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Knitting Reciprocity and Communality: Countering the Privatization of Family in Bimanese Muslim Local Marriage of Eastern Indonesia

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Abstract

This article aims to introduce two distinctive forms of marriage recognized by Bimanese Muslims in West Nusa Tenggara, *nika taho* (good marriage) and *nika iha* (bad marriage), to outline how traditional marriages demonstrate the value of reciprocity and collectiveness. Arranging marriage (parental choice) and love marriage (self-choice), two types of marriage generally known in the existing literature, are both practiced by the Bimanese with additional essential requirements: getting permission from parents and relatives and giving consent by the couple to be. Based on ethnographic research conducted in 2017, a series of visits in 2021-2022, and the theory of marriage as "a sequence, place-based, practical actions" by Catherine Allerton, this article argues that marriage for the Bimanese is a meeting point of private intimacy and public activity (*rawi rasa*), which necessitates public interest in fostering the well-being of the family. This article underlines the interdependence of privacy and the social values of family and marriage lives, which is significant in countering a current state of affairs called the privatization of family, which is simultaneously practiced by the Bimanese along with the communality of marriage tradition. This opposite trend, unfortunately, is often used as a reason to reject the transformation and reform of family laws that emphasize public interests, such as the maturation of the age of marriage and the elimination of domestic violence against women. This article suggests that the value of communality and interconnectedness should go both ways, with public affairs influencing the institution of marriage and supporting families to fulfill their functions, while families accept and perform their social responsibilities in realizing the public good.

[*Artikel ini memperkenalkan dua bentuk pernikahan yang dipraktikkan oleh masyarakat Muslim Bima di Nusa Tenggara Barat:* nika taho *(pernikahan yang baik) dan* nika iha *(pernikahan yang buruk), untuk menunjukkan nilai-nilai kesalingan dan kolektivitas dalam tradisi pernikahan mereka. Baik perjodohan (pilihan orang tua) maupun pernikahan atas dasar cinta (pilihan sendiri), seperti yang biasa dibahas dalam literatur, dipraktikkan oleh Muslim Bima dengan menambah dua persyaratan yang esensial: mendapatkan izin dari orang tua dan kerabat dan menerima persetujuan dari pasangan yang akan menikah. Berdasarkan penelitian etnografi yang dilakukan pada tahun 2017, serangkaian kunjungan pada tahun 2021-2022, dan merujuk teori Catherine Allerton tentang pernikahan sebagai "rangkaian tindakan praktis berbasis tempat", artikel ini berargumen bahwa pernikahan bagi Muslim Bima berfungsi sebagai titik temu antara keintiman privat dan aktivitas publik* (rawi rasa)*, di mana kepentingan publik diperlukan untuk mendukung kebaikan*

bagi keluarga. Artikel ini menggarisbawahi saling ketergantungan antara nilai privasi dan sosial dalam konteks keluarga dan pernikahan, yang berfungsi signifikan dalam melawan tren privatisasi keluarga dewasa ini. Tren privatisasi, walaupun masih dipraktikkan bersamaan dengan komunalitas pada sisi tertentu dari tradisi pernikahan, sering dijadikan sebagai alasan untuk menolak transformasi dan reformasi hukum keluarga yang menekankan kepentingan publik, seperti menaikkan usia legal pernikahan dan penghapusan kekerasan dalam rumah tangga terhadap perempuan. Artikel ini menyarankan agar nilai-nilai komunalitas dan kesalingan harus berjalan dua arah: urusan publik selayaknya mempengaruhi institusi pernikahan dan mendukung keluarga dalam memenuhi fungsinya, sementara keluarga sepatutnya menerima dan menjalankan tanggung jawab sosial mereka dalam mewujudkan kebaikan publik.]

Keywords: Bimanese Muslims, Communality, Family Privacy, Reciprocity, Traditional Marriage.

