URBAN MUSLIMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: 
CAMPUS DA’WAH ACTIVISTS’ MASTER NARRATIVES ON 
POLYGAMY VIEWS

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Abstract
This research will examine the polygamy narratives of Campus Da’wah Activists during the rise of polygamy discourse in Indonesia. Campus Da’wah activists are part of the urban Muslims who have intellectual and social duties to preach religion within the scope of the campus level. This research is field research with the object of research being Campus Da’wah Activists on three major campuses in Yogyakarta, the research uses Master Narrative theory as a dissection of the narrative used. The findings in the study show that there are three groups of views on polygamy, namely pro-polygamy, conditional pro-polygamy, and counter-polygamy, while the main narratives that develop, the pro-polygamy group views the inequality of the ratio of men and women as unbalanced, the conditional pro-polygamy group emulates the story of Siti Sarah who is willing to be polygamous in an emergency, while the counter-polygamy group makes the love story of the Prophet Muhammad with Siti Khadijah which teaches marital fidelity. This research is expected to contribute to the narrative that is developing in the community towards polygamy, which is not only based on lust but also the guidance of Shari'a.

Keywords: Da’wah Activist; Main Narrative; Polygamy; Pros and Cons; Urban Muslim.

A. Introduction
The discussion of polygamy is an interesting study to continue to study. The discussion about polygamy is said to never end because it always reaps the pros and cons of polygamy (Azhari, 2021). Polygamy is a term for the act of a husband having more than one wife (Adebayo, 2019), This is different from monogamy where the husband only has one wife (Merdad et al., 2022). Most of the literature tends to discuss polygamy as an interesting study (Al-Sharfi et al., 2016). Polygamy itself is an Islamic
teaching as stated in the Qur’an and Prophetic Hadiths. However, Islam recommends polygamy only to husbands who can be fair (Ali, 2012).

Polygamy is still an issue in marriage that continues to be debated and even controversial. This is due to the argumentation against polygamy for various reasons, including normative, psychological, and even gender issues. On the other hand, campaigns related to polygamy are seen as having a normative and firm basis and are seen as an alternative to solving social problems.

The rise of polygamy in this contemporary era is not only a practical phenomenon in society but has now become a massively disseminated commodity. This can be seen from the existence of seminars on polygamy, polygamous applications, and even polygamous mentoring classes. This phenomenon is a form of public enthusiasm for the polygamy discourse that is massively produced and developed with various packaging. This is a real social reality of society that occurs, this social reality works and acts and can affect individuals (Durkheim, 1982). This reality becomes an objective and subjective social reality in the form of individual knowledge (Berger Peter L & Luckmann, 1990). Thus, concerning polygamy, there is a tendency for society to continuously produce and maintain the existence of polygamy.

This reality that occurs is a phenomenon among urban Muslim communities because of the easy access to religious materials through the internet and also very diverse religious doctrines. Urban Muslims are very aware of the importance of technology in life, including in reflecting their religious attitudes (Ni’mah et al., 2022). In this context, urban Muslims who are closely related are reflected in urban Muslims in universities who have broad access to knowledge, making it easier to get information from various sources, where which is represented by Campus Da’wah Activists.

Campus Da’wah activists are part of intellectuals who have unique social roles and responsibilities. This distinctive social responsibility is reflected in the strategic role to preach the teachings of Islam at the campus level and in the surrounding community (SMPN FSLDK Nasional, 2004, p. 18). Historically, the presence of Campus Da’wah Activists tends to have a fundamentalist style of Islamic thought. This style tends to reject new values that are not following Islamic teachings, one of which is the view on the issue of gender equality. This issue is an issue that contradicts polygamy. Thus, Campus Da’wah Activists tend to maintain the concept of polygamy. With such a reality, this is an interesting thing to study, for at least two reasons; First, the understanding of Campus Da’wah Activists influences the campus environment. Second, historically, Campus Da’wah Activists have a fundamentalist Islamic perspective and tend to be pro-polygamy with the narrative that is built.

