

Polygamy in Mali: Social and Economic Implications on Families

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Abstract

The culture and legislation of Mali supports a man to marry more than one wife. The statistical data of 2015 reveals that 41.8% of married women between 12 -60 years old were in polygamous union and 26.7% of married men between 12 and 60 years old had 2 or more than 2 wives. This kind of marital life has caused a series of social and economic problems, most especially in polygamous homes. There have also been a lot of associated problems affecting people from polygamous families such as jealousy, misogyny, aggression, bitterness, invidiousness, denigration and bewitching. The current study is an attempt to analyze the social and economic effects of polygamy on the society of Mali. The study utilizes individual panel data for data analysis.

Keywords: Polygamy;Matrimony;Family, Household;Social problems

1. Introduction

Polygamy is a matrimonial relationship involving multiple wives and it exists in several forms. The most common form of polygamy occurs when a man has more than one wife at the same time, known as polygyny¹. To Malians, the system of polygyny (polygamy) is nothing strange;Polygyny was the acceptable form of marriage in Mali prior to the arrival of the colonizers, Christianity and Islam. It is legally performed in Mali, although not practiced by all the people . The polygamy represents an aspect of Malian culture and religion. These types of marriages have been more existing in the whole history of Mali like other countries of Africa or other countries in the world. One of the reasons why this has happened, is because the Malian societies have managed to see that children were a form of wealth and this way a family with more children was considered to be more powerful. Under these circumstances the polygamy in Mali was considered to be a part of the way you could build an property. This practice is very common among the animist 34.4% for men, 45.9% for women while the Muslim communities 30.1% for men, 42.1 for women.

In 2015, 29 % of the marriages in rural areas in Mali were polygamous, in urban areas almost 14% of the marriages were polygamous.

Although polygamous marriages are most popular in rural regions of Mali but it exists in urban areas as well. It has not only affected low educated people but sometimes highly educated people are also affected by polygamous marriages. In Mali men are the head of the family, so they can take decision any time to marry one, two, three or even in some cases four wives. Polygamy in both wealthy and poor families is painful for females. So it leads to co-wife jealousy, negative competition, unequal distribution of menage, emotional resources and can generate rancorous between co-wives and between the children of different wives. It can also create inheritance problems after the death of the husband, generally most of the family are ruined.

Marrying a second wife is indeed costly and expensive for the husband. So huge savings are needed to bear the expenses of wedding especially the prices of the new brides have remained high and remarkably stable over a period of time in Mali. Does polygamy have social and economic impacts on households of Mali? This paper is an analysis of polygamy in Mali and the impact of Polygamy on the family structure .

