



Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam
Volume 7 No. 3. November 2023
ISSN: 2549 – 3132; E-ISSN: 2549 – 3167
DOI: 10.22373/sjhk.v7i3.17666

“The New Men”: The Rahima’s Experiences in the Gender Sensitivity Construction among Marriage Registrar in Lampung Indonesia

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Abstract: Efforts to prevent gender-based violence will progress slowly without involving men. Socialization and education tend to be targeted towards women’s groups, with few including men as subjects in the anti-violence education process. This article discusses several important lessons learned from the mentoring process of Marriage Registrar Officials at the Office of Religious Affairs in East Lampung, Indonesia, by the Rahima Association. The study is the result of observations on the mentoring process of Marriage Registrar Officials who have internalized the values of justice and reciprocity in family relations. The research data are supported by interviews, focus group discussions, and documentation. This article argues that the involvement of male religious figures in preventing family violence is essential for two reasons. First, in textual societies, male ulama has a strategic role in reproducing more egalitarian and just knowledge. Second, the process of building gender-just awareness requires authoritative actors in the process of building knowledge from shared experience to be more legitimate. The article also explains the theoretical foundations of the successful mentoring approach that has transformed the outlook of male Marriage Registrar Officials who have the drive to effect change in Muslim society regarding equal and just family relations through their duties and functions.

Keywords: New men, Rahima, gender sensitivity, marriage registrar officials, gender-based violence

|| Submitted: April 04, 2023 || Accepted: August 21, 2023 || Published: August 26, 2023

<http://jurnal.ar-raniry.ac.id/index.php/samarah>

Abstrak: *Upaya pencegahan kekerasan berbasis gender akan berjalan lambat tanpa melibatkan laki-laki. Sosialisasi dan edukasi cenderung dilakukan dengan sasaran pada kelompok perempuan dan tidak banyak yang menyertakan laki-laki sebagai subjek dalam proses edukasi anti kekerasan. Artikel ini mendiskusikan beberapa pelajaran penting yang dipetik dari proses pendampingan Pegawai Pencatat Nikah pada Kantor Urusan Agama Lampung Timur-Indonesia oleh Perhimpunan Rahima. Kajian ini merupakan hasil observasi terhadap proses pendampingan pegawai KUA yang mengalami internalisasi nilai-nilai keadilan dan kesalingan dalam relasi keluarga. Data-data penelitian ini didukung dengan wawancara, focus group discussion dan dokumentasi. Tulisan ini berargumen bahwa pelibatan tokoh agama laki-laki dalam pencegahan kekerasan dalam keluarga menjadi keniscayaan karena dua alasan. Pertama, dalam masyarakat teks, ulama laki-laki memiliki peran strategis untuk mereproduksi pengetahuan yang lebih egaliter dan berkeadilan. Kedua, proses membangun kesadaran adil gender meniscayakan aktor otoritatif dalam proses membangun pengetahuan dari pengalaman bersama agar lebih legitimate. Tulisan ini juga menjelaskan dasar-dasar teoritis dari pendekatan pendampingan yang berhasil mengubah cara pandang laki-laki Pegawai Pencatat Nikah yang memiliki daya dorong untuk melakukan perubahan di masyarakat Muslim mengenai relasi setara dan berkeadilan dalam keluarga melalui tugas dan fungsi yang diembannya.*

Keywords: *Laki-laki baru, Rahima, sensitifitas gender, Pegawai Pencatat Nikah, kekerasan berbasis gender*

Introduction

Violence against women is a persistent problem, with men being the main perpetrators and women being the primary victims. Eliminating this cycle of violence requires the involvement of men¹, as the internal construction of masculinity shapes men's violent behavior. However, violence is often triggered by women's agency in resisting authority or demanding sufficient livelihood.²

¹ Elli N. Hayati, et.al., “‘ We No Longer Live in the Old Days’: A Qualitative Study on the Role of Masculinity and Religion for Men’s Views on Violence within Marriage in Rural Java, Indonesia,” *BMC Women’s Health*, (2014), p. 14-58.

² Dina Afrianty, “Agents for Change: Local Women’s Organizations and Domestic Violence in Indonesia,” *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde* 174, no. 1 (2018), p. 24-46. Siti Aisyah and Lyn Parker, “Problematic Conjugations: Women’s Agency, Marriage and Domestic Violence in Indonesia,” *Asian Studies Review*, (2014).

During Covid-19 pandemic crises, reduced income, job loss³, and anxiety-related stress increase the likelihood of domestic conflicts and violence.⁴ Moreover, gender-biased religious interpretations perpetuate violence by normalizing it in the name of male leadership or education of women.⁵ Marriage registrars, who are predominantly male and represent religious scholars with authority in marriage and family matters, play a crucial role in preventing violence against women within the family.

Despite various studies on violence against women, research on the involvement of men in preventing it within the family is limited. Studies often focus on women's experiences as victims,⁶ excluding men's perspectives on this issue. However, Hayati's research on masculinity sheds light on men's views on violence against women and how religious beliefs contribute to its perpetuation.⁷ Hasyim's and other's study, on the other hand, highlights the problematic nature of singular feminist social movement group activism.⁸

Therefore, this paper complements existing studies by presenting the efforts of the Rahima Association, an NGO focusing on gender and Islam issues,

³ Alimatul. dkk. Qibtiyah, “Kajian Dinamika Perubahan Di Dalam Rumah Tangga Selama Covid-19 Di 34 Propinsi Di Indonesia” (Jakarta, 2020), <https://komnasperempuan.go.id/pemetaan-kajian-prosiding-detail/eksekutif-summary-kajian-dinamika-perubahan-di-dalam-rumah-tangga-edisi-revisi>; Margarita Anatolyevna Ivchenkova, “Towards the Issue of Impact of the Self-Isolation Regime during the Coronavirus Pandemic on the Marital Conflicts’ Escalation,” *Теория и Практика Общественного Развития*, (2020).

