

## Spatial Variation of Polygamy in Al-Shirqat City

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### Abstract

*Purpose: Studying the spatial variation of polygamy in the city of Shirqat is an important demographic topic that directly affects both males and females in society. Theoretical framework: The study tries to reveal the variation in polygamy across administrative units in Shirqat city. Methods: It examines the relative and environmental distribution and the motivating factors behind polygamy, as well as the positive and negative effects resulted from such marriage. Results and conclusion: The study adopts a descriptive approach to uncover the spatial and temporal variations of polygamy. It relies on field research, official statistics, quantitative analysis methods, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Finding Implication: The study found that there is a clear spatial and temporal variation among males married with multiple spouses across administrative units. Many men desire polygamy without fully realizing the responsibility and the need for fairness and providing housing for each wife to avoid problems and negative consequences that can lead to family disintegration. Originality/value: Therefore, the study recommends the necessity to legislate new laws that secure the rights of the first wife. Polygamy should not be solely the husband's decision without any valid reason, and the consent of the first wife should be obtained. This ensures that she is aware of the situation and gives her consent.*

**Keywords:** Al-Shirqat city, marriage, polygamy, spatial variation.

### Introduction

Marriage is the cornerstone of the family in society. Polygamy is an important topic that deserves attention. Polygamy is a type of marriage in which a man is permitted to have multiple wives. The system of polygamy varies in characteristics, motives, and obligations from one society to another. It exists in human societies and varies based on age structure, whether for men or women. The system of polygamy is a demographic and social phenomenon that is equally important as the study of any other social phenomenon, considering its social, economic, and demographic dimensions (Abdulwahid, 2020). Marital life holds great significance, as Islam has given it a beautiful and honorable meaning, emphasizing its purpose in providing a home, stability, and the values of compassion and mercy. The permissibility of polygamy for a man is subject to

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different opinions in societies, ranging from acceptance to rejection ( Zamal & Mohammed, 2012).

#### Research questions

1. Does the phenomenon of polygamy vary by administrative unit in Al-Shirqat city?
2. Are there driving reasons for the phenomenon of polygamy in Al-Shirqat city?
3. What are the positive and negative effects of polygamy on the family in Al-Shirqat city?

#### Research hypotheses

1. There is a clear spatial variation of the phenomenon of polygamy in Al-Shirqat city attributed to administrative units.
2. There are driving reasons for the phenomenon of polygamy in Al-Shirqat city due to some family, emotional, financial, and other problems.
3. There are various positive and negative effects on polygamists in Al-Shirqat city.

#### Research goal

The study aims to:

1. Uncover the phenomenon of polygamy,
2. Identify the reasons and motives that contribute to this phenomenon,
3. Determine the encouraging factors for polygamy,
4. Determine the relative and environmental distribution of individuals who are married to more than one spouse.

#### Reasons driving polygamy in Al-Shirqat city

Polygamy is not a new phenomenon; it has been known to humanity since ancient civilizations and was a phenomenon in Arab culture and Islamic law. Marital relationships are one aspect of human life, and like other aspects, the causes of polygamy must be studied to explain the variation in it (Al-Jubouri,1983). To explain the variation in polygamy, it is necessary to study the motivating factors, which include:

#### Desire for procreation

Marriage is a demographic phenomenon in all societies; it has great importance in forming families. Sometimes, the wife's infertility leads the husband to marry another wife, especially in rural areas where there is ignorance of medical examination. Male infertility may also be a reason for not having children, and the man may not be aware of it and marry another wife. Infertility of the first wife is considered one of the primary reasons that drive husbands to practice polygamy in order to have children (Aliwi, 1990).

#### An increase in the husband economic income

The high per capita income and financial stability contribute to thinking about the issue of a second marriage. It is known that marriage requires funds to open a second home, such as paying the advanced dowry and buying furniture and other necessities for the second marriage and others. The economic stability of the family contributes to the stability of the family budget and the lack of the occurrence of future problems for the family with regard to expenses, such as

problems and other expenses and expenditures. Income is an economic component of the family, in addition to having a major role in the success of families, as it is observed in the rich classes. If the husband is rich, he is motivated to polygamize.

