Gender Problems in Indonesia: The Phenomenon of Gamophobia in a Permissive Society

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Abstract: The global discourse on sex recession has intensified, with a noticeable trend towards singleness among individuals. United Nations data indicates a significant 1% decline in global population, underscoring this shift. Shocking statistics reveal that 64.65% of millennials opt to remain unmarried, avoiding marital commitment. This article explores gamophobia as a social pathology in permissive marriage cultures. In permissive contexts, the term “permissive” signifies a trend towards legalizing actions based on personal rights and freedom. The article investigates various causes of gamophobia and argues that marriage should not be feared or excessively debated in terms of gender dynamics. Additionally, it provides a gendered perspective on gamophobia and proposes solutions based on the author's insights. Using a literature review approach, this study comprehensively examines gamophobia in permissive societies, drawing from diverse scholarly sources to explore its complexities within gender frameworks and societal norms. Gamophobia in permissive societies manifests as a complex issue where individuals experience fear and avoidance towards committed marital relationships. This phenomenon not only poses psychological challenges but also mirrors broader gender dynamics, social constructs, and cultural norms that shape perceptions and responses to marriage. Addressing gamophobia's detrimental effects requires a holistic approach involving government bodies, educational institutions, civil society, and individuals. The article advocates for comprehensive preventive measures and interventions, including the author's suggestion to reevaluate pre-family constructs for societal benefit. In conclusion, this article contributes to understanding gamophobia within permissive societies, stressing the necessity of a multifaceted approach to effectively address its implications and foster healthier attitudes towards marriage and commitment.

Keywords: Gamophobia, Permissive culture, Gender dynamics.
Introduction

The phenomenon of sexual recession has become a hot topic of discussion among the world community. One concrete proof of this is that there are still many individuals who prefer to be single. The trend in the world population graph shows a decline as described based on UN data at 1%. The surprising fact was also echoed that the millennial generation chose to be single and were reluctant to get married as much as 64.65% in a survey institute. This phenomenon of fear of marriage is known as "gamophobia". Fear of getting married is increasingly becoming a social epidemic that cannot be stopped. Even more ironically, this phenomenon is used as an orientation for people's lives so that they do not need to promote marriage as human nature. This phenomenon marks a worrying paradox in a society that increasingly embraces permissive values. The government and the private sector have a very important role in reducing gender inequality in Indonesia. Ideally human rights do not have gender, but in fact women do not universally enjoy and practice basic human rights of freedom on the same basis as men (Larasati 2021).

If this trend is allowed to continue in the social ecosystem, it is possible that it will become a social pathology and will destroy the existence of gender in human life. Because the resulting impact is very detrimental to the benefit of the people. This social epidemic could become a virus that can undermine family institutions and lead to social destruction. In fact, humans need to marry, not just to follow their biological desires. Rather, it is to produce offspring as an obligation to give birth to the next generation of the people, to love and serve each other, both in mental and physical matters, and the human essence is meant to be mutually related.

Gamophobia has become a social issue that has shocked various age groups, educational backgrounds and social strata of society. Surveys conducted in various countries show a significant increase in the number of individuals who delay or even refuse to get married (Ogbugwa 2023). They further established that today people have a greater discretion about whether to marry. They further stated that where young adults have been found to be appreciative of sexual relationships, they are non-committal about transiting these relationships into marriage (Ossai and Chujor 2023). In fact, several studies also show a marked increase in number divorce. This is proven by data from the Director General of the Religious Courts and the Supreme Court which noted that while there were 2.21 million marriages in 2013, there were around 324 thousand divorces that year. Then, when the marriage rate reaches 1.7 million in 2022, the divorce rate will reach 516 thousand. Then in 2023, the divorce rate will be 463 thousand. As many as 251 thousand divorce cases occurred due to disputes, while 108 thousand cases were due to economic problems. The conduct of marital partners with regard to the way in which they spend money can influence the success of their relationship. Marriage counsellors point out that some of the most serious problems in a marriage are caused by the respective partners' attitudes and behaviour regarding money (Amato, P.R. & Previti n.d. 2003).

