The practice of plural marriage poses ethical and legal challenges for the liberal state. Internal minorities demand the toleration of polygamous practices. Migrant groups demand recognition of polygynous marriages contracted legitimately under foreign legal regimes. Critics of monogamy ask why the state should limit recognition to dyadic relationships. Critics of marriage ask why the state should impose the terms of intimate relationships rather than allowing the parties to set these themselves.

This international conference, hosted by the HBI Project on Gender, Culture, Religion, and the Law (GCRL), will explore a range of issues related to polygamy, polygyny and polyamory in the United States and around the world.

The Project on Gender, Culture, Religion, and the Law was initiated by a grant from Sylvia Neil and Dan Fischel. The mission of the Project is to support research and activism which explores conflicts between women’s claims to gender equality and legal norms justified in terms of religious and cultural traditions.
Program: Polygamy, Polygyny, and Polyamory

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2010 | BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
RAPAPORTE TREASURE HALL, GOLDFARB LIBRARY

7:00pm  Reception
7:30pm  Markowitz Memorial Lecture on Gender and Human Rights
Keynote: Polygamy and Gender Justice in the 21st Century: Reflections on Basic Principles
Dr. Abdullahi An-Na‘im, EMORY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW
Space is limited. Please RSVP to hbi@brandeis.edu.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2010 | BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
HASSENFELD CONFERENCE CENTER, LURIA ROOMS

8:00  Coffee and Registration
8:30  Welcome
9:00 to 9:30  Reading from Blood Stains: A Child of Africa Reclaims Her Human Rights by Khady Khoita
(UNCUT/VOICES PRESS, 2010)
Moderator: Shulamit Reinharz, BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
Translator: Tohe Levin, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

9:30 -11:15  Panel I: Is Polygamy Bad for Women?
Chair: Dr. Abdullahi An-Na‘im, EMORY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW
1. Janet Bennion, LOYOLA STATE COLLEGE
   The Many Faces of Polygamy: An Analysis of Mormon Fundamentalism
2. Debra Majeed, BELoit COLLEGE
   The Ethics of Sisterhood: African American Muslim Women and Polygyny
3. Abdoul Aziz Kebe, UNIVERSITÉ CHEikh ANt A DioP DE Dakar
   Cultural, Islamic and Legal Aspects of Polygamy in Senegal
4. Sarah Whedon, SIMMONS COLLEGE
   Media Representations of Polygamous Fundamentalist Mormon Women

11:15 – 11:30  Break
11:30 – 1:15  Panel II: Polygamy and Freedom
Chair: Lisa Fishbayn Joffe, BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
1. Martha Bailey, QUEENS UNIVERSITY
   Should Polygamy Be a Crime?
2. Sarah Song, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY
   Should the US Decriminalize Polygamy?
   Considerations from the Mormon Case
3. Maura Strassberg, DRAKE LAW SCHOOL
   Why the U.S. Should Not Decriminalize Polygamy, but Should Not Criminalize Polyamory
4. Judith Stacey, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
   Why the U.S. Should Decriminalize Polygamy: Lessons from South Africa

1:15—2:00  Lunch
2:00 – 3:30  Panel III: Polygamy in Israel: Jewish and Palestinian Perspectives
Chair: Sylvia Barkai Fishman, BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
1. Elimelech Westreich, TEL-AVIV UNIVERSITY
   Jewish Legal Responses to Polygamy from Medieval Times to the Modern Day
2. Zvi Zohar, BAR ILAN UNIVERSITY
   Pilegsh: A Classical Halakhic Intimate Relationship and Its Contemporary Potential(s)
3. Alean Al-Krenawi, MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY
   A Study of Psychological Family Function, Marital and Life Satisfactions of Polygamous and Monogamous Women: The Palestinian Case

3:30 – 4:00  Closing Remarks
Bernadette Brothen, BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
Shahla Haeri, BOSTON UNIVERSITY
Linda McClain, BOSTON UNIVERSITY

Dr. Abdullahi An-Na‘im
Approaching polygamy with a radically open mind, Dr. Abdullahi Ahmad An-Na‘im will examine how polygamy compares to monogamy in social and personal terms and discuss the implications for the theory and practice of human rights.

Dr. An-Na‘im is the Charles Howard Candler Professor of Law and Director of the Center for International and Comparative Law at Emory University School of Law. Dr. An-Na‘im is an internationally recognized scholar of Islam and human rights and human rights in cross-cultural perspective. He is the author of Islam and the Secular State (2008); African Constitutionalism and the Role of Islam (2006); and Toward an Islamic Reform: Civil Liberties, Human Rights and International Law (1990).