#### Wife's sickness

God Almighty has deposited the desire in humans for the continuation of his race through offspring. Yet, the wife's illness is one of the reasons leading to polygamy. There are different types of the wife's illness, which may be psychological or physical. Therefore the woman's inability to pay attention to the man and provide his requirements, and the wife's illness follows an obstacle as for sexual relations between man and his wife. The husband resorts to remarrying another woman to satisfy his sexual needs. The wife's illness may be a result of repeated pregnancies and taking care of the children, which affects the mother's physical, emotional and emotional health, as this is reflected in her relationship with her husband (Shaqa, 1984).

#### The newborn sex

The desire for offspring is one of the most prominent reasons for marriage. This reason comes to meet social and psychological motives. The gender of the newborn has a significant and fundamental role in the stability of marital life in many cases. Therefore, the failure to conceive can lead many couples to practice polygamy. The newborn sex can also have a significant impact on the occurrence of polygamy. Some couples tend to have male children instead of females for social and economic reasons, and in case the woman fails to conceive a male child, this may lead many men to marry another wife. This situation may repeat itself for several wives, and polygamy in rural areas is more common than in urban areas due to the desire to increase the birth rate of males for social and economic reasons.

#### Husband's sexual ability

Marriage entails both a material and moral dimension. The material aspect relates to the sexual component of the relationship, while the moral aspect encompasses the emotional dynamics that shape the marital bond. There exist inherent differences between men and women when it comes to these aspects. Women tend to prioritize emotional connection, feelings, and overall emotional well-being, while men often place a greater emphasis on the sexual aspect of the relationship. It is important to recognize that the sexual instinct is not solely influenced by societal circumstances, as it represents a personal expression of desire that can sometimes transcend the individual's relationship with the larger social group.

#### Ill treatment

Husbands often treat their wives badly and do not rise to the level of respect. This is due to several reasons, including money related to the nature of choice. For not giving parents the freedom to choose a partner often results later after abnormal marital relations punctuated by problems, where the woman is always the victim. Also, the cultural level between the spouses plays a role in what their family relations will be. The woman's superiority over the man in levels of attainment prompts the man to create an atmosphere of family tension resulting from the ill-treatment of the man. This is linked to the psychology of the eastern man, in addition to that, the nature of society has an impact on this is because the predominance of the characteristic of the clan environment and what you see that the man is the leader of the family. He is in his hand the disobedience and

misunderstanding of that by the man leads to practices that reflect disrespect towards women all of that leads to bad treatment by the man to his wife.

#### The social status of men

The social status of men is a factor that contributes to their tendency to practice polygamy. It can give them a higher social status in their community by establishing kinship relationships with other families and creating close ties with other social circles. Polygamy can also be a form of entertainment that is directly related to improving the individual's income in many cases. Other reasons for polygamy include the deterioration of the first marital relationship due to human and emotional factors or the need for offspring. The sex of the newborn can also have a significant impact on the occurrence of polygamy, as some couples tend to have male children instead of females for social and economic reasons. In case the woman fails to conceive a male child, this may lead many men to marry another wife. Polygamy is more common in rural areas than in urban areas due to the desire to increase the birth rate of males for social and economic reasons.

#### The positive effects of polygamy

##### Childbearing

Childbearing is one of the basic elements in population and demographic studies because it is directly related to population growth (Al-Saadi, 2013). It is the main pillar of population growth and rises at a higher level than the level of mortality. Therefore, we see that the general reproduction of population growth tends to rise. Childbearing has a major role for the vast majority of women in the countries of the world linked to the home and the formation of the family, which is the nucleus of society.