⁴ Winda Ayu Fazraningtyas, Dini Rahmayani, and Indana Rahmah Fitriani, “Kejadian Kekerasan Pada Perempuan Selama Masa Pandemi COVID-19,” *Dinamika Kesehatan: Jurnal Kebidanan Dan Keperawatan*, (2020). Vivian Lee, “Has the Coronavirus Pandemic Created a Spike in Divorces?,” *NYI*, (2021). Ivchenkova, “Towards the Issue of Impact of the Self-Isolation Regime during the Coronavirus Pandemic on the Marital Conflicts’ Escalation.”

⁵ Hayati, et.al., *We No Longer Live in the Old Days’...*, p. 14-58.

⁶ Siti Musawwamah, “Divorcing Husbands as a Solution to Protect Women’s Dignity: A Case Study of Domestic Violence at Madura Religious Court,” *Samarah*, (2022). M. Joan McDermott and James Garofalo, “When Advocacy for Domestic Violence Victims Backfires: Types and Sources of Victim Disempowerment,” *Violence Against Women*, (2004). Babatunde Oluwayimika Popoola et al., “Engaging with People Experiencing Domestic Violence; Unresolved Problem in Ilorin,” *Cogent Social Sciences* 5, No. 1 (2019).

⁷ Hayati, *We No Longer Live in the Old Days’...*, p. 14-58.

⁸ Nur Hasyim, “Laki-Laki Sebagai Sekutu Gerakan Perempuan,” *Sawwa: Jurnal Studi Gender*, (2017). Ira Larasati, “Gerakan Aliansi Laki-Laki Baru: Membongkar Konstruksi Maskulinitas Untuk Mewujudkan Keadilan Gender,” *Journal of Politic and Government Studies*, (2019). Tinka Tabea Schubert, “Some Men. Feminist Allies and the Movement to End Violence against Women,” *Masculinities & Social Change* 6, No. 2, (2017), p. 190.

to involve male religious figures in preventing violence against women. Specifically, this paper addresses how the Rahima Association designs awareness-raising efforts involving men to prevent domestic violence, how the Religious Affairs Offices (*Kantor Urusan Agama/KUA*) internalize a gender-fair perspective, and how it impacts their attitudes and behavior in conducting their roles and functions. These aspects provide an overview of the dynamics of gender awareness-raising processes among religious figures and their impact on the reproduction of values of justice and reciprocity in conducting their roles and functions as marriage registrars.

This paper argues that involving male religious figures in preventing violence against women is essential for two reasons. First, male religious figures, represented by KUA officials in a text-based society, have a strategic role in reproducing texts in a more egalitarian and just manner, especially concerning family relations, in line with their roles and functions as religious scholars. Second, building gender-fair awareness can be internalized through the process of building knowledge from shared experiences facilitated by authoritative actors, which serves as a basis for legitimacy. This gender-fair knowledge and awareness will resonate in society through the implementation of their roles and functions.

The study is based on three years of observations of the mentoring process carried out by Rahima for the Marriage Registrar at the Office of Religious Affairs in East Lampung. The unit of analysis is marriage registrars, who play a strategic role in delivering marriage sermons, counseling, and religious lectures that influence the construction of gender relations within families institutionalized in society. In addition to observation data, interview and focus group discussion techniques were used with 24 leaders of the KUA, and document analysis was conducted to confirm the data. The collected data were sorted and coded, and subsequently displayed in tables and narrative quotes. Restatement, description, and interpretation methods were used to analyze the data, providing meaning to the processes and impacts experienced by the Marriage Registrars, forming the basis for drawing conclusions from the research results.

Rahima: Building Awareness about Islam, Gender, and Women's Rights

The Rahima Association was established on August 5th, 2000 and officially registered before a notary on September 11th, 2000. The Rahima was established from the initiative of several activists who were part of the Women's

Fiqh Study Group, the Association for the Development of Pesantren and Society (*Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat/P3M*). The founding figures of Rahima were scholars, religious leaders, and activists who were involved in women's issues. Hussein Muhammad, Sinta Nuriyah Abdurrahman Wahid, Saparinah Sadli, Syafiq Hasyim, Farha Ciciek, Azyumardi Azra, and AD Eridani are some names who actively participated in the birth of Rahima.⁹

Distinctively, Rahima is a non-governmental organization (NGO) that focuses on issues related to Islam, gender, and women's rights. This spirit is embodied in the vision of "Realizing a culture and social structure of justice characterized by the fulfillment of women's rights as human rights." This vision is the soul of the Rahima association in its work, explicitly mentioned as Rahima's primary mission to achieve (1) Recognition of female ulama authority, and (2) The ability of Rahima's networks to achieve social change.¹⁰

Based on the historical aspect of Rahima's birth, its work is related to what P3M had previously done through the Women's Fiqh Study Group.¹¹ Rahima adopted and developed critical study models of religious texts related to women's issues that are spread across various classical Islamic texts. These critical studies are conducted to make these texts more contextual in addressing contemporary issues. Rinaldo referred to Rahima as a pious critical agency characterized by activism and public involvement in interpreting religious texts for justice and gender equality. Additionally, Rahima also shows religious expressions that respect differences and remain consistent in making Islam a source of strength to realize social justice.¹² Nina Nurmila showed that both Rahima and Fahmina Institute developed Islamic studies with a feminist

⁹ Redaksi, "Tentang Rahima," Swara Rahima, n.d., <https://swarahima.com/tentang-rahima/>.