Introduction

Anthropologists' works on marriage topic have always been linked to issues of kinship and alliances.[1] It indicates that marriage and family are indeed institutions that form togetherness between the two parties involved and their extended families. A universal social institution is the family. According to a classical viewpoint, the features that make up a family are that its members must live together, participate in various activities together, provide the resources needed for survival, and have offspring. However, during the second half of the 20th century, there were significant shifts in the way that people saw families. Still, the family's social functions have largely not changed despite these structural changes.[2] Relationships in marriage also cannot be separated from the context and situation in which the marriage occurs. Allerton states that "*relations of marriage can be understood not simply as a set of rules and classifications, but as a sequence of place-based, practical actions*."[3] This article aims to see how marriage becomes an expression of "placed-based practical actions," as suggested by Allerton, particularly on the value of communality and reciprocity, including the possibility of those values being maintained as a counter-reaction to the phenomenon of the privatization of family life that has also emerged among Bima communities in the last decade.

The "privatization of family life" refers to the increasing tendency for families to retreat into private spheres, with diminished engagement in public or community life. This phenomenon has been observed and discussed by sociologists and family researchers in recent decades. The privatization of family life trend has been attributed to various factors, including the rise of individualism, the pursuit of privacy and autonomy, and the changing dynamics of work and leisure.[4] As families become more insular and self-contained, there is

1 See: F. A. E. Van Wouden, *Types of Social Structure in Eastern Indonesia* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1968); James J. Fox and Monni Adams, eds., *The Flow of Life: Essays on Eastern Indonesia*, Harvard Studies in Cultural Anthropology 2 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1980); Rodney Needham, "1 Principles and Variations in the Structure of Sumbanese Society," in *The Flow of Life*, ed. James J. Fox (Harvard University Press, 1980), 21–47.

2 Ionut Anastasiu, "The Social Functions of the Family," *Euromentor Journal* 3, no. 2 (2012): 1–7.

3 Catherine Allerton, "The Path of Marriage; Journeys and Transformations in Manggarai, Eastern Indonesia," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia* 160, no. 2–3 (2004): 340.

4 Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: Knopf, 1977), 87–95.

a risk of social isolation and a weakening of community ties. It can negatively impact both individual well-being and societal cohesion.[5] This trend also occurs in Bimanese society, although they generally maintain the communal value of marriage tradition, which is reflected in the process and implementation of marriage. However, after the family is formed, some aspects of family life are considered private, which often contradicts the public rules on realizing the family as the smallest social institution that determines the more desirable condition of wider social life.[6]

One of the consequences of this privatization is the potential erosion of social capital, which refers to the networks, norms, and trust that facilitate cooperation and collective action within a community.[7] When families are disconnected from their broader social networks, it can become more challenging to maintain strong bonds and shared values, potentially leading to a fragmentation of society.[8] In Bima, this trend of family privatization can be seen in the decline of social control over family life in the last decades.[9] In the past, mutual care of children could be done by close family members and even neighbors, but now, the care of children is the sole business of the nuclear family, especially the mother. It has positive implications, such as fewer opinions affecting children's development, but it also results in reducing social bonding and incrementing mutual indifference between social groups and families.[10] Moreover, the privatization of family life may contribute to narrowing perspectives and experiences as families become more insular and less exposed to diverse viewpoints and cultural influences.[11] It can perpetuate social inequalities and limit opportunities for personal growth and understanding.

For Lies Marcoes, the strict separation between public and private in the context of marriage is just an imaginary line that has worsened the condition of women and gender equality.[12] For example, child marriage and female circumcision are still highly practiced in Indonesia. It is due to the conservative view that the family has the prerogative to take care of these two issues, which implies the problem of family privatization. The rules that already exist in the public world fail to be implemented, and the family fails to contribute to improving social stability. Therefore, the interdependence between families and the public good is a crucial aspect of societal well-being and cohesion. Families play a vital role in shaping individuals, maintaining social values and public interest, and instilling the values that contribute to the greater public interest. At the same time, the well-being of families is heavily influenced by the social, economic, and political environments in which they exist.