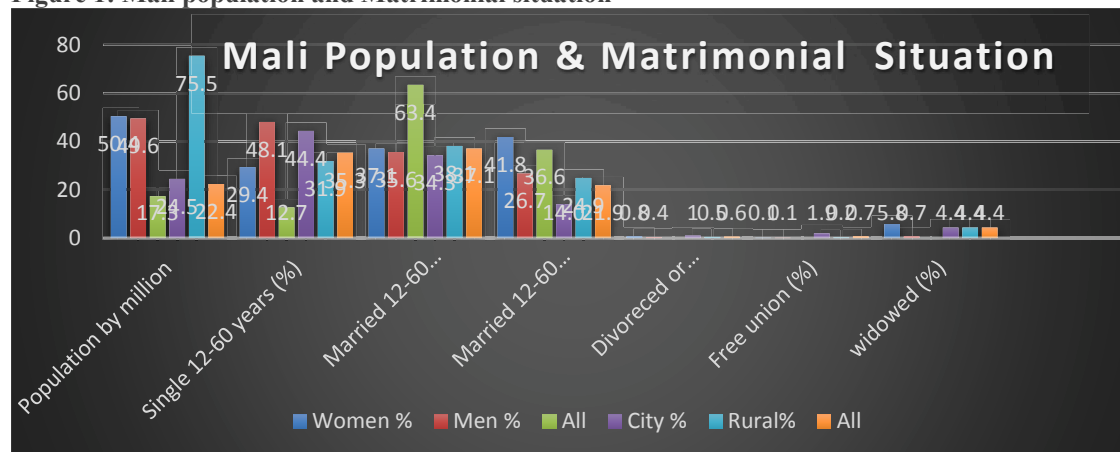
2. Cognizance of polygamy in Mali

Since the adoption of a new family code in 2011 in Mali, religious marriages are also recognized legally and they have the same rights and duties as civil marriages. In case of civil marriages, couples must have to decide whether their marriage will be monogamous or polygamous². If a marriage is monogamous, the husband may not marry another woman if the first marriage has not been dissolved, the wife must consent to a polygamous marriage or it is subject to change her monogamous marriage into a polygamous one, the type of marriage chosen is recorded on the marriage certificate. But unfortunately some men do not follow the rules even having a monogamous marriage, they enter into the second marriage which is not legalized.

¹ Harper, Douglas (ed.). "Polygamy". Online Etymology Dictionary. Archived from the original on 1 February 2016.

² Mali. 2011. Loi n° 2011 - 087 du 30 décembre 2011 portant Code des personnes et de la famille. Accessed 2 Jan. 2014

Figure 1: Mali population and Matrimonial situation



Source:RGPH 2009,EMOP2014/2015

Legend:The proportion of singles in Mali from 12 years old is 48.1% among men and 29.4% among women. 50.7% of the male population are married against 63.8% of the female population. The marriage seems much more widespread among women, whatever the sex, the percentage of singles is higher in urban than in rural areas: 56.4% against 45.2% . Divorce and separation are rare: only 1.2% of urban women and 0.7% of rural women are in this situation, for widowhood, this percentage is much higher among women with no big difference between the circles

Mali' s population is estimated at seventeen million two hundred eighty-seven thousand inhabitants in 2015 with 75.5% live in rural areas; 48.8% of people aged under 15, Mali is characterized by a young population. The population includes 50.4% of women. Sikasso is the most populated region, with 18.3% of the total population, Gao is the least populated region with 3.8% of the population. The average size of Malian economic household is 8.4 people. 59.0% of 12 years or older of persons are married. Figure1 presents the results of matrimonial situation in Mali, despite the predominance of monogamous unions 63.5%, polygamous marriages are still widespread. They relate, in fact almost 41.8% of married women. 5% of the women around 20 years old have 2 or more co-wives. The proportion of women living in polygamous increases with age, from 20% at age 15-19, 23% 20-24 years and 44% at 40-44. In 45-49 years, half of married women (50%) live in polygamous union.

Economic and social modernization in Mali society has made polygamy much less economically worthwhile and sustainable than it was in the past. Nevertheless, the practice of polygamy remains prevalent and is largely accepted among Malians, especially Muslim and animist community.

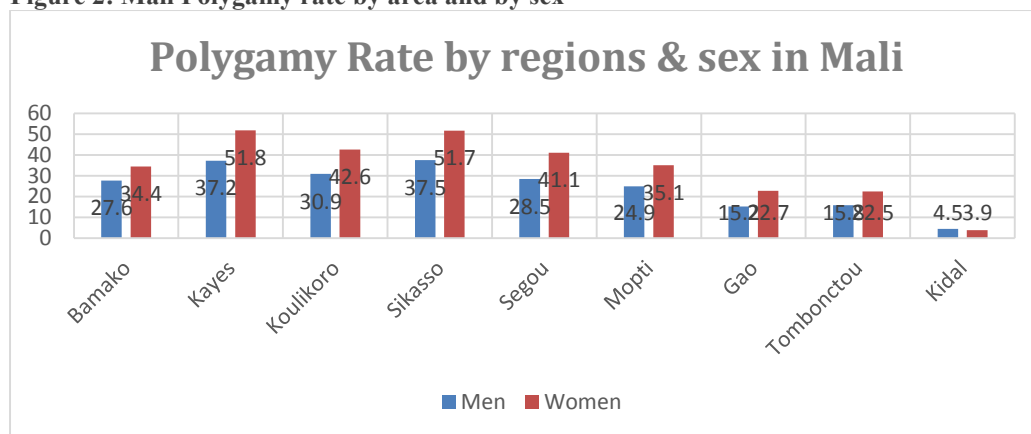
The social-cultural and traditional perception of Malian families hold that larger the social unit, the greater its power, influence, and honor. This perception, similar to that of the other cultures supporting polygamy, could be one of the explanations for the prevalence of this practice: marrying many wives enhances the chance of having many sons, thus increasing the number of members in the family unit and amplifying one's honor and influence. In such cases the social and psychological implications of polygamy are associated with power prestige and these factors may trump the economic disadvantages of supporting multiple households.