¹⁰ Redaksi, "Tentang Rahima," Swara Rahima, n.d.; Nor Ismah, "Destabilising Male Domination: Building Community-Based Authority among Indonesian Female Ulama," *Asian Studies Review*, (2016).

¹¹ Ismah, "Destabilising Male Domination: Building Community-Based Authority among Indonesian Female Ulama"; Pera & Andi Nur Hamzah Sopariyanti, *Madrasah Rahima Untuk Tokoh Agama: Upaya Penghapusan Kekerasan Berbasis Gender*, ed. Ahmad Thohir (Jakarta: Rahima, 2020).

¹² Jane Monnig Atkinson, "Gender and Islam in Southeast Asia: Women's Rights Movements, Religious Resurgence, and Local Traditions Ed. by Susanne Schröter," *Indonesia*, (2019).

approach reflected in the publications of these two organizations.¹³ These findings affirm Rahima's positioning as an NGO that consistently conducts critical studies of religious texts from the beginning to remain contextual and beneficial for social justice, especially for women.

Rahima's consistency can be traced through its programs implemented, both related to the recognition of female ulama and strengthening of Rahima's networks in the regions to achieve social change. For these two main missions, Rahima focuses its programs on three areas simultaneously: seeking more emancipatory and just interpretations, campaigning for gender equality ideas, and advocating for women's rights. These three things are performed by involving participating female ulama as part of life who contribute to reinterpreting classical Islamic texts with their distinctive perspectives and experiences.¹⁴

Since its establishment in 2000 until 2022, Rahima has had more than 1,000 partners from various community groups in 12 provinces. Rahima's partners include female and male ulama, Islamic teachers, lecturers, KUA officials, *majelis taklim* communities, madrasah students as well as pesantren's who are involved and become the target of Rahima's programs. Rahima's partners or networks are intermediary groups that conduct education, socialization, and mentoring work in their respective communities.¹⁵

Engaging Men in Domestic Violence Prevention Effort Program

Being inspired by the idea of engaging men in efforts to prevent domestic violence (referred to as the Male Engagement Program), Rahima sought to implement a program that would strengthen the role and function of KUA leaders in building peaceful families. This program is part of Rahima's educational approach, in addition to their dissemination of information, to realize a culture and structure that is just.¹⁶ Rahima believes that a factor perpetuating violence against women within the family context is the interpretation of religious teachings that is continually reproduced by religious

¹³ Nina Nurmila, “New Grounded Feminist Approach to Islam in Indonesia: A Textual Analysis of Rahima and Fahmina’s Publications,” *Journal of Asian Social Science Research*, (2020), p. 11.

¹⁴ Ismah, “Destabilising Male Domination: Building Community-Based Authority among Indonesian Female Ulama.”

¹⁵ Redaksi, “Tentang Rahima,” n.d.

¹⁶ Sopariyanti, *Madrasah Rahima Untuk Tokoh Agama: Upaya Penghapusan Kekerasan Berbasis Gender*.

leaders.¹⁷ Regarding the role and function of KUA leaders, the reproduction of these interpretations that can perpetuate injustice and violence against women occurs during pre-marital courses, marriage advice (*khutbah nikah*), and counselling sessions. Thus, to achieve family resilience, the KUA leaders who have a gender-just perspective in understanding the relationship between men and women is seen as highly important and strategic.

The Male Engagement Program is one of Rahima's flagship programs in conducting Women Ulama Cadre development in various regions of Indonesia. The effort to sow more women ulama cadres is based on the fact that women have limited access and space to participate.¹⁸ The seeding process occurs organically from critical and transformative forums for religious texts related to women, humanity, nationality, and global issues.¹⁹ Starting with the training of female ulama cadres, the program also developed the training of male ulama by building sensitivity toward issues of equality and justice. The phenomenon of male ulama who has a perspective of justice and gender equality is also a global phenomenon found in many regions.²⁰ Male ulama who become friends with female ulama in upholding justice and welfare.²¹ The profiling of these male

¹⁷ Rahima, “Kerangka Acuan Kerja (KAK) ‘Pencegahan Kekerasan Berbasis Gender Melalui Pelibatan Tokoh Kepala KUA’” (Bandar Lampung, 2018).

¹⁸ Husein Muhammad, *Perempuan Ulama Di Atas Panggung Sejarah*, ed. Yanuar Arifin, I (Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2020). Eridani, AD, *Merintis Keulamaan Untuk Kemanusiaan: Profil Kader Ulama Perempuan Rahima*, ed. Nor Ismah (Jakarta: Penerbit Rahima, 2014). Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, *Metodologi Fatwa KUPI: Pokok-Pokok Pikiran Musyawarah Keagamaan Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia*, ed. Marzuki Wahid (Cirebon: Fahmina Institute, 2022); Paridah Napilah, Dadang Kuswana, and Bambang Qomaruzzaman, “Pandangan Masyarakat Tentang Keulamaan Perempuan,” *Hanifiya: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama*, (2021).

