

that the Lord's provision would make the man monogamous.⁶ Such could happen when the wives voluntarily leave the man or by death of some of the wives.⁷ This is the stance in resolution five of the 1888 Lambeth Conference.⁸

Johnston, records Rev. Professor T. Smith concurring that requiring separation is a violation of God's indictment against divorce and contending that the church has no right in excluding them. Thus advocating for baptism without separation and withholding the right to any ecclesiastical office, in his view, according to Paul's instruction in 1 Tim 3:12 and Titus 1:6.⁹ Siron seems to agree with Smith as he concludes his article in Ministry Magazine saying "there can be no genuine reason that we should deny people the privilege of salvation simply because they were polygamists when they heard the gospel."¹⁰ Gbonigi, who charges missionaries with heightening the clash between Christian ethics and cultural family values for being culturally-conditioned Europeans, suggests that the church accepts polygamist with their wives to avoid prostitution and juvenile delinquency¹¹ which are rising in contemporary westernized Africa. Resolution 26 of the 1988 Lambeth Conference is of this view without restricting church leadership.¹²

⁶James Johnston ed., *Report of the Centenary Conference on the Protestant Missions of the World Held in Exeter Hall (June 9th-19th)*, 3rd ed, vol. 2 (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1888), 52.

⁷Ibid, 2:51-57.

⁸Anglican Consultative Council, "The Lambeth Conference: Resolution Archive from 1888," Anglican Communion Office, 2005, 17, accessed June 13, 2021, <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/127722/1888.pdf>.

⁹Johnston, 2:63.

¹⁰Siron, 23-24.

¹¹Emmanuel Gbonigi, "Christian Ethics Versus African Cultural Values," *Transformation* 19, no. 1 (January 2002): 79.

¹²Anglican Consultative Council, "The Lambeth Conference: Resolution Archive from 1988," Anglican Communion Office, 2005, 2, accessed June 13, 2021, <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/127749/1988.pdf>.

Thus, the no separation policy hinges mainly on God's indictment against divorce aside from marital infidelity, the lack of an outright prohibition to the practice in the Bible, recognizing polygamy as an acceptable form of marriage in polygamous societies, and the lack of a similar instruction in the Bible against an apparent presence of polygamists in the early church.

The Separation Position

The Separation view appeals heavily to the ideal marriage according to Gen 1:27; 2:22, 24; Mark 10:7 and Hos 2:19 and the negative aspects of such unions and demands polygamists to attain a state of monogamy before acceptance into church membership. Proponents of this view presuppose the invalidity of at least one if not all marriages of the polygamist rendering them eligible for dissolution.¹³ Ron du Preez represents this sentiment in no uncertain terms when saying "never should any compromise be made with biblical principles by permitting practicing polygamists, either husbands or wives, to be baptized into the membership of the church."¹⁴ Moreover, Davidson may be hinting at this stance in alluding to the intention of the narrator of Genesis to show Jacob's return to monogamy after conversion.¹⁵ This stance has two variations which stem from the assumptions regarding the sinful nature of polygamy.

The Non-Defined Stance. The first variation requires that the man puts away all wives save one without specifying whether the first or any of the subsequent wives.

¹³Siron, 23.

¹⁴Ronald A. G. du Preez, *Pathology of Polygamy: Cross-Cultural Mission on a Biblical Basis* (Berrien Springs, MD: Litho Tech Graphics, 2007), 139.

¹⁵Richard M. Davidson, "Condemnation and Grace: Polygamy and Concubinage in the Old Testament." *Christian Research Journal* 38, no. 5 (2015): 35.

The major argument for this stance could reside on the assumption that all marriages in a polygamist context are invalid since these would have not been Christian marriages and all non-Christian marriages are evil and barbaric.¹⁶ It is noteworthy that the Seventh-day Adventist Church subscribes to this stance after evoking God’s plan for marriage, polygamy as bringing confusion and lowering moral standards that govern human society and the church besides posing a challenge to Christian principles and compromise.¹⁷

The First Wife Stance. A stance that seems to emanate from the Roman Catholic Church’s position as early as 866 C.E. when pope Nicholas I, according to Urrutia, stated that “Therefore, if one is found to have two wives at the same time he is to be compelled (*cogatur amittere*) to lose one and keep the first.”¹⁸ The stance may also emanate from the church’s inclination to promote social justice whilst protecting women from the lustful nature of men thus requiring that the man keeps “the first and only true wife,”¹⁹ which some term as the real wife or original wife. This stance prevents younger wives remaining in detriment to barren and older wives. Proponents of this stance argue that, biblically and culturally, the first wife has more rights to the marriage besides the biblical phrase “wife of your youth” in Prov 5:18 and Mal 2:14 refer to the first wife. Kenya is notable for this widespread approach together with the African Inland Church²⁰ and the CCAP (Church of Central Africa Presbyterian) Synod

¹⁶Siron, 24.

¹⁷General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Working Policy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists*, 2019-2020 ed. (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2019), 159-160.

¹⁸Francisco Javier Urrutia, “Can Polygamy be Compatible with Christianity?” *African Ecclesial Review* 23, no. 5 (1981): 276.

¹⁹Staples, 2.

²⁰Yego, 78.

of Livingstonia in Malawi also holds the same position.²¹ The first wife stance does not consider whether the first marriage was customary or civil, it simply looks at the chronological order of the union. The Nigerian Baptist Convention is one of the churches that take this stance.²² In Mozambique, there is an apparent inclination towards this stance as chapter four will indicate that 46% of questionnaire respondents elect this option.

Evolution of Seventh-day Adventist Church's Policy on Polygamy

Staples and du Preez review the evolution of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's policy on polygamy.²³ This section probes the rationale for such resolutions while establishing its views regarding the wife to remain. Beginning with a 1913 recommendation with heathen and Muslims in mind, it requires the man to live only with his first and lawful wife without presenting any rationale. The June 1926 General Conference resolution on polygamy by many races in mission lands presents polygamy as challenging Christian principles, its permission in the church as constituting a compromise. The resolution recommends that no practicing polygamist be admitted without a probationary period for examining the sincerity of his separation

²¹Moses Mlenga, *Polygamy in Northern Malawi: A Christian Reassessment* (Luwingu, Malawi: Mzuni Press, 2016), 46.

²²Apollos Inuwa Handan, "The Nigerian Baptist Convention Use of the Bible in Moral Decision Making About Polygamy" (ThM thesis, Western Theological Seminary, Holland, MI, 2003), 56.

²³Ronald A. G. du Preez, *Polygamy in the Bible*, 21–22; Staples, 5-9. Du Preez looks at the three policies in relation to admission or not of practicing polygamists into the church. Staples surveys these policies and recommendations in relation to what missionaries believed to be the Christian or biblical solution and accepted missionary practices in the area (p. 5).

from the practice.²⁴ In 1930, the resolution also addresses polygamy as a practice of heathen lands, evokes the negative effects on laid off wife and asserts God's condemnation of the practice in His Word. Resolving to, upon recommendation of local committees, admit such as probational members. The resolution requires that only one wife remains in places where separation does not result in social injustice.²⁵ The General Conference Policy of June 1941 affirms monogamy as God's plan, its contravention as resulting in confusion, lowering moral standards for society and church, its practice by non-Christians constituting a challenge to Christian principles and compromise if permitted. Therefore, the policy recommends that the man puts "away all wives save one."²⁶ The General Conference Working Policy of 1977 does not have any substantial changes from the 1941 policy. A suggested resolution of March 1986 builds on God's monogamous plan from the "one flesh" model, polygamy as challenging the monogamy principles and representing a less than ideal situation although prevalent in biblical times and affirms the "sacredness and inviolability" of the family unit.²⁷ It thus recommends that polygamous men in marriages conforming to tribal, legal and cultural structures which are not a disguise for otherwise adulterous situations, may be admitted into church membership without dissolving such relationships while withholding church leadership positions in the church.

A survey of these policies and recommendations reveals that their scope was polygamy of heathen lands, only the 1913 recommendation specified the wife to

²⁴General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, "Minutes of the Sixth Meeting of the General Conference Committee" (Milwaukee, WI, June 13, 1925), 13. Office of Archives, Statistics and Research.

²⁵General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, "Minutes of the Fifty Ninth Meeting of the General Conference Committee," (November 3, 1930), 163, Office of Archives, Statistics and Research.

²⁶Staples, 23.

²⁷Ibid, 25.

remain, all build their case on polygamy as a violation of God's monogamic plan but none uses the term sin or adultery to characterize polygamy.

Polygamy as a Form of Marriage

The Etymology and Definition

Recent debates on same-sex marriages heighten the variance in the definition of marriage which for centuries the Christian church defined as “the official, church-sanctioned union between one man and one woman”²⁸ rendering all forms of non-civil and non-Christian marriages invalid. Today, the world is moving towards a definition of marriage as “what you want it to be”²⁹ forcing the church to redefine what makes marriage a marriage. Whether cultural and social norms, civil legislations of countries, church policies, the Bible or an intersection of all.

Marriage is according to the Oxford Dictionary of English “the legally or formally recognized union of two people as partners in a personal relationship”³⁰ according to the English dictionary. In sociology, beyond being a rite and a process, it is a social institution where a man and woman commit for the rest of their lives to each other in a special kind of social and lawful dependence to form and maintain a family. Through history, marriages existed as an economic alliance between families, legitimizing sexual relations, parenthood and offspring.³¹ The New Bible Dictionary

²⁸Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, “The Church and Non-Traditional Marriage,” *Canadian Mennonite*, October 26, 1998, 6.

²⁹Don Horrocks, “What is Wrong with Polygamy?” *Evangelical Allegiance*, October 24, 2014, accessed June 22, 2020, <https://www.eauk.org/idea/polygamy.cfm>.

³⁰*Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “marriage,” accessed June 09, 2021, <https://www.lexico.com/definition/marriage>.

³¹Marilyn Ihinger-Tallman, “Marriage,” *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, 2nd ed, eds. Edgar F. Borgatta and Rhonda J. V. Montgomery (New York: Gale Group, 2000), 3:1733.

defines marriage as a “state where a man and a woman live together in a sexual relationship with the approval of the social group.”³²

The word “polygamy” derives from the Greek πολυγαμία as presupposing polygamy as a form of marriage.³³ Zeitzen, who looks at it as often married, defines polygamy as a practice where a given “person is married to more than one spouse at the same time.”³⁴ Polygamy, from the Greek meaning frequent or many heterosexual³⁵ marriage is the custom of having more than one husband or wife simultaneously.³⁶ The definition of polygamy entails the concept of it being a form of marriage.

In Biblical Times

Moses’ statement at the end of creation account, “God saw all that he had made—and it was very good!” [(Gen 1:31) New English Translation (NET)] indicates that the first human marriage was monogamous. Jesus’ reference to the creation event in Matt 19:4 indicates God’s intention in making that first marriage a model for future marriages.³⁷ Alongside monogamy, the ideal marriage from creation, polygyny as form of marriage pervaded not only the patriarchal and Israelite narratives but the Ancient Near Eastern and arguably the New Testament times. Polygamy cuts across

³²J. S. Wright, “Marriage,” *New Bible Dictionary (NBD)*, 3rd ed, ed. D. R. W. Wood (England: University and Colleges Christian Fellowship, 1996), 732.

³³Gane, 7.

³⁴Miriam Koktvedgaard Zeitzen, *Polygamy: A Cross-Cultural Analysis* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2020), 3.

³⁵While dictionaries will not specifically indicate the heterosexual nature of polygamy, it is important to note that when the term is used it does not include homosexual marriages and there for in homosexual relationships the term polyamory becomes more applicable.

³⁶*MacMillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*, International Student ed. (2002), s.v. “Polygamy.”

³⁷Siron, 23.

all social levels from Monarchs like David, Levites to commoners like Elkana³⁸ against God's will for their wellbeing.³⁹ Biblical, extra biblical records⁴⁰ of its occurrence and laws regulating the practice, hint at polygamy as an existing form of marriage in the Old Testament Times and was lawful among the Jews until the sixth century Justinian reforms.⁴¹ Moreover, rabbinic texts (e.g. *m. Ketub.* 10) refer to the practice. The law of Arcadius and Honorius of 393 C.E. stating "None of the Jews shall keep his custom in marriage unions, neither shall he contract nuptials according to his law, or enter into several matrimonyes at the same time"⁴² assumes the practice of polygamy by Jews of that time.

Marriage, with a primary function of providing a male heir in the Ancient Near East, ensured care during old age and inheritance. Although the Ancient Near East and Old Testament cultures were permissive polygynists, they were predominantly monogamists. Longman III, attributes the rarity of polygamy to the requirement to pay a bride price as marriage procedures restricting the practices to only those who could afford.⁴³ Kunhiyop quotes Jasper who asserts that polygamy was a full marriage that deserved all protection accorded by law⁴⁴ while Gbonigi cautions the reader not to

³⁸Staples, 12.

³⁹Calvin B. Rock, "Marriage and Family," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 728.

⁴⁰Flavius Josephus, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*, trans. William Whiston (USA: Delmarva Publications, Inc., 2016), 4538, Kindle. Josephus says polygamy was "an immemorial custom among the Jews, and their forefathers, the patriarchs" in the footnotes to his assertion of the long-standing permission on Jews marrying many wives.

⁴¹C. C. Kroeger, "Women in Greco-Roman World and Judaism," *Dictionary of New Testament Backgrounds (DNTB)*, Crain A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, eds. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, 2000), 1277.

⁴²Adiel Schremer, "How Much Jewish Polygyny in Roman Palestine?" *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 63 (1997): 181-223, accessed June 13, 2021.

⁴³Tremper Longman III, ed., *The Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, (2013), s.v. "Family."

⁴⁴Samuel Waje Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics* (Nairobi, Kenya: Hippo Books, 2008), 235.

confuse these acceptable traditions of the Hebrews with God's wishes for His people.⁴⁵

The Greco-Roman world was more tolerant to sexual arrangements other than polygamy. Greeks did not always approve concubinage but recognized its practice by other people. Roman law forbade a married man to have a concubine but men of lower status and soldiers had concubines who upon discharge could become legal wives.⁴⁶

It does seem from the biblical records that marriages almost always began as monogamous and became polygamous as a result of prevailing circumstances such as, infertility, increasing financial resources of the household, surplus of adult women in society, levirate practices and societal demands.⁴⁷ One could safely agree with Horrocks, without discarding some sinful tendencies by a few, that polygyny was a form of marriage to address specific issues and such marriages were always an exception never the norm.⁴⁸

In Contemporary Africa

In Africa, the anthropological truism stating that what is legal and advocated as ideal in relation to marriage is not what people practice stands true. Moreover, laws abolishing polygamy did not end the practice, rather promote its mutation continuing widespread cross-culturally in the world.⁴⁹ A study with 494 157 women from 34 Sub-Saharan countries by James Fenske concludes that polygamy is prevalent in sub-

⁴⁵Gbonigi, 79

⁴⁶C. S. Keener, "Marriage," *DNTB*, 683.

⁴⁷Jon L. Berquist, "Marriage," *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 862.

⁴⁸Horrocks, "What is Wrong with Polygamy?"

⁴⁹Zeitzen, 5.

Saharan Africa with a major concentration in Western Africa down to Tanzania where 28% of the women indicated to be in polygamy.⁵⁰ These findings corroborate those of Josephat Yego.⁵¹ Mwambene, concludes her comparative study on recent African legislation that either legalize, prohibit or regulate⁵² polygyny stating that its fast transformation into unofficial or informal relationships demonstrates that its essence in Africa will not change.⁵³ While many have indeed predicted that African polygamy is in demise, studies indicate that it is not only flourishing but constantly changing and adapting to the circumstances and new interpersonal relations.⁵⁴

Functions of Polygamy

A brief look into the functions of polygamy may inform any interpretation of the practice and missionary policies. Some authors highlight male's sinful craving for multiple sex partners, desire for recognition, status, wealth and huge dowry from marrying off many daughters.⁵⁵ Others, like Höschele point their readers to polygamy as a traditional ideal in dealing with several social functions of marriage and family in the African culture.⁵⁶ Nthamburi, reminds the reader of migrant labour where a man

⁵⁰James Fenske, "African Polygamy: Past and Present" (Munich Personal Research Papers in Economics, University of Oxford, 2013): 3, accessed June 13, 2021, <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/id/eprint/48526>.

⁵¹Yego, 62.

⁵²Kenya and Swaziland have legislations that legalize, Mozambique is swiftly moving towards prohibiting while South Africa regulates the practice.

⁵³Mwambene, 23.

⁵⁴Zeitzen, 18

⁵⁵Gaskiyane, 19-20.

⁵⁶Stefan Höschele, "Polygamy Among the Tanzania Maasai and Seventh-day Adventist Church: Reflections on a Missiological and Theological Problem," *JAMS* 2, no. 1 (January 2006): 54.

would have a rural and an urban home or in the recent past when most southern African men worked in the mines of South Africa and had also several homes.⁵⁷ Children, especially male children, who in African culture are born to the community, never to the nuclear family, and guarantee the perpetuity of the family's name, lineage, ensure support during old age.⁵⁸ Therefore, childlessness would lead to the extended family or the first wife to initiate the process of marrying a secondary wife and thus functions as a deterrent of divorce because marriage is incomplete without children in many African communities.⁵⁹ Baloyi indicates polygamy as solution for sexual activity beyond menopause, during pregnancy, nursing and illness of the wife which prevented adultery by the husband, and catered for the widows within the clan through levirate marriages. Polygamy also provided marriages for all women as adult singleness is a curse and provided labour in the farm.⁶⁰

Different authors and studies indicate that though there could be lustful reasons, the main reasons for polygamy in Africa are to avoid divorce and immorality among African communities whose marriages did not have sexual intercourse as a primary function but guarantying progeny, continuance of the community, and sustenance.

⁵⁷Zablon Nthamburi, "Polygamy and Christianity in Contemporary African Society," in *Responsible Leadership in Marriage and Family*, ed. Mary N. Getui (Nairobi, Kenya: Acton Publishers, 2008), 69.

⁵⁸Gaskiyane, 15-16.

⁵⁹Mwambene, 3.

⁶⁰Elijah M. Baloyi, "Critical Reflections on Polygamy in the African Christian Context," *Missionalia* 41, no. 2 (Aug 2013): 168-173.

The Mozambican Context

Mozambique is one of the Southern African countries where polygamy occurs despite efforts from the post-colonial government to promote equal opportunities for men and women. The efforts for eradicating the practice are evident through in the recent amendments to the penal code and family law that discourage the practice. However, the practice seems to prevail implying that traditional cultural practices and norms still take precedence over legal standing in the value system of a number of communities as Paulina Chiziane's *The First Wife: A Tale of Polygamy* portrays.⁶¹

Polygamy Statistics. A Demographic and Health Survey in Mozambique⁶² indicates similar trends of prevalence of polygamy as those in the rest of Africa with 19% of married women between ages 15 and 49 in polygamous marriages. The highest prevalence is in the central province of Sofala with 30.1% and lowest in the capital city of Maputo with 5.3%. Polygamy in Mozambique is highest among the rural communities reporting 23% compared to 12% of the urban women. The study highlights an interesting finding that a greater number of women in urban areas (14%), educated (15%) and with higher socioeconomic levels (19%) do not know whether their husband have other wives comparing to only 3% of rural, uneducated (2%) and of lowest socioeconomic levels (2%). These findings substantiate Arnaldo's claim that educated and urban women, though preferring monogamy, tend to be more in informal

⁶¹Paulina Chiziane is a famous Mozambican female writer who addresses the social issues that the country grapples with and in her book, *The First Wife: A Tale of Polygamy*, she portrays the reality and existence of polygamy in contemporary Urban Mozambique. In 1990, Chiziane wrote another novel, *Balada do Amor ao Vento* portraying Colonial Era Polygamy of Southern Mozambique.

⁶²*Inquérito Demográfico e de Saúde*, 62.

polygamy.⁶³ Informal polygamy being a situation where men have many steady sexual partners and homes without social and legal requirements.

Arnaldo's study in 2003 indicates that people not ascribing to any religion had the highest levels of polygamy (34.3%) followed by Muslims (30%) and Zionists (31%). Protestants (24%) and Catholics (13%) still responded with significant degree of polygamy.⁶⁴ These studies demonstrate that formal polygamy is still common in Mozambique and might linger a while calling the church to better address the issue. However, while prevalent, monogamy continues to be the majority of the indigenous marriages as was by the 15th and 17th centuries according to the Catholic Father Dom Gonçalo da Silveira.⁶⁵

The Legal Framework. Since independence in 1975, the Mozambican government embarked on a progressive agenda to abolish polygamy in light of equal rights of men and women and international conventions. The inclusion, in the December 2019 revision of the penal code, of unregistered marriages, stipulation of a prison penalty in addition to a fine, constitutes a progress in criminalizing bigamy which previously only contemplated registered marriages.⁶⁶

The Family Law 22/2019 of 11 December⁶⁷ deems as marriage a voluntary and singular civil, religious or traditional union between a man and a woman to constitute

⁶³Carlos Arnaldo, "Tendências e Fatores Associados a Poligamia em Moçambique," in *Mosaico Sociológico*, eds. Nair Teles, Baltazar Muianga and Eugénio Brás (Maputo, Mozambique: Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 2015), 203.

⁶⁴Ibid., 201.

⁶⁵Universidade de Aveiro, "Memórias de África e do Oriente," *Moçambique: Documentário Trimestral*, no. 17 (March 1939), 31.