In Mali Polygamy is widespread in places where farming is main craft and needs to big labor force like the region of Sikasso and Kayes. Polygamy is used there as a tool to ensure social and economic stability of family. In addition, children themselves are also used in farming works and then they will be backbone of their parents when they will be old age. Accordingly, some cultures such as Sarakole, Senoufo, Bambara in rural areas feel proud of polygamy and increasing number of children to ensure their social and economic positions. They considered polygamy as reproductive strategy by men to increase their offspring.

Another explanation for polygamy in Mali is embodied in religious practices and beliefs within Islam; Koran, Surat 4 .ch 3. However, Islam allows polygamy only under certain conditions: a man may not have more than four wives at any given time; he must have the appropriate economic resources to provide adequately for more than one woman and he should pay attention and care for all women equally (Al-Krenawi and Graham 2000). In Mali women prefer to marry as additional wives rather than remain childless, divorced or as widows. Polygamy may be viewed as a helpful proxy to the the deeply problematic prospect of divorce, widowhood¹. In Mali, some reasons for, or functions of polygamy are: increase the probability of children, particularly when a wife is barren or gives birth to female children only, increase the labor supply within a kinship network, deal with the problem of surplus women, expand the range of a man's alliances so he is able to maintain or acquire a position of leadership and perhaps provide sexual satisfaction to men.

¹ Kasomo Daniel,The role of women in the Church in Africa,Department of Philosophy Religion and Theology, Maseno University, Kenya,June 2010

Figure 2: Mali Polygamy rate by area and by sex

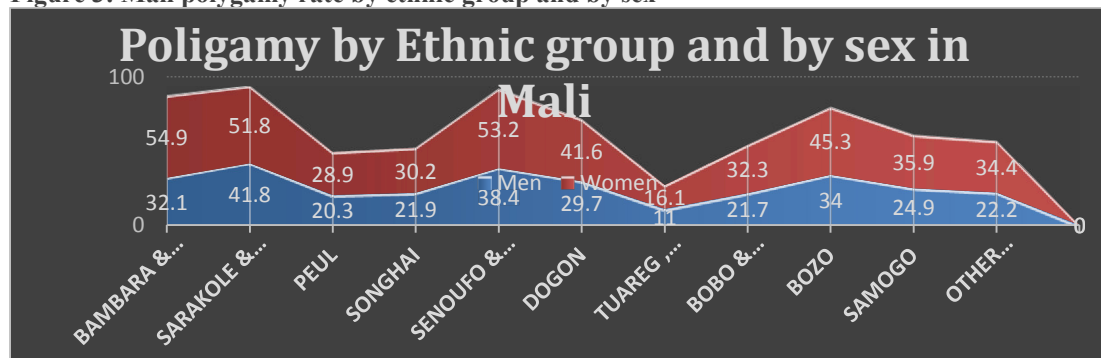


Source:RGPH 2009,EMOP2014/2015

Legend : Regions with highest polygamy rate are the Kayes region with 51.8% for women and 37.2% for men, followed by the Sikasso region with 51.7% for women and 37.5% for men and Koulikoro, recording 42.6% for women and 30.9% for men. In contrast, there are the three northern regions, Timbuktu and Gao which record polygamy approximately the same rate about 22% in women and 15% men and Kidal, where we noted the lowest rates in the country, and also where the rate is lower among men than women 4.5% in men and 3.9% among women.

In a polygamous society as in Mali all monogamous women are potentially at risk of polygamy, poorly educated women from rural areas of Mali and with low socioeconomic status are much more likely to be in a polygamous marriage, and well-educated women from higher socioeconomic backgrounds, who have many more marital options, shun polygamy.