Even though this phenomenon is obvious in everyday life, in-depth scientific research into the root causes, impacts, and solutions to gamophobia is still rare. Because society considers this phenomenon to be taboo and its circulation is not very important to overcome or prevent. Although Situations of discrimination and inequality, which are reflected in organizations, families, and society, must be transcended to achieve gender equality (Abd. Rasyid 2022). This research gap is an important focus point in efforts to understand this phenomenon as a whole, as well as develop effective strategies in overcoming the challenges faced by individuals and society. So that this article can have novelty value and be useful in research and writing for academics, policy makers and social movement communities that speak out about gender issues and problems.

This article will examine in more depth the phenomenon of gamophobia which has become a social pathology in marriages in permissive societies. The term permissive is an attempt to justify the practice of acting on the basis of personal human rights to actualize freedom. Apart from that, in this article, other causes of gamophobia will also be discussed in more detail. The basic premise underlying this research is that marriage is not something to be afraid of, let alone a crucial debate in the world of gender. Apart from that, at the end of the article we will present how the gender perspective assesses this phenomenon along with solutions based on the author's ideas.
Method

This research uses various literature related to gender, gamophobia, and the dynamics of permissive society in Indonesia. Sources of this information include scientific journals, books, research reports, news exposure from various media sources, as well as related documents that have been published. Literature research involves identifying and researching sources that provide factual or prior information in expert opinion about the research question; an important component of other research methods at any given period (George 2008). Literature from these sources is selected based on its relevance to the research topic.

The data collection technique used is through searching and analyzing literature relevant to the research topic. Researchers will use academic databases and online libraries to identify and collect information appropriate to their research focus. The selection of literature was careful to ensure it covered a wide range of viewpoints and approaches to the phenomenon of gamophobia.

The data collected was analyzed by formulating a conceptual framework based on findings from the literature that had been collected. In this analysis, researchers identify patterns, trends, and relationships between concepts that appear in the literature related to gamophobia and permissive society in Indonesia. A critical approach is used to evaluate and interpret the information found, thereby gaining a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study.

The findings from this analysis will be implemented in the research results and discussion. The researcher will outline how the collected literature supports or challenges existing views on gamophobia in the context of a permissive society. The implications of these findings will also be discussed in theoretical and practical contexts, contributing to further understanding of gender issues and social dynamics in Indonesia. With this approach, it is hoped that research can make a meaningful contribution in expanding understanding of gamophobia and its impact in a society that is increasingly open to differences in gender and sexual orientation.

Results and Discussion

Gamophobia, Permissiveness in the Name of Personal Rights

The demand for individual freedom to choose a lifestyle without too many constraints or rules has inspired the theory of permissiveness. This theory reflects the attitude that individuals have the freedom to make their personal decisions, including in matters of relationships and marriage, without too much interference or judgment from society or institutions. Studies such as those conducted by tirto.id and Populix show that many millennials in Indonesia tend to postpone or even avoid marriage due to factors such as focus on career, high social expectations and economic uncertainty. This is in line with the view that permissiveness can encourage individuals to prioritize their personal freedom over conventional commitments such as marriage. Changes in views towards marriage and commitment are also reflected in the downward trend in marriage in countries such as Indonesia, Japan and Korea. Factors such as increasing urbanization, cultural changes, and economic pressures have influenced perceptions and practices regarding marriage. The concept of gamophobia, or fear of marriage, can be understood as a response to social changes and individualistic values that increasingly dominate society. When individuals feel that marriage could hinder their personal freedom or pose a risk to their happiness and career, they are likely to experience gamophobia.

The demand for individual freedom in the context of permissiveness also has an impact on social structures, including family institutions and prevailing social norms. A lack of clear boundaries and rules can create instability in relationships and tension within the family, as well as disrupt existing social norms. From the preliminary study above, many people want to follow the path to marriage because it is believed that it will bring abundant happiness. However, there are some millennials who feel anxious and afraid about wanting to get married. (Nurri Hadatul Aisy, Arie Setyaningrum, Fina Ilriyati, Sidiq Hari Madya,) A study conducted by tirto.id in 2016 found that almost a quarter of women in Indonesia chose not to marry. The main reason given was the belief that marriage would cause problems and hinder their career development.
Modern life, which provides more opportunities for career development, for both men and women, turns out to be one of the factors that influence fear of marriage. (Utaminingsih 2017) In China, according to the same report in 2015, up to 80 percent of the young generation who are still single are afraid to get married. (Chang 2024) This is caused by pressure from the social environment, work demands, expectations from parents, and the high cost of living associated with marriage.