⁶⁶"Lei n.º 24/2019: Código Penal," *Boletim da República*, I Série, N.º 248, Art. 259, (Dezembro 2019): 5730.

⁶⁷"Lei n.º 22/2019: Lei da Família," *Boletim da República*, I Série, N.º 248, Art. 259, (Novembro 2019): 5598-5638.

a family but only a monogamic, religious and traditional marriage, duly inscribed or transcribed carries the same value and efficacy as a civil marriage. The law mandates registration of all marriages but does not render unregistered marriages, inexistent neither null. Moreover, the existence of a non-dissolved civil, religious or traditional marriage may render a subsequent marriage null contrary to the previous Family Law 10/2004⁶⁸ where only duly registered previous marriages made subsequent ones voidable upon legal action within one year of their celebration. The nullity of a subsequent marriage resolves itself with the nullifying of the preceding ones.

De facto unions, are singular, stable and lasting, for a period longer than one uninterrupted year, unions between a man and a woman legally capable to marry but did not celebrate a marriage. Such unions are relevant for the presumption of maternity and paternity, community of acquired property and may render subsequent marriages null or voidable.

Therefore, as Mwambene rightly points out, the Family Law prohibits polygamy but continues lacking implicit prohibition by recognizing unregistered religious and traditional marriages even if without the value and civil effect of a civil marriage. This lack of implicit prohibition, promotes polygamy, will contribute, though in a lesser degree than the previous law, and may explain the prevalence of the practice many years after the 2004 law.⁶⁹

Polygamy versus Adultery

Probably the policy towards polygynist converts depends greatly on whether polygamy is or is not akin to adultery which is the sole reason the bible may accept

⁶⁸“Lei n.º 10/2004: Lei da Família,” *Boletim da República*, I Série, N.º 34, Art 67 (Agosto 2004): 342-(7).

⁶⁹Mwambene, 15-18.

separation between a married man and woman. Adultery is defined as “sex that takes place between a married person and someone who is not their husband or wife.”⁷⁰ Or rather, adultery and fornication are sexual relationships not recognised as constituting a marriage by society. The proponents of a separation policy understand polygamy to be or as akin to adultery while those defending a no separation policy tend to view polygamy not as a less than ideal form of marriage.

Polygamy as Adultery

Even without stating it outrightly, the Christian church has traditionally portrayed polygamy as akin to adultery⁷¹ which may inform the historical stance of the Christian church in accepting only the first wife of a man as the only married woman while relegating all subsequent wives to adulterous relationships.⁷² Paul Schlehlein argues from Matt 5 and 19, Rom 7:2- and 1 Cor 6, 7 and contends for the possibility of committing adultery with one’s spouse, as the passages define adultery as marrying without dissolving a previous marriage. He further indicates that adultery by a woman in a second marriage did not receive the death penalty in Deuteronomy 24 making polygamy another instance of adultery where God extended his grace and mercy.⁷³ Answering the question “Why is that the Lord never forbade polygamy?” the Orthodox Presbyterian Church’s website uses Matt 19:2-9 as forbidding divorce aside marital infidelity and polygamy. The website asserts that the same reasoning that renders subsequent marriage without a previous biblically acceptable divorce to be

⁷⁰*Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*, s.v. “Adultery.”

⁷¹Kunhiyop, 223.

⁷²Nthamburi, 67.

⁷³Paul D. Schlehlein, “Pastoring Polygamists: Biblical Counsel for the African Church” (MA thesis, Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, North Carolina, 2013), 71-73, accessed May 23, 2021, <https://rts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/201302-Schlehlein-Paul.pdf>.

adultery renders polygamy the same evil.⁷⁴ Roy E. Gane asserts that polygamy is tantamount to adultery in the United States of America.⁷⁵ This earlier position was common among many missionaries and western thinkers according to Okorie.⁷⁶ Probably, proponents of this position use the logic of Dwight of the 19th century that a polygamist is an adulterer because having one wife, he marries another without first lawfully divorcing the previous wife.⁷⁷ It is noteworthy that Rock, in the section on Marriage aberration, while not equating polygamy to adultery, nevertheless, states that it is both sinful and illegal for Christians living in most western countries.⁷⁸ Ron du Preez⁷⁹ seems to reflect the same opinion. While some proponents, if not all, of this view would believe one could commit adultery with a person to whom someone is lawfully and even legally married, which can be true, most ascribe only the subsequent marriages to a state of adultery. The General Conference Committees, *Polygamous Marriages in Heathen Lands* indicates that a person who ventures into a polygamous relationship after knowing the truth is living in adultery.⁸⁰

Polygamy Different from Adultery

A suggested resolution of March 1986, by an ad hoc committee to amend the current Seventh-day Adventist Church's policy on polygamy hints that the committee

⁷⁴"Polygamy Forbidden?" The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, accessed June 21, 2020, https://opc.org/qa.html?question_id=217.

⁷⁵Gane, 2.

⁷⁶Okorie, 4.

⁷⁷Serenio Edward Dwight, *The Hebrew Wife or The Scriptural Laws of Polygamy and Incest* (New York: Leavitt, Lord and Company, 1836), 11-12.

⁷⁸Rock, 736.

⁷⁹Ron du Preez, "Polygamy in the Bible with Implications for Seventh-day Adventist Missiology" (DMin Project Report, Andrews University, 1993), 289.

⁸⁰"Minutes of the Fifty Ninth Meeting of the General Conference Committee," 164.

members, if not the church in general, did not regard polygamy as adultery.⁸¹ Robert Nguyen Cramer points out not finding documents of the early church equating polygamy to adultery while indicating that many a times the practice was a way to avoid adultery by divorcing a wife that did not commit adultery against her husband.⁸²

Kisaka who believes that this equality is a product of the western mind agrees with Cramer in the African function of polygamy guarding against immorally.⁸³ Adeney joins the two previous authors in contending that it is the “western pietistic obsession with sexual sin” that conditioned missionaries to equate polygamy with adultery by failing to recognise the role of polygamy as an acceptable social structure in its own context.⁸⁴ B. L. Cocherell believes that as long as these entail a lawful marriage agreement between each man and each woman in the relationship with the consent of all existing wives it is not adultery. He further notes that Matt 5:31-32; 10:11-19; 19:3-9; and Luke 16:18 sanction that such marriage contracts can only cease by death or fornication or adultery which are sexual relationships between a man and a woman outside of marriage.⁸⁵

Discussing God’s dealing with David after his adultery with Bathsheba, Redford claims that God did not invalidate David’s marriage to Bathsheba and David commits adultery not with his many wives that he already had but with Bathsheba who

⁸¹Staples, 25.

⁸²Robert Nguyen Cramer, “Polygamy, bigamy, and adultery,” Bibletexts.com Questions, Insights, & Responses, accessed June 21, 2020. <http://www.bibletexts.com/qa/qa100.htm>

⁸³John Aza Kisaka, “The Adventist Church’s Position and Response to Socio-Cultural Issues in Africa” (DMin Project Report, Andrews University, 1979), 32.

⁸⁴Bernard T. Adeney, “Polygamy: How Many Wives in the Kingdom of God?” *Transformation* 12, no. 1 (March 1995): 4.

⁸⁵B. L. Cocherell, “Polygamy,” Bible Research, accessed June 21, 2020, <https://www.bibleresearch.org/home/articles/polygamy>.

was the wife of another man.⁸⁶ Kunhiyop contends that, as in the Old Testament times, in the traditional African context, polygamy was never adultery which required ritual cleansing from the shame and guilt sexual relations outside of marriage brought upon the whole clan and attracted such punishment as shaming the person, whipping, stoning to death, mutilation or payment of a compensation⁸⁷ For Wright, Polygamy is not sexually immoral because it constitutes a recognized married state.⁸⁸

Gane begins from the etymology of the word polygamy, terminology for contracting marriages and adultery in monogamous and polygamous unions to conclude that polygamy is not adultery giving the basis of its deferential treatment in the Pentateuchal laws.⁸⁹ Stokes discussing Jesus' answer to the Pharisees in the question of divorce posits that no one in Jesus' audience would associate adultery to polygamy in Jesus' response for being an accepted form of marriage in their community and the response of the disciples was to not marrying at all.

First and Subsequent Wives

In the Biblical world, a polygamous home would comprise of wives, a wife and a concubine or wives and/or concubines. Wives would ordinarily be from Hebrew descent or at least not Palestinians (Deut 20:14-18) and would be acquired through prescribed procedures, even in the case of a female slave who would become a wife or concubine in which case her status would vary according to whether she was the first,

⁸⁶Shawn Barrett Redford, *Missiological Hermeneutics: Biblical Interpretation for the Global Church* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 203.

⁸⁷Kunhiyop, 224, 234.

⁸⁸Wright, "Marriage," *NBD*, 732.

⁸⁹Gane, 6-7.

second or only wife.⁹⁰ Concubines, which were distinguished from wives had inferior status in relation to wives and under their authority and were mostly slaves with whom the master was free to have sexual relations.⁹¹

Rev. W. McGregor sharing his views on late 19th century Chinese polygamy, asserts that only one wife, the first wife was the real wife and the second wife with a subordinate position to the first wife and all other women would be concubines bought for a certain amount of money. The children of the secondary wife and of the concubines are children of the first and real wife whom they only call as mother.⁹² In several African cultures, like the Tsongas of South Africa and Southern Mozambique, the first wife convinces, selects and initiates the marriage of subsequent wives⁹³ to assist her with the household duties⁹⁴ enhancing her social status in the community⁹⁵ and over the subsequent women. Senior wives have the privilege of selecting hard-working co-wives maximizing their own economic benefits and those they like, at times their sisters, with whom they can gossip and play limiting conflicts in the home.⁹⁶

⁹⁰Wright, "Marriage," *NBD*, 732.

⁹¹J. A. Thompson, "Concubine," *NBD*, 219.

⁹²Johnston, 64.

⁹³Siron, p. 23

⁹⁴Daniel Patte, ed. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity*, (2010), s.v. "Polygamy and Christianity."

⁹⁵SouthAfrica.co.za, "Marriage in Tsonga Society," accessed July 09, 2020, <http://southafrica.co.za/marriage-in-tsonga-society.html>.

⁹⁶Dominique Meekers and Nadra Franklin, "Women's Perceptions of Polygyny among the Kaguru of Tanzania," *Ethnology* 34, no. 4 (1995): 315-29.

Ellen G. White and Polygamy

Surprisingly, Ellen G. White living during the time of the Centenary Conference on Protestant Missions of the World in 1888 and the Lambeth Conference in 1913,⁹⁷ seems not to address the treatment of polygamist converts. She denounces polygamy as contrary to God's marital arrangements,⁹⁸ one of the sins behind the flood⁹⁹ and its evil results to the polygynist, polygamous family members, the society and humanity as a whole. White portrays polygamy in conjunction with antediluvian degeneracy and corrupt passions, idolatry, degradation of God's image in man and sinfulness of God's people. In discussing David's conduct, Ellen G. White clearly distinguishes David's murder and adultery from his polygamy.¹⁰⁰

White also states that "Sarah was the first and only true wife of Abraham."¹⁰¹ Sarah, according to White, "was entitled to rights as a wife and mother, which no other could have in the family and God did not rebuke Sarah for sending away Hagar from the home."¹⁰² Moreover, she indicates God's direction to Abraham in sending away Hagar and her son as a lesson that the rights and happiness of marriage should be respected and guarded "even at a great sacrifice."¹⁰³ It becomes relevant to the discussion because she specifically states that Sarah was the first and only wife,

⁹⁷These are two conferences that extensively discussed the treatment of polygamous converts in Protestant missions and significantly shaped the Polygamy Policy in Christendom.

⁹⁸Ellen G. White, *Daughters of God* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1998), 27.

⁹⁹Ellen G. White, *From Eternity Past* (Mountain View, CL: Pacific Press, 1983), 236.

¹⁰⁰Ellen G. White, *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1989), 94.

¹⁰¹Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1870), 1:98.

¹⁰²*Ibid.*,

¹⁰³*Ibid.*, 1:104.

however there seems not to be a generalization of this principles neither the statement is meant to be a principle to all marriages.

Advising on a situation of a wife who was a victim of marital infidelity, Ellen White weighs the wellbeing of the victim and her children in deciding whether she could seek divorce from her unfaithful husband.¹⁰⁴ Ellen white also indicates that only one sin, adultery, can free a man or woman from the marriage vow in the sight of God.¹⁰⁵ Perhaps Elder W. C. White's statements on the 1913 round table towards a moderate, well-balanced standards that allowed for exceptions¹⁰⁶ in dealing with such situation could better represent his mother's approach in dealing with polygamous converts as in other unbiblical marriages as portrayed in *Testimonies on Sexual Behaviour, Adultery, and Divorce*.¹⁰⁷

Ellen G. White alludes to Sarah as the first and only true wife of Abraham without making it a rule to all polygamous relationships neither making the same statement regarding other polygamists in the Bible. White affirms that polygamy is a sin without equating the practice to adultery and adopts a moderate, well-balanced policy in dealing with unbiblical marriages of her society, even in cases of adultery. It is however, her silence on the treatment of polygamous converts, resembling God's silence throughout the Bible, that may be calling for emulating moderate, well-balanced and needs sensitive policies in missions.

¹⁰⁴Ellen G. White, *The Advent Home* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1952), 346.

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*, 344.

¹⁰⁶Staples, 5-6.

¹⁰⁷White, *Testimonies on Sexual Behaviour*, 123.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, there is overwhelming evidence that although not biblically sanctioned and contrary to God's ideal for marriage, polygamy does not constitute sexual immorality either adultery. A true statement in contemporary Africa, Mozambique and other polygamy permissive societies during biblical times. Moreover, both first and subsequent wives are spouses, even in places where the former has a higher social status than the latter. As a response to social issues in different cultural contexts, polygamy constitutes a permissible form of culturally, legally lawful marriage in specific communities and protected in Biblical times and contemporary Africa.

On the one hand, the first wife stance relies heavily on the adulterous nature, illegitimacy, unlawfulness of subsequent marriages, and the church's responsibility in promoting social justice. On the other hand, the non-defined stance builds its case on the illegitimacy of all marriages in the polygamous setting, imperative in attaining monogamy and preserving the church against polygamy. With such assumptions, the chapter closes with no evidence to enforce a rigid stance in either direction as they all depend on how specific communities perceive and regard polygamy calling for a moderate and well-balanced treatment of converts from such backgrounds.

CHAPTER 3

BIBLICAL SURVEY

Chapter II establishes polygamy as a permissible, culturally lawful, and protected form of marriages in Biblical times and in certain contemporary African countries as a social community issue rather than immorality. It becomes, therefore, crucial to understand God's treatment of polygamy in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament. If the Bible indicates that polygamy is adultery, it, therefore, follows that in all times the first wife should remain because it is the subsequent wives who are in the state of adultery unless the first wife is herself married to another person. The present chapter will seek to understand the Bible's treatment of polygamous wives throughout the Old Testament.

Terminologies

Wife

The term that English versions render wife is the Hebrew אִשָּׁה occurring as a noun 782 times in the Old Testament most frequently in Genesis with 19.4 % followed by Judges (8.8%), 1 Samuel (6.9%) and 2 Samuel (6.3%).¹ English translations render the Hebrew lemma primarily as wife and woman. The term applies to human females in Num 31:18 and Ezek 16:30; 23:44, a prostitute in Josh 2:1, a harem in the book of Ester, to one another in reference to the tabernacle curtains in Exod 26. Each, in Ruth

¹Victor P. Hamilton, "אִשָּׁה," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis (NIDOTTE)*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 1:537.

1:8 and in reference to female animals in Isa 34:15 and Amos 4:3 are other renderings of the term. The Hebrew term is also rendered as concubine in Judg 19:1, 2 Sam 15:16 and 2 Sam 20:3. The Septuagint equivalent is γυνή which carries the meaning of a woman as opposite to a man, a wife in contrast to a husband, spouse as opposed to a virgin and a mortal woman as opposed to a goddess in the works of Homer and Xenophon.² The Greek of the New Testament denotes a woman, a married woman and a wife.³

The word means wife, “the legitimate sexual partner of a man,”⁴ and a female human, animal or object. The word has an irregular plural (נְשִׂאִים) which may be due to its consideration in relation to polygamy alluding to the ability of forming a group in contrast to “the plurality of single entities.”⁵ The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament indicates a meaning of a wife in the manner of giving a woman in marriage, stepmother, concubine, widow and a bride.⁶ The Brown, Driver and Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament highlights the meaning of wife as a woman belonging to a man in the construct or suffixed forms and of a betrothed woman.⁷ There is a special nuance to the word denoting a female human being under the protection and authority of a man in a legal and social entity of family

²Perseus Digital Library, s.v. “γυνή,” ed. Gregory R. Crane. Tufts University, accessed October 11, 2020, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>.

³William D. Mounce, *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament* (1993), s.v. “γυνή.”

⁴David J. A. Clines, *The Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (2009), s.v. “נְשִׂאִים.”

⁵Hamilton, “נְשִׂאִים,” *NIDOTTE*, 1:537.

⁶Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, eds. *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (HALOT)* (2001), s.v. “נְשִׂאִים.”

⁷Francis Brown, with S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*, based on the lexicon of William Gesenius (1952), s.v. “נְשִׂאִים.”

relationship.⁸ אִשָּׁה would therefore denote in most instances a woman under the authority of a man with whom sexual relations are lawful.

Marriage

The concept of marriage in the Old Testament comes from the words בעל and אִשָּׁה encapsulating the legal relationship between the spouses where the wife was a possession whose primary function was to bear children.⁹ The words נָתַן, לָקַח and בָּרָא denote the forms of acquisition of a wife. Occurring 16 times in the Hebrew Bible, English translations use to marry half of the times or get married as in Prov 30:23, a married woman (Gen 20:3 and Deut 22:22), husband, rule and master as equivalents for בעל. בעל has a semantic range entailing having sexual relations with, marry, rule over, husband, lord, master, owner and possessor, conveys a relationship between a man and a woman where the former has authority over the later.¹⁰

The Bible also uses the verb לָקַח, “to take” a woman for oneself or another person to denote marriage¹¹ in passages as Gen 4:19; 6:2; 25:1; 24:4; 34:16; 12:19; Exod 34:16 and Jer 29:6. Another verb conveying the idea of marriage in the Old Testament is “to give” (נָתַן) in marriage or as a wife or for a wife as in Gen 16:3; 29:28; 30:4; 1 Sam 18:19; 1 Kgs 2:21. נָתַן highlights the role of the bride’s or woman’s parents, guardians, master or mistress in the marriage deal as the opposite of לָקַח which highlights the acquiring role of the groom or master and those acting on his

⁸James Strong, *The New Strong’s Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible Expanded with the Best of Vine’s Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, Red Letter Edition, (2001), s.v. “אִשָּׁה.”

⁹T. C. Mitchell, “Family, Household,” *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed., ed. J. D. Douglas (Leicester, England: Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship, 1996), 362.

¹⁰William T Koopmans, “בָּעַל,” *NIDOTTE*, 1:681-83.

¹¹Koehler and Baumgartner, *HALOT*, s.v. “לָקַח”

behalf.¹² The other term that may intimate marriage is בוא denoting “to enter through” sexual relations in the consummation of a marital union with a bride on her wedding day (Gen 29:21-30) or simply cohabitation¹³ without which marriage was void in the ancient near east.¹⁴

The terms denoting marriage in the Bible shape the three modes of acquiring a wife in the tannaitic literature, that of money, a contract and sexual intercourse (*b. Qidd. 2a:1*). Moreover, these terminologies in scripture refer to wives, slave-wives and concubines in monogamous or polygamous marriages.

Adultery

The translation of the Qal and Piel forms of the Hebrew נָאָץ can be “commit adultery” as having “illicit sexual intercourse” in the context of the Ancient Near East. In the Old Testament, the case laws elucidate the definition of adultery as involving sexual associations of a man with a married woman (Lev 18:20; 20:10), a married woman with a man (Ezek 16:32; Hos 4:13) or a man with a betrothed girl (Deut 22:23-27).¹⁵ In all these cases, the marital status of the man seems irrelevant for the definition of adultery.¹⁶ The seduction of a virgin, while forbidden, is not adultery in the Old Testament. The Hebrew Bible also uses phrases as lying with (שָׁכַב in Num 5:13, 19, 20; Deut 22:22-27), violate or ravish (שָׁנַא in Deut 28:30; Is 13:16, Jer 3:2;

¹²Michael A. Grisanti “נתן,” *NIDOTTE*, 3:206-207.

¹³Koehler and Baumgartner, *HALOT*, s.v. “בוא.”

¹⁴Robert Francis Harper, *The Code of Hammurabi King of Babylon: About 2250 B.C.*, 2nd ed., (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1904), 45.

¹⁵Gary H. Hall, “נָאָץ,” *NIDOTTE*, 3:3.

¹⁶Max L. Margolis, “Adultery,” *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979-1988), paragraph 1394. Accordance Bible Software 1994-2020.

Zech 14:2), go to (בוא אֶל) 2 Sam 16:21, 22), go near to (קָרַב אֶל) in Gen 20:4) and crouch over (כָּרַע עַל) Job 31:10).¹⁷ Smith’s Bible Dictionary defines it by identifying the parties involved in the crime as being a married woman and a man other than her husband.¹⁸ Polygamy did not amount to immorality from the Biblical point of view and in the Ancient Near East since all women were having intercourse with their lawful husbands (lords or masters).