Figure 3: Mali polygamy rate by ethnic group and by sex

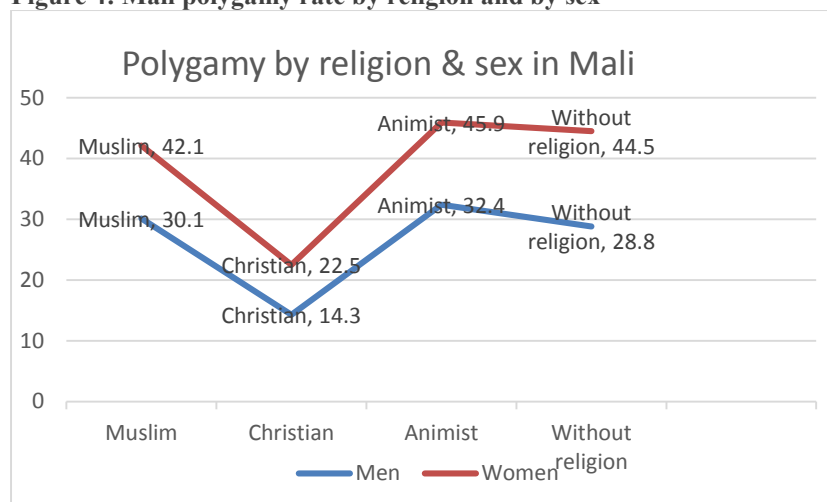


Source:RGPH 2009,EMOP2014/2015

Legend : Ethnic group is defined here as the language usually spoken by this ethnic in the household of the person in its infancy. It is found that exactly half (50.0%) of those whose mother tongues such as the Sarakole, the Kassonké the Senoufo or Minianka are in polygamous unions. The proportion of the highest polygamous union is among those speaking Sarakole and Kassonké (54.9% for women and 41.8% men). In contrast, the ethnic group living in the north of the country are the lowest proportion of polygamists only 13.7% of people speaking the Maure, the Tuareg or the Arabic are polygamous ,16.0 % among women and 11.0% men

Educated Malian men are inclined to keep the polygamy options open for themselves, while young, educated Malian women are less and less likely inclined to be in a polygamous marriage. However, women have few choices other than agreeing to a polygamous marriage, even if they would prefer a monogamous marriage

Figure 4: Mali polygamy rate by religion and by sex



Source: RGPB 2009, EMOP 2014/2015

Legend: Religion has an influence on marital behavior, being sometimes interacting with other variables such as educational attainment overall, polygamy is practiced in Mali by different religions, but with varying degrees of magnitude, the animists record the highest proportion of polygamous. Indeed, nearly half of women are polygamous animist 45.9%, and a third of Men 32.4%, animists are proportionally more polygamous than Muslims. The proportion of Muslims in polygamous unions is important: 42.1% for women and 30.1% among men. Islam dominates and practice is much more common than the other religions like Christianity

3. Existent Literature

Polygamy is frequent in Mali, and is accused for bad issues. Beside anthropologist and sociologist economists since at least Becker (1973) have been interested in the operation of marriage markets.

Polygamy in Mali is not only a type of marriage but a profit entity. Factors affecting the occurrence of polygamy include social, economic and religious factors (Al-Shamsi & Fulcher, 2005). Graham and Al-krenawi (1997), polygamy is common in cultures or societies that allocate social status based on hereditary and inheritance.

Some societies have made polygamy acceptable through the use of intense social pressures, (Ware, 1979). Regardless of its acceptance in many cultures, polygamy has many of its distinctive problems. According to Al-Krenawi and Lightman (2000), problems of polygamy arise from situational factors specific to polygamous households. Al-krenawi and Lightman (2000) discovered that children from polygamous families have lower levels of scholastic achievement, face more difficulty adjusting to the procedures and norms of the school and classrooms, and a higher number of conflicts in their homes.

In the African context, Fainzang and Journet (2000) have documented that wives in polygamous unions overbid for children. Women commonly resort to marabouts to increase their own chances to get pregnant and to cause infertility or stillbirths for the co-wife. In most extreme cases, aggression may jeopardize children's lives. Indeed, child mortality is found to be higher in polygamous households and co-wife rivalry is considered as one important risk factor (Strassman 1997, Areny 2002).