Another discourse regarding Indonesian people who are reluctant to get married is also contained based on information released by Populix with the title "Wedding Planning and Wedding Preparation for Indonesian Gen-Z & Millennials", only around 18% and 19% of Generation Z and Millennials are planning to get married in the near future. The majority of them expressed a desire to get married, but not in the immediate future, some even stated that they had no concrete plans to get married. In this research, it was found that 57% of respondents chose to postpone marriage because they focused on developing their careers. Meanwhile, 53% expressed a desire to enjoy aspects of their personal life outside the scope of their career, such as not wanting to be in a relationship because they were afraid of divorce, economic pressure, and not being ready to face the complexity of internal domestic conflict. A total of 44% of them stated that they had not found a partner who met their expectations, including a sense of insecurity or lack of self-confidence in their souls, while 11% admitted that they were satisfied with their current life and did not feel the need to get married.

Elsewhere, in data released by the Central Statistics Agency, there was a significant decline in the number of marriages in Indonesia from 2018 to 2023. In 2018, the number of marriages reached 2.01 million couples, but this decreased to 1.96 million couples in 2019. After that, there was another decline in 2020, with the number of marriages reaching 1.78 million couples, then continuing to decline in 2021 to 1.74 million couples, and in 2022 reaching 1.70 million couples. The marriage rate continues to decline until it reaches 1.58 million couples in 2023, a decrease of around 128,000 couples compared to the previous year. Not only in Indonesia, the trend of decreasing the number of marriages is also occurring in several other countries. This phenomenon also occurs in developed countries in Asia such as Japan and Korea. The public's low interest in marriage ultimately triggers problems related to declining birth rates and population crises in these countries. This is supported by a report from The Japan Times, the number of marriages in Japan in 2023 will reach 489,281 couples, a decrease of around 30,000 couples or around 5.9 percent compared to the previous year. The marriage rate is the lowest in Japan since 1933. Apart from that, Drajat Tri Kartono, a sociologist from Sebelas Maret University (UNS) Surakarta, observed that the paradigm shift regarding marriage, especially in the context of women's roles, which occurred in Japan and other countries, was also manifested in Indonesia. This change in outlook developed in line with privatism becoming increasingly rampant in social life and increasingly weak moral ties and trust in the institution of the family.

Apart from seeing these changes in Japan, Drajat and his fellow researchers have conducted similar research on conditions in Indonesia. One of the studies is entitled "Family Crisis in the Development of Women's Autonomy". In this research, Drajat identified changes in power dynamics within the family sphere which resulted in a paradigm shift, especially regarding the role of women in the context of marriage. In his analysis, modern women prioritize work, then education, then think about marriage. (Indri Nursalam, Nursalam 2015)

The statement above is in line with the theory of permissiveness which states that it is a person's attitude to be free to carry out all actions that he considers appropriate to himself even though they are actually deviant. (Fauzia and Sabil 2021) This attitude cannot be used as a way to resolve a problem. People who are permissive in their lives act freely, there is no regularity and don't seem to think much about the rules that apply. Far from feeling empathy and caring. Does not reflect individuals or society with positive values. Permissiveness, if excessive without social control or self-awareness on the part of the person, can result in a person feeling free and uncontrolled as if there is no moral value in their life. Permissiveness also has a significant impact on social structures and individuals. For example, a permissive attitude can make individuals feel free to do whatever they want without considering the impact on themselves or others. Then the impact on the family line, permissive attitudes in the family context can create instability and tension due to the lack of clear boundaries and rules. Meanwhile, in society, permissiveness can disrupt existing social norms and create confusion.
about what is considered right or wrong in life. Moreover, this phenomenon has shifted cultural polarization where it should not be.

Gamophobia as a result of permissiveness implies that in society it can create an environment where individuals feel that they do not need to marry or be in a committed relationship. This can reinforce gamophobia among individuals who feel that marriage is no longer necessary or desired. When individuals or societies experience gamophobia, they may tend to adopt a permissive attitude towards sexual relationships and behavior. (Siti Hartatingsih, Sumarjoko 2022) They may think that allowing themselves to have a relationship without marriage is the solution to their fear of the institution of marriage.