Laws on Adultery and Polygamy in the Old Testament

It is crucial to begin by noting two types of laws in the Pentateuch in analyzing the legal texts of the Bible. Apodictic laws emanate from the character or will of God for his people presenting absolute or “categorical assertions of right and wrong.”

¹⁹ Casuistic laws, on the other hand, present the procedures to follow in specific cases.²⁰

Laws on Adultery

The decalogue, in its two versions, categorically prohibits adultery (Exod 20:14; Deut 5:18) and while this law prohibits against anyone coming between the relationship between spouses it did not prohibit polygamy.²¹ Adultery is a severe sin in the Old Testament attracting a death penalty (Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22; 2 Sam 12:13;

¹⁷Hall, 3:3.

¹⁸William Smith, *Smith’s Bible Dictionary* (1884), s.v. “Adultery.”

¹⁹Peter T. Vogt, *Interpreting the Pentateuch: An Exegetical Handbook*, ed. David M. Howard Jr., *Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2009), 138.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 138.

²¹Bruce K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 429.

Ezek 23:45-47; John 8:4,4). To protect women from wrongful accusations, the legislator institutes the laws of Num 5:11-31; Deut 22:13-19 and the requirement of two witnesses in Deut 17:6. These laws denote the severity of such a crime.

Within the context of apodictic laws forbidding certain sexual relations, Lev 18 verse 20 prohibits sexual relations with the wife of a neighbour or fellow citizen (adultery) as an action rendering the adulterer unclean (טמא) which is to make something ceremonially unclean, defile or desecrate. The law seeks to preserve the sanctity of Israel and safeguard marital relationships without prescribing a penalty. It is contrary to God's law to have sexual relations with the wife of another man.

In Lev 20:10, which comes in the context of forbidden sexual relations in casuistic laws attaching the penalty for individual crimes, adultery carries the penalty of death for both the male and female parties. The parallel law to this verse is Deut 22:22-25, which augments the law to include the case of consented rape of a betrothed (engaged) woman as having the same penalty of death. Verse 25 makes the exception of rape in the field, unconsented rape, in which case only the man would die.

On the fringes of adultery, are laws regulating the rape or sexual intercourse with a virgin who is not engaged (Deut 22:28) in which case the man was liable to pay fifty shekels of silver and marry the victim with no right to divorce. Akin to this regulation is the case in Lev 19:20-22 of a man who has intercourse with a slave woman whose marriage deal was not yet complete in the manner of freemen, the man was liable to pay compensation and a guilt offering would suffice. These two laws may seem to have a lenient stance against adultery to the modern reader; however, these acts do not amount to adultery in the Old Testament's perspective as both women are not married.

Adultery is among many crimes in the Old Testament with capital punishment.²² While there could be persons who did not die like David in the matter of Uriah's wife, adultery in any of its forms was a severe crime that the Bible vehemently and unequivocally denounces and punishes. The laws on adultery preserve chastity and restrict sexual relations to persons in a marital relationship.

Laws on Polygamy

This section of the paper will discuss cursorily Old Testament legislation relating to polygamy in four categories being, laws that imply the existence of the practice, encourage, or may result in, prohibit and those that regulate the practice. The intent is to glean some insights on the principles underlying the Bibles' dealing with polygamy concerning first and subsequent wives in the legal corpora of the Old Testament.

Laws Implying Polygamy

The apodictic laws of Lev 18:6-23 are in the context of the formation of a nation with a moral code that discourages practices from Egypt and Canaan and forbids specific sexual relations. These laws aim at preserving harmony in the family, community and environment at large. While not directly addressing polygamy, these laws regulating relationships within Israel imply a prevalence of polygamy in the community.

Leviticus 18:8 forbids a man from having sexual intercourse with his father's wife. The woman in this verse is not the mother of the addressee since the previous

²²Regarding capital punishment, adultery ranks with non-sexual crimes like homicide (Exod 21:12), human sacrifice (Lev 20:2), treating parents shamefully (Exod 21:17), rebellion against parents (Deut 21:18-21), kidnapping a fellow citizen to sell as a slave (Deut 24:7), contempt of court (Deut 17:8-13), prostitution by a priest's daughter (Lev 21:9).

verse deals with such a prohibition. While the woman here may refer to a second marriage following the death of a first wife or a lawful divorce, the law does not convey the intent of limiting itself to such situations.

In Lev 18:9, the prohibition focuses on a man with a sister with whom he shares a father or a mother born in the same “household” or not. The text extends the kinship to sisters from previous marriages without excluding those from existing polygamous marriages and the possibility of a single man constituting several households.

The last law that may hint at the existence of polygamy in Israel is Lev 18:11, which interdicts sexual relations with the daughter of the father’s wife, which implies not of the same mother with the addressee. This text while allowing for an interpretation of a wife that comes following the death or divorce of the first wife, it does not exclude the possibility of a man having other wives simultaneously to the addressee’s mother. While not approving of the practice, these laws assume the possibility of polygamous marriages in the Israelite community.

Laws Resulting in Polygamy

Exodus 22:16-17 regulates the case of a man who seduces a virgin and should marry her. This law, however, provides for the father of the victim to prevent such marriage and receive only the bride price of virgins while the offender cannot refuse to marry the victim. The law does not consider the marital status of the man, rendering it not relevant from the offender’s point of view leading to polygamy in cases where the offender was a married man.

The law about female captives of Deut 21:10-14 is another law that opens the possibility of polygamy by allowing soldiers to take attractive women from their enemies as wives. It is of significance that the law does not specify the marital status

of the addressee and also speaks of “your house” as opposed to “your father's house.” The phrase “your house” hints at the independent status of the soldier who has a household of his own.

The law in Deut 22:28-29 mandates a rapist “must” marry in contrast to the seducer whom her father could decide otherwise. Like many laws relating to adultery and sexual offences, this law seems not to render the marital status of the offender relevant to the penalty and could potentially lead to polygamy in cases where the offender was already married. A woman married in such a manner could not be divorced in whatsoever case in the lifetime of the rapist with no exception if she was a subsequent wife.

The casuistic family law of Deut 25:5 forbids the wife of a sonless man to remarry outside the late husband's family and mandates the surviving brother to marry the widow and raise a name for the late brother. While mandatory, the man could opt out of such duties, bearing the shameful epithet “House of the Unsandled” in Israel. The only prerequisite for this duty is that the brothers live together with no indication of the marital status of the surviving brother. Thus, the levirate law while not necessitating it, could lead to polygamy in cases where the surviving brother was already married at the time of bereavement. The ceremony of shame and the title “house of the unsandled” discouraged surviving brothers from lightly neglecting such responsibly. Another ambiguous aspect of the law is that it is not clear whether the widow became a wife or had sexual relations for bearing a male child after which such relationship would cease. Gen 38 and Ruth 2:8, 3:12; 4:6 are illustrations of the practice.

Laws Discouraging Polygamy

There are two laws in the Pentateuch that scholars interpret differently concerning their attitude towards polygamy. Leviticus 18:18 prohibits the referee from marrying a woman and her sister as rivals. The verse may be the only text that, if aiming at prohibiting general polygamy, includes it among sexual misconduct legislation.²³ Davidson uses the phrase “a woman to her sister” idiomatically as in other eight occurrences he identifies elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible to support the law as a prohibition against general polygamy.²⁴ It is, however, worth noting that none of the eight occurrences refers to women, instead, to curtains and wings suggesting an interpretation within the immediate context. Other scholars include the text in the category of incest laws of verses 6 to 18²⁵ or as part of the general sexual prohibitions of verses 18 to 23 or as an intermediary section of two laws in verse 17 and 18 concerned with the close relationship between the women involved than incest itself.²⁶ Although there are differences between verse 18 and previous incest laws, there are similarities, as the use of kinship terms (sister) which does not appear in the latter section of laws having more semblance to the preceding than the following

²³Angelo Tosato, “The Law of Leviticus 18:18: A Reexamination,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 46, no. 2 (April 1984): 199-214. Tosato does a philological, literary and historical re-examination highlighting the Qumranic interpretation of Leviticus 18:18, and separates verse 18 from the incest laws of verses 6-17 as a law against polygamy and divorce and asserts that the Qumran interpretation represents a faithful transmission and not an innovation.

²⁴Richard M. Davidson, “Condemnation and Grace: Polygamy and Concubinage in the Old Testament,” *Christian Research Journal* 38, no. 5 (2015): 35.

²⁵William K. Gilders, “Prohibited Bodies in Leviticus 18,” in *Strength to Strength: Essays in Appreciation of Shaye J. D. Cohen*, ed., Shaye J. D. Cohen and Michael L. Satlow (Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2018), 27–44.

²⁶Stephen F. Bigger, “The Family Laws of Leviticus 18 in their Setting,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98, no. 2 (June 1979): 202.

verse. While sister (תּוֹתָן) could refer to a female fellow-citizen as in Num 25:18²⁷ the incest laws use the term four times in the previous verses to indicate a biological sister and no other kin term in these laws suggests a general usage, making this interpretation an exception in the immediate context. Moreover, in referring to a fellow-citizen, verse 20 uses neighbor (עֲמֻיָּת) instead of brother (אָח) a kin term in verse 14. These points, and the rabbinic tradition²⁸ allows the writer to join scholars who see Lev 18:18 as a prohibition against sororal polygamy. This law safeguards Israel from perpetuating a social ill that has a precedent among the patriarchs by using the same kinship term “sister” (תּוֹתָן) and the same animosity among blood sisters as that of Leah and Rachel that Gen 30 vividly depicts.

In Deut 17:14-17, there is a prohibition against multiplying wives within a collection of laws addressing several issues. Coming after the law dealing with appeals for complicated matters and before provisions on inheritance for the priests, the law describes the profile of an ideal king for the nation of Israel. There are four things a king should not multiply to himself (יִרְבֶּה־לֵּו) which are horses, wives, silver and gold. While many horses could lead the king to take the people back to Egypt, many wives would lead the king's heart away from the God of Israel. The prohibition of kingship polygamy is within the context of accumulation of possessions which poses a danger of turning the king's affection from God, resulting in the king's departure from the commandments and ultimately resulting in Israel going astray and the demise of the nation. Albeit focusing on the king, the principle remains valid to every person. Moreover, kings set an example for their communities, making this law the closest to

²⁷Hamilton, “תּוֹתָן,” *NIDOTTE*, 1:351-54.

²⁸*b. Yevamot 8b:4-5; 49a:3 and b. Makkot 13a:8* indicate that rabbinic tradition was aware of a specific law forbidding intercourse or marriage with the sister of one's wife whilst the wife lived.

an outright prohibition against polygamy in the Old Testament with an echo in 1 Tim 3:2. However, the specific application of the prohibition, it's co-text dealing with kingship's responsibility in keeping the people faithful to God and splitting the king's affection from God towards possessions, indicates that the lawgiver regards polygamy in a different light from a sin of sexual nature or adultery.

Laws Regulating Polygamy

After considering the legal corpora that imply, encourage and possibly prohibit polygamy comes the time to look into how God regulates the practice in the Law intending to gain insight of God's primary interest in dealing with the practice that may lead to principles of dealing with polygamous converts. Two passages of the Law, in a casuistic format, give a hint to God's attitude towards the women in such relationships.

Exodus 21:7-11 is part of the Law regarding Hebrew servants that begins in verse 2. Here, the Law deals with a maidservant sold by the father and would later become a wife²⁹ of either the man buying her or his son. That this is not a simple maid becomes evident by the use of "designated" in verses 8 and 9, "deal deceitful" which would not be the case if she was only a maidservant. This Law prevents the husband from showing favouritism among wives, prohibiting the husband from diminishing food, clothing and marital rights of the less pleasing wife. Naudé translates the hapax legomenon, הַנְּדָבָה , as cohabitation, sexual intercourse within marital unions³⁰ and the

²⁹W. Hall Harris, ed., *Notes for the NET Bible*, (Dallas, TX: Biblical Studies Press, 1996-2005), note 16 for Exod 21:7.

³⁰Jackie A. Naudé, "הַנְּדָבָה" *NIDOTTE*, 3:454.

Lexham English Bible has it as the right of cohabitation.³¹ Whether the marital rights may indeed be sexual intercourse, which is more plausible, or ointments³² due to the woman, this Law seeks is to prevent the wealthy and the men from depriving such rights to their less loved wives. The text seems to free the man from such obligations upon freeing the slave wife.

Probably, the least controversial of texts, at a textual and interpretation level, dealing with polygamy is Deut 21:15-17, where the distribution of inheritance is irrespective of the order of marriage of the mother or whether she was the loved or hated among the wives. In contrast to the experience of the patriarchs where children other than firstborn receive the birth right blessings (Isaac, Jacob and Joseph), this law mandates the father to recognise the firstborn regardless of the circumstances surrounding their birth or wife preference.

Significantly, the laws explicitly addressing polygamous situations are casuistic denoting the rare occurrence of such unions whilst relegating the practice to lesser importance in the Old Testament legal corpora. Also significant is that the apodictic laws on sexual relations aim at correcting practices prevalent and existent among the patriarchs and surrounding nations, yet, such laws fail to explicitly include polygamy. Marriage between a brother and a sister (Gen 20:12), marrying two sisters (Gen 29:30) and giving inheritance to a son other than the firstborn are outrightly forbidden in the laws of Israel. The laws regulating polygamy seem to be in the context of inheritance, property and fair dealings, not sexual relationship, signalling to

³¹*b. Pesah. 72b* states that a husband has an obligation to satisfy his wife sexually at regular intervals as a mitzva. In 1 Corinthians 7:3, discussing celibacy and encouraging couples against depriving each other from sexual intercourse talks about marital responsibilities of the husband.

³²Étan Levine, "Biblical Women's Marital Rights," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 63 (1997): 87-135, accessed June 13, 2021, doi:10.2307/3622599.

the reader that the legal framework of Israel did not associate polygamy with sexual misconduct.

In summary, the casuistic nature of these laws, their co-texts, and penalties they attract hint at the scarcity of such situations in Israel but protect vulnerable women from the abuse of dominating males in their society who could use women as objects of sexual self-satisfaction. These elements make polygamy distinct from sexual misconduct and adultery in the Pentateuch legal framework.

Difference Between Wives in Scripture

In the Old Testament, there are three categories of married women regardless of their monogamous or polygamous marriage arrangements. There are free wives, slave-wives and concubines. Wives are generally free women in monogamous or polygamous settings of both pious and wicked persons as in the case of Rebekah (Gen 49:31), Adah and Zilah (Gen 4:19), Abigail and Bathsheba, although not the first wives of David (1 Sam 25:42; 2 Sam 12:15, 24).

Slave-wives were mainly women whom their mistresses married to their husbands or the masters took them with the purpose of procreation, whose children could, in some cases, inherit the master's estate together with the children of their mistresses.³³ Albeit Harris states that they could eventually become the primary wives justifying Sarai's fears upon Hagar's conception,³⁴ the lack of a biblical example

³³Robert Francis Harper, *The Code of Hammurabi King of Babylon: About 2250 B.C.*, 2nd ed., (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1904), 61. Article 170 of the Code of Hammurabi states that "If a man's wife bear him children and his maid servant bear him children, and the father during his lifetime say to the children which the maid servant bore him: "My children," and recon them with the children of his wife, after the father dies the children of the wife and the children of the maid servant shall divide the goods of the father's house equally. The child of the wife shall have the right of choice at the division."

³⁴Harris, note 11 for Gen 16:3.

makes Wallenfells' assertion that these women would never attain any rights nor social standing due to a primary wife more plausible.³⁵ Wright asserts that slave wives would have sexual relations with their master for a specific time, making them secondary and not second wives, informing Bilhah's status as a concubine and presupposing that Gen 25:6 does not include Hagar as Abraham's concubine.³⁶ Hagar, Zilpah and Bilhah are examples of slave-wives in the Pentateuch.

Harris sees concubines as "elevated slaves" having licit intercourse with their masters without attaining the rights of a free wife.³⁷ However, Hamilton's assertion of concubines as auxiliary wives without necessarily being slaves is closer to the Bible's portrayal of these women for only Bilhah is a concubine in Gen 35:22 besides the implicit mention of Hagar in Gen 25:6. Hamilton's observation that concubines could be a free and the sole wife in a monogamous marriage setting is appropriate, especially with the incidence of the Levite's concubine in Judg 19:2-3.³⁸ That the Bible does not use concubine for Sarai, Leah and Rachel and the use of the term in contradistinction to wives in 2 Sam 5:13, 1 Kgs 11:3, 2 Chr 11:21 and Song 6:8 makes concubines distinct from wives. Keturah's concubinage in 1 Chr 1:32 may be an indication that she was a concubine who was called a wife. These are marital associates secondary to the wives.³⁹ The treatment of the Levite as a "husband" of the concubine and her father

³⁵Ronald Wallenfells, ed., *The Ancient Near East: An Encyclopedia for Students* (2000), s.v. "Family and Social Life."

³⁶Wright, s.v. "Marriage."

³⁷Harris, note 59 for Judg 8:31.

³⁸Hamilton, "פְּלִיטָה," *NIDOTTE*, 3:618.

³⁹Jeremiah Unterman, "Concubines," *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary*, ed. Paul Archteemeier (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1996), 192.

as a “father in law” in Judges 19 demonstrates how close to a wife a concubine was.⁴⁰ Probably because this was the only woman in the life of the Levite.

The Old Testament seems not to classify wives in terms of chronological order as “first wife” or “second wife.” The cases of Gen 4:19 and 1 Sam 1:2, depending on the translation,⁴¹ may arguably be the only instances in the Scripture. The same phrase construction, *וְשֵׁם הָאִשָּׁה בְּעֵנָה וְשֵׁם הַשְּׂנִי רַכָּב*, not addressing wives, is present in 2 Sam 4:2 where the New English Translation (NET) renders as “one was named Baanah and the other Recab,” and in Ruth 1:4 where the same translation reads “one was named Orpah and the other Ruth.” The NET translates Gen 4:19 and 1 Sam 1:2 in the same way and while *שְׁנִי* is translated second in 92% of its occurrence and Hannah’s bareness may plausibly make her the first chronological wife, nothing hints at such chronology in Genesis besides the translator’s interpretation. Moreover, nothing hints at the writers’ intent of conveying something other than an order of mention. Therefore, this paper will depart from the NET’s interpretive rendering of 1 Sam 1:2 and have it as “the name of the one was Hannah and the name of the other Peninnah” (Today’s New International Version).

This survey of the Old Testament intimates no distinction in the legitimacy of wives based on the chronological order of association to the husband. Their status at the time and mode of acquisition determines their status in the family and society,

⁴⁰Merrill F. Unger, *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, rev., and updated ed. (1988), s.v. “Concubine.”

⁴¹There are three main translations of this verse as (1) “...the name of the first was Hannah and the name of the second...” (NET Full). (2) “the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah” (Today’s New International Version) and (3) “... the name of the one [is] Hannah, and the name of the second Peninnah...” (Young’s Literal Translation of the Holy Bible). This last reflects the LXX which reads “ὄνομα τῆ μιᾷ Ἄννα, καὶ ὄνομα τῆ δευτέρᾳ Φεννάνα.”

⁴¹The paper assumes that Samuel is the writer of both Ruth and Samuel.

although even that could be a function of the husband's discretion.⁴² There is a distinction, though difficult to ascertain due to paucity of biblical data, between wives and concubines and a lesser distinction between slave wives and concubines but not within each of these categories. The word “wife” becomes an umbrella term denoting a lawful marital relationship between a free woman, a slave-woman (slave-wife) or a concubine with a man who plays a role in constituting or increasing the family through childbearing.

God’s Treatment of First and Subsequent Wives

This section of the paper will study three cases of Old Testament Polygamy and a summary of royal polygamy to understand its function, circumstances and how the Bible writer and God deal with such practices. Beginning with Abraham to Jacob and ending with Elkanah, these will become case studies into this Old Testament practice. The section will survey, the reasons leading to multiple wives, their treatment through the Bible and events and principles surrounding the dissolution of such marriages.

Sarai and Hagar

The narrative of Abraham's polygamy is part of a 13-unit section beginning in Gen 12:1 with God's promise of descendants to Abraham and extends to chapter 21:7 with the birth of Isaac. It is significant that at the centre of the chiastic structure of the unit is the subunit of chapter 17:1-21⁴³ dealing with God’s changing of names, the

⁴²James Hastings, ed., *Dictionary of the Bible* (1909), s.v. “Family.”

⁴³David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1999), 56.

institution of circumcision as a sign of the covenant and God's rejection of Ismael as the son of promise while reiterating Sarah's son as the son of the covenant.

Abraham's polygamy narrative begins with the words "now Sarai, Abraham's wife, had not given birth to any children, but she had an Egyptian servant named Hagar" (Gen 16:1, NET). The verse highlights Sarai's bareness as the underlying cause for engaging Hagar "as a wife" against the social-cultural expectation of a marriage to produce children. The juxtaposition of Sarai's bareness and her possession of a maidservant through the conjunction "but" indicates the socio-cultural expectation and solution for the situation. These assumptions are more robust with the narrative's plot resolution in verse 15 with the birth and naming of Ismael and the indication of ten years as the length of time⁴⁴ the home of Abraham remained childless in Canaan.