(Boltz-Laemmel and Villar, 2013) the arrival of a co-wife thus implies a decrease in the household per capita income and consumption level. Moreover, anecdotal evidence suggests that the cohabitation of co-wives may be a source of conflict, monogamously married women may thus have an incentive to save more if the perceived risk of polygamy increases, in order to protect themselves against a negative income shock. Indeed, in Senegal, the expected contributions of husband and wife to the household budget when faced with the arrival of a co-wife women have an outside option which is divorce (Antoine, 2002; Locoh and Thiriart, 1995). Divorce is indeed relatively frequent in Senegal and Mali; however this option is costly, since divorced women have to leave their former husband's household and either be taken in by a related household or earn their own living, creating additional incentives for

wives to increase their precautionary savings are not symmetrical: men are expected to provide for their household while women are not

Some researchers have emphasized the potential benefits to children in large polygamous families, such as the availability of numerous role models (Swanson, Massey, & Payne, 1972; Valsiner, 1989). Others have reported large variations in children's experiences, both positive and negative (Kilbride & Kilbride, 1990; Valsiner, 2000). However, much of the research has identified negative outcomes for children, including academic as well as psychological outcomes, such as internalizing problems, externalizing problems and mental health

problems (Al-Krenawi, Graham, & Slonim-Nevo, 2002). Family variables and hypothesized risk factors associated with polygamy that could influence children's developmental outcomes include marital conflict, marital distress, father absence, the happiness or distress of the wives in polygynous marriages, financial stress and parental education (Elbedour, Onwuegbize, Caridine, & Abu-Saad, 2002).

There are many reasons why wives care so much about their number of children, relative to the number of children of their co-wives. In an economic perspective, the relative number of children directly determines the wife's share in husband's resources. It is particularly important in case of widowhood because in Mali a man's inheritance is to be shared among his children. The surviving wives generally have little control over inheritance other than through their own children.

Demographers working on Sub-Saharan Africa have established that, at the woman level, fertility is lower in polygamous unions than in monogamous ones. On the one hand, women with low fecundity are over-represented in polygamous unions because infertility is a common motive for taking another wife.

4. The risk of polygamy on households in Mali

Polygamy is widespread in Mali and although it has been declining since the 1970s, it remains persistent especially in Sikasso, Kayes and Mopti regions. From time immemorial, there had been series of problems that are associated with polygamous family in Mali.

This study is not against nor in favor of polygamy but describing its social and economic impact on households in Mali. The female population of Mali is higher than the males' one, if polygamy did not exist in this country how to solve the female single problem? In rural economy if polygamy did not exist, how to solve the problem of labor in Mali where more than 70% are farmers?

In Mali, those who are living in monogamy union, are they really monogamous as we claim it? Nowadays we witness a new form of polygamous by men in monogamous union, most of them are not faithful to their wife and have many partner or mistress whose they take care more than their wife. The question is, does the polygamy men are also faithful to their wives as require to the Malian law or to Koran?

The arrival of a second wife is mostly viewed by women in a monogamous union as a threat, this threat may be exploited by the husband to monitor his wife, who has in general no say in this decision¹. Marrying a second wife is indeed costly to the husband: savings are needed to pay for both the wedding and the bride price which has remained high and remarkably stable over time in Mali. Spouses in Mali do not behave cooperatively, especially in the presence of asymmetries of information, among others and that spouses may have conflicting views on the use of household income. In addition, the politics of inequity underlying the practice of polygamy where there are child brides, for example are often attributed to the institution of polygamy. Polygamy entails inequality between men and women because usually there is a difference of 20 to 30 years between the second or third wife and her husband². Children of actually polygamous marriages are at greater risk of experiencing marital conflict, family violence and family disruptions, marital distress, particularly that related to high levels of unhappiness of women in polygamous unions, absence of the father and financial stress. However, some of the studies reviewed found that children, particularly older children in a family, demonstrated resilience in dealing with these risk factors. Polygamy also negatively affect the relationship between children and their parents: Impact on both economic and emotional aspects. A majority of the children of first wives also demonstrated negative emotions towards their fathers marrying again. If the man can not be fair, one of a family will not be satisfied and it can cause squabbles between spouses³. In accordance with Jordanian study stressed that polygamy affected rate of drop in school among children, escalated addiction of alcohol, juvenile delinquency as well as causing to low self-esteem Al-Krenawi, and Gharaibeh 595).