Moreover, family is the basic group that contribute to his upbringing in the social environment. It provides the first opportunity for social interaction and creates in him the need and the tendency to adapt with others. The elderly and others may contribute to the task of instilling habits, especially the familiar ones in society. Therefore, remarriage leads to having children and then increasing the size of the family. Therefore, the number of children for a Muslim woman is a social insurance, but rather a valuable tool to prove her feminine identity and gain respect and social recognition within the family and the community at the same time.

#### A solution to the problem of widows and divorced women

The increase in the number of widows and divorcees is a major reason for the spread of the polygamy. This situation would create a state of interruption in the sexual life of a large number of women. This would result in great problems for them as it would corrupt the society and its collapse in the event of not finding suitable means and mechanisms to satisfy the instinct sexuality in women.

The increase percentage of divorced women in urban areas as another wife is due to reasons related to the preservation of inheritance and the low costs of marriage. The superiority of divorced women in rural areas indicates the man's desire for another wife to help him in his agricultural work.

#### The negative effects of polygamy

The phenomenon of polygamy leaves negative effects on society, which are reflected directly on the family, including:

1. Family problems
2. Family disintegration

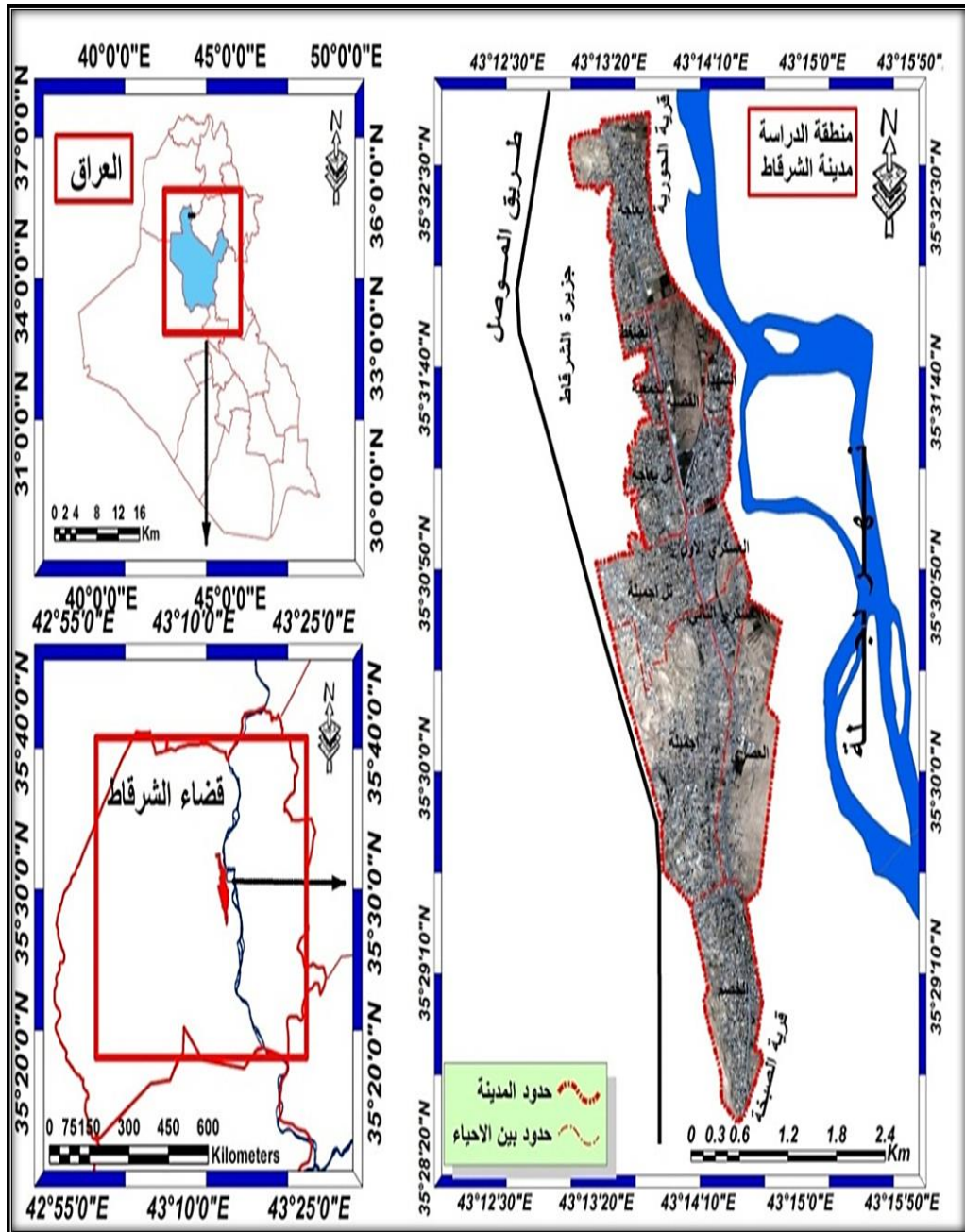
3. Domestic violence
4. Divorce
5. Family quarrels
6. Losing confidence for men
7. Residential and domestic overcrowding
8. The psychological state of the husband
9. Delaying in children's education
10. Increasing poverty
11. Weakening the emotional relationship