Sarai, the person with authority over the slave woman (cf. Gen 16:6), marries off Hagar to her husband to constitute family on her behalf. Terms as "come to" in verse 2, "gave Hagar...wife" in verse 3, and "gave into your bosom" (verse 5) indicate the marriage arrangement.

Throughout the narrative, Sarai calls Hagar her "maidservant," or "handmaid." Moses calls her "Egyptian maidservant," "Hagar the Egyptian." Abraham calls her "maidservant." God calls Hagar "maidservant of Sarai," "Abraham's slave wife or handmaid," and calls her by name in the desert of Beer Sheba. Ismael's mother is the "slave woman" in Gal 4:21-44. The reader should note that Hagar calls Sarai "mistress," while this may not necessarily make her a lesser wife to Abraham, it indicates that Hagar was under the direct authority of Sarai and not Abraham as would

⁴⁴The Talmud limits the time a married man can remain childless to ten years, after which he had to either divorce the barren woman to marry a substitute or take another wife while married to the barren wife (*b.Yebam. 64a:3*). This may shed light into the cultural expectations and Sarai's motivations in giving Hagar as a wife and Abraham's acceptance of the offer.

typically be if she was a free woman. The Bible writer introduces Sarai as “Abraham's wife,” and Paul calls her the “free woman” in Gal 4.

Hagar leaves Abraham's household twice. The first time, while pregnant, she flees from Sarai's harsh treatment as a response to her conduct and God orders the fugitive maidservant to return and “submit” to her mistress' authority. The second time, Ismael's behaviour precipitates Hagar's expulsion from the home because Sarai does not want Ismael to be heir with her son although he was Abraham's firstborn son.

God's ordering of a fugitive pregnant slave woman to submit to the “oppressive” authority of Sarai and His consent to the expulsion of Hagar from the home of Abraham denotes God's respect for cultural and social norms in dealing with humanity, although short from His ideals. God's concern for a lonely pregnant Hagar, allowing grown Ismael⁴⁵ to leave saving Isaac from family strife and rivalry, God's promise to Hagar prospering, caring and future freedom for Ishmael and assuring Abraham of his son's wellness, indicates that in dealing with humans' shortcomings, God cares for the wellbeing of those involved, especially the most vulnerable.

In closing the generation of Abraham, Moses narrates the account of Abraham's death and gives a summary of his descendants beginning with the descendants through Keturah his other wife, followed by those through Hagar, Sarah's servant and introducing the account of Isaac. This arrangement serves the narrative's plots by beginning with the wife who probably buried Abraham, then Hagar who was no longer part of his household and ending with Isaac providing a bridge to the accounts of Isaac.

⁴⁵Ishmael was between 16 and 17 years of age, three years over the age of majority when he could act independently even in respect of marriage contracts according to *b. Git. 68b:11*. This is calculated taking into consideration that Isaac is born when Ishmael was 14 and weaning of a child took place at 2 or 3 years of age according to the NET 2nd Edition's Study Note 15 of Genesis 21:8.

Without addressing polygamy, which is not its focus, the narrative keeps Hagar to the status of a slave wife. The difference between the two women rests on their civil status rather than chronological order at the point of marriage to Abraham. Sarai is the free wife of Abraham in contrast to his slave wife Hagar who was under the direct authority of Sarai and could only be free at the discretion of her mistress. God respects their *sitz im leben* promoting the wellbeing of the most vulnerable.

Leah and Rachel

The second case of polygamy worth consideration is that of Jacob in the narrative of Gen 29:15-35:19. Jacob's marriage to Leah is a result of deceit from the perspective of Jacob and a cultural norm, according to Laban. While his marriage to Rachel is a result of love, Jacob works seven years as the bride price for each of his two wives. Besides the two sisters, Jacob adds a third wife in Bilhah, his younger wife's maidservant, as a result of Rachel's childlessness and a fourth wife, Zilpah who was Leah's maidservant as a result of rivalry among the sisters.

Jacob's marriage to Leah and Rachel are portrayed as betrothals through seven years of service for their father and the terms as "come to," "brought" and to "give" in Gen 29:21, 23, 26 and "to bring." In the case of Rachel, Laban "gives" to be his wife (v.28) and Jacob "came into" her. Rachel "gave" Bilhah as a wife and Jacob "comes in" the maidservant (Gen 30:40) and later Leah also "gives" Zilpah as a wife (Gen 30:9).

Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah (Gen 29:30), the narrator's order in placing the wives as "Rachel and Leah" in Gen 31:4, 14, is reversed in Gen 33:1 as he orders them as Leah, Rachel and the two maidservants, and places Leah in a forward line of defense as that of Rachel's when meeting Esau (Gen 33:2). The order of the wives is that of Leah, Rachel, Bilhah and Zilpah in the list of Jacob's sons (Gen 35:23-26).

Leah's childbearing is God's response and in the context to her being "hated" which brings hopes for being loved and in contrast to Rachel's bareness (Gen 29:31) who remains barren until Leah has seven children. God remembers and pays attention to Rachel (Gen 30:22), and she gives birth to sons. God attends to the prayers and afflictions of a second chronological wife.

Leah regards Jacob as her husband (Gen 29:32); Jacob calls both women wives in Gen 30:26, 31:17, 32:22, which may include the two slave wives or merely the two sisters. The narrator calls both slave-wives as wives in Gen 31:17 and "handmaids" in Gen 31:33, 32:22 and 33:6. In Gen 32:22, the narrator distinguishes Jacob's "two wives" from his "two maidservants," but in Gen 37:2, both Bilhah and Zilpah are Jacob's wives while Laban considered possible future women as wives in Gen 31:50. Bilhah is a concubine in Gen 35:21, but Zilpah is never so treated. In relating Jacob's words to the lord of Egypt, Judah calls Rachel "my wife" (Gen 44:27), although we may not be sure of these precise words coming from Jacob's mouth, the reader perceives that Jacob's favoritism of Rachel was evident to the children. The narrator also calls Rachel "Jacob's wife" while simply calling Leah without the qualifying "wife" in Gen 46:9-25. Jacob rebukes Reuben for defiling his bed in the matter of Bilhah in Gen 49:4 (cf. Lev 18:8, Heb 13:4)⁴⁶ setting the trespass beyond a mere invasion of property. In his burial instructions, Jacob calls Sarah and Rebekah as wives, yet he does not attach such title to Leah (Gen 49:31) however, he does not request a burial with Rachel neither does he request the sons to bring her remains to the cave of Machpelah.

⁴⁶The Septuagint uses for defiling the same Greek verb *μυαίνω* in Genesis 49:4 that is used in Hebrews 13:4.

The story of Jacob highlights the ugly consequences of favoritism within the family to which polygamy played a significant role. However, the two sisters remain throughout the narratives as wives to Jacob. What sets these women at variance is the treatment by their common husband and not the chronology of their marriage to Jacob. The narrative sets the two slave-wives as occupying different status in the family from the two sisters without one being a more slave wife than the other neither Leah becomes more of a wife than Rachel.

Hannah and Peninnah

The third case of polygamy that this paper discusses is that involving Elkanah, Hannah and Peninnah in 1 Sam 1:1-2:18. Contrary to the previous accounts, the Bible does not record the resolution of this Ephraimite's polygamy.

The reading of the narrative hints at the lack of a male child through Hannah as the motivation for this marriage arrangement which the identification of Hannah as the first and barren wife (1 Sam 1:2) and Hannah's prayer for a male child (1 Sam 1:11) corroborate. Elkanah's polygamy is introduced to the reader by the phrase, "and he had two wives." They are both introduced to the reader as "wives" in 1 Sam 1:2. Each of the women is called wife individually in 1 Sam 1:4, 19 and 20. The parenthetical material of verses 4 to 7 uses "wife" for Peninnah and uses the name Hannah without the word "wife," however, in 1 Sam 1:19 Elkanah "knew his wife Hannah" and also in 1 Sam 2:20. Elkanah seems to favor Hannah as the explanation for giving a double portion is "... because he loved Hannah although, the Lord had not enabled her to have children" (1 Sam 1:5, NET) likely indicates. However, this may reflect Elkanah's efforts to alleviate her affliction from her rival wife while not necessarily stating his less affection towards Peninnah.

God attends to the prayers of Hannah and grants her, besides Samuel, three sons and two daughters. The Bible refers to Peninnah lastly in 1 Sam 1:21 only implicitly as part of Elkanah's family going to Shiloh while Hannah remains nursing little Samuel and the reader does not know how life continues in this polygamous arrangement.

Probably the only case in scripture attributing ordinal appellations to a man's wife, the narrative does not hint at a lower wife category to any of them besides intimations, if warranted, of Elkanah's favoritism towards Hannah. God, without intervening in the polygamy as such, vindicates an oppressed and humiliated woman and responds to the prayers of Hannah giving her a male child.

Royal Polygamy

Contrary to God's indictment against kings multiplying wives for themselves, the kings of Israel had multiple wives. The Bible mentions one wife and a concubine of Saul (1 Sam 14:50; 2 Sam 21:11), at least ten concubines and undisclosed wives of David (2 Sam 15:16) and Solomon being the epitome of royal polygamy in Israel. However, other kings like Rehoboam, Ahab, Abijah and others after Solomon multiplied wives for themselves in transgression of an explicit law from God. The reasons for these multiple wives and concubines vary from lust in the case of David and Bathsheba (2 Sam 11), love in 1 Sam 18:20 to political alliances with surrounding nations (1 Kgs 11:1, 3).⁴⁷ Some received their wives from their guardians like Joash in 2 Chr 24:3.

⁴⁷"Multiply wives" [Deut 17:17], *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., ed. Francis D. Nichol (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1978), 1:1014.

There is little information regarding the relationship between these women and the kings that may inform any theological stance. However, concubines seem to emanate from lower social strata and rank inferior to wives, it is the royal polygamy that brings a clear distinction between wives and concubines because the chroniclers are faithful in not mixing wives and concubines (2 Sam 5:13; 2 Chr 11:18-23; 1 Kgs 11:3).

Conclusion

This chapter concludes recognizing that Old Testament polygamy was within the culturally and socially expected and permitted practices of its time against a legal framework that albeit not outrightly prohibiting, regulated, discouraged, and showcased its negative consequences. Besides the husband's preference in loving one and hating the other, or rather, loving one more than the other, the Bible shows no difference in legitimacy within the same category of wives, whether free, concubines or slaves. The difference lies between the different categories of wives. Each category fulfils its social functions in the household and has its socially ascribed rights within its civil status as free wives, concubines or slave wives. Chronological order of association to the husband does not ascribe any higher degree of legitimacy or claim of one wife towards the husband in detriment of the others. In fact, God intervenes as an equalizer alleviating the affliction, removing the shame and protecting the vulnerable from those who seek to oppress or neglect their social duties towards the different parties. Moreover, whether polygamy involves free wives, free wives and slave-wives or free wives and concubines, nothing in the Old Testament warrants equating polygamy to sexual immorality and definitely it is not akin to adultery in the Old Testament.

CHAPTER 4

PERCEPTIONS OF POLYGAMY

Research Methodology

The research paper sets to establish Mozambican Seventh-day Adventists' perception regarding the wife to remain upon polygamists' conversion. In such a quest, the research establishes the locus of the first wife to subsequent wives within a polygamous family that may inform the treatment of polygamous converts seeking baptism regarding the wife to remain upon their conversion. The paper also seeks to establish whether the Bible, members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Mozambique and polygamists seeking membership to the denomination perceive polygamy as constituting or being akin to adultery and what should be the treatment of polygamist converts intending to join the church through baptism. These research questions have a background of a country with 19.5%¹ of women living in polygamous relationships, a family law, penal code, church practice and member perceptions that favor a first wife position vis a vis a church policy that seems to allow a non-defined position.²

¹*Inquérito Demográfico e de Saúde*, 62.

²Family law 22/2019 of 11 December, Art. 58 makes subsequent marriages annulable by a previous marriage duly transcribed and allows resolution of subsequent marriage impediment through dissolution of the previous marriage and duly attested consensual unions without rendering subsequent marriages inexistent. The Penal Code 24/2019 of 24 December, Art. 259 makes subsequent marriages punishable with 2 years imprisonment and a fine for both parties. GC Working Policy, C 70 favors a non-defined position.

Chapter four seeks to understand Mozambican Seventh-day Adventists and polygamists' perception regarding polygamy being adultery, the status of the first and subsequent wives in a polygamous relationship, and which of the wives should remain upon conversion of a polygamist. The chapter presents results, through bar graphs, tables and explanations of a survey with 481 Seventh-day Adventist respondents and Interviews to four polygamous men who have been exposed to the Adventist Message yet the requirements to attain monogamous status before baptism keeps them from becoming members of the church.

Research Design

The research is qualitative, which Lawrence defines as a research method that “examines motifs, themes, distinctions and ideas” from documents, event, and behavior observation³ as it seeks to understand specific people’s perceptions in a specific context. The aim is to understand how participants regard polygamy and what they believe should be to treat polygamist converts by identifying patterns and similarities between the different aspects relating to current practices.⁴ It is a descriptive study that aims at describing “something” or “someone”.⁵ This particular research describes believers’ beliefs, perception, and attitude towards, polygamy, polygamous converts and their wives and takes a multiple method approach beginning with a literature review, a biblical survey, questionnaire, and an interview.

³W. Lawrence Neuman, *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 2nd ed. (Boston, MA: Pearson Education, 2007), 89.

⁴Nassaji, Hossein. “Qualitative and Descriptive Research: Data Type versus Data Analysis,” *Language Teaching Research* 19, no. 2 (March 2015): 129–32.

⁵ Helen L Dulock, “Research Design: Descriptive Research,” *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing* 10, no. 4 (October 1993): 154–57.

Researcher's Worldview

The researcher approaches the task with a biblical theistic worldview because while subscribing to a good number of the overall theistic worldview assumptions, departs in some of the eight worldview presuppositions⁶ from various variations of the theistic worldview. Aspects as the immortality of the soul, nature of man, God's intervention in and purpose of human history and core commitment of life are of relevance in defining one's worldview. Theistic assumptions that may view man, even in his fallen nature, as a complete reflection of God's nature and regard all events as a product of God's predetermination may lead to accepting man and human experiences as standards of moral conduct. As such, the researcher identifies with Canale's approach in defining his worldview as biblical theistic which safeguards the researcher from secularism and institutionalism⁷ keeping scripture carding in interpreting the world and understanding God and His dealings throughout human history. Moreover, the Bible should evaluate and inform any life commitment of humans. The researcher upholds monogamy as the ideal marriage and views polygamy because of corruption in humanity due to the advent of sin in the world.

Research Setting

In Mozambique, 67% of women responding to a study by the National Statistics Institute live with a marital partner where 44.6% are in formal relationships,

⁶James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*, 6th ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 8-10.

⁷Fernando L. Canale, "Theological Worldview and its Impact on the SDA Church," A presentation made at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Annual Council (Andrews University, Annual Council, 1995), accessed, December 15, 2020, https://www.andrews.edu/~canale/theological_worldview_and_its_impact_on_the_SDA_Church.htm.

and 23.2% are in informal⁸ relationships and not so different from other African countries, 19% of women are in polygamous relationships.⁹ When it comes to religious affiliations, a 2017 census demonstrate that 18.9% of the population is Muslim and 15.6% Zionists¹⁰ while the census does not report on approximate 28.1% of ethnoreligionists,¹¹ religions which are permissive of polygamy. Among the Seventh-day Adventist membership in Mozambique who indicate their previous religion on the Adventist Church Management System (ACMS), 87% are from Catholic, Adventist and Protestant backgrounds. Muslim converts represent 3.5% while those from traditional and spiritualist backgrounds represent 0.6% intimating less missional focus or success of the church's message in religions permissive of polygamy. The difficulty in identifying baptized polygamous male converts, for the interviews, attest to a few people from such backgrounds joining the church.

While penalizing the registration of multiple wives in the civil courts, the country's legal framework does not outrightly prohibit neither penalizes polygamy so long as the man remains monogamous in the civil courts. Moreover, the law does not render unregistered marriages void neither makes them a crime resulting in polygamy. The researcher observes in his ministry and upbringing that most churches and pastors require that only the first wife always remains, resulting in a good number of

⁸A formal relationship is one that has been formalized through civil or religious ratification while an informal relationship is a consensual durable relationship without civil or religious ratification, including customary marriages.

⁹*Inquérito Demográfico e de Saúde*, 63.

¹⁰Instituto Nacional de Estatística, “Quadro 11. População por Religião, Segundo Área de Residência, Idade e Sexo. Mocambique, 2017, accessed December 17, 2020, <http://www.ine.gov.mz/iv-rgph-2017/mocambique/03-religiao>.

¹¹“Mozambique, Religious and Social Profile,” The Association of Religion Data Archives, accessed December 17, 2020, https://www.thearda.com/internationalData/countries/Country_156_1.asp.

polygamists converts preferring to remain unbaptized even if attending the church faithfully.

Population and Sample

The research uses a quota sampling for the questionnaires and a non-probabilistic purposive sample for the interviews. Neuman defines quota sampling as a method in which the researcher pre-sets the number and pre-determines categories of participants. Neuman also defines purposive sampling as employing various methods to get a possible number of participants in a given case who fit set criteria.¹²

The researcher set to distribute 500 questionnaires (see Appendix A) to church members in an urban and peri-urban south area of the country with fewer polygamy cases and central area with highest prevalence of polygamy.¹³ The interview participants' criteria were being a male living in polygamy for a minimum of 5 years and attending church for more than one year after receiving bible studies and manifesting desire for baptism into church membership. A minimum of 3 participants was the initial number for this data collection method.

Validity and Reliability

A triangulation of methods and data collection tools within the qualitative method approach¹⁴ establishes the findings' validity and reliability. The tables that follow indicate the answers in each of the research methods and data collection tools where "Yes" indicates that the method answers the specific question while "No"

¹²Neuman, 141-144.

¹³Refer to Background of the Study in chapter I of this research paper.

¹⁴Sharan B. Merriam and Elizabeth J. Tisdell, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, 4th ed. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2015), 259.

indicates the method does not answer the particular question. The research methods are presented throughout the research chapters: Literature Review (LR), Biblical Survey (BS), and Surveys. On the methodology triangulation the term surveys include questionnaires and interviews.

Table 1. Methodology triangulation

Research Question	LR	BS	Surveys
Polygamy is akin to adultery	Yes	Yes	Yes
The first wife is the only and real wife of a man	Yes	Yes	Yes
The first wife should remain in all circumstances	Yes	Yes	Yes
Any of the wives can remain	Yes	Yes	Yes

In methodology triangulation, the three methods agree on the first research question while literature review and biblical survey agree on the rest in variation with the questionnaires. The triangulation intimates that member perceptions on polygamy may reflect cultural values and most probably religious traditions considering Mozambican church membership's religious backgrounds, which is mainly catholic, Adventist and protestant.

Data collection triangulation investigates the instruments of data collection to validate the research outcomes. Three data collection tools are questionnaires, interviews and the researcher who makes observations from his own experience and observations during the data collection exercise.

Table 2. Data collection triangulation

Research Question	Questionnaires	Interviews	Researcher
Polygamy is akin to adultery	Yes	Yes	Yes
The first wife is the only and real wife of a man	Yes	Yes	Yes
The first wife should remain in all circumstances	Yes	Yes	Yes
Any of the wives can remain	Yes	Yes	Yes

The triangulation of data collection methods demonstrates a great variation between the researcher and the participants while the questionnaire and interviews only differ in one question. The only variation between the survey and interview can be due to participants' degree of involvement with polygamy. Interview participants have first-hand experience with polygamy as they are still living in such a status and have been confronted in real life situation with the challenge of choosing the wife to remain and the social pressures that this challenge poses. On the other hand, most questionnaire respondents may have only a theoretical understanding of such challenges and the polygamy phenomenon. While theological training and exposure to the biblical survey and literature review may condition the researcher's observations, the participants may not have the same degree of exposure. However, it is remarkable that all three agree that polygamy is not akin to adultery and polygamist converts select the first wife to remain in their circumstances.

Further, to guarantee the reliability of information and validity of results, a pilot survey took place with 50 questionnaires distributed to one of the churches in the south region's peri-urban area. The pilot study aids in ascertaining that the instrument will collect relevant information for the study while providing a basis for comparison of the results with the final questionnaire results. The pilot questionnaire also provides an opportunity to refine the instrument before widespread distribution to the research sample population.

Research Instruments

The researcher resorts to two research instruments to gather information relevant to the research questions that literature review and Biblical survey respond in a general way. Because the project's interest is the perception of Mozambicans about polygamy and treatment of polygamous converts, only an interaction with

Mozambican believers and Mozambican polygamous men can shed better light into the subject. Therefore, the researcher used questionnaires and interviews as research instruments to bridge the gaps that literature review and biblical survey leave in answering the research questions. The holist picture of literature, Bible, questionnaires and interviews will enable a conversation towards a better contextualization of the gospel message to Mozambican polygamous interests.

Questionnaire. Because baptized members are the ultimate people who determine the readiness of a candidate for baptism and are the main stakeholders in discipling new believers, their perception of the practice and treatment of polygamous converts is paramount. While literature review sheds light into these perception from a general, scholarly, sociological, cultural and historical point of view, and the research is not aware of any documentation of such perceptions, only Mozambican church members can give more accurate response about their perceptions. Moreover, the researcher believes that the Bible is the rule of faith and practice, however, variant interpretation and levels of contextualization of biblical principles lead to varying treatment of polygamous converts as the literature review demonstrates. It becomes, mandatory to understand what members perceive is the Biblical stance on polygamy and treatment of polygamous converts if reaching a well-contextualized approach to polygamy and discipleship is the aim of the church's mission efforts.