The discussion of polygamy, in general, has been widely researched, such as linking polygamy to marital structure, psychology, and other social issues (Al-Krenawi & Slonim-Nevo, 2008; Elbedour et al., 2007). However, specifically the discussion related to polygamy in the views of activists of community organizations has been carried out by Shava Oliviatie (2010), Miftah Ilham Irfani (2016), and Burlian Senjaya (Senjaya, 2009). Shava Oliviatie analyzes the interpretative-phenomenological paradigm using a qualitative approach, in this study focusing on the views of Hizbut Tahrir activists in Malang City in viewing polygamy (Oliviatie, 2010). Meanwhile, Miftah Ilham Irfani discusses the views of Tarbiyah activists who view polygamy and also explores the background that encourages polygamy (Irfani, 2016). And finally, Burlian Senjaya’s research, in his research presents descriptive-analytical data on the polygamy views of activist ‘Aisyah. This research uses the Double Movement theory. Thus, it was found that according to the views of ‘Aisyiyah activists, the law of
polygamy is permissible if it is in a social emergency and can do justice (Senjaya, 2009). Therefore, research involving Campus Da'wah Activists in their views on polygamy with diverse backgrounds and religious understanding influenced by the urban environment has not been conducted. This paper will describe how Campus Da'wah Activists in Yogyakarta understand polygamy and also describe the narratives that develop within it.

B. Method

This research is field research with descriptive-analytical nature by describing the views of polygamy. The research data was collected by conducting interviews with Campus Da'wah Activists at three universities in Yogyakarta, namely Yogyakarta State University, Universitas Islam Indonesia, and Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, the campus selection was based on the fact that there were only three campuses where Campus Da'wah Activists were willing to be interviewed. The use of Halverson's master narrative theory is used to find out the narratives that develop into the understanding of Campus Da'wah Activists. In addition to interviews, data is collected by collecting documents in the form of books and previous studies.

C. Findings and Discussion

1. Findings

Campus Da’wah Institutions and the Understanding of Polygamy

Lembaga Dakwah Kampus (LDK) is a student organization that is spread across every university in Indonesia. Certainly, most of the well-known universities in Indonesia have LDK, but in each university, the name of LDK is different. LDK is currently an intra or campus institution that is an Islamic student movement whose main activity is social and moral-based da'wah. Campus Da'wah Activists (ADK) are dedicated to inviting the academic community to the Islamic path, using various facilities on campus, and because their activities have been legalized by the university, they also receive support from the academic community. Da'wah activities are carried out by prioritizing intellectual values and are reflected in behaviour that is influenced by Islamic teachings. As an example in the language used in communicating with others, the use of Arabic terms is the language most often used to greet others such as akhi, ukhti, 'afwan, syukran, antum, ikhwan, akhwat, anti, and others (Isnaniah, 2013). In terms of appearance, LDK members tend to look different from students and campus activists in general. They express their characteristics in appearance and clothing. Keep the beard, wear Muslim clothes/koko, and pants above the ankles.

Some Campus Da'wah Activists believe that polygamy can be practiced for certain reasons and conditions, such as being able to be fair to wives as stated in verse 3 of Surah an-Nisa. Campus Da'wah activists are active students whose perspectives and paradigms are forward-looking, objective, and constructive. They do not bring up pure egoism unless the Qur’an is their reference. Informants who are willing to be interviewed are 6 people from 3 Campus Da'wah Institutions in Yogyakarta, so they can be categorized into 3 positions, as follows:

a) Views of Campus Da'wah Activists Pro Polygamy

Campus Da'wah activists who argue that polygamy is permissible are based on Surah an-Nisa verse 3, which is the legal basis for husbands who want to be polygamous. The Campus Da'wah Activists' perspective on polygamy begins with the definition of polygamy and explains the permissibility of the law and matters related to it.
Based on an interview with F.A.N, one of the members of LDK Jama'ah Al-Anhar, Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta (UMY) said that polygamy is an order from Allah SWT, so as humans we must obey it. As the permissibility is stated in the Qur'an letter an-Nisa verse 3. In the end, the ratio of men to women is 1:50, so polygamy is one of the solutions to reduce the population of single women in the future.