¹⁹ Kodir, *Metodologi Fatwa KUPI: Pokok-Pokok Pikiran Musyawarah Keagamaan Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia*; dkk. Yafie, Helmi Ali, *Modul Pengkaderan Ulama Perempuan Perspektif Kesetaraan*, ed. AD Eridani (Jakarta: Rahima, 2011); Eridani, AD, *Merintis Keulamaan Untuk Kemanusiaan: Profil Kader Ulama Perempuan Rahima*.

²⁰ Adis Duderija, “Contemporary Muslim Male Reformist Thought and Gender Equality Affirmative Interpretations of Islam,” *Feminist Theology*, (2020). Faizatun Khasanah, “Awareness on Islamic Feminism Learning From Gus Dur and Husein Muhammad,” *Al-Tahrir: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam*, 2019.

²¹ Kodir, *Metodologi Fatwa KUPI: Pokok-Pokok Pikiran Musyawarah Keagamaan Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia*. Hasyim, “Laki-Laki Sebagai Sekutu Gerakan Perempuan.”

ulama is documented as female ulama, who in some studies are referred to as feminist Muslims²² or "new men".²³

Rahima designed the Male Engagement Program for KUA leaders and village chiefs in East Lampung Regency for 3 years (2018-2020) through education, capacity building, and strategy. The program design, called "Rahima Madrasah for Religious Leaders," is integrated into the role and function of KUA in providing services and guidance for peaceful families according to the Ministry of Religion Regulation No. 34 of 2016.²⁴ In a broader context, this program is part of the International Rutgers WPF Institution's effort to prevent violence through individual, community, institutional, and psychological interventions. Rahima's intervention activities are in the institutional realm, carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Religion (KUA). While other forms of intervention are carried out by other NGOs such as the Damar Advocacy Institute, Rifka Annisa, and the Pulih Foundation.²⁵ This means that Rahima's Male Engagement Program is not a standalone activity but part of prevention program carried out jointly with other institutions with different targets and focuses.

Madrasah Rahima trains religious leaders in social awareness using an adult education methodology, with a curriculum that includes gender analysis, reproductive health, human rights and women's rights, the goal and universal values of Islam (*maqāṣid shari'āh*), and transformative methods of interpretation. These topics are framed within the context of *Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin*, an approach that emphasizes justice and benefits for both men and women. The 24 district Islamic officials and village leaders who participated in

²² Ulfah Zakiyah, "Posisi Pemikiran Feminis Faqihuddin Dalam Peta Studi Islam Kontemporer," *The International Journal of Pegon: Islam Nusantara Civilization* 4, No. 02 (2020), p. 134–35. Shabana Mir, "Mobilizing Piety: Islam and Feminism in Indonesia," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, (2015).

²³ Febi Rizki Ramadhan, "Kekerasan Bisa Dimaknai Berbeda-Beda': Ragam Pemaknaan Atas Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan Dalam Praktik Gerakan Sosial Aliansi Laki-Laki Baru," *Paradigma, Jurnal Kajian Budaya* 7, no. 2 (2018), p. 103. Elisabeth Windy Annesia Simaibang, Atwar Bajari, "Representasi Male Feminist Oleh Aliansi Laki-Laki Baru Di Media Sosial," *Linimasa: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, (2019). Eni Maryani, Preciosa Alnashava Janitra, and Detta Rahmawan, "'Aliansi Laki-Laki Baru': The Role of Social Media in Promoting Gender Equality in Indonesia," *SALASIKA: Indonesian Journal of Gender, Women, Child, and Social Inclusion's Studies*, (2018).

²⁴ Sopariyanti, *Madrasah Rahima Untuk Tokoh Agama: Upaya Penghapusan Kekerasan Berbasis Gender*.

²⁵ AD Eridani, "Focus Group Discussion Dengan Kepala KUA Lampung Timur" (n.d.).

this program are religious leaders who have authority in interpreting religious teachings and are influential in promoting gender-equitable religious understanding within their communities and society.

The involvement of male leaders of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in East Lampung is described in the following table.

Table 1: Forms of Activities and Actions in The Mentoring Program

Years	Activities	Approaches	Purposes
2018	Rapid Self-Assesment	Focus Group Discussions & Interviews	Mapping of issues and religious understanding of violence, and relationships in the family
	Training of Trainers for Sakinah Family	Training	Bringing out the vocal point of the Sakinah family
2019	Preparation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Mutual Respect in marriage sermons	Focus Group Discussion	Standardization of delivering marriage sermons and marriage counseling in a participatory manner
	Short Circle Discussion on the Approach of Mubadalah and Genuine Justice	Focus Group Discussion	Building a perspective of justice and mutualism and insert it into the implementation of the roles and tasks of the head of the Office of Religious Affairs.
2020	Strengthening the Network for Addressing Family Issues During the Covid-19 Pandemic	Focus Group Discussion	Sharing of experiences in conducting the duties and functions of the head of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) during the pandemic
	Profile of KUA	Modeling	Documenting the profile of