The Irony of Gamophobia as a Socially Destructive Threat

Broadly speaking, the meaning of gamophobia is maneuvered around the phenomenon in which individuals or society collectively experience extreme fear of the institution of marriage. This phenomenon can appear in various forms, ranging from resistance to marriage, delaying marriage to the belief that marriage is undesirable or scary. Apart from the basic permissiveness that has been explained previously, fear of getting married can be associated with negative thought patterns and cognitive distortions towards marriage. (Indri Nursalam, Nursalam 2015) Individuals with this tend to have irrational beliefs about commitment, such as fear of losing freedom, fear of marriage failure, or fear of being trapped in an unhappy relationship.

Apart from that, past experiences, especially in interpersonal relationships, can also influence the development of a person's fear of getting married. Childhood trauma, such as domestic violence from one's mother or father, abuse by other people, or neglect from one's parents, can also increase a person's risk of experiencing marriage phobia. (Arifin and Fardiah n.d.) Without exception, the large number of divorce cases is also a factor in someone being afraid to get married. Fear of marriage and commitment can be caused through experience or observation. Individuals who grew up in families with disharmonious marriages, full of discomfort or experienced negative experiences in their home environment, will potentially be vulnerable to fears about things related to forming a marriage story.

In line with the structural theory of functionalism, which states that marriage has an important role in social and cultural structures (Nanik Nanik and Lina Natalya 2022), gamophobia can be seen as a form of deviation from social norms that value marriage as an ideal achievement in life. So if the demands of family life as above are not felt well, they can experience mental, emotional, and psychological pressure. Meanwhile, symbolic interactionism theory interprets marriage as a social construction through interaction and communication. So it can trigger the phenomenon of fear of marriage due to high social expectations regarding marriage and the pressure faced after marriage. Apart from that, feminist theory actualizes gender norms and traditional marriage expectations as factors that can influence women to be afraid of getting married so they prefer to be single. Pressure and inability to maintain a marriage relationship does not only affect women, as described above. Who would have thought, men also have the potential to experience pressure and fear about getting married. Based on facts on the ground, financial reasons and prestige are the reasons why men are reluctant to get married.

Gamophobia is not a trend that should be heeded and even allowed to mushroom in the spectrum of society. Farah Mahsheed Al-Jannah, Elga Andriana, “The Role of Coping Strategies on Life Satisfaction in Married Women,” Unesa Repository 49 (2023): 2023. There are many socially destructive impacts resulting from this phenomenon which in the end can become a threat to the people. One of them causes individuals to feel isolated or lonely because they find it difficult to form intimate and committed relationships. This can affect a person's emotional and psychological well-being. This is supported and strengthened by research which states that if people are single for too long, it can be dangerous for their health.

John Cacioppo, a psychologist from the University of Chicago, found a link between loneliness and its bad effects on health. Saida A Kasim, “The Influence of Mental Health Education on Cyberbullying Prevention Behavior in Adolescents in Class 4 (2023). In the study, it was said that if someone is single for a very long period of time, it will cause hardening of the arteries. This is what will cause blood pressure to rise. Not only that, the mental state of someone who is alone is more easily depressed, they become stressed and easily depressed.
This is also supported by a study by UCLA researcher Robert Kaplan, which was published in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community, saying that people who choose to be single are actually at risk of developing heart disease.

In another survey, based on research conducted by the Journal of the International Association for Relationship Research, it was found that unmarried individuals have higher levels of depression, anxiety, mood disorders, adjustment difficulties, and other psychological stress when compared to married couples (Khamdan Khamdan Safiudin, 2024) The study also noted that individuals who engage in romantic relationships within the framework of marital bonds can experience higher levels of well-being compared to those who choose to remain single. The negative impacts of other socially destructive activities also threaten the continued safety of the family institution in the future. (Binti Nurhana, 2023). The inability to form a stable and happy family can have a negative impact on future generations (Izzatul Lutfiyah and Muhid Maksum, 2023). Children from families affected by gamophobia will experience emotional instability and difficulty in forming healthy relationships in the future. Of course, this will have an impact on the resilience of family institutions which are vulnerable to collapse and lead to collapse and divorce.