### **Methodology**

The descriptive approach is obtained to investigate the spatial and temporal differences in the phenomenon of polygamy. In order to comprehensively cover all aspects of the phenomenon, the study employed both field research and made use of official statistics. Additionally, the study utilized quantitative analysis and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) methodology.

#### **Setting and context**

The study area is located in Al-Shirqat city, the center of Al-Shirqat district within Salah al-Din province. Al-Shirqat city area is situated between the latitudes (35.31.40N and 35.29.10S) and longitudes (43.13.20West and 43.15.0 East). Al-Shirqat city is administratively bordered to the north by Al-Qayyarah sub-district, to the northeast by Makhmour district (Erbil province), to the east by Erbil and Kirkuk provinces, and to the south by Baiji district. Al-Shirqat is approximately 1565 square kilometers, accounting for 6.29 of the province's total area of 24075 square kilometers as shown in Map 1.



Map 1. Al-Shirqat city

The study area is centered around the Al-Shirqat city. It extended over an area of 661.8 hectares and includes 12 residential neighborhoods. The city's municipal boundaries are defined to the north by the village of Shakrah, to the west by the Baghdad-Mosul highway, to the east by the Tigris River, and to the south by the village of Al-Sabkha.

## Results and discussion

Geographic distribution of polygamy in Al-Shirqat city

Numeric and ranked distribution of polygamist in Al-Shirqat City

The numeric distribution of polygamists determines the numerical quantity in the administrative units of Al-Shirqat City at the environmental level. It varies

by location and time and is reflected in many geographical maps. Then, the numeric distribution of polygamists is determined.

Table 1 Numeric and relative distribution of polygamists based on Al-Shirqat Personal Status Court, 2021

No	Numeric and relative distribution	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
1	Number	101	89	101	111	33	19	8	22	55	176	146
2	Percentage	11.73	10.33	11.73	12.89	3.83	2.20	0.92	2.55	6.38	20.44	16.95