The questionnaire (see Appendix A) gathers perceptions of members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The term questionnaire can refer to either a self-completion survey instrument where participants complete a set of fixed questions. or the survey where the researcher or his agent administers the questions. The participant

responds to hard copy printed schedule of questions.¹⁵ This research paper uses the term questionnaire to refer to the self-completion set of questions comprising both open and closed questions. The researcher chooses the questionnaire to grasp many people's perception and allow participants to complete the questionnaires conveniently. Further, the instrument will eliminate researcher's bias as people of different church clusters will participate and ensure that every participant answers the same question.¹⁶

Interviews. Due to the prevalence, distribution of polygamy in the country and the religious background of Adventist membership that could intimate a lack of first-hand experience with the practice by majority of questionnaire respondents, interviews become crucial. Interview participants, going through the challenge of choosing and sending away wives shed more light into the treatment of this cluster of converts. Moreover, the lack of Biblical precedence of men sending away wives upon conversion or guidelines of the treatment of these converts demands a better understanding possible of the phenomenon and challenges of both separation stances. The interviews, which is conversation related to the research questions¹⁷ gather seeks to understand how church-going polygamists interpret polygamy and feel about the selection of the wife to remain. who have accepted the Adventist message and seek baptism into the denomination. Interview participants share special information that general members would not have by virtue of them having lived in monogamous and polygamous relationships. Moreover, the participants are currently facing the

¹⁵Ian Brace, *Questionnaire Design: How to Plan, Structure and Write Survey Material for Effective Market Research*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, PA: Kogan Page, 2008), 2.

¹⁶Ibid, 5-8.

¹⁷Merriam and Tisdell, 108.

challenge of deciding which of the wives should remain as a requirement. The interviews are semi-structured (see Appendix D) and conducted by the researcher or his agent face-to-face in the same physical space and through zoom and WhatsApp calls. The use of semi-structured interviews¹⁸ allows flexibility in phrasing and rephrasing the questions until the participants understands the information required and allows for follow up and probing questions where necessary and to skip certain questions where not applicable.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher secured, through a written request, authorization (see Appendix F) from the Mozambique Union Mission to conduct the research in its territory and verbal authorization for the local churches where the surveys were distributed to the membership. The research advisor and university methodologist reviewed the interview consent form (see Appendix E), interview question schedule containing guiding questions (Appendix D) for the interviews and the questionnaire before administration.

Church elders and pastors explained the research's objective and the voluntary nature of participation in the survey before distributing the survey questionnaires. The local church elder or pastor contacted the interviewee before the researcher explains the interview's purpose and nature and allows them to sign the consent form, thus taking care of the informed consent. The consent form discusses the right to privacy and confidentiality and the consent to make citations of participants in documents by the researcher. The introductory paragraph to the questionnaire makes an invitation to participate, explains the aim of the research and assures the participant's anonymity

¹⁸Berg, 66-73.

while discouraging the respondent from writing their names. Because the participants speak Portuguese, a translation by the researcher then a back translation by a professional translator took place to ascertain that the approved questionnaire was the same administered to the respondents. Besides, a translation of the written authorization from the union to conduct the research is enclosed in the appendixes of this research paper.

No name neither other identifying information was required, and the questionnaire instruction paragraph and the elders and pastors explained that participants should not enclose such information on the surveys. The researcher and church elders assured interviewees that there would be no disclosure of their names and identity information unless without their permission and in the presentation and analysis of results interview participants are coded as Mr W, X, Y and Z.

Result Presentation and Analysis

The following lines will present graphs, tables, and brief descriptions of the questionnaire results in each question's sequence, highlighting key aspects relevant to research questions and those the researcher believes shed some light into the research questions. Following the questionnaire results is a discussion of the interview results in categories of topics that are common among the participants and answer the research questions.

Questionnaire Results and Analysis

Of the 481 respondents, out of the 500-questionnaire distributed, only eight did not indicate their age group. A considerable number of respondents (43%) are in the 20 to 29 age group while the age group with fewer respondents comprises those with more than 60 years of age accounting for only 2%. 20% are between 30 and 39 years

Graph 1. Respondents' Gender Profile

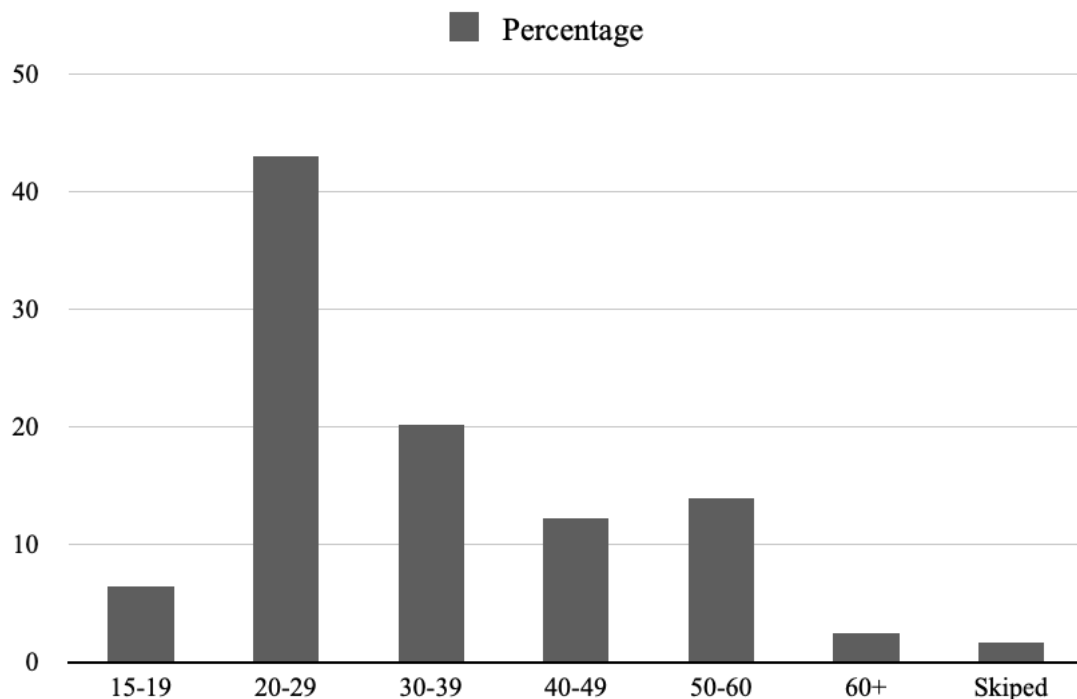


Table 3. Respondents' Gender Profile

Response options	Respondents	Percentage
15 - 19	31	6
20 - 29	207	43
30 - 39	97	20
40 - 49	59	12
50 - 60	67	14
60+ (More than 60)	12	2
Skipped	8	2

of age, 14% between in the 50 to 60 age group followed by the 40 to 49 age group with 12% of the participants. The second least age group population is 15 to 19, with 6% of the respondents. This age distribution reflects the church's overall membership age in these areas, which has 41.5% among the 20 to 29 age group¹⁹ and other age groups with similar order of members.

Graph 2. Respondents' Age Profile

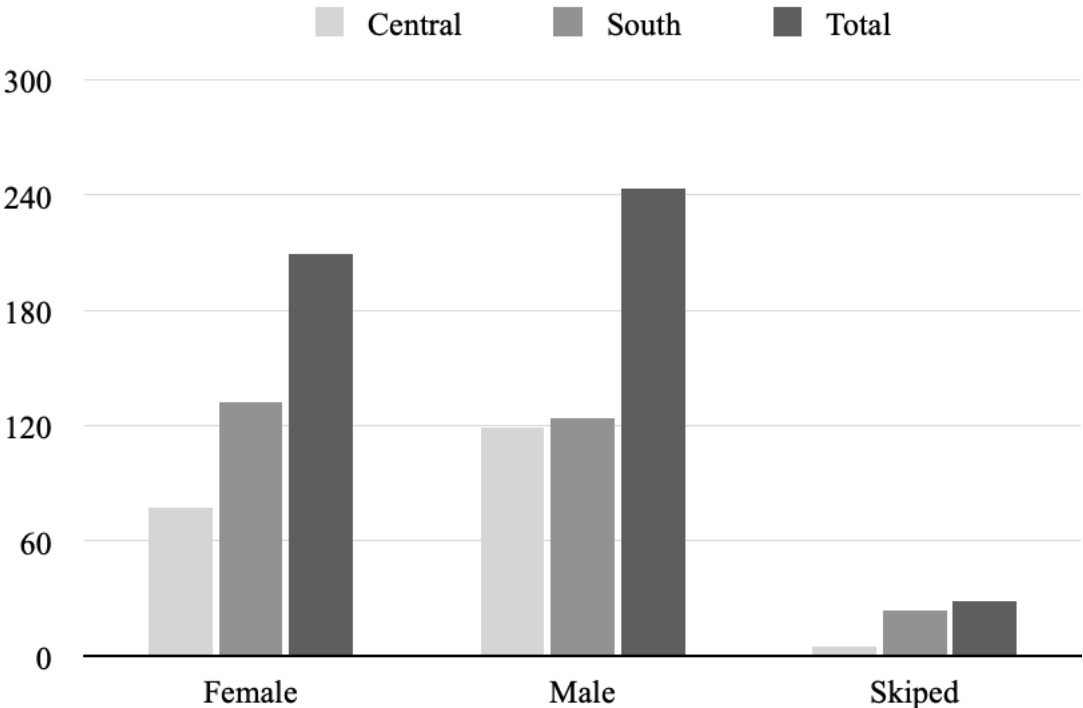


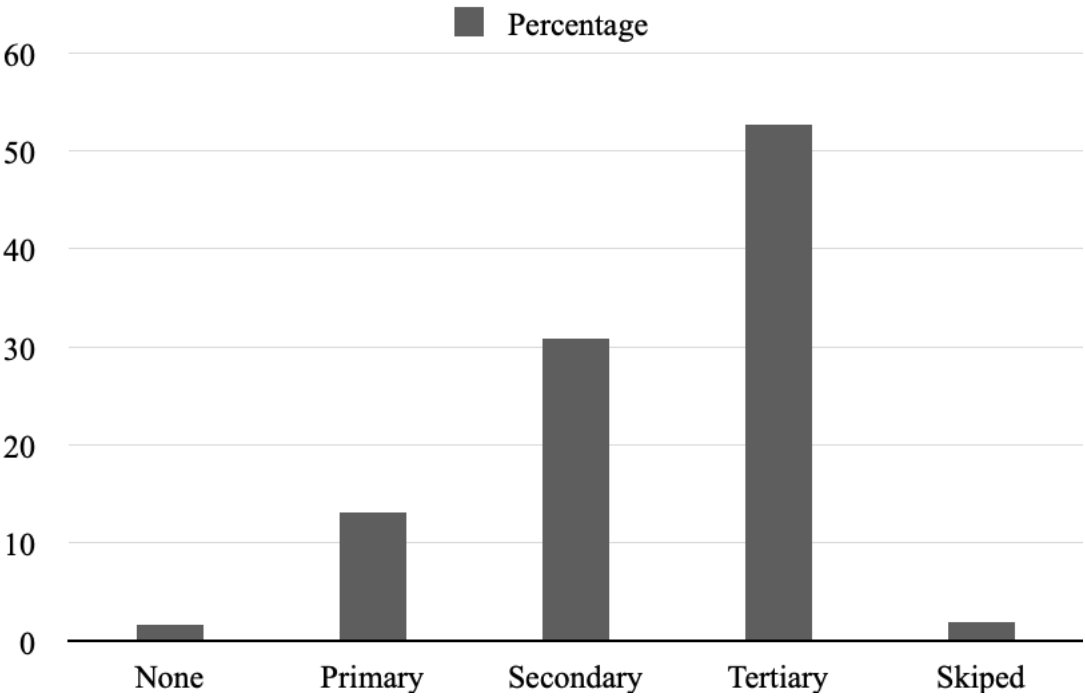
Table 4. Respondents' Age Profile

Response options	Respondents	Percentage
Female	209	38
Male	243	51
Skipped	29	6

¹⁹“Member Statistics: Reports/Member,” Adventist Church Management System (ACMS), accessed December 27, 2020.

The gender distribution of questionnaire respondents in graph 2 and table 4 shows 51% male in contrast to 38% of female participants. There is a disparity of gender distribution compared to membership gender distribution as 52.7% of church members in the south and central regions are female, and 47.3% are male.²⁰ However, a closer look to the respondents show that the south has slightly more female respondents with 47% against 44% of male respondents whilst the central region has a wider gap in gender representation with 59% male participants against 38% of their counterparts.

Graph 3. Respondents' Educational Profile



²⁰ACMS.

Table 5. Respondents' Educational Profile

Response options	Respondents	Percentage
None	8	2
Primary	63	13
Secondary	148	31
Tertiary	253	53
Skipped	9	2

When it comes to the respondents' education levels, the majority (53%) of the respondents have tertiary education, and 31% have secondary level education. Only 2% have no formal education, the same percentage as those who did not indicate their education level. Primary level accounts for 13% of the participants. The difference in educational levels between females and males may explain the lower rates of female participants, albeit the majority in the churches. 80% more women have primary level against their male counterparts, a gap that narrows to 2.8% more males with secondary, while 46.4% more male participants have tertiary levels.

Graph 4. Respondents' Marial Status

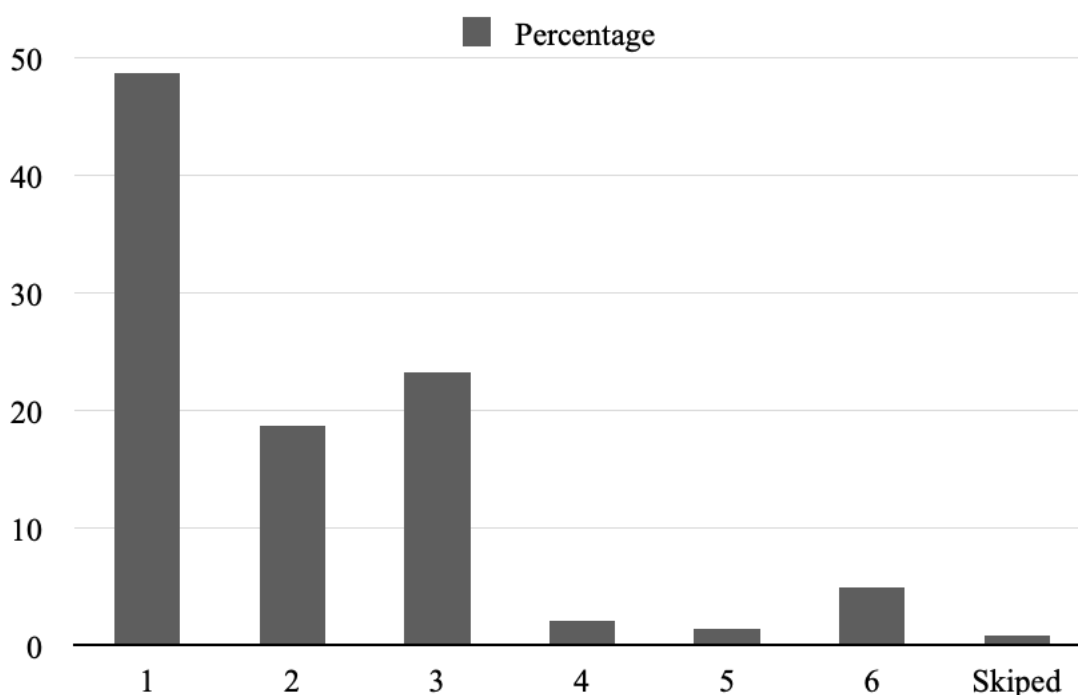


Table 6. Respondents' Marital Status

Response options	Respondents	Percentage
1. Single	234	49
2. Customarily Married	90	19
3. Civil Marriage	112	23
4. Separated	10	2
5. Divorced	7	1
6. Widow/Widower	24	5
7. Skipped	4	1

Most respondents are single with 49%, and 23% are married through the civil courts, while 19% are customarily married. 5% are widows or widowers, and 2% do not live with their spouses, while 1% are formally divorced. More married men than women represent 36% of the married respondents, and 41.7% of women against 55.6% of men are married through the civil. However, when counting those who did not indicate their gender, 52% of participants married civilly, and 47.8% were customarily married.

There are fewer single females (41%) as single males (53.8%) among participants. The higher the education level, the higher the percentage of single women than single males, from 11% single women with primary education compared to 40% men, 53.6% to 61.9% in the secondary levels and 54.5% single females to 51% males at tertiary levels. Age-wise, there are more single males (84.4%) compared to single females (68.6%) in the 20-29 age group whilst the percentage civil marriages and traditional marriages among the genders is almost the same. The highest percentage of participants in customary marriages is in the 40-49 age bracket, among the females with 76.4% against 44% in their male counterparts.

As the table below shows, 42 % of the respondents associate polygamy to a desire for multiple sexual partners while religious beliefs and need for labor receive

Graph 5. Main Reason for Polygamy

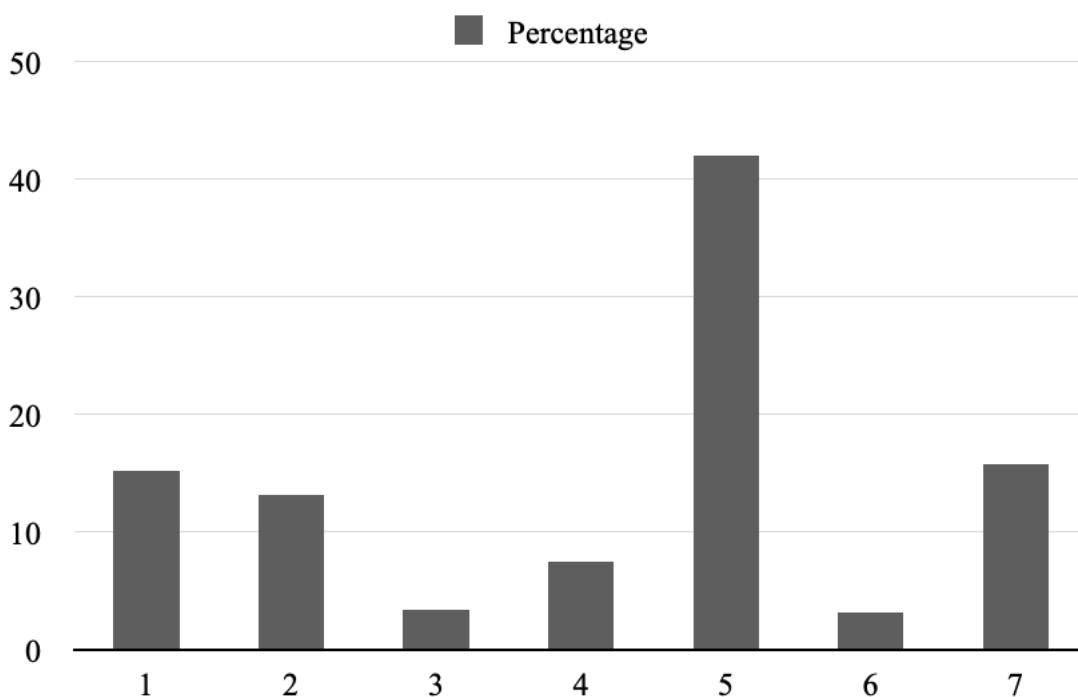


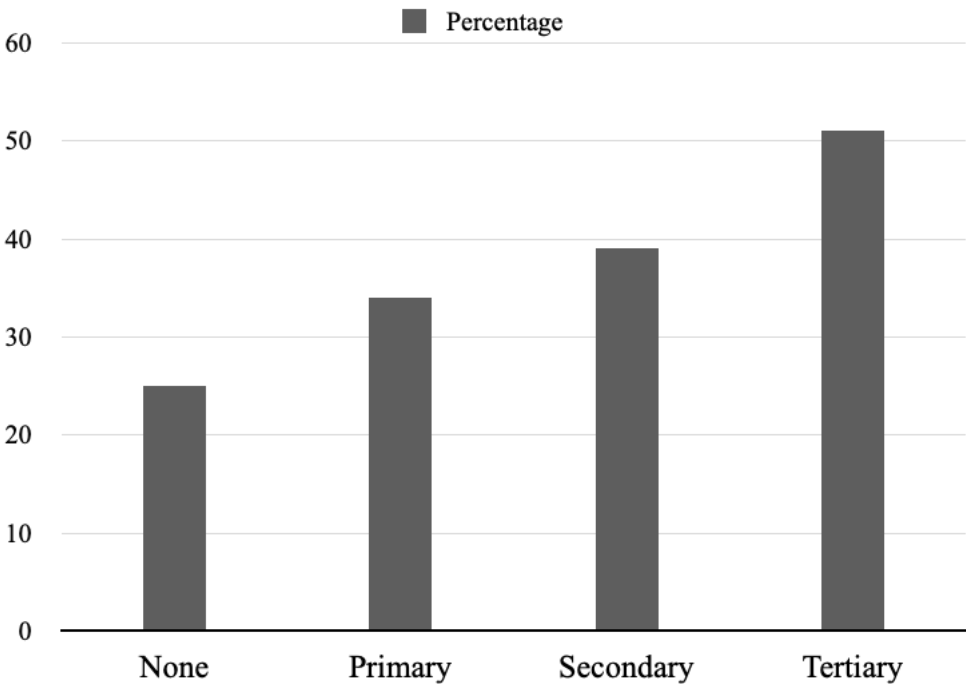
Table 7. Main Reason for Polygamy

Response options	Respondents	Percentage
1. Relatives and Traditions Demand	73	15
2. First wife cannot have children or male child	63	13
3. Wanting to have people to work in the fields and home chores	16	3
4. They cannot divorce the first wife due to religious or cultural laws	36	7
5. Desire to have multiple sexual partners	202	42
6. Religious Beliefs	15	3
7. Others	76	16

the least responses with 3% each. Relative and traditional demands were the choice of 15% of participants, while 13% attribute the practice to bareness or lack of a male child by the first wife. 16% indicate other reasons ranging from infidelity, sinful nature of humans, disobedience to God's word, ambitions in acquiring beautiful wives, prestige and pleasure. 7% of participants see polygamy as due to the inability to divorce the first wife.