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5 Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 21–8.

6 Field Notes from Observation, July and August 2022.

7 James S. Coleman, "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital," *American Journal of Sociology* 94 (January 1988): 95–120.

8 See: Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 22; Robert N. Bellah, ed., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 55–242.

9 Field Notes from Observation, July and August 2022.

10 K, Interview with a Social Activist, July 2022.

11 Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1997), 3–35.

12 Lies Marcoes, "Memperkuat Perempuan di Ruang Privat," kompas.id, March 7, 2023, https://www.kompas.id/baca/opini/2023/03/07/memperkuat-perempuan-di-ruang-privat.

This interdependence highlights the importance of fostering a balanced and mutually supportive relationship between the family unit and the broader public good.[13]

Among the primary ways families contribute to the public good is through the proportional interconnectedness of family and social lives. Families serve as the primary agents of socialization, maintaining norms, values, and behaviors that are essential for social well-being and public good.[14] By instilling a sense of responsibility, communality, empathy, and reciprocal engagement, families help cultivate citizens who are invested in the well-being of their communities and the greater public interest. Furthermore, strong and stable families provide a foundation for social stability and economic productivity. When families can function effectively, they can better support their members' educational attainment, mental and physical health, and overall well-being.[15] Thus, the relationship between families and the public good is a two-way street. Families are heavily influenced by the broader social, economic, and political contexts in which they exist. Policies and initiatives that support family well-being, such as quality education, access to healthcare, and equality before the law, directly impact the ability of families to thrive and contribute to the public good.[16] Conversely, societal issues such as poverty, discrimination, and lack of access to resources can strain families and impede their ability to function optimally.

Many studies have shown the mutual relationship between family life, the public world, and cultural values. Allerton examines how the Manggarai community in Eastern Indonesia perceives marriage and the family home as a site for commonality, for example, in the *padong* tradition (accompanying the bride to her new home), which is accompanied by the cries of the villagers.[17] Atun Wardatun specifically considers that the collective agency expressed in Bima Muslim marriages occurs because it is supported by the cultural perspective that marriage is a joint investment.[18] Miftahul Huda discovers how prohibitions in the Javanese marriage tradition are closely related to culture but also provide space for people to negotiate in a cultural context with these prohibitions.[19] Amrin et al. examine traditional marriage practices to illuminate the Bimanese Muslims' communal values.[20] Marriage is also an arena for contesting identity, various actors, and authority. Muhammad Latif Fauzi, in his study of the marriage of the Madurese Muslim community in East Java, observes the involvement of

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13 See: Rusli Rusli, "The Role of Family in Preventing Social Conflict in Society from Islamic Perspectives," *Hunafa: Jurnal Studia Islamika* 17, no. 1 (June 18, 2020): 108–22; Fred Bidandi, "The Responsibility of Government and Society Towards Social Cohesion: A Family Perspective," *The Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 43, no. 1 (August 26, 2021): 11–33.

14 Talcott Parsons and Robert F. Bales, *Family: Socialization and Interaction Process* (Glencoe, Ill: Free Press, 1955), 35–64.

15 Paul R Amato, "The Impact of Family Formation Change on the Cognitive, Social, and Emotional Well-Being of the Next Generation," *The Future of Children* 15, no. 2 (September 2005): 75–96.

16 Karen Bogenschneider, *Family Policy Matters: How Policymaking Affects Families and What Professionals Can Do* (Mahwah, N.J: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006), 156–221.

17 Allerton, "The Path of Marriage," 339–62.

18 Atun Wardatun, "Matrifocality and Collective Solidarity in Practicing Agency: Marriage Negotiation Among the Bimanese Muslim Women in Eastern Indonesia," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 20, no. 2 (February 8, 2019): 43–57.