The divorce polemic itself cannot be separated from the number of cases that occur in Indonesia. According to data from the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency, the main causes of divorce in 2022 are disputes and quarrels. The number is 284,169 cases or the equivalent of 63.41% of the total factors causing divorce cases in the country. Nur alfi fasolina Yuniar Muijwati et al, (2022). This is further strengthened by a quote from the website of the East Java Ministry of Religion which reveals that divorce cases in the field mostly occur in families whose marriage age is still five years or less. The cause is small or trivial things such as stress due to the relatively frequent frequency of fighting, usually due to the partners' emotional instability towards each other. This means that the resilience of the family institution can easily collapse due to unhealthy relationships as discussed above and this is an emanation of the impact of gamophobia itself.

Apart from that, the social destruction threatened by this phenomenon also attacks the community ecosystem. This can cause a cultural shift in the structure of society which tends towards individualism and rejection of traditional values such as marriage and family (Ikfini Haula Aqiqa et al, 2024). Not only that, if this phenomenon is allowed to sink into people's lives, it will bring the era of ignorance to the surface again. Including how in the end this social disease can damage the maqashid component of shari'ah as a guide for humans in carrying out shari'ah in every line of life.

Even worse, this phenomenon can disrupt social stability and create an imbalance in the structure of society. Such as the decline in birth age and productive age as part of the success of the demographic bonus. In line with the statement by the Head of the National Population and Family Planning Agency, Hasto Wardoyo, quoted by Antara, he stated that the trend of decreasing marriage rates would have an impact on the demographic bonus, number of births, population growth and middle class income. Apart from that, this phenomenon will also influence Indonesia's efforts to achieve a position as the fourth largest country in the world. This statement was also supported by the appeal of the Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia, KH Amin Ma'ruf, who encouraged the public not to postpone marriage, because it could hamper the productive population in Indonesia.

If this phenomenon is not limited or stops the spread of the virus, it is possible that thoughts will emerge that deify humans not needing to marry as a normal and ordinary trend. However, without realizing it, little by little this phenomenon will have the impact of damaging social institutions which will explode if it is allowed to permeate society.

The Gamophobia Phenomenon from a Gender Perspective and the Resilience of Pre-Family Construction as an Alternative Solution

The phenomenon of gamophobia, which is a fear or tendency to avoid intimate relationships or commitment in romantic relationships, is an important aspect that can be analyzed from a gender perspective. In a permissive society, where norms related to sexuality and romantic relationships are increasingly open, gamophobia becomes an interesting subject to study because it shows the complexity in gender dynamics. From a gender perspective, gamophobia is not only an individual psychological problem, but is also reflected in the social
construction of masculinity and femininity. Nancy J. Smith-Hefner Marcia C. Inhorn, Waithood, 2020), Patriarchal traditions that link a man's value and identity to the ability to control and dominate in relationships, as well as social norms that idealize the image of a 'tough guy' who is not afraid of commitment, can strengthen the stigma against men who experience gamophobia. On the other hand, women may experience pressure to be the object of open and unconditionally accepting sexual desire in relationships, and thus feel uncomfortable with men who demonstrate an inability to commit.

Understanding gender in the context of gamophobia also involves analyzing the power dynamics in relationships (Wati Hermawati, Gender in Science and Technology, ed. Wati Hermawati, 2018). Concepts such as gender hegemony, where men are seen as holding power and control in relationships, can influence how gamophobia is viewed. Women who refuse to be objects in committed relationships may be seen as challenging existing power structures, while men who show signs of gamophobia may be seen as undermining or threatening that gender hegemony. Permissive societies, which show greater tolerance for a variety of sexual behaviors, can create their own stresses related to gamophobia. Norms that encourage sexual freedom and self-exploration can create conflict for individuals experiencing gamophobia, who may feel unable to meet these expectations. This can create tension between expected gender identity and the individual's personal experiences in navigating romantic relationships.