Several Muslim countries either restrict or ban polygamy and cite Surah al-Nisa 4:3, which states that if a man fears that he cannot deal justly with several wives, he should only marry one. In Mali, women do not like polygamy but cannot do anything about it. Jealousies in polygamous families are almost uncontrollable. In Mali polygamy is featured with jealousy and competition among wives; Jealousy between wives may increase and escalate to different levels even they reach up to physical injuries by women; bewitched of husband or co-wife children and suicide trails among the women. Families live mainly in overcrowded conditions making aggravate conflicts and stress between co-wives, one of the biggest problem in polygamous marriage is that education attainment and academic achievement of children as well as psychological problems of men. Women who are living in polygamous marriage, have more problems than monogamy in terms of marital problems. In addition, polygamous women are less satisfied with their life because they feel pains, sufferings and jealous from co-wives (Al-Krenawi and Gharaibeh. 599).

¹ Marie Boltz, Isabelle Chort, The Risk of Polygamy and Wives, Saving Behaviour, UMR DIAL 225. July 2015

² Dr. Martha Bailey, et al., "Expanding Recognition of Foreign Polygamous Marriages: Policy Implications for Canada" Issued 2006-JAN-12, Status of Women Canada, at: <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/>

³ Nu Na, The Impacts of polygamy on children & family, Prezi, 20 April 2015

In Mali, men in polygamous societies aren't very good father, polygamous also decreases male parental investment. The theory is that since married men would remain perennially in the marriage market, high-status men could choose to invest their resources in acquiring more wives rather than investing in their children¹

The mothers in polygamous house will not want the children from another mother to be better off than their own children. These and many more are the beliefs of many people. The competing nature of interaction among mothers in polygamous homes later impacted on the lives of children from such homes as competition also is reflected in their latter lives.

5. Empirical approach of effects of polygamous on poverty in Mali

5.1 Methodology and empirical specification

We approach this problem through the application of multivariate analysis, using a logistic regression in accordance with the basic principles of discrete choice models on the 2014/2015 data. In order to explore the correlates of type of union with the variables thought to be important in explaining polygamy a logistic regression model was estimated, with dependent variable being the dichotomous variable of whether the Malian household is polygamous or poor 1 or monogamous or not poor 0 through p variables ($x_1, \dots, x_j, \dots, x_p$). The explanatory variables considered important in the analysis of impact of polygamy were: marital status; demographic characteristic (household size); personal characteristic (age and its square); religion (muslin, animist); educational attainment (no education, nursery, primary, secondary, and post-secondary); occupation/employment; ethnic group and geographical residence (Bamako, Kayes, Koulikoro etc)

Thus, in the model, the response variable is binary, taking only two values, I1 ($y = 1$) for polygamous or poor, I2 ($y = 0$) for monogamous or not poor. The probability of being polygamous or poor depends on a set of variables listed above and denoted as ($x_1, \dots, x_j, \dots, x_p$) so that:

$$x = (x_1, \dots, x_j, \dots, x_p)$$

Using the logistic distribution, we have:

$$I1 (y = 1)$$

$$I2 (y = 0)$$

The probability model is the regression:

$$\pi_{YXY} = \frac{1}{1 + \exp \sum_j^p a_j x_j}$$

The dependent variable is defined as 1 if average per capita household expenditure is below the poverty line and 0 if it is above the poverty line. To analyze the effects of the independent variables upon the probability of being poor, we looked at the change of disparities ratio as the dependent variables change. The disparities ratio is defined as the ratio of the probability of being poor divided by the probability of not being poor. This is computed as the exponent of the log it coefficients (e). All disparity ratios greater than one means that the associated variables are positively correlated with the probability of being poor while disparity ratios lower than one means that the associated variables are negatively correlated with the probability of being poor.

5.2 Empirical results

Our empirical results for 2015 data are summarized in Table below.