	Heads in Swara Rahima Magazine		the transformed KUA.
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Data Source: Terms of Reference and minutes of Activities to involvement of male leaders of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in East Lampung

For three years, there were six activities carried out to build knowledge, strengthen the capacity, develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and document KUA figures or institutions with a gender justice perspective. The program was facilitated by the Rahima team, which has almost 20 years of experience in the issue of Islam and women's rights. Helmi Ali, Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, Nur Rofiah, AD Eridani, and Pera Soparianti were Rahima facilitators who processed the journey of involving male religious figures in preventing gender-based violence. They are people who have expertise in gender and Islamic studies as well as experience in advocating for justice and equality. This learning process positions religious figures not as "empty vessels" to be filled with knowledge, but as people who have knowledge and capacity and are given a new perspective in seeing reality. They were involved in the learning process with action and reflection cycles: experiencing, expressing, analyzing, and concluding. Each participant was positioned as a subject of education to reproduce knowledge based on experiences reflected with a *mubadalah* perspective, genuine justice within the framework of *Islam rahmatan lil alamin*.

Acceptance of KUA Leaders toward Knowledge and Values of Gender Justice in A Mentoring Program

“Wait and see” is a phrase that best represents the participants' impression of the male engagement program by Rahima which was identified as an organization with a "negative" label of being a "project-seeking". During the initial meeting, Rahima was viewed by the program participants as an active gender activism or a Western feminist movement without a basis in Islam.²⁶ This impression became a high wall that Rahima had to break through, given that the movement targeted the privilege of male authority, while the participants were male religious figures with religious and state authority. Some participants expressed resistance to the women's emancipation and gender movement during the initial FGD in 2018.

²⁶ Rahima, “Notulensi FGD Dengan KUA Lampung Timur” (Bandar Lampung, 2018).

Not only did some participants show subtle rejection and suspicion, but they also demonstrated a passive attitude in participating in capacity-building activities. Attending the forum was merely part of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' duties. Some participants also appeared unenthusiastic in discussions or group work. One participant stated, "We just accept it if someone joins because we think maybe there will be enlightenment or new things there" (R. 3). Responses from other participants also confirmed that gender equality and domestic violence issues were already commonly heard before from their lecturers during their studies or social institutions that advocate for them. Therefore, the program was seen as ordinary and nothing new.

However, in the subsequent development during the *Mubadalah* session, the participants began to affirm that Rahima was distinctive. The offer of the *Mubadalah* concept deeply rooted in the tradition of religious texts, aroused awareness of equality and interdependence as human beings. *Mubadalah* refers to the primary sources of the Quran, hadiths, and the authoritative references, making it a suitable guide for life. Additionally, the concept of *Mubadalah* was presented by Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, a male scholar who fairly advocate for women without negating men. His expertise in mastering classical texts was a unique attraction that made the participants accept *Mubadalah* as a new knowledge and perspective that could be used in their duties. The politeness in conveying ideas with the reason of interdependence became the turning point for the program participants' reception, who were initially apathetic, passive, and even tended to reject the program, becoming enthusiastic and positively responding. The statements of the KUA heads show the diversity of responses in receiving the idea of the Male Engagement Program.

Table 2: The Responses of Participants Toward the Support Activities

Statement	Forum	Coding
The first FGD session with 10 KUA participants occurred in July 2018 at the Auditorium of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in East Lampung. At the beginning of the session, the discussion was very difficult. Many participants expressed grievances	FGD 2018	Resistance

because Rahima was seen as a women's emancipation movement. (R.3) ²⁷		
Ladies and gentlemen, let me introduce Rahima, an NGO. It used to be referred to as an NGO, a non-governmental organization, but now when people talk about NGOs, the connotation is negative. I myself am an alumnus of UNFPA, PKBI, and Acil NGOs. When I entered the bureaucracy and encountered some NGOs, I realized that our way of thinking did not match. (R.1)	Opening Remarks at the 2018 FGD	Suspicion
We feel that Rahima is our wake-up call regarding these two issues - gender equality and eradicating domestic violence, even though we have heard about them from other activists or organizations before. (R.2)	FGD forum in June 2021	Indifferent
First, I was admittedly skeptical about Rahima and their emphasis on gender equality. I couldnot help but wonder where such a push might ultimately lead us.	Monitoring and evaluations in 2020	Suspicion
Initially, we had reservations about the feminist movement that advocated for gender equality. During our discussion at the Ministry of Religious Affairs, we felt a sense of suspicion. However, our doubts were dispelled after we reconvened at the Grand Hotel and had more in-depth conversations. (R.4)	Monitoring and evaluations in 2020	Acceptance
I warmly welcome Rahima's presence as its programs have significantly supported my duties at the Sekampung Sub-district KUA. The benefits of its programs are truly felt by the community members who have begun building their households. Building a successful household requires mutual completion and perfection between husband	FGD forum in June 2021	Acceptance

²⁷ Focus Group Discussion with KUA in East Lampung, 2018.