“I accept polygamy because Islam allows polygamy, I don't forbid it. The logic of my reasoning is this, it is said that, for example, near doomsday, the ratio of men to women is about 1:50, so for example, if there is no polygamy, it is a pity that there will be more single women in this world” (F.A.N, 2023).

F.A.N gained knowledge about polygamy through reading books, but she did not mention these books. She also mentioned that she learned about polygamy from videos of Ustadz that she watched on the YouTube platform. When faced with the phenomenon of infidelity or the phenomenon of polygamy, she prefers polygamy to infidelity.

b) Views of Campus Da'wah Activists Pro Conditional Polygamy

The view of Campus Da'wah Activists who are pro-polygamy but conditional, this group has special demands apart from the existence of justice. Some of these conditions include; First, being able to be fair to the wife. Second, if the original wife is physically disabled, she cannot fulfil her duties as a wife. Third, as long as the second wife is chosen directly by the first wife, then the husband may polygamize. Fourth, polygamy is allowed as long as it is the main wife. Furthermore, I.P from LDK UKKI Jamaah Al-Mujahiddin Yogyakarta State University (UNY) agreed to polygamy on the condition that it can be fair. According to him, justice here is fair in terms of economics in the form of maintenance. In addition, she has certain conditions, which must be used as the first wife. According to her, if she is used as a second wife, she is worried that she will not get fair treatment for herself.

"First of all, if we say agree or disagree, our reference is the Qur'an and Sunnah, even if we disagree, Allah SWT allows polygamy, so whether we like it or not, we have to agree. However, Allah does not necessarily allow polygamy like one, two, three, or four wives, and some verses require them to treat their wives fairly. So, I agree with polygamy, but with one condition, and that is justice” (I.P, 2023).

I.P's views on polygamy are influenced by his activities in attending studies and watching videos delivered by Ustadz Abdul Somad. In addition, he regularly watches videos of lectures by the late Ustaz Jefri al Buchori and Anis Matta’s inspirational videos and religious books. The second opinion was conveyed by P.T.R, according to whom polygamy is a good practice and is regulated in the Qur'an, but the conditions must be fair. According to him, justice is related to the economy, namely the maintenance of wives and children. Apart from reading books, she also learned about polygamy by watching videos of lectures by ustadz on YouTube. The lectures he usually watches are those delivered by Ustadz Abdul Somad (P.T.R, 2023).

Furthermore, the third opinion was conveyed by T.R from LDK Al-Fath at the Islamic University of Indonesia (UII). According to him, he approves of polygamy because it is regulated in the Qur'an and is legally permissible (mubah). However, allowed does not mean recommended or prohibited. Polygamy is allowed but with conditions. According to him, an important condition of polygamy is related to tarbiyah (education). The reason for tarbiyah (education) was obtained by watching Ustadz Adi Hidayat's lectures via YouTube. T.R himself is a fan and follower of Ustadz Adi
Hiidayat, Abdul Somad, and Khalid Basalamah. According to him, this Ustadz gives religious explanations that are easy to understand and can be accounted for as the truth (T.R, 2023).

c) Campus Da'wah Activists' Views on Polygamy

As for the results of the interviews, it was found that there are two Campus Da'wah Activists who disagree with polygamy. Both of them think that their husbands cannot treat their wives and children fairly. D.K from LDK UKKI Jamaah Al-Mujahiddin UNY, responding to the phenomenon of polygamy in Indonesia, feels that it is normal and natural. He added that the requirements for polygamy are reasons justified by sharia, not by their desires. This is based on the opinion of the ustadz during his study at Teras Dakwah Yogyakarta (D.K, 2023). D.K's reason for rejecting polygamy refers to the story of Siti Khadijah, who lived her domestic life without polygamy and devoted herself to serving the Prophet Muhammad until his death. She was inspired to be like Siti Khadijah who devoted herself voluntarily to her husband so that there was no gap for her husband to be polygamous.