¹ John Durant ,Good reasons why polygamy is a bad idea,ancient life style,modern life,December 16th, 2011

Table 1: Marital Status, Household Size, Religion, Area and Other Covariates of Poverty in Mali: 2010

Variables	Men Odd Ratio	Sig.	Women Odd Ratio	Sig.
Age group				
12 a 14	1.46	0.00	1.02	0.00
15-19	1.25	0.18	0.96	0.00
20-24	0.68	0.00	1.70	0.00
25-29	0.79	0.00	1.76	0.00
30-34	1.82	0.00	2.45	0.00
35-39	1.95	0.00	2.95	0.00
40-44	2.76	0.00	3.28	0.00
45-49	3.38	0.00	3.41	0.00
50-54	3.75	0.00	3.24	0.00
55-59	4.04	0.00	3.21	0.00
60-64	3.95	0.00	2.76	0.00
65-69	4.07	0.00	2.63	0.00
70-74	3.78	0.00	2.2	0.00
75-79	3.78	0.00	2.02	0.00
80+	3.21	0.00	1.64	0.00
Occupation				
Self-employed	1.20	0.00	1.00	0.00
Employee	1.18	0.00	0.89	0.00
Family helper	1.41	0.00	1.55	0.00
Independent farmer	1.36	0.00	1.66	0.00
Farm worker	1.7	0.00	1.8	0.00
Unemployed person	1.47	0.00	1.59	0.00
Student or pupil	1.68	0.00	1.66	0.00
Home activity			1.4	0.00
Inactive	1.44	0.00	1.71	0.00
Other	1.4	0.00	1.45	0.00
NSP	1.44	0.00	1.58	0.00
Native language				
Bambara	0.83	0.00	0.83	0.00
Peul	0.75	0.00	0.72	0.00
Sonrai	1.22	0.00	1.27	0.00
Soninke	1.7	0.00	1.64	0.00
Senoufo ou minianka	1.57	0.00	1.53	0.00
Dogon	1.5	0.00	1.55	0.00
Maure, tamacheq	0.51	0.00	0.5	0.00
Bobo	1.18	0.00	1.07	0.00
bozo	1.66	0.00	1.57	0.00
Others languages of Mali	1.03	0.00	1.09	0.00
Education level				
No educational level	1.25	0.00	1.18	0.00
Basic first cycle	1.22	0.00	1.12	0.00
Basic second cycle	1.16	0.00	0.99	0.00
college	1.06	0.00	0.84	0.00
high education	0.96	0.00	0.68	0.00
Religion				
Muslim	1.01	0.00	1.06	0.00
Christian	0.48	0.00	0.48	0.00
Animist	1.05	0.00	1.09	0.00

Other religion	0.86	0.00	0.79	0.00
None	1.02	0.00	1.11	0.00
Region				
Kayes	1.05	0.00	0.91	0.00
Koulikoro	0.97	0.00	0.86	0.00
Sikasso	1.32	0.00	1.25	0.00
Segou	0.85	0.00	0.8	0.00
Mopti	0.7	0.00	0.61	0.00
Gao	0.53	0.00	0.48	0.00
Tombouctou	0.53	0.00	0.48	0.00
Kidal	0.23	0.00	0.11	0.00
Bamako	1.23	0.00	0.98	0.00
Residence				
Urban	1.71	0.00	1.76	0.00
Rural	1.80	0.00	1.95	0.00
Marital Status				
Married(Monogamous)	1.24	0.00	1.37	0.00
Married(Polygamous)	0.93	0.00	1.55	0.00
Living Together	0.04	0.00	0.04	0.00
Divorced/Separated	0.01	0.00	0.03	0.00
Widowed	0.02	0.00	0.21	0.00
Household Size				
1 -3persons	0.17	0.00	0.18	0.00
4-7 persons	1.74	0.00	1.78	0.00
8-10 persons	1.40	0.00	1.43	0.00
11-15 persons	1.44	0.00	1.47	0.00
15+ persons	1.29	0.00	1.32	0.00

Source: Mali DNSI 2015 -RGPH-2009

5. 3 Discussion

Polygamy Age and Poverty

The results show that age and its quadratic form do matter in determining poverty in Mali. This conforms with the argument of both non-linearity and that as the level age and polygamous increases, the higher the level of poverty. Thus, our finding shows that polygamous trough age increases poverty incidence but at a decreasing rate. This means that in Mali, incomes/expenditures are low at relatively young age, increasing at middle age and then decrease again at old age.