<p>and wife, and a good knowledge base to achieve a family that embodies peace, love, and mercy. The presence of Rahima has assisted us in expanding our knowledge and insights, providing us with the necessary tools to conduct our duties effectively. (R.7)²⁸</p>		
<p>Rahima has influenced the mindset of the leader of the KUA regarding gender equality. Before being introduced to Rahima, I was somewhat wary of the concept of gender equality. However, after gaining enlightenment, I came to realize that the equality that Islam envisions is the mutual strengthening of husband and wife as servants of Allah. (R. 8)</p>	<p>FGD forum in June 2021</p>	<p>Acceptance</p>
<p>Initially, I was skeptical about the concept of gender equality, but my perspective shifted after attending Rahima's activities. The competent speakers who shared their knowledge on the topic and their references to the Qur'an, Hadith, and trusted sources convinced me to be more open-minded. As a result, I became enlightened on the matter and now understand its importance. (R. 9)²⁹</p>	<p>FGD forum in June 2021</p>	<p>Acceptance</p>

Data Source: Minutes of Rahima’s Activities in East-Lampung

The interview excerpts above reveal a diverse range of attitudes and responses toward the male engagement program. Overall, the article confirms previous research that patriarchy remains a serious problem in Lampung, especially among religious leaders in East Lampung.³⁰ Therefore, the initial

²⁸ Focus Group Discussion with KUA in East Lampung, 2021.

²⁹ Focus Group Discussion with KUA in East Lampung, 2021.

³⁰ Nancy Dela Octora, “Potret Relasi Gender Pada Keluarga Ulun Lappung (Tinjauan Etnologi),” *SETARA: Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Anak* 1, No. 2 (2020), p. 43–62. Rina Martiara, *Nilai Dan Norma Budaya Lampung Dalam Sudut Pandang Strukturalisme* (Yogyakarta: Badan Penerbit ISI Yogyakarta, 2012). Mufliha Wijayati, “Punishing Women: Diskriminasi Terhadap Perempuan Yang Mengajukan Cerai Di Pengadilan Agama Indonesia,” in *Islam Indonesia:*

attitudes of officials that tend to be resistant, distant, suspicious, indifferent, and wait-and-see reflect patriarchal attitudes that are threatened by gender discourse and women's emancipation. Patriarchal attitudes among the ulama in this region are supported by an understanding of religious texts that tend to be gender-biased and misogynistic.

Therefore, Rahima's strategy of rereading and reproducing interpretations of texts in the Family Sakinah Trainer of Trainers program is quite effective. In this program, religious texts that have the potential for gender bias are reread with a new perspective: *mubadalah*. The use of *mubadalah*, rather than gender or feminism, can reduce the resistance of program participants. Because the concept of *mubadalah* is derived from religious texts, the Quran, al-Hadith, and the authoritative references. Thus, the gender justice and equality advocated are not derived from the West but from the heart of the Islamic texts themselves. This is what makes participants' suspicions slowly disappear.

In the patriarchal spectrum, inviting male speakers is also a savvy strategy. Moreover, the male speakers are very authoritative in their mastery of classical religious texts, with a strong religious education background. This can reduce participants' resistance. If the speaker invited is a woman, no matter how strong her authority and capacity for knowledge, resistance still exists because in the eyes of patriarchal participants, there seems to be an effort from another gender to undermine the comfort they have enjoyed.

In addition to ideological aspects, Rahima's program targets practical aspects such as preparing wedding sermons and family trainers of trainers. Such technical strengthening programs directly contribute to the effectiveness of KUA officials' performance. Therefore, the relative acceptance of participants is positive because it supports their performance.

The New Men: The Transformation of Knowledge, Attitudes, and Policies among Marriage Registrars

This study demonstrates the positive response of male engagement program participants, showing a shift in their knowledge, attitudes, and

Dialektika Agama, Budaya, Dan Gender, ed. Greg & Sally White Fealy, 1st ed. (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2020), p. XX + 296; Siti Zulaikha, Muhamad Nasrudin, and Enny Puji Lestari, “Dialectic of Public Sphere vs Private Sphere in Millennial Families in Lampung Customary Law Community,” *Samarah*, (2021). Rina Martiara, *Cangget: Identitas Kultural Lampung Sebagai Bagian Dari Keragaman Budaya Indonesia*, Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta, 2014.

behavior, as well as innovation and policy toward social change. At the level of knowledge, religious understanding of family relationships potentially discriminates against women. Local-level religious figures, such as marriage registrars, generally view and accept violent practices as normal. In a meeting in 2018, for example, several statements were made that reflected gender bias views. After attending several discussions in the mentoring program, a shift in knowledge is clear in their perspective and understanding of religious texts.

Table 3: Shifts in The Perspectives of Participants Receiving Supporting Program

Statements in the 2018 FGD	Statements in 2019-2021 FGDs	Coding
One way to promote household harmony is by preparing a glass of water well for the husband when he comes home from work (R11).	Sometimes, whether acknowledged or not, men can be selfish in wanting to be served and respected, among other things. However, after participating in the Rahima program, mutual respect in households increased. Both parties should have a sense of responsibility in the household. For instance, raising children is not just the responsibility of the wife, but also the husband's. ³¹	The harmony of a household depends on the service of women toward men
It is possible that domestic violence can also be caused by women. The wife can become a provoker leading to domestic violence. For example, she may become jealous if her husband works outside and has many female colleagues or acquaintances, leading to a	In any form, whether physical, verbal, or psychological, domestic violence cannot be justified for any reason. In a household, issues can be resolved through discussion. If the husband and wife are unable to resolve it, then it is best to involve a third party to help. ³²	Trigger of violence and its resolution

³¹ Focus Group Discussion with KUA in East Lampung, 2019.