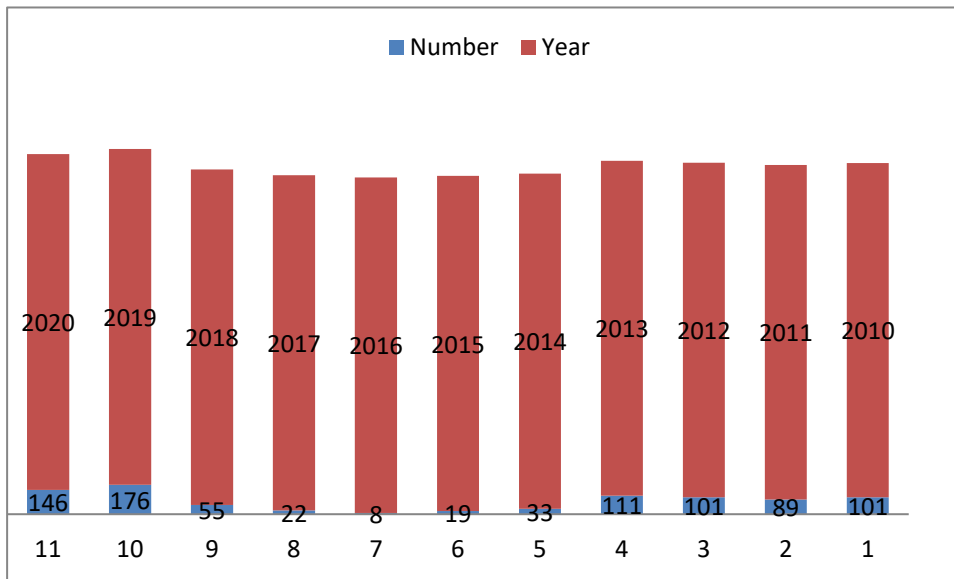


Figure 1. Numeric and relative distribution of polygamists in Al-Shirqat city

Table 1 and Figure 1 show the number of polygamists in Al-Shirqat City between 2010 and 2020. The distribution witnessed clear spatial fluctuations and variations. The number of polygamists increased in 2010 to 101, or 11.73, and in the years 2011, 2012, and 2013, the number of polygamists reached 89, 101, and 111, respectively, with percentages of 10.33, 11.73, and 12.89, respectively.

The reason beyond this increase in polygamy rates is due to the increase in individuals' income, improved economic conditions, and increased salaries for employees. However, we find a decrease in these rates for the years 2014-2017 at a rate of 19.33, 8, 22, and 55, respectively, with percentages of 3.83, 2.20, 0.92, and 2.55 respectively.

The reason beyond this decrease is due to the deteriorating security situation in Salah al-Din province in general and Al-Shirqat district in particular, where the displacement of residents and the suspension of salaries for employees led to a decrease in the percentage of individuals married to more than one spouse, in addition to the suspension of agricultural activities that were the reason for the increase in polygamy rates because they required a large workforce.

In the years 2019-2020, we notice an increase in the number polygamists at a rate of 176 and 146, respectively, with percentages of 20.44 and 16.95, respectively. This increase is due to the security stability in the region, the return of economic stability, a significant recovery in the market, and an improvement in agriculture. Furthermore, the climate improvement played a role in this

increase, in addition to the widespread use of mobile devices and the development of social media platforms.

Table 2 shows clear spatial and temporal variations in the number of polygamists among the administrative units. Al-Qasbah neighborhood, which represents the center of the district, ranked first in all years, with the highest number of 42 polygamists in 2019. It is a significant percentage recorded by this neighborhood in Al-Shirqat district for all years. Ajmeela neighborhood ranked second with 22 polygamist in 2020.

Table 2 Numeric and relative distribution of polygamists based administrative unit in Al-Shirqat

Neighborhood	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Al-Khasam	11	8	12	10	3	2	1	4	6	21	20
<b>Ajmeela</b>	17	15	14	17	2	2	2	2	7	18	22
Ba'aja	9	8	10	12	2	1	1	3	5	21	10
<b>Tal-Ajmeel</b>	11	9	4	7	3	2	0	1	4	11	11
Al-Askari	8	6	8	9	1	2	0	2	7	16	13
Al-Qasbah	19	20	21	23	11	7	3	6	17	42	35
<b>Al-Quds</b>	7	5	8	8	2	0	0	0	3	8	6
Al-Baladiyat	4	4	6	7	3	1	0	1	2	9	9
An-Nur	7	5	8	6	2	0	1	2	1	12	9
<b>Tal- Ba'aja</b>	8	9	10	12	4	2	0	1	3	18	11
<b>Total</b>	101	89	101	111	33	19	8	22	55	176	146

#### Relative distribution of polygamist in Al-Shirqat City

Population distribution refers to the percentage of the population extended in an administrative unit or region out of the total population. This percentage and its spatial and temporal variations indicate the importance of the place and the development of that importance over a certain period (Najmuddin, 1974).