Polygamy, Poverty & Occupation

Our results show that paid employee has a significant negative effect on the level of poverty in Mali while farm worker has significant positive effect on poverty. Being a paid employee decreases the odds of being poor by 1.18 and 0.89 times more for men and women. On the other hand, being a farm worker increases the odds of being poor by 1.7 and 1.8 times

Polygamy, Poverty & Native language

For Native language the polygamy is more practiced by men and women who speak Soninke than who speak Maure, the rate of poverty of Soninke areas is higher than Maure and Bambara area which also have a low rate of polygamous.

Polygamy, Poverty & Education

Our results indicate polygamous having no education, significantly increased the level of poverty in Mali. On the other hand and more pleasantly, being polygamous and holding a high education in Mali significantly reduces poverty. From the odds ratio results in Table upload, not having any formal education increases the odds of being poor by 1.25 and 1.18 times more. But possessing a high education decreases the odds of being poor by 0.96 and 0.68 times more

Polygamy, Poverty & Religion

Religion is a cultural factor able to influence on Malian behavior about marriage. Our results show that polygamy

is more spread to Muslims and to non believer than Christians.

Polygamy, Poverty and Zonal Location

Our results indicate that zonal location matters in explaining polygamous and poverty in Mali. Location in the North Central and West East zones of Mali have a statistically significant negative effect on the probability of being poor. Contrariwise, the results show that location in the West and South zone increase the probability of being poor. From the odds ratio results in Table upload, in 2015, being a resident of Gao and Tombouctou reduces the odds of being poor by 0.53 and 0.48 times more but living in Sikasso increases the odds of being poor by 1.32 and 1.25 times more.

Polygamy, Poverty & Rural-Urban Location

Our estimates confirm that Mali's poverty is largely a rural phenomenon just as the descriptive statistics above show. This is because our results show that there is a statistically significant positive effect of rural polygamous dwelling on the probability of being poor. This means that the probability of being poor increases if the polygamous household is located in a rural area. From the odds ratio results in the table uploaded residing in rural areas increases the disparities of being poor by 1.80 and 1.95 times more

Polygamy, Poverty and Marital Status

The results indicate that monogamous marriage, being divorced/separated and widowhood have statistically significant negative effects on the probability of being poor. In fact, being in monogamous marriage reduces the disparity of being poor by 1.24 and 1.37. Thus, monogamous marriages have the highest probability of reducing poverty in Mali but polygamous marriages are not.

Polygamy, Poverty and Household Size

As shown in the table uploaded, we find that polygamy and household size is significantly related to poverty in Mali, one to three persons' households have significant negative impact on poverty with disparity ratio of 0.17 and 0.18. However, as household size increases beyond three persons, the higher the positive impact on poverty. For example, the disparity of four to seven persons' polygamous household increasing poverty are 1.74 and 1.78 times.

Source: Mali DNSI 2015 -RGPH-2009

6. Conclusion

Marriage is viewed as a joint enterprise whereby a man and woman produce goods and services for their own consumption, particularly in the Western hemisphere, marriage involves one man and one woman¹. Whatever polygamy is unacceptable for Malian society or not, it seems to remain a charismatic choice for some males. Using the individual panel data, we have found that the predominance of polygamy not only diverge considerably but also is affected differently by socio-economic aspects in Malian society. It appears that these contrasts can be mostly understood as observation towards the act of modernizing. The significance of women education decreasing polygamous trend increases with the Malian society standard of modernism.

In the past many intellectuals thought that a desire to increase the force of the progenitors with the addition of male descendant was a main desire for the practice of polygamy, I think that social concern is the fundamental drive. After all, polygamy in both high income and low income households has negative consequences for all engaged, so it is not surprising that many person, man or women disapprove it. In our study, economic, education, health and psychological argumentations are given approving monogamous alliance and limited children; moreover the mental suffering associated with jealousy, economic and educational problem can no longer be fit with too many children

According to our results, Monogamous marriages tend to reduce poverty in Mali, so public and private sector policies should be used to increase the number and proportion of high quality monogamous marriage rates among Malian. Actions that can be used include, governments at both the urban and rural levels providing economic incentives for couples to marry and stay married. The government should also establish a healthy marriage initiative to fund marriage education programs for couples who desire these services and should make divorce limited by making hard procedures, such as involving the families, area or companies where the married are working, government should impose a high fine to those who really want to divorce.

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