³² Focus Group Discussion with KUA in East Lampung, 2021

<p>misunderstanding that can make the husband angry.</p>		
<p>There are women who are not sensitive, even after being scolded they do not understand and end up sleeping separately from their husbands. They still donot understand when their husband is angry. Later, when they are physically abused, they report it as violence.</p>	<p>In cases where divorce is precipitated by instances of violence, it is crucial to discern whether such violence is attributable to occasional lapses or ingrained patterns of behavior. While divorce may be deemed justifiable in such instances, it is imperative that this process be guided by mediation and carefully orchestrated stages of conflict resolution. In cases where impasse is reached, divorce on grounds of violence may be considered an acceptable recourse. Nevertheless, it is advisable to take proactive measures to prevent such scenarios from arising.³³</p>	<p>Trigger of violence and its resolution</p>
<p>With respect to the verse that designates men as leaders over women, it is based on the premise that men possess physical and cognitive advantages. While men tend to rely on logic, women tend to rely on emotions. This partly explains why there are more male professors in certain fields. (MF)³⁴</p>	<p>In pre-Islamic times (<i>jahiliyah</i>), women were dehumanized and regarded as inferior to men. Islam, however, established the fundamental equality of men and women, and affirmed that both can attain salvation. In Islam, men and women are considered as equal servants of Allah, with no inherent subordination of women to men, and both are entitled to the same basic human rights. (RS)³⁵</p>	<p>The exercise of male leadership over women</p>
<p>From my perspective, An Nisa verse 34 presents an unequivocal statement</p>	<p>Surah Al-Hujurat teaches us that Allah has designed men and women with distinct characteristics. As men,</p>	<p>The exercise of male</p>

³³ Focus Group Discussion with KUA in East Lampung, 2021.

³⁴ Interview with MF, KUA in East Lampung, 2020.

³⁵ Interview with RS, KUA in East Lampung, 2020.

<p>regarding the role of men as imams, and any contravening interpretation would disrupt the natural order. I welcome additional insights from my colleagues on this matter. (R 17)</p>	<p>it is incumbent upon us to appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of women, but this does not entail an absolute mandate for us to exercise unilateral authority within the family (SBH).³⁶</p>	<p>leadership over women</p>
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Data Source: Minutes of Rahima Activities in East-Lampung, 2021.

The aforementioned shift in understanding and perspective is not only evident in verbal statements but also manifested in attitudes and behaviors. The attitude of being a little king who commands and is served within the family has shifted toward one of protection and nurturing. The habit of helping with domestic chores out of pity has transformed into an awareness that housework is a shared responsibility, although some individuals still choose to select certain tasks based on situational circumstances. Personal changes are still confronted by the prevailing views and cultural values staunchly held by society. Men who perform domestic work are perceived as inferior, and their emasculation is viewed as shameful. Regarding the role distribution, Ende, a participant in the focus group discussion, stated, "It's not a problem for me to do household chores, it is just that it does not suit me because of feminist reasons. It was not until I heard the *mubadalah* that I found peace. It's about cooperation and happiness together."

The *mubadalah* perspective has a significant impact on the implementation of duties and functions as employees of the Office of Religious Affairs. Several innovations have been introduced by KUA officials, particularly in the pre-marriage course (*Suscatin*)/marriage guidance (*Bimbingan Perkawinan*) program, orientation of marriage sermon material, and mutual agreement policies. The knowledge and perspectives gained during the mentoring process serve as a foundation to optimize the provision of material with a *mubadalah* perspective to prospective brides and grooms during the *Suscatin*/binwin phase. Adult learning strategies introduced in the Rahima program are duplicated by KUA officials in providing marriage guidance. The same approach is adopted in delivering marriage sermons. After jointly drafting

³⁶Interview with SBH, KUA in East Lampung, 2019.

a marriage sermon standard operating procedure based on shared experiences and mubadalah-based sermon manuscripts during the mentoring process, this document has become an essential instrument that serves as a reference for delivering marriage sermons.³⁷

The signing of a mutual agreement by husband and wife after the marriage ceremony is an innovation introduced by KUA Batanghari Lampung Timur, Indonesia. This mutual agreement is a document of mutual understanding and promise to love, care, and support each other in their married life. The agreement prevents violence in resolving any problems that arise, in contrast to the ta'lik talak agreement, which involves negative agreement clauses. The substance of the agreement is conveyed during the *Suscatin/binwin* phase. The agreement is jointly ratified by the couple in a post-marriage ceremony gathering. Then, both parties sign the agreement in the presence of the Marriage Registrar. Three copies of the agreement were created: one for each spouse and one for KUA's archives. The majority of couples welcome this agreement with open arms, and there is no one who rejects it. In fact, they take a group photo while reading and displaying the agreement. The community's response is also excellent due to the novelty and appeal of this ceremony.

In terms of preventing violence, efforts to engage men have not been as extensive compared with those aimed at raising awareness and building capacity among women as victims. However, studies on masculinity conducted by James Messerschmidt (1993) and others have confirmed that violence tends to be associated with the potential inherent in men to demonstrate their masculinity when other resources, such as decent work or livelihoods, are unavailable.³⁸ Various research findings have also established a link between traditional patriarchal masculinity and acts of violence.³⁹ Although masculinity is not

³⁷ Rahima, “Notulensi FGD Dengan KUA Lampung Timur.” Mursyid Djawas, et.al., “Creating Family Resilience in Indonesia: A Study of Marriage Guidance Program in Aceh and South Sumatera,” *Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum dan Pranata Sosial* 17, No. 1 (2022), p. 299–324.