Of those identifying the practice with a desire for multiple sexual partners, 22% are between 20 and 29 years of age, representing 52% of the respondents in that age group. People between 40 to 49 are the least to associate the practice with sexual desire, with only 15.2% of the age group respondents and 33% of respondents above 60 years of age make that association. Gender did not influence much this perception, with 48% against 42% males. The association of polygamy to sexual desire increases with education level, from 25% among those with no formal education, 34% of the primary level, 39% of the secondary education and 51% of university-level respondents as *graph 6* below shows.

Graph 6. Respondents associating practice to sexual desire



Widows respondents rank high in associating the practice to sexual desires with 75% than those who do not live with their spouses (63%), the single (40%), divorced (38%) and married women regardless of their marriage regime (33%). The unbaptized (56%) associated polygamy with sexual desire more than pastors (42%)

and baptized members (45%). In all, 58% per cent of the respondents associate the practice to varied social issues. However, 42% who represent the younger and most educated generation of the participants perceive polygamy as a function of a desire to have multiple sexual partners.

Graph 7. Main impediment to Polygamy

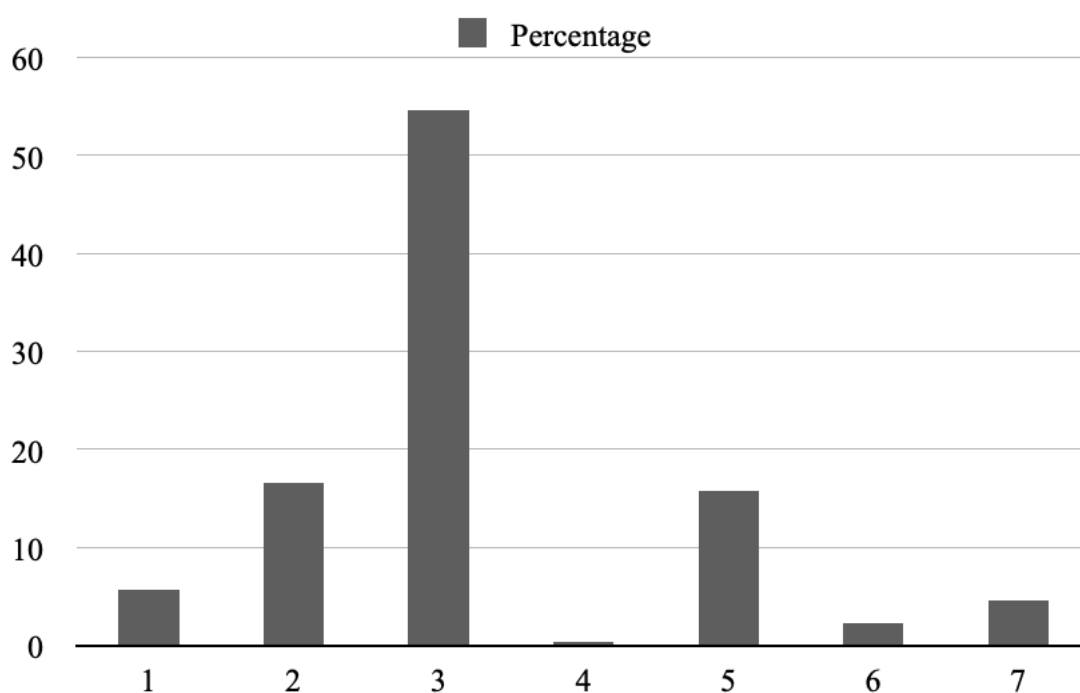


Table 8. Main impediment to Polygamy

Response options	Respondents	Percentage
1. Polygamy is against the law of the country	27	6
2. Polygamy is akin to adultery	80	17
3. God created one man for one woman	263	55
4. Polygamy violates women's rights	2	0
5. The Bible condemns polygamy	76	16
6. No reason	11	2
7. Skipped	22	5

Most of the participants (55%) indicate the original marriage as the main reason people refrain from polygamy. 49.6% of those selecting this option are males, 45.7% are female while 4.7% did not disclose their gender. The highest age group identifying with this reason is youngest and the eldest with 76% and 75% respectively before the 50 to 60 age group with 67.7% and the least is those between 40 and 49 with 53.5% of respondents in this age group. Approximately 56% of the participants in all educational levels and 50% and 50% of those with no formal education identify with this reason. The single identify themselves more with this reason, with 57.2% of single participants decreasing to 32.2% among the civil married and 27.9% of the customarily married participants.

The second most reason is polygamy being akin to adultery which accounts for 17% of the respondents and then the perception that the condemns polygamy with 16% while 6% of the participants elect the illegality of polygamy the main reason. Interestingly, only two respondents, one male and another female, all above 40 years of age, regard violation of women's rights as a significant deterrent for this practice. The second most reason is more prevalent within the 60 and above age group with 37.5% and least popular within the 15 to 19 age group with 10% of respondents. When it comes to marital status, 40% of the separated participants, 20.8% of the widows, 16.7% of the single, 17% of those married in the city then 13.3% of the customarily married have this perception of polygamy. The marital status intimates this perception in people who are not living with a spouse than those married. The higher the educational level, the more likely the participants views polygamy as adultery.

Graph 8. What the Bible says about Polygamy

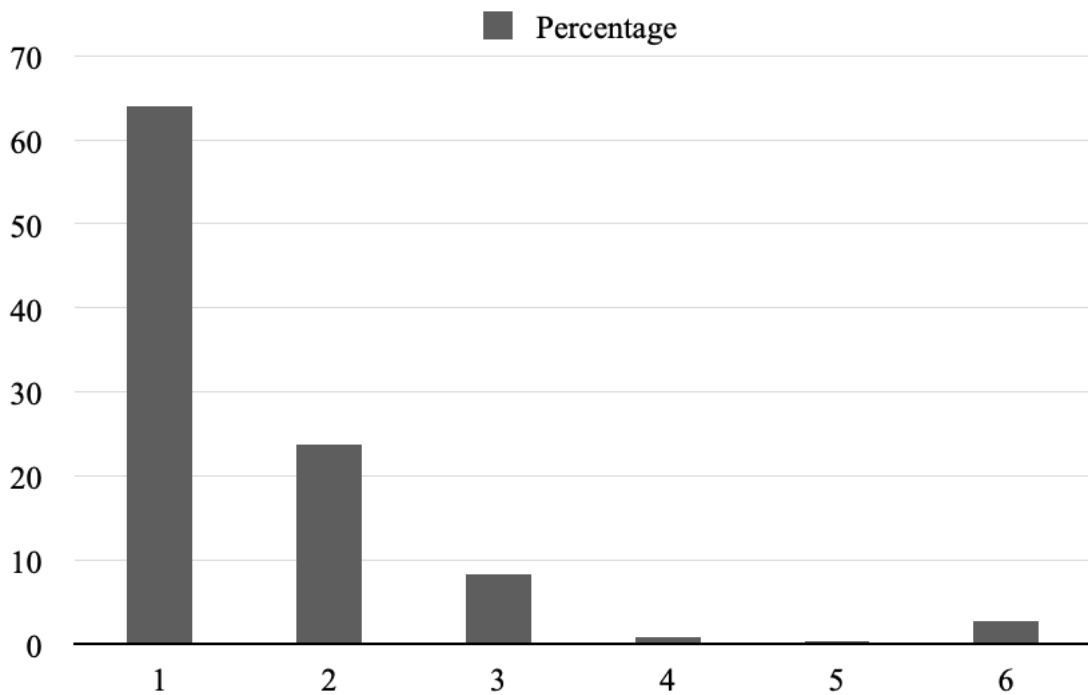


Table 9. What the Bible says about Polygamy

Response options	Respondents	Percentage
1. The Bible condemns polygamy	308	64
2. The Bible discourages polygamy	114	24
3. The Bible does not condemn neither approves polygamy	40	8
4. The Bible permits polygamy	4	1
5. The Bible approves polygamy	2	0
6. Skipped	13	3

A majority, this is 64% of the participants, understand the Bible as condemning polygamy, and 24% perceive the Bible as discouraging the practice. There is 8% of the participants who believe the Bible as not condemning neither approving, and only 2 participants believe that the Bible approves of the practice. 3% did not respond to this question. It is noteworthy that only two respondents believe that the Bible approves of polygamy indicating that church members have a fair appreciation of the Bible's stance towards the practice.

Graph 9. Condition for Baptism

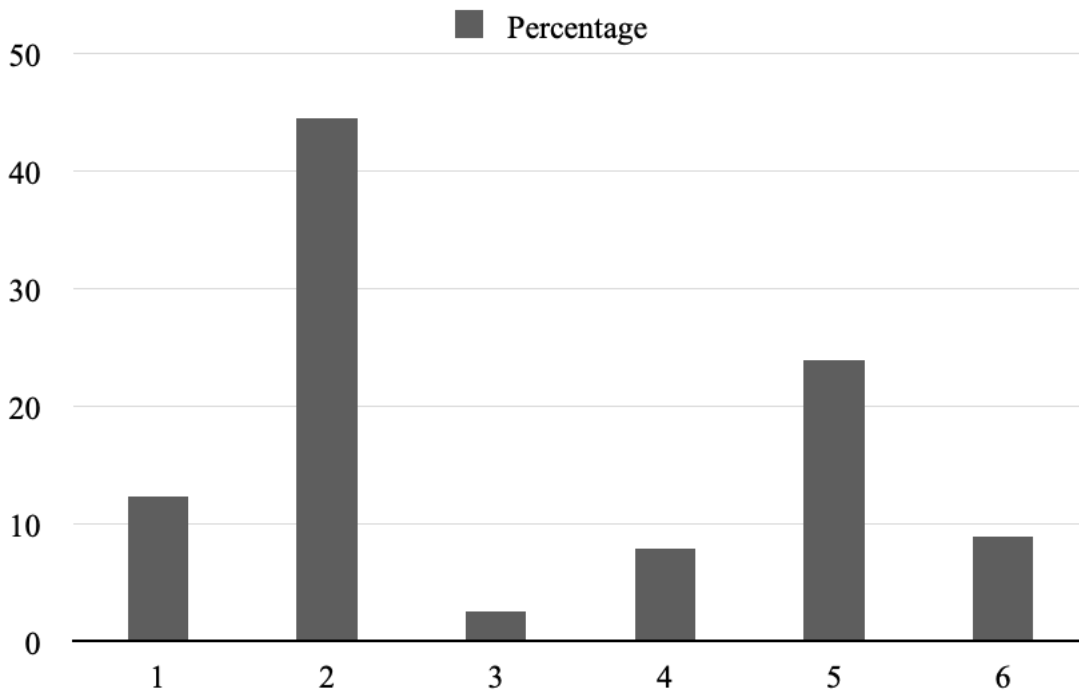


Table 10. Condition for Baptism

Response options	Respondents	Percentage
1. The women decide what should happen	59	12
2. The man should send away all and remain with the first wife	214	44
3. The man should send away all wives and marry a new wife	12	2
4. The man should not send away any of his wives	38	8
5. The man should choose one wife and send away all other wives	115	24
6. Other	43	9

The requirement to remain with the first wife ranks high with 44% while 24 % of participants identify themselves with the non-defined position and 12% defer this decision to the women. There is a sentiment among 8% of participants that these men should not send away any of their wives and 2% elect that all the polygamous women leave allowing the man to marry another woman altogether. Other responses include praying for the partners; it is a tricky situation, it is up to God to judge, total surrender to God and God will work out a way and variations of the pre-defined responses.

Among the first wife position, 46.9% of women participants and 42.8% men side with the stance while educational levels made little difference participants' position. Those married traditionally side with this stance more (40%) than those with marriage certificates (28.6%), but the separated individuals rank high with this position with 60%.

The first wife position is the perception of 35% of those who believe polygamy to be akin to adultery, 47.5% of those to whom the marriage of Adam and Eve becomes the standard and 29.2% of participants who see polygamy as a function of sexual desire. Moreover, 37% of those attributing polygamy to cultural demands and 42.9% of those attributing the practice to the barrenness or lack of a male child elect that the polygamist convert sends away all but the first wife a condition for baptism. The first wife position is slightly more popular among participants who do not see polygamy through the eyes of adultery or sexual desires than among those who do.

The second most popular position in treating polygamist converts is the non-defined stance with 24% of participants. Among these, there is 21.5% of the female and 25.1% of the male participants. Besides the separated group having 10%, almost a quarter of every other marital grouping select this treatment of polygamous converts. Within the age groups, the 20 to 29 age group is popular with 28.7% of its participants followed by the 30 to 39 age group with 27.7%. The least age group with this position is those above 60 years of age, with only 12.5% of its population.

Among those who perceive polygamy as akin to adultery, 30% adopt a non-defined position, 24.3% of people who see the ideal marriage as the major deterrent to having multiple wives also adopt the choice position. The non-defined stance is elected by 26.7% of those who believe polygamy to be similar to adultery, 24.7% of

those who see cultural norms while 27% of those who see bareness as the underlying reason for polygamy.

Graph 10. Which Wife Should Remain

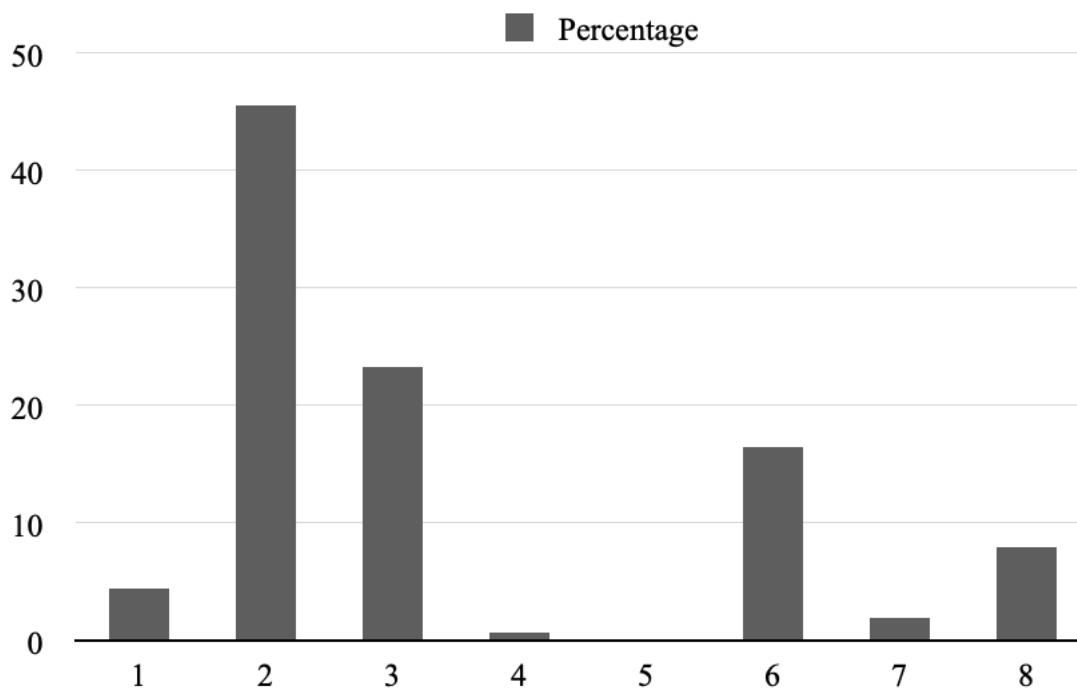


Table 11. Which Wife Should Remain

Response options	Respondents	Percentage
1. The wives decide which wife should remain	21	4
2. The first wife in all circumstances	219	46
3. The one married in the civil court	112	23
4. The one with the youngest children	3	1
5. The youngest of the wives	0	0
6. The one the man loves the most	79	16
7. The one who needs most assistance	9	2
8. Other	38	8

Regarding the wife's selection to remain, 46% of the participants elect the first wife in all circumstances, the wife with a marriage certificate comes as the second most popular option with 23% of participants then the wife the man loves the most

with 16% of respondents. Less popular options are the one with the youngest children with 1%, the one who needs most assistance with 2%, the wives to decide with 4% and other options with 8%. No participant elects the youngest of the wives. The first wife option ranks high among 41.6% of women and 50% of men. More participants (51.4%) with tertiary levels select this position decreasing in educational levels to 41.2% within the secondary level and 35.5% in primary-level education. The first wife option is also that of 54.5% of participants married through the civil court against 46.7% within those customarily married. However, it is the selection of 85.7% of divorced participants and 41% of the single participants. 43.6% of those who associate polygamy to a desire to have multiple wives opt for the first wife against 46.4% of those ascribing other factors. Those who believe that the original marriage prohibits polygamy take this view in 43.6% of participants while 51.2% of those who view the practice as adultery perceive the first wife as the only one to remain in all circumstances.

The second option in popularity among the participants is the wife married through the civil court with 23% of the participants, of which 26.3% of the female and 21% of the male respondents identify with. This option decreases popularity with increasing education level from 30.2% among those with primary, 24.3% among those with secondary and 20.9% in those with tertiary levels of education. 23.4% of respondents who see the original marriage as a hindrance to polygamy elect the wife with a marriage certificate to remain increasing to 25.9% of those who believe polygamy is akin to adultery. Widows are at the top with this selection with 25% of widows followed by 24.1% of those in civil marriages and 22.2% of those in customary marriages.

The third popular option is where the convert chooses the wife to remain on his conversion with 14.8% female and 18.5% of male respondents. Those with secondary educational levels champion this option with 21.6% then tertiary level with 17% of respondents and those with primary being the least with 6.3%. In terms of marital status, the single lead with 23.9% of respondents and those in civil marriages lag behind all with 8% while those in customary marriages count 14.4% of them and those separated with 10% of respondents opting for this option.

Graph 11. Wives' Legitimacy

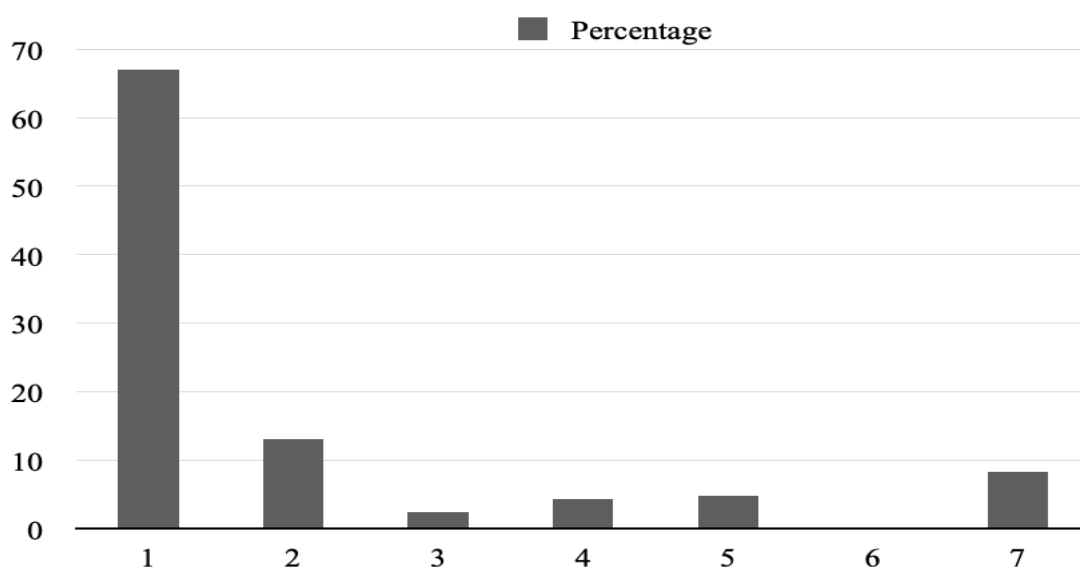


Table 12. Wives' Legitimacy

Response options	Respondents	Percentage
1. The first wife is the only and real wife of a man	322	67
2. Subsequent wives are in adulterous relationships	63	13
3. Subsequent marriages are not marriages (they are not wives)	12	2
4. All wives are legitimate and their marriages are valid	21	4
5. All wives are in adulterous relationships	23	5
6. The first is the wife of a man's youth	0	0
7. Other	40	8

In question number ten, the participants select the statement representing their beliefs about polygamy most accurately. The first wife is the only, and real wife of a man is the perception of 67% of the survey participants while 13% believe that subsequent wives are in adulterous relationships, a statement not very distant from the 5% who believe all women in a polygamous relationship are living in adultery. Twenty-one participants (4%) believe that all wives are legitimate and their marriages valid, while 2% of the respondents see subsequent marriages as not marriages. It is noteworthy that no participant elects the first wife as the wife of a man's youth which has a 2% in the pilot survey.