The second opinion was delivered by N.M from LDK UII. Regarding the concept of polygamy, he said that at first, he rejected the concept of polygamy 100%, but over time he began to learn to accept the concept of polygamy because polygamy has been regulated in the Qur'an, so the percentage decreased in rejecting polygamy. In other words, conceptually she accepts, but practically she rejects polygamy. She rejects polygamy because she believes that every woman has something against polygamy. In addition, she believes that in the context of polygamy, no one can be fair in all respects, such as emotions, feelings, and time allocation (N.M, 2023). Among the opinions of the three groups of speakers above, the most favorable opinion is that of conditional polygamy. This opinion refers to the word of Allah in the book of Nisa verse 3. Thus, it can be seen that the view on polygamy is still based on the rules of the Qur'an and legislation, not on mere lust.

2. Discussion

Based on the findings above, the opinions of Campus Da'wah Activists are divided into three views, namely pro-polygamy, conditional polygamy, and against polygamy. So, to find out the narratives used by Campus Da'wah Activists in their views on polygamy, Helverson's master narrative theory is used. This theory is based on the premise that narrative is a powerful resource for determining cultural frameworks and actions. Group narratives are essential to understanding how they operate (Halverson et al., 2011). In the context of this research, the data is analysed by looking at the narratives that develop that shape people's views, especially in polygamy, this narrative is important because it will provide doctrine that affects the mindset. Of the three groups of views on polygamy, there are at least three ustadz narratives that are the main ideas of the emergence of these groups, as follows.

a) Pro Polygamy Master Narrative: The Myth of Human Population Comparison

The Qur'an and the story of Prophet Muhammad's polygamy are indisputable as ideological foundations and are believed by many Muslims around the world, including Indonesian Muslims. However, another narrative has developed in Indonesian society and is believed by some Muslims, that there are more women than men. This narrative is one of the reasons behind groups that support polygamy. This is the opinion of Campus Da'wah Activists who support polygamy by looking at the ratio of men and women which is 1:50 when approaching the last day (doomsday). For those in favour of polygamy, the proportion of women in the world is much higher than...
men, and this proportion is increasing. It makes sense that if a man has only one wife, chances are, there will be many women without husbands, so polygamy becomes the ultimate solution. Saiful Islam Mubarak also states in his book that the imbalance in the male-female population ratio is a social problem, and polygamy needs to be implemented in society. Therefore, polygamy is a God-given solution to humanity (Mubarak, 2007, p. 18).

Referring to the argument above, it is found that according to data from the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2020, based on gender, the male population was 136.66 million people with a percentage of 50.58%, and the female population was 133.54 million people with a percentage of 49.42%. Compared to the previous census, the sex ratio of the Indonesian population shows an increasing trend over time. In 2020 the sex ratio of the Indonesian population was 102, i.e., there were 102 males for every 100 females. A sex ratio greater than 100 indicates that there are more men than women (Sekretariat Kabinet Republik Indonesia, 2020).

Thus, the above facts show that the comparison of men to women is a myth. This myth seems to be an entrenched dogma in Indonesian Muslim society. This applies not only to men but also to women, so for polygamy support groups, this myth is used as a tool to legitimize polygamy and can be used to influence the perceptions of Muslim communities in Indonesia. According to the author, this comparison myth arises because informants tend to read less, so they take it for granted. The polygamy support group gets and is influenced by the preacher's lectures on YouTube because a preacher can influence others (Wellman, 2010, p. 559).

b) The Main Narrative of Conditional Polygamy: The Story of Siti Sarah and Prophet Ibrahim

The story of Siti Sarah and Prophet Ibrahim is a rational reason for conditional polygamy. This opinion is expressed by T.R from LDK UII, he agrees to polygamy with conditions, this refers to the story of Prophet Ibrahim and Siti Sarah, where Siti Sarah could not provide offspring. At that time Prophet Ibrahim did not ask his wife for permission to polygamy, but Siti Sarah asked Prophet Ibrahim to marry Siti Hajar. However, Siti Sarah's jealousy of Siti Hajar is also a narrative that shows how difficult it is for women in polygamous marriages to suppress their jealousy of other wives.