³⁸ Madinah Nabukeera, “Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) during Novel Covid-19 Lock-down in Uganda,” *Journal of Adult Protection*, (2020). Ha Song Vu et al., “Divorce in the Context of Domestic Violence against Women in Vietnam,” *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, (2014). Tinyiko Sam Maluleke and Sarojini Nadar, “Breaking the Covenant of Violence against Women,” *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, No. 114 (2002), p. 5. <http://search.proquest.com/openview/6cfdc430521e57e4549a0d1a6c430878/1?pq-origsite=gscholar>.

³⁹ Linda Mshweshwe, “Understanding Domestic Violence: Masculinity, Culture, Traditions,” *Heliyon*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e05334>; Veysel Bozkurt,

always synonymous with men⁴⁰, these research findings underscore the importance of involving men in efforts to prevent and eliminate violence against women.

The success of male engagement programs in gender-based violence prevention has been documented in various studies. For instance, the emergence of the new male alliance movement in Indonesia has had a positive influence on transforming men's attitudes and behaviors toward gender equality.⁴¹ The movement relies on collectivism through focal points in communities and leverages digital media to educate members on the significance of male participation in achieving gender justice.⁴² Although masculinity is not always synonymous with men, these research findings underscore the crucial role of male involvement in efforts to prevent and eliminate violence against women. According to studies conducted by William⁴³ and Morris⁴⁴, interventions targeting men as subjects of gender-based violence prevention efforts are recommended to be adapted and modified according to social changes in the community. This highlights the importance of male engagement in promoting gender justice and combating violence against women.

Safak Tartanoglu, and Glenn Dawes, “Masculinity and Violence: Sex Roles and Violence Endorsement among University Students,” *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, (2015). Edward W. Morris and Kathleen Ratajczak, “Critical Masculinity Studies and Research on Violence Against Women: An Assessment of Past Scholarship and Future Directions,” *Violence Against Women*, (2019). Popoola et al., “Engaging with People Experiencing Domestic Violence; Unresolved Problem in Ilorin.”

⁴⁰ Morris and Ratajczak, “Critical Masculinity Studies and Research on Violence Against Women: An Assessment of Past Scholarship and Future Directions.”

⁴¹ Hasyim, “Laki-Laki Sebagai Sekutu Gerakan Perempuan”; Febi Rizki Ramadhan, “Kekerasan Itu Katarsis Dari Patriarki!”: Resistensi Pada Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan Dalam Praktik Gerakan Sosial Aliansi Laki-Laki Baru,” *Antropologi Indonesia*, (2018)..

⁴² Larasati, “Gerakan Aliansi Laki-Laki Baru: Membongkar Konstruksi Maskulinitas Untuk Mewujudkan Keadilan Gender”; Maryani, Janitra, and Rahmawan, “Aliansi Laki-Laki Baru’: The Role of Social Media in Promoting Gender Equality in Indonesia”; Atwar Bajari, “Representasi Male Feminist Oleh Aliansi Laki-Laki Baru Di Media Sosial.”

⁴³ Todd Powell-Williams, Allison Foley, and Kim Davies, ““So I Won’t Go to Jail’: Year Two of a PROMUNDO-Adapted Program to Eradicate Gender-Based Violence,” *HSE Social and Education History*, (2020).

⁴⁴ Morris and Ratajczak, “Critical Masculinity Studies and Research on Violence Against Women: An Assessment of Past Scholarship and Future Directions.”

Conclusion

The involvement of male religious scholars in preventing violence initially encountered resistance due to the patriarchal privileges enjoyed by men. The Office of Religious Affairs' leaders harbored deeply entrenched prejudices against gender justice discourse and Western feminism, posing a formidable challenge to the implementation of such programs. However, a strategic approach that employs patriarchal logic, based on religious texts, and features the reproduction of authoritative male speakers successfully shifted their resistance. This acceptance serves as a crucial foundation for preventing violence against women and promotes a more equitable and just view of the relationship between genders. It is imperative to note that patriarchy remains a significant obstacle in Indonesia, particularly in Lampung. Thus, engaging men in the process of reproducing religious texts that promote gender equality is crucial. Employing a special strategy that utilizes patriarchal logic is also essential to minimize resistance. The paradigm shift among the leaders of the Office of Religious Affairs has been gradual and challenging, as patriarchy is deeply ingrained in their thinking. Nonetheless, they have started to recognize and adopt a more reciprocal perspective, carefully selecting their words to avoid representing patriarchy and injustice. It is paramount to continue this program and preferably, through state management on a more comprehensive and inclusive scale, involving authoritative male and female speakers to provide perspectives from both sides. This approach will ensure that the program is more effective in challenging the patriarchal system in Indonesia, leading to a more equal and just society. It is important for this article to be disseminated as a best practice that can be duplicated and adapted in other region or community, according to the context of the problems and resources each region has.

Acknowledgment

The authors expressed an appreciation to the Rahima Association and the "new men" in East Lampung for their willingness to be critical friends in the process of mentoring and research. The author also thanks the Research and Development Agency for Religious Guidance and Services, the Research and Development and Training Agency, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia for their support in making this research possible.

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