Those who believe that the first and real wife comprise 59% of the females and 74% are males. 90% of those separate from their spouses believe in this statement, then 78% of those in traditional marriages and 67% of those in civil marriages. The widows and widowers are the least with this belief, with only 46% of their category. The statement becomes less accurate with increasing education levels, with 71% among those with primary, 70% within the secondary education levels and 64% within the tertiary level. Of those who believe the desire for multiple sexual partners, 61% identify with the statement while 69% of those who see the original marriage as the main reason for monogamous and 63% of those who see polygamy as akin to adultery.

Those who believe that women in a polygamous relationship live in adultery represent 21% of the female and 17% of the male participants. This belief becomes weaker with increasing education levels from 23% among the tertiary education, 16% among the secondary and 5% among the primary level participants. Among those who believe sexual desire for multiple partners 25% identify more with this belief while 15% of those who see the original marriage as interdicting polygamy and 22% of participants regarding polygamy as the same as adultery.

Graph 12. Caring for Separated Wives

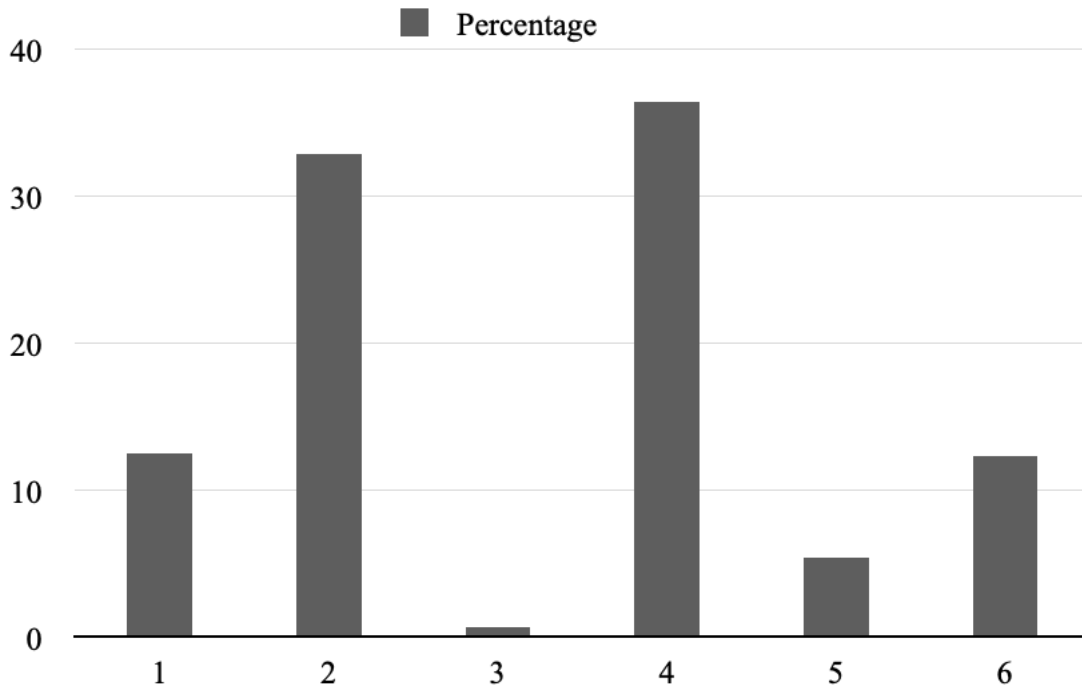


Table 13. Caring for Separated Wives

Response options	Respondents	Percentage
1. Provide separate housing for the separated wives	60	12
2. Provide necessary assistance only for the children	158	33
3. Provide sexual satisfaction if she does not get married again	3	1
4. Provide necessary assistance for the children and separated wives	175	36
5. None, she is no longer his responsibility	26	5
6. Other	29	12

Considering the responses regarding responsibility for the separated wives and family, 36% of respondents require that the convert provides necessary assistance to both children and their wives while 33% require assistance only to the children. 12% require separate housing for the wives who will not continue with the man, 5% state that the convert has no more responsibility for the wives while 1% still require that the convert sexually satisfy the women until they re-marry. 12% provide other options or simply rephrase the previous one with explanations.

Overall, more participants in every category require that the convert polygamous man takes responsibility for the women and the children he will send away with some exceptions. 37% of respondents with secondary and 41% with primary education levels would require provisions only for the children while 28% and 24% would require such assistance for the women and children. Further, 48% of those in customary marriages would require provisions only for the children against 26% in the same category include the wives in such responsibility. It is worth noting that more males than women respondents require that the convert provides for either the children or the wives and the children.

Graph 13. Respondents' Relation to the Church

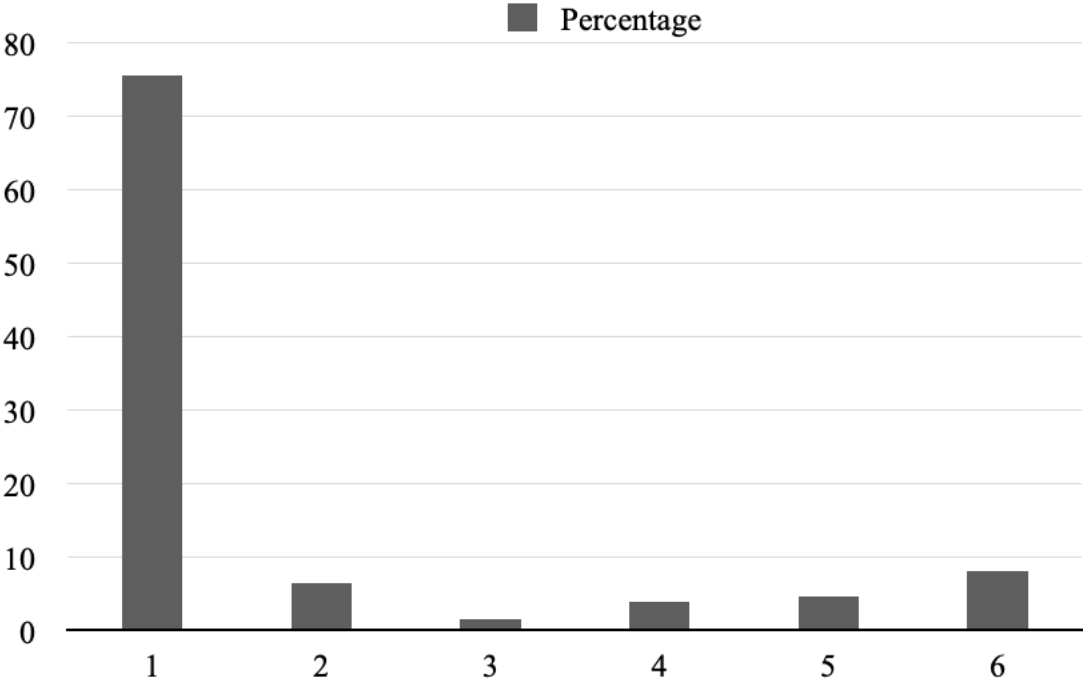


Table 14. Respondents' Relation to the Church

Response options	Respondents	Percentage
1. Baptized member	364	76
2. Sabbath School Member	31	6
3. Mission or Union Administrator	7	1
4. Pastor or Theological Student	19	4
5. Frequent visitor	22	5
6. Skipped	39	8

When it comes to the participants' relationship to the Seventh-day Adventist church, 76% of these are baptized members while 8% do not disclose their relationship to the church. Among the respondents, 6% are Sabbath School members, 5% are frequent visitors, 4% are either pastors or theology students, while 1% are Mission or Union administrators.

Interview Results and Analysis

Four participants share their experience attempting to attain Seventh-day Adventist Church's membership after accepting the Gospel in separate interviews whose responses feature in the following lines in six main categories or themes. Entering the Adventist church, polygamous family, desire and tradition lead to polygamy, the first wife as the main wife in a polygamous relationship, condition for baptism and caring for the wives and children after separation six themes that surface from the

Church. Participants describe their experience with the Adventist church as “I am in the church,” “I entered the Adventist Church” or “I went to Adventist” as an indication of their relationship to the Adventist Church. None of the participants uses phrases like “I am” an Adventist or “I belong to” the Adventist church which indicates that although they participate and attend the church, they recognize that they are not

Adventists and do not belong to the church. While all participants continue to attend church albeit some seem less regular than others, Mr W, who attends church since 2018, comes from a Christian background as he says, “I attended Jehovah Witnesses” before while Mr Z, who attends church for the past eight years, accompanied his mother to the Adventist church before leaving the church during his early adolescence. Mr X and Y did not attend any formal religion before coming in contact with the Adventist message as Mr Y says “no, no, I have never attended any church, I began with the Adventist Church.”

Three of the participants’ first wives are members in regular standing, and in the words of Mr Y the first is the one “since she began going to church she has not abandoned and always goes to church.” None of Mr Z's wives goes to church as “only the son of my last wife likes to go to church with me” and “none of my wives goes to the Adventist Church with me. Each one goes to her church.” The statement of Mr X “some days back I used to go to the Adventist Church” demonstrates that he may be planning to stop going to church on account of not being baptized contrary to Mr Y's “Even me, I always have the strength to attend church while figuring out what to do” about my wives.

Polygamous Family. Two of the participants have two wives while Mr X has three wives, but when asked about the reasons to have three wives, he asks “to have four wives?” and hesitantly admits being in the process of acquiring a fourth wife. Mr Z currently has three wives after losing the second wife to death. The wives of three of the participants live in different homesteads although since January of 2020, the second wife of Mr. W lives at her parents’ home due to some differences between her and the husband. Mr Y has another house he has built with his second wife and where she now lives, but they began living together. The same applies to Mr Z, whose wives

currently live in separate houses, but they shared the same home when they married the second wife.

Mr W's polygamy begins twenty-one years after marrying the first wife who has seven children, of which three are male and his second wife of nineteen years has three children, two who are male. Mr X was monogamous for six years and has seventeen children in a total, five from the first wife. Mr Y lives sixteen years in monogamy and has four children with the first wife and none with the second. Mr Z has seven living children out of 10, and his first wife has one living child after losing a boy child and lives eleven years before becoming a polygamist.

The participants' polygamous families seem to have challenges; the second wife of Mr W "does not understand me [him] well" and is now living with her parents. Mr Y mentioned the challenge when they knew the Gospel, and they began to attend the Adventist church, his second wife did not join them, creating tension in the family. Mr Z mentions the rivalry between the second and the first wife and the current tension and challenge to attend all three wives and children equally.

Reason for Polygamy. Two reasons for having many wives surface from the interviews. While Mr W indicates that "I had no reason, only wanting to" and denies the influence of culture to his polygamy as he says "no, no it was not culture, it was my wish," Mr Y says "I only liked her, there was no other motive." On the other hand, tradition and family background play a role in Mr X's polygamy who marries three wives as an insurance policy as he says "Epah, you know, it is our tradition. We have many children so that when some die, you remain with the others." Although not expressing it, the same concept may inform Mr Z's marrying of many wives in saying "I wanted to have a big family" His polygamy begins when his first wife does not conceive after the first female child.

All participants live in a permissive polygamy context as none face resistance from the community and their relatives. The relatives of Mr. W are present during his subsequent marriages, and upon expressing his desire to add a wife they say “go ahead it depends on you.” Although not pushing him into polygamy, Mr X's relatives, especially his father and grandparents influence him into marrying many wives to have many children in saying “look my grandchild, when you have a wife, sometimes she dies, and you remain with nothing, if the child dies you remain childless.” Mr Y says my family “did not force me neither prohibited” and Mr Z’s first wife becomes the godmother of the second wife and all his relatives ask is whether the additional wives and their relatives know that he has other wives and “did not see as something wrong, also because my father was a polygamist.”

The First as the Main Wife. Participants indicate that all women are their wives, but the first is the main wife for Mr W because “she is my strength” and “since the beginning, there is no problem with her, everything was perfect” after stating that “all my wives are wives.” However, it is crucial to understand that the “main wife” concept seems to come after contact with Adventism as he says “for me, in past times, both the first and the second are my wives” and it would cause him pain if he lost his second wife. For Mr X, there is no difference between his wives. He says “Haaaa; they are all in the same level.” Mr Z demonstrates that he also holds his wives at a same level and legitimacy as he struggles to decide which wife he could send away, but he holds a chronological concept of the “main wife” in saying that “we had the first son but the second wife now wants to become the main and was pushing the first wife away.” Mr Y does not use the term “main wife” however, he says “I can say I have four, three or even two wives, but I know that the first wife is the one that remains the man's wife.”

Condition for Baptism. The first wife and non-defined positions prevail in the churches that the participants attend as the church requires Mr W to “strive to be baptized” by remaining with “only one wife and only the first.” The participant agrees with the position through personal reflection, what he hears in general and the church says, however, his recollection of the church’s requirement is fuzzy in the lines “the church may state a number or one wife, but I also understand through the Bible that it should be one wife.” The first wife position is the same as Mr Y’s encounters in the pastor’s words, who says “he who has two wives should send away the second wife.” To Mr X, the church says “if you want to be baptized you need to have one wife” without specifying any preference and Mr Z says “the church did not give clear guidance, but they said I should solve the situation on my own.” These last two reflect a non-defined position.

Regarding the decision of which wife, the participants would keep, all but one indicate a preference for the first wife for different reasons. Mr Z prefers that the women decide to leave on their volition. Mr W says “I would choose the first” because she is his first wife and he marries the second only because of youthfulness, besides, his second wife is already at her parents’ home, and he is tired of her on account of misunderstandings regarding his sickness. Mr X prefers to send away the other wives and remain with the first without giving concrete reasons beside saying that “if I should register any of my wives, I will not do it with any other but the first one.” The one that attends the Adventist church would be the wife to remain in the case of Mr Y because “I see that, that which I say, she listens and since she began to attend the church she has not abandoned.”

The interview invites participants to state what assistance they will give the wife they would send away. Mr W would only take care of the children and not the

wife because she would no longer be his responsibility. Mr W believes that the wife would not be fine after separation but could survive and if she is still in “good shape,” she could find another husband, who would take care of her, although he recognizes that there are people who can survive alone and those who may not.

Mr X believes the wife would not have any challenges to survive after leaving his home, but she would have challenges if she takes her child. As such, the community would require him to send some money for the child’s food, clothing and hospital, which he would gladly do. Mr Y will only provide what the community leaders demand from him until she marries again, but would not assist in anything once she leaves because their relationship would have come to an end. Mr Z will provide for the wives and his children although he does not envision separation, at least from his side as an excellent solution to the problem.

Not Addressing the Separation Issue. Although all know that baptism's condition is attaining a monogamous status, none of the participants attempted to attain such marital status. Mr W states that the community shuns separation aside from problems or misunderstanding between the spouses in which case the community would reject the woman. However, if a woman leaves the husband with no cause, the community encourages the woman to return to the husband's home. After knowing the requirement for baptism, he became undecided, because he loves both wives and there is no problem with any of the wives that warrant their separation preventing him from even discussing the possibility of separation. He further says that he does not even know how the wives feel about the possible separation because they live in separate places.

Mr X never addresses the issue of separation with his wives without stating any reason. However, the participant promises to explain to the wives and hear their

opinion regarding the separation, but does not know what he will do if they all refuse to leave willingly. The participant's silence and speech fillers give a glimpse of the challenging task of asking the wives to leave. Mr X says “I will hear each wife's opinion ehhhh, I will see when I talk to them, [silence] I do not know, ahhhh, I will see at that time.” Mr Y follows suite in not addressing the separation issue with the wives; he says “I have not told them, it remained in my heart” because he is still pondering the issue. Mr Z has not discussed separation with his wives because he has no right to continue to hurt them as he “took them only to abandon them on the way” this makes him feel tremendous guilt. Therefore, it should be a decision by the wives and not his decision; they should come to realize that this way of living is wrong and decide to leave, he believes. Besides requiring the participants to resolve their polygamous status, all participants agree that the church has not done much to help them separate themselves from their wives.

Conclusion

Questionnaire results indicate that a considerable number of respondents perceive polygamy as akin to adultery, corroborating the number of those who perceive subsequent or all polygamous wives as living in adultery. However, a greater number do not share this perception and regard the original marriage of Genesis as the basis for monogamy. More respondents adopt a first wife position compared to almost half their number who elect a non-defined position in the treatment of polygamous converts. The first wife position ranks higher among the male, tertiary level, divorced, respondents and those in civil marriages and who view polygamy as adultery. The first wife position is also higher among respondents linking the practice to cultural demands and bareness compared to those holding sexual desire as the main reason for this form of marriages. A majority of those adopting a non-defined stance prefer the

wife with a marriage certificate. The number of participants (67% of respondents) who regard the first as the only and true wife regardless of the reasons for polygamy is greater than those who do not. Perceptions of polygamy do not vary much with respondents' age as they do with gender, marital status and educational level of respondents intimating a significant influence of socialization and religious conditioning upon these perceptions.

On the other hand, polygamous converts indicate a desire to have multiple wives and cultural backgrounds as equal underlying factors for having multiple wives. Together with their relatives and permissive communities, they do not perceive the practice as immoral neither regard subsequent wives as less legitimate or easily disposable in relation to the first wife. Moreover, interviewees hint that their encounter with the Adventist message changed their perception of the locus of the first wife in the family economy to that of the only and true wife. Their preference for the first wife rests upon not having reasons to send her away, a reason that may be hindering them from sending away the subsequent wives, what the church and other people say and being the only one who is baptized and faithful to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Both questionnaire respondents and interview participants agree that the original marriage sets the standard for all marriages, one woman for one man, and the only indictment against polygamy. Moreover, they also agree generally on the first wife position although respondents hold this position based on the chronological order of wife's acquisition and polygamy being akin to adultery while participants' selection rests upon the health of their marital relationships and the wives' current religious status. While a significant number of respondents regard subsequent wives as less legitimate without necessarily being in adulterous relationships, interview participants seem not to hold the same perception at least until encountering Adventism. Adventist

members tend to associate polygamy to a desire for multiple sexual partners more and only collectively do other factors outweigh this perception, while polygamists see both the desire and cultural conditioning as underlying factors.

There is conclusive evidence from the questionnaires and interviews that Mozambicans adopt a first wife position while readily accommodating a non-defined position according to circumstances. This preference is mainly due to the belief that the original marriage of Genesis is the standard for marital relations and that the first is the only and true wife of a man.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The research project, *Perceptions of Polygamy and Treatment of Polygamous Male Converts: A Mozambican Context*, addresses the disparity in treating polygamous converts within the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Mozambique. The disparity arising from two leading separation positions, the first wife and the non-defined position in the treatment of polygamous converts, poses a challenge in effectively disciplining polygamous converts from different contexts. For over a century of Christian and Protestant missions, the Christian church moved from a complete separation to a no separation policy owing to how it views polygamy and the church's role in different cultural settings. During this time, whether the church should allow polygamy or not and whether the Bible condemns or approves the practice dominates the debate. However, which wife should remain, a question that may influence a polygamist convert's discipleship, receives little attention in the whole debate.

Therefore, it becomes crucial to understand the perception of polygamy by the church members and polygamous converts to develop a framework and rationale for adopting any of the positions without casting appearances of conflicting policies within the denomination. It is vital to remind the reader that the Seventh-day Adventist policy on polygamy may imply a non-defined position without defining the party that decides the wife to remain.

The research sets to understand whether only one stance should be adopted. If polygamy amounts to adultery and whether only one wife is legitimate in a polygamous marriage arrangement. Also, to ascertain if the Bible regards the first as the only and legitimate wife in polygamous marriages and what informs the wife's choice to remain from the perspective of members and polygamists. The research achieves this task through a literature review, a biblical survey and a qualitative descriptive study.

The non-defined stance may stem from perceiving all wives as illegitimate since polygamy is contrary to God's will and, in certain civilizations, illegal or recognizing all wives' legitimacy under cultural practices and country legislations before the man encounters the gospel. As such, none of the women or wives has more significant claims to the husband. On the other hand, the first wife position, which seems to be present as early as C.E. 866, may stem from linking polygamy solely to lustful reasons, equating it to adultery, or perceiving the church as an arbiter of social justice.

Conclusion

The literature review shows that polygamy, although also a result of lustful desires and contrary to God's marital ideal, is distinct from adultery, not constituting in itself sexual immorality and maybe a cultural device to prevent immorality. While the country's legal framework enables a fully attested marriage or consensual union to impede and nullify a subsequent marriage, the resolution of such an impediment or nullity through a previous marriages' dissolution allows for a non-defined position in the treatment of polygamous converts. The title "main wife" or "first wife" refers more to the chronological order of acquisition, ascribing certain social privileges to her as choosing a subsequent wife without relegating other women to less legitimate

wife status. However, Ellen G. White's silence, moderate and well-balanced approach in dealing with unbiblical marriages, resembling that of God's throughout Scripture, warrants a non-rigid stance in the treatment of polygamous converts.