Table 3 shows a clear variation in the relative importance of polygamists in Al-Shirqat district for the years 2010-2020 as a result of the factors affecting this distribution. These factors led to differences in the number polygamists. This is due to the imbalance in the relative distribution of polygamists, which may be more evident when compared to the ranked and numeric distribution.

Table 3. Relative distribution of polygamist in Al-Shirqat City

Neighborhood	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Al-Khasam	9.09	9.01	11.88	8.99	10.89	10.53	12.50	18.18	10.91	11.93	13.70	11.60
<b>Ajmeela</b>	6.06	15.32	13.86	16.85	16.83	10.53	25.00	9.09	12.73	10.23	15.07	13.78
Ba'aja	6.06	10.81	9.90	8.99	8.91	5.26	12.50	13.64	9.09	11.93	15.07	10.20
<b>Tal-Ajmeel</b>	9.09	6.31	3.96	10.11	10.89	10.53	0.00	4.55	7.27	6.25	7.53	6.95
Al-Askari	3.03	8.11	7.92	6.74	8.00	10.53	0.00	9.09	12.73	9.09	8.90	7.65
Al-Qasbah	33.33	20.72	20.79	22.47	18.81	36.84	37.50	27.27	30.91	23.86	23.97	26.95
<b>Al-Quds</b>	6.06	7.21	7.92	5.62	6.93	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.45	4.55	4.11	4.35



Al-Baladiyat	9.09	6.31	5.94	4.49	4.00	5.26	0.00	4.55	3.64	5.11	6.16	4.96
An-Nur	6.06	5.41	7.92	5.62	6.93	0.00	12.50	9.09	1.82	6.82	6.16	6.21
<b>Tal- Ba'aja</b>	12.12	10.81	9.90	10.11	7.92	10.53	0.00	4.55	5.45	10.23	7.53	8.10
<b>Total</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 3 shows that Al-Shirqat district center ranks first with the highest percentage of polygamists for the years 2010-2020, with 26.95% due to its population size and the improvement of economic and living conditions, as well as the availability of job opportunities that encourage polygamy. Ajmeela neighborhood ranks second with 13.78% due to its population size and the availability of vast agricultural areas that contribute to the development of the agricultural sector which requires a large workforce. As for the percentage of change, it varied between years for residential neighborhoods in the study area, as shown in Table 4. The percentage of change is the amount of population increase during the two censuses over the total population in the first census multiplied by 100 (Al-Zaini, 1969).

Table 4 Change index for polygamy in Al-Shirqat City

No	Neighborhood	Change
1	Al-Khasam	-20.50
2	Ajmeela	11.70
3	Ba'aja	-40.86
4	Tal-Ajmeel	44.55
5	Al-Askari	-10.15
6	Al-Qasbah	-21.53
7	Al-Quds	68.65
8	Al-Baladiyat	-35.11
9	An-Nur	12.43
10	Tal- Ba'aja	5.13
<b>Total</b>		<b>1431.26</b>

Table 4 shows that Al-Quds neighborhood ranked first in terms of the percentage of change, with 68.65%, followed by Tal-Ajmeela neighborhood with 44.55%, and then An-Nur neighborhood, which recorded 12.43%.

The urban-rural distribution of polygamists in Al-Shirqat city

The urban-rural distribution is of great importance in population studies. The geographical distribution polygamists varies and changes according to the environment represented by the urban and rural areas, as the environment reflects values and customs practiced by humans at different levels depending on their educational attainment and income level (Mohammed, 2016). The environmental distribution reflects the developed relationship between land and humans and the resulting variation in social, economic, and demographic aspects (Al-Jubouri 2014). In rural areas, economic and social conditions have led to the consideration of polygamy as a phenomenon resulting from communication and movement problems. The phenomenon of polygamy has moved to cities, while it continues and increases in rural areas, where farmers seek to increase reproduction and population growth to help with agricultural work.