This narrative makes an archetype, where a wife reluctantly gives her husband permission to remarry another woman for a reason. This story becomes a role model for women who allow their husbands to practice polygamy for emergency reasons such as health reasons or disabilities and even physically unable to have offspring. This is in line with the opinion of Hasbi who believes that polygamy is only allowed when there is an emergency (Ilyas, 2004, p. 167). In addition to emergencies, the Qur'an explains that polygamy can be carried out under strict conditions, namely being able to be fair (Engineer, 2007, p. 111). In this context, polygamy can be practiced as a solution to sexual and social problems (Ilyas, 2004, p. 165).

c) The Counter-Polygamy Main Narrative: The Story of Siti Khadijah's Faithfulness

Many people are more concerned about discussing the polygamy of the Prophet Muhammad's family, even though in the historical record of the Prophet's life, the Prophet has applied the principle of marriage, namely monogamy with Siti Khadijah. As we know, the Prophet Muhammad married Siti Khadijah when he was 25 years old and Siti Khadijah was 40 years old (Mubarrakfury, 2014, p. 551). Their marriage lasted for 25 years until the death of Siti Khadijah at the age of 65 (Haikal, 1993, pp. 104–105). The fidelity in the marriage of Siti Khadijah and Prophet Muhammad became the main narrative in the anti-polygamy group. This main narrative places the archetype of Siti Khadijah's loyalty as a wife who accompanied her husband until the end of his life.
This story is used as an example of a husband’s loyalty and obedience.

Furthermore, the main narrative of polygamy provides a view that polygamy can lead to conflict in the household. Household conflicts in polygamous marriages present complex household dynamics with characteristics and challenges that are different from families in general (Westrupp et al., 2018). The financial stress, marital conflict and abuse, and declining mental health of wives found in polygamous households can create an unhealthy parenting environment (Arthi & Fenske, 2018), and the mental health of children living in them (Giallo et al., 2022). On that basis, they reject polygamy, even firmly choosing divorce over polygamy. According to Mannheim, one’s knowledge or thoughts cannot be separated from the social conditions of existence or social life (Mannheim, 1991, p. 336). This is as Brooks argues, that structurally the practice of polygamy does not uphold egalitarian principles in both theory and fact, therefore polygamy must be opposed (Brooks, 2009). These factors have become the main narrative driving the formation of an understanding that rejects polygamy.

D. Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, there are three groups’ views on polygamy; first, the group that supports polygamy is because polygamy is an order of Allah in the Qur’an. Second, a group that views polygamy but conditionally with the argument that even though polygamy is a law of Allah, it must be fair and there is an emergency. The third group rejects polygamy because polygamy can cause complex problems. Furthermore, the main narrative that develops against polygamy, the pro-polygamy group views the inequality of the ratio of men and women as unbalanced, the pro-polygamy group conditionally emulates the story of Siti Sarah who was willing to be polygamous in an emergency, while the counter-polygamy group makes the love story of the Prophet Muhammad with Siti Khadijah which teaches marital fidelity. This research is expected to contribute to the narrative that is developing in the community towards polygamy, which is not only based on lust but also on the guidance of Shari’a.

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F. Author Contributions Statement

Dian Furqani Tenrilawa contributed to conceptualizing the research, such as writing the initial concept, methodology, and formal analysis. Zezen Zainul Ali helped conceptualize the research, assisted with methodology, conducted project administration, curated data, and sources, and reviewed and edited.

G. References