The Old Testament survey supports a non-rigid stance by neither addressing nor treating polygamy as adultery. Furthermore, the Bible does not include polygamy within legal corpora dealing with adultery or sexual immorality but within social injustice and issues regarding property and leadership. Bible writers call all women in polygamous relationships as "wives," never using chronological order of acquisition to differentiate the hierarchy of wives' legitimacy within categories of wives. However, God's intervention in human history and polygamy in the Old Testament as an equalizer, alleviating the affliction of either Rachel or Hannah, removing their shame and protecting the vulnerable beacons His followers to look beyond chronological order of wife acquisition in the treatment of polygamous converts.

A first wife stance is most popular among questionnaire respondents and interview participants. However, this stance comes without equating polygamy to adultery. While respondents believe that the first wife is more legitimate and should remain in all circumstances, interview participants' choice of the first wife rests upon the health of their marital relationships and the religious affiliation of the wives. Moreover, participants disagree that there is a difference in legitimacy between wives. Interview participants signal the difficulty of separating themselves from their wives by continuing in polygamy and not addressing the need for separation with either woman. The difficulty in the separation decision emanates from the society's opposition towards divorce with no breach in marital conventions, the challenges the separated women and children may face, the attachment between the involved parties and a perceived lack of moral authority of converts in initiating the separation.

The current project concludes with an understanding that all wives in a polygamous relationship are legitimate in contexts permissive of polygamy, that none of the wives in a community sanctioned polygamous relationship is committing adultery. Moreover, neither the first wife stance nor the non-defined stance violates biblical principles. Further, the study understands that a significant number of Mozambican Adventist members perceives polygamy as distinct from adultery. The members also perceive that the first wife is the only and legitimate wife of a polygamous man, and should remain in all circumstances upon the conversion of a polygamous man. However, polygamous converts' perception differs from that of the members in viewing all wives as true wives and placing the wife's relationship and religious allegiance above chronological order of acquisition in determining the wife to remain.

Recommendations

There is a need for intentional study and cultural research on polygamy, its impact on spiritual formation and social life among church members and a more detailed emphasis on polygamy during marriage bible study lessons. Bible studies on what constitutes adultery are a need among church members, which will help them to understand better polygamous converts' challenges and assist them on their discipleship journey. Moreover, not understanding what constitutes adultery may lead to church members engaging in immoral behaviours or perceiving the Bible as condoning adultery in the form of polygamy.

The study demonstrates the necessity of developing contextualized baptism bible study lessons on marriage and family life that address polygamy through biblical, cultural and legal lenses. Such studies will enable interests to appreciate the

beauty of monogamous marriages and realize that polygamy is in variance with God's will and the spirit of country laws.

It becomes evident in the study that it is essential to sensitize communities on the benefits of transcribing marriages, lowering the prevalence of plural marriages. Moreover, sensitizing converts, communities and church members in caring for separated wives of polygamous converts will prevent them from becoming common property and lead miserable lives. Proactive sensitizing will safeguard the church's image from disrupting marital relationships and social order to upholding society's social fabric and contributing to the well-being of the communities. There is also a need to train church elders in coaching polygamous converts to attain a monogamous status instead of merely telling them to send away their wives, resolve their situation, or not address the issue.

Mozambique Union Mission is recommended to uphold the first wife position as it is more in line with the national legal framework than the non-defined position and is not contradictory to the Bible. It is vital to consider that the law allows for the dissolution of a first marriage to resolve a subsequent marriage's nullity paving the way for a non-defined position whenever circumstances warrant such a position.

Also, the Union is recommended to contextualize the Seventh-day Adventist denomination's policy on polygamy and craft guidelines that may give preference to the first wife position without ruling out the non-defined position. Moreover, the policy should state that the polygamous marriages' circumstances should take precedence in determining the wife to remain, and such a choice should be the prerogative of the convert and involved wives after adequate discipleship coaching. Such guidelines should indicate the worldwide denomination's stance regarding the

polygamy and the treatment of polygamous converts and demonstrate that a non-defined stance is not in variance with the Bible.

There is a need to thoroughly exegete predominantly polygamous cultures to understand polygamists' needs and purposes better and offer biblically sound solutions to effective missions among polygamy permissive cultures. Such a study will transcend the debate from a mere legalistic and moral view to actual social reality, often neglected in such studies. This better understanding will help polygamist converts seek and effectively move from a polygamous to a monogamous state, which is currently a challenge and results in polygamous men electing to attend church without baptism even to abandon church after some time. A more in-depth study on the prevalence of polygamy, correlations between assumptions about members' practice and treatment preferences will help the church to address polygamy more relevantly for the country. Moreover, a better understanding of the phenomenon will equip churches to ascertain polygamists' conversion experience, even if they elect to dissolve the first marriage due to different reasons.

The present study indicates the need for a correlation study between perceptions of polygamy, the treatment of polygamous converts, and how should converts care for separated wives in cultural contexts that believe that a man should only take care of a woman, other than his relative, if she is his wife. Moreover, accepting polygamous converts who do not effectively care for their wives and children after separation will tarnish the church's image calling for a careful study on this requirement for baptism. There is also a need to study the treatment of polygamous female converts who receive baptism by being the first wives while still living in polygamy. Another gap that future studies may endeavour to research is the

polygamous wives' perception of polygamy and the separation requirement for acceptance of both male and female converts.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A
ORIGINAL QUESTIONNAIRE

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE
Original

You are invited to participate of this survey on polygamy that will contribute to a Master's Thesis. The purpose is to gather the perception and understanding of Seventh-day Adventist Members and Pastors regarding what should happen when a person with two or more wives accepts the gospel and wants to join the church through baptism. The results will help the church in sharing the gospel to people who live in polygamous relationships and better nurture them once they join the church. There are only twelve questions which you can respond in less than ten minutes. After selecting your preferred answer in each question, click OK to save your option and move to the next question. After responding all questions click on FINISH to submit your answers.

Note that no one will be able to know your individual answers to the questions and DO NOT write your name on the questionnaire. Thank you for giving your time in responding this questionnaire.

Polygamy, in this survey, refers to situations where one man has two or more wives, whether they all live in the same household or not and whether the wives approve the situation or not.

1. Tick the box with your age group?

15 – 19

20 – 29

30 – 39

40 – 49

50 – 60

More than 60

2. Select your gender?

Male

Female

3. Indicate your education Level?

None (No Formal Schooling)

Primary Level (1st to 7th year)

Secondary Level (8th to 12th years)

Tertiary Level (Post-Secondary)

4. Which of the following best describes your marital status?

Single (no spouse)

Married in Civil Court

Customarily Married (marital unions)

Divorced (in Civil Court)

Separated (living away from spouse)

Widow

5. In your opinion, what makes people have more than one wife?

- Relatives and traditions demand;
 - First wife cannot have children or a male child;
 - Wanting to have people to work in the fields and home chores;
 - They cannot divorce the first wife due to religious or cultural laws;
 - Desire to have multiple sexual partners;
 - Religious Beliefs
 - Others, please state in few words
-
-

6. Which would be the main reason people should not have more than one wife

- Polygamy is against the law of the country
- Polygamy is adultery
- God created one man for one woman
- It violates women's rights
- The Bible condemns polygamy
- No reason

7. What does the Bible says about polygamy?

- The Bible condemns polygamy
- The Bible discourages polygamy
- The Bible does not condemn neither approves polygamy
- The Bible permits polygamy
- The Bible approves polygamy
- I am not sure

8. If a polygamous man wants to be baptized, what should happen to his wives?

- The man should choose one wife and send away all other wives
- The man should send away all wives and remain with the first wife
-

The man should send away all wives and marry a new wife

The Man should not send away any of his wives

Other, please state in few words:

9. Select the statement that represents your belief more accurately?

- The first wife is the only and real wife of a man
- Subsequent wives are in adulterous relationships
- Subsequent marriages are not marriages (they are not wives)
- The first wife is the wife of the man's youth
- All wives are legitimate and their marriages are valid
- All wives are in adulterous relationships

10. If he has to keep only one of the wives, which of them should remain?

- The first wife in all circumstances
- The one married in the civil court
- The one with younger children
- The youngest of the wives
- The one the man loves most
- The one who needs most financial assistance

11. How should the former husband care for the separated wives?

- Provide for separate housing
- Only care for education, clothing and food of the children
- Provide sexual satisfaction if she does not get married again
- Provide for food, clothing for the wife
- She is no longer his responsibility
- Other, Specify _____

12. Which of the following, best describes your relation to the church? (Select only one)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baptized member | <input type="checkbox"/> Pastor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sabbath School Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent Visitor |

Thank you for responding to this Survey Questionnaire

APPENDIX B

TRANSLATED QUESTIONNAIRE
(from English to Portuguese)

QUESTIONÁRIO DE INQUÉRITO

Translation by Silas B. Muabsa

É convidado a participar deste inquérito sobre poligamia que contribuirá para uma Tese de Mestrado. O propósito é colher a perceção e compreensão de membros e pastores Adventistas do Sétimo Dia em relação ao que deve acontecer quando alguém com duas ou mais esposas aceita o evangelho e decide unir-se à Igreja pelo batismo. Os resultados ajudarão a igreja a partilhar o evangelho com pessoas que vivam em relacionamentos poligâmicos e melhor alimenta-los espiritualmente depois destes se unirem à Igreja. Existem apenas doze perguntas que poderá responder em menos de dez minutos. Após selecionar a sua resposta preferida de cada questão, clique em OK para salvar a sua opção e passe para a questão seguinte. Depois de responder todas as questões clique em TERMINAR para submeter as suas respostas.

Note que ninguém será capaz de identificar suas respostas individuais e NÃO escreva o seu nome no questionário. Obrigado por dar o seu tempo para responder este questionário.

Poligamia, neste inquérito se refere a situações onde um homem tenha duas ou mais mulheres, quer vivam todas na mesma casa ou não e quer as mulheres estejam de acordo ou não com a situação.

1. Marque a caixa com o seu grupo etário (sua idade)

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 15 – 19 <input type="checkbox"/> | 20 – 29 <input type="checkbox"/> | 30 – 39 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 40 – 49 <input type="checkbox"/> | 50 – 60 <input type="checkbox"/> | Mais que 60 <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. Selecione o seu sexo

- Masculino
Feminino

3. Indique o seu nível de escolaridade

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nenhum (Nenhum Ensino formal) | Nível Primário (1ª a 7ª Classe) <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nível Secundário (8ª a 12ª Classe) | Nível Universitário (depois da 12ª) <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. Qual dos seguintes descreve melhor o seu estado civil?

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Solteiro(a) (sem marido ou mulher) | Casado(a) no Civil | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Casado(a) Tradicionalmente | Divorciado(a) (no Civil) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Separado(a) (não vive com marido/mulher) | Viúvo(a) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. Na sua opinião, porque algumas pessoas têm mais que uma esposa?

- Exigência dos familiares e tradições;
 - A Primeira esposa não faz filhos ou não tem filhos masculinos;
 - Para ter pessoas para trabalhar na machamba e fazer trabalhos domésticos;
 - Não podem divorciar-se da primeira mulher devido à leis religiosas e culturais;
 - Desejo de ter muitas parceiras sexuais;
 - Crenças religiosas
 - Outra, escreva em poucas palavras
-
-

6. Qual seria a razão principal porque as pessoas não devem ter mais que uma esposa?

- Poligamia é contrária à lei do país
- Poligamia é adultério
- Deus criou um homem para uma mulher
- A Poligamia viola os direitos da mulher
- A Bíblia condena a poligamia
- Nenhuma razão

7. O que a Bíblia diz sobre a poligamia?

- A Bíblia condena a poligamia
- A Bíblia desencoraja a poligamia
- A Bíblia não condena nem aprova a poligamia
- A Bíblia permite a poligamia
-

A Bíblia aprova a poligamia

Não tenho certeza

8. O que deve acontecer com as mulheres de um polígamo que quer ser batizado?

O homem deve escolher uma e mandar embora todas as outras

O homem deve mandar embora todas e permanecer com a primeira mulher

O homem deve mandar embora todas e casar uma nova mulher

O homem não deve mandar embora nenhuma das suas mulheres

Outra, escreva em poucas palavras:

9. Escolha a afirmação que representa a sua crença de forma mais correta?

A primeira é a única e verdadeira mulher de um homem

As outras mulheres estão num relacionamento adúltero

Os casamentos subsequentes não são casamentos (elas não são esposas)

A primeira mulher é a mulher da juventude de um homem

Todas as mulheres são legítimas e seus casamentos válidos

Todas as mulheres estão num relacionamento adúltero

10. Se o homem tiver que manter apenas uma das mulheres, qual delas deverá ser?

A primeira mulher em todas as circunstâncias

A mulher casada no civil

A mulher com os filhos mais novos

A mulher mais nova

A mulher que o homem mais ama

A mulher que mais necessita de assistência financeira

Depende das circunstâncias

11. Como é que o ex-marido deverá cuidar das mulheres separadas?

Fornecer-lhes uma casa separada

Cuidar apenas da educação, vestuário e alimentação dos filhos

Satisfazer sexualmente as mulheres que não conseguirem casar de novo

Fornecer alimento e vestuário a mulher separada

Ela já não é sua responsabilidade

Outras, especifique

12. Qual das seguintes, descreve melhor sua relação com a Igreja? (Selecione uma)

Membro Batizado

Pastor

Membro da Escola Sabatina

Visitante Frequente

Obrigado pelo seu tempo em responder ao Questionário

APPENDIX C

BACK TRANSLATED QUESTIONNAIRE
(from Portuguese to English)

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Back Translation by Leila Neves

You are invited to participate in this survey regarding polygamy, which will be used for a Master's Degree Thesis. The aim is to gather the perception and understanding of Seventh-day Adventist members and pastors of what should happen when someone with two or more wives accepts the Gospel and makes the decision to join the Church through baptism. The results will help the church share the Gospel with people who live in polygamous relationships and better nurture them spiritually after they join the Church. There are only twelve questions and you should answer these in less than ten minutes. After selecting your answer to each question, click OK to save your option and move on to the next question. After answering all the questions click END to submit your answers.

Note that no one will be able to identify your personal answers and DO NOT write your name on the questionnaire. Thank you for taking time to answer this questionnaire.

In this questionnaire, polygamy refers to situations where a man has two or more wives, regardless of whether they live in the same household and whether the wives agree with the situation or not.

1. Tick the box with your age group

15 – 19	<input type="checkbox"/>	20 – 29	<input type="checkbox"/>	30 – 39	<input type="checkbox"/>
40 – 49	<input type="checkbox"/>	50 – 60	<input type="checkbox"/>	Above 60	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Select your gender

Male
Female

3. Indicate your level of education

<input type="checkbox"/> None (No formal education)	Primary School (Grade 1 to 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> High School (Grade 8 to 12)	Tertiary Education (post grade 12)	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Which of the following best describes your marital status?

- | | | |
|--|----------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single (no husband or wife) | Legal Marriage | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customary Marriage | Legal Divorce | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Separated (does not live with husband/wife) | Widower/Widow | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. In your opinion, why do some people have more than one wife?

- Family demands and traditions;
 - The first wife cannot have children or does not have male children;
 - To have people to work the land and do household chores;
 - Cannot divorce the first wife due to religious and cultural rules;
 - They want to have many sexual partners;
 - Religious beliefs;
 - Other, describe briefly
-
-

6. What would be the main reason why people should not have more than one wife?

- Polygamy is against the laws of the country
- Polygamy is adultery
- God created one man for one woman
- Polygamy violates women's rights
- The Bible condemns polygamy
- No reason

7. What does the Bible say about polygamy?

- The Bible condemns polygamy
- The Bible discourages polygamy
- The Bible neither condemns nor approves polygamy
- The Bible allows polygamy
-

The Bible approves polygamy

I am not sure

8. What should happen to the wives of a polygamous man who wishes to be baptised?

- The man must choose one and send away all the others
 - The man must send all away and stay with the first wife
 - The man must send all away and marry another woman
 - The man must not send away any of his wives
 - Other, describe briefly:
-

9. Select the statement that represents your belief more accurately.

- The first is a man's only and true wife
- The other wives are in an adulterous relationship
- Subsequent marriages are not marriages (the women are not wives)
- The first wife is the woman from the man's youth
- All wives are legitimate and their marriages are valid
- All the wives are in an adulterous relationship

10. If the man keeps only one of the wives, which one should it be?

- The first wife under all circumstances
- The wife to whom he is legally married
- The wife with the youngest children
- The youngest wife
- The wife whom the man loves the most
- The wife who most needs financial support

11. How should the ex-husband take care of the separated wives?

- Give her a separate house
- Provide only for the children's education, clothing and food
- Sexually satisfy those who are unable to remarry
- Provide for her food and clothing
- She is no longer his responsibility

Other, specify

12. Which of the following best describes your church status? (Select one)

- | | | |
|--|-----------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baptised Member | Pastor | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sabbath School Member | Regular Visitor | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Thank you for your time answering the Questionnaire

APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interviewees: Polygamous Men Seeking Baptism in the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Number of Interviewees: 3

Mode: Through WhatsApp Video Calls

Time: 30 to 45 Minutes

I. Background Information

1. What is your current religion and how long have you been in this religion?
2. How many wives do you currently have?
3. How many of your wives are Adventist Members or attend the church?
4. Which of them (first or subsequent) were baptized?
5. Tell me how many children you have? Male/Female and the number per wife.

II. Functions of Polygamy

1. Could you share how you became a polygamous man?
2. What role did your family play in your subsequent marriages?
3. How many years did you live with one wife and what was the reason for having another?
4. How would you respond a person who says there is only one real wife?

III. Selection of the Wife to Remain

1. What did the church require from you to be baptized to the Seventh-day Adventist Church?
2. How did you feel when you knew you had to leave some of your wives to be baptized?
 - a. What makes that decision difficult for you?
 - b. If you had to leave one of your wives, which one would you remain with and why?
3. What was the reaction of your wives when they knew about this requirement?

IV. Care of Separated Wives

1. What would be the challenges your separated wives would face?
2. Does your baptized wife or wives want you to be baptized?
3. What support or assistance would you give to the separated wife?

4. What support or assistance did the church offer in the process?
5. If you had an opportunity to say something to the church regarding polygamous converts, what would you say?

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Research Project Title: Perceptions of Polygamy and Treatment of Male Polygamous Converts: A Mozambican Context.

Researcher's Name and Contact: Silas B. Muabsa, +27 79 743 3238, muabsas@aua.ac.ke

Research Participant's Name and Contact:

Purpose: The purpose of this interview is to gather the perception of participants about polygamy and selection of the wife to remain upon conversion of polygamous men who seek membership through baptisms in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Benefits: The participant benefits by playing an active role in the Great Commission through informing better practices, policies and adequate presentation of the gospel to and discipleship of men who live or lived in polygamous relationships.

- I confirm that my participation in this research is voluntary and with no payment.
- I consent that the interview will last between 30 to 45 minutes approximately.
- I understand that the researcher will disclose my name only after my permission.
- My confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure.
- I confirm that the interview will be recorded, a transcript produced and I can review the notes.
- The actual recording will be destroyed after the publication of the research paper
- I agree that the researcher may publish documents that contain quotations by me.
- I have been allowed to ask all questions regarding the interview that I may have.
- I have been given a copy of the consent form.

By signing this form, I agree to the above terms

Participant's Signature

Researcher's Signature

Date Signed

Date Signed

APPENDIX F

AUTHORIZATION LETTER



CERTIFICATE

I, the undersigned, Leila Neves, Sworn Translator duly admitted by the Supreme Court of South Africa (Witwatersrand Local Division), residing in the city of Johannesburg, in the Province of Gauteng do hereby certify and attest, unto all whom it may concern that the attached (which I have initialled) is to the best of my knowledge and belief, a true and correct translation of the document annexed hereunto in the Portuguese language.

In faith and testimony whereof I, the Sworn Translator have hereunto subscribed my name, at Johannesburg, Province of Gauteng, Republic of South Africa, on this 15th day of August 2020.



[CHURCH LOGO]

SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST
CHURCH

**Mozambican Union of
Seventh-Day Adventists**

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Maputo, Moçambique, Africa
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To whom it may concern

Re: Authorisation to Carry Out Research

We hereby confirm that the Mozambican Union Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, located in Av. Maguiguana nº 300, City of Maputo, authorises **Silas B. Muabsa** to carry out interviews and surveys with pastors, members and theology students at the Adventist University of Mozambique, in the entire territory under the jurisdiction of this Union, in accordance with the Master's Degree in Divinity Research Project Draft by the Adventist University of Africa.

Thank you for your cooperation and best regards.

Maputo, 12th August 2020

(Illegible signature)
José Moreira
Executive Secretary
[Stamp]





IGREJA
ADVENTISTA
DO SÉTIMO DIA

União Moçambicana dos
Adventistas do Sétimo Dia

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A quem possa interessar

Assunto: Permissão para Fazer Pesquisas

Esta carta serve para confirmar que a União Missão Moçambicana da Igreja Adventista do Sétimo Dia, sita na Av. Maguiguana nº 300, Cidade de Maputo, concede permissão a **Silas B. Muabsa** para fazer entrevistas e pesquisas aos pastores, membros e estudantes de teologia da Universidade Adventista de Moçambique em todo território sub jurisdição desta União, de acordo com o Desenho do Projecto de Pesquisa de Mestrado em Divindade pela Adeventist University of Africa.

Com nossos mais sinceros agradecimento pela vossa colaboração.

Maputo, 12 de Agosto de 2020


José Moreira
Secretário Executivo



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