Table 5 shows that the percentage polygamists varied according to the environmental level. The percentage of rural areas exceeded that of urban areas in Al-Shirqat city, where the percentage in rural areas was (62.58) and in urban areas was (37.42) for the period (2010-2020). This indicates that Al-Shirqat city is characterized by a rural nature in terms of the predominance of individuals married to more than one spouse in the rural areas of the district.

Table 5. The urban-rural distribution of polygamists in Al-Shirqat city

Year	Number of polygamists			Percentage of polygamists		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
2010	33	68	101	32.67	67.33	100
2011	34	55	89	38.20	61.80	100
2012	39	62	101	38.61	61.39	100
2013	42	69	111	37.84	62.16	100
2014	12	21	33	36.36	63.64	100
2015	7	12	19	36.84	63.16	100
2016	3	5	8	37.50	62.50	100
2017	8	14	22	36.36	63.64	100
2018	21	34	55	38.18	61.82	100
2019	74	102	176	42.05	57.95	100
2020	54	92	146	36.99	63.01	100
<b>Total</b>	327	534	861	37.42	62.58	100

The highest percentage of polygamists was recorded in the rural areas of the district, with 67.33 % in 2010. The lowest was recorded in the rural areas of the district, with a 57.95% in 2019. As for urban areas, the highest percentage was recorded with 42.05 in the year 2019, while the lowest was recorded in urban areas of the district, with 36.36% in 2017.

## Conclusions and recommendation

### Conclusions

1. It appears that the number of polygamists in the city of Al-Shirqat exhibited significant fluctuations and spatial variations between the years 2010 and 2020. In 2010, the number of polygamists reached 101, with a percentage of 11.73. Similarly, for the years 2011, 2012, and 2013, the number of polygamists was 89, 101, and 111, respectively, with percentages of 10.33, 11.73, and 12.89, respectively. The reason behind this increase in polygamy rates can be attributed to an increase in individuals' income, improved economic conditions, and salary increments for employees. However, we notice a decline in these rates for the years 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017, with percentages of 19.33, 8, 22, and 55, respectively. The reason for this decrease in polygamy rates can be attributed to the deteriorating security situation in Salah al-din Governorate in general and Al-Shirqat district in particular. This has led to population displacement, suspension of salaries for employees, and a decrease in the number of individuals with multiple spouses, along with the halt of the agricultural sector that previously contributed to the increase in polygamy rates due to the need for a significant workforce. As for the years 2019 and 2020, we observe an increase in the number of polygamists, with rates of 176 and 146, respectively, and percentages

of 20.44 and 16.95, respectively. This increase can be attributed to the return of security and economic stability in the region, significant market recovery, improvement in the agricultural sector, and favorable climatic conditions. Additionally, the widespread use of mobile devices and the development of social networking sites could have played a role in this increase.

2. There is clear spatial and temporal variation among polygamists across administrative units. The Al-Qasbah neighborhood, which represents the center of the district, ranked first in all years, reaching its highest number (42) in 2019. This represents the highest percentage recorded by this neighborhood in the Al-Shirqat city for all years. Following Al-Qasbah, the Ajmeela neighborhood ranked second with 22 individuals in 2020.

3. Additionally, it is evident that the center of the Al-Shirqat city occupies the first position with the highest percentage of polygamists, reaching a rate of 26.95% for the years 2010 to 2020. This can be attributed to its population size, improved economic and living conditions, and the availability of employment opportunities, which encourage polygamous marriages. The Ajmeela neighborhood follows in second place with a rate of 13.78% due to its population size and the availability of extensive agricultural areas that contribute to the development of the agricultural sector, which requires a large workforce.

#### Recommendations

1. Polygamy is only allowed if there are legitimate reasons, such as the spouse's illness, infertility, or other valid reasons.
2. Providing suitable housing for polygamists to avoid conflicts between wives.
3. Marriage to one or more additional wives can only take place with the consent of the first wife.
4. Establishing new laws that protect the rights of the first wife, even if the marriage is with her consent.

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