In an ever-changing society, gender dynamics in the context of gamophobia are also changing. Social changes, such as increasing gender equality and more open dialogue about men's emotions and vulnerabilities, may influence how individuals understand and overcome gamophobia. In addition, the feminist and LGBTQ+ movements have also made important contributions in raising awareness of various forms of gender inequality and encouraging open conversations about gamophobia. In addressing this phenomenon, it is important to adopt a holistic approach that considers gender dimensions as well as social, cultural, and historical contexts that influence individual constructions and experiences related to fear of commitment in romantic relationships. Thus, this treatment will not only help individuals to overcome their fears and anxieties, but can also result in broader changes in gender dynamics and interpersonal relationships in society.

From the series of discourse discussions above, concrete steps can be taken as an alternative solution in preventive efforts to prevent the phenomenon of gamophobia, namely by strengthening the pre-family social structure or the author illustrates it as the resilience of the pre-family construction (Zhila Jannatic Tiaraa, Komaruddinb, 2023).

The author's version of the concept of pre-family construction resilience is likened and described as humans consisting of three elements of the soul. First, it consists of humans who can understand and realize (understanding), strengths and weaknesses (strengthness and weakness), and humans who are full of hope (hopefulness). Humans who can understand and realize the meaning of everything related to themselves must of course know and be aware of every essence of a thing, especially regarding the units of the marriage dimension. That matter can poured in a number of action plan program as following:

a. Promote Guidance for Catin or Prospective Brides

This program can implemented through synergy institution government like Ministry of Religion and KUA in various countries point area. Although a number of already implement, however still lots areas that haven’t apply full program. Therefore that’s necessary exists regulations clear and binding that calls for this program urgent for held.

b. Conduct a Feasibility Test Marry Certified

This program can held by the institution relevant private sector nor agency government such as the Population Agency Family Planned with holding hands doctor or expert psychologist related as partners in the field. With the existence of this program is expected can become reject measuring assess the feasibility test somebody already capable for quick Marry as form of passing verification and validation from various related aspects with marriage units.

Draft resilience second that is man consists from strengths and weaknesses. It means how man life must always reflect himself from every collision problem mainly prepare himself...
in face life married. This can be expressed through self-efficacy as follows.

a. Reflection of society

Society needs to reconstruct divine values from the essence of marriage and family as a strong moral and social foundation. This can be realized by promoting social awareness. The mechanism is that people need to be given an understanding of the negative impacts of gamophobia, as well as the importance of maintaining traditional and moral values in social life. This was done as a joint campaign movement to promote that marriage is not that scary.

b. Strong religious education and awareness of the importance of the teachings of the Koran

This is done with the aim of helping individuals and society understand the importance of marriage and encouraging them to build healthy relationships and commit to a marriage bond. This is done as an effort to internalize self-confidence from doubts and fears about getting married.

The final concept of resilience is that humans are creatures full of hope. This means that every human journey certainly has targets, desires and achievements to be realized. Of course, in an effort to achieve that, of course there is hope that is included and efforts are made. Humans are not creatures who always fail, especially in the case of love. There are humans who don't want to rise from every adversity. This concept refers more to the life behavior of endeavor, optimism and qona'ah. Believe that every time there is rain there will definitely be a rainbow. Every problem of the heart will certainly find a solution. Because every human being's life scenario has been arranged in such a way by Allah, the Most Great and Wise. The flow diagram of the pre-family construction resilience concept is as follows:

### Conclusion

The phenomenon of gamophobia is a complex problem in a permissive society, where individuals experience fear and a tendency to avoid committed relationships in marriage. This is not only an individual psychological problem, but also reflects gender dynamics, social constructs, and cultural norms that influence how individuals understand and respond to marriage.

To overcome gamophobia and its detrimental impacts, a holistic approach is needed that involves various parties, including government institutions, educational institutions, civil society and individuals. There are comprehensive preventive and intervention steps such as the author’s idea of pre-family construction resilience for everyone. This idea needs to be implemented and also supported in order to be implemented. Through synergy from various related parties, of course. In this way, it is hoped that a more supportive environment can be created for individuals to build healthy and committed relationships in marriage.

Recommendations for further research on gamophobia and strategies for overcoming gamophobia also need to continue to be carried out to deepen our understanding of this phenomenon and develop more effective approaches to overcoming it. This involves collaboration between academics, practitioners, and policy makers in identifying and responding to changes in social and cultural dynamics that influence gamophobia.

### References