19 Miftahul Huda, "The Negotiating Process of Ponorogo's People Toward Prohibitions in Javanese Marriage Tradition," *Al-Risalah: Forum Kajian Hukum dan Sosial Kemasyarakatan* 17, no. 01 (2017): 87–103.

20 Amrin Amrin et al., "Analysis of Local Wisdom in Bima Community Marriage (Study of Socio-Cultural Values)," *Legal Brief* 11, no. 4 (2022): 2418–25.

various actors and norms in shaping the marriage tradition, although individual agency still has a place.[21] Karel Karsten Himawan also noticed that singleness in Indonesia is still a topic of conversation, so he termed it "involuntary singleness" because marriage is considered a cultural imperative.[22] Also, Mohamad Abdun Nasir discusses how interfaith marriage in Lombok becomes an arena for the contestation of religion, law, and identity where institutional authority, namely the state and personal autonomy of the people involved in interfaith marriages meet.[23] The above studies provide a basis for the argument of this article that marriage in Indonesian society is indeed very communal and that cultural factors strongly influence family decisions and events. However, the novelty offered by this article underlines families' privatization issues in the cases of domestic violence and underage marriages. It emphasizes the possibility of positive contributions of families to cultural engineering and public good.

This article underlines those traditional values and relationships as the epistemological basis to ensure that the family becomes the main locus for social transformation movements. The research underlying this article was conducted ethnographically with a data collection process in the form of repeated observations conducted over nine months in 2017 and revisited four times in July and August in 2021 and 2002 for one week each. Data collection through observation was recorded in filed notes and personal reflections. Interviews with male and female informants were purposively conducted with ten people each, making a total of 20. The theory proposed by Catherine Allerton states that marriage is "a sequence, place-based, practical actions," is the main reference in analyzing the research data obtained.

This article will begin with a brief description of Bima as the locus of study and Bimanese Muslims as the subject of study. Then, the second part will explain narratives and empirical examples of how the institution of marriage is a place where reciprocity and togetherness are expressed in the lives of Bimanese Muslims and how private life closely intersects with public life. The third section will show some cases of the privatization of family lives, which has numerous detrimental effects on family goals in making public good and transforming social life. The final section underlines some insights into how public interests in marriage tradition promote public good through families to deal with the various social problems today.

Brief Overview of Bima and Bimanese Muslims

Bima is a region located in the eastern part of West Nusa Tenggara province, precisely on the island of Sumbawa. The indigenous people of this area are Bimanese, who always identify themselves as devout and even fanatic Muslims.[24] Empirically, however, the diverse styles of Bima society range from the overly strict, which has led to the region being referred to as

[21] Muhammad Latif Fauzi, "Actors and Norms in Islamic Marriage: A Study of Madura Community in Rural Eastern East Java," *Journal of Indonesian and Islam* 13, no. 2 (December 1, 2019): 297–325.

[22] Karel Karsten Himawan, "The Single's Struggle: Discovering Involuntary Singleness in Indonesia Through Gender and Religious Perspectives," *The Family Journal* 28, no. 4 (October 2020): 379–89.

[23] Mohamad Abdun Nasir, "Religion, Law, and Identity: Contending Authorities on Interfaith Marriage in Lombok, Indonesia," *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 31, no. 2 (April 2, 2020): 131–50.

[24] Iswahyudi Iswahyudi and Irfan Hidayat, "The Philosophical Values of Rimpu Traditional Clothing of Bimanese People in West Nusa Tenggara," *Technium Social Sciences Journal* 35, no. 1 (2022): 611–16.

part of the radicalism movement, to the lax, which does not practice religion such as prayer and fasting. Those at this extreme are in the minority. The majority are those with moderate views who see religion as guidance for personal piety as well as a direction to ascertain social good for others.[25]

Administratively, Bima consists of two governmental regions, Bima City (Kota Bima) and Bima Regency (Kabupaten Bima). The number of people in these two regions varies. In 2022, the population of Bima city was 155,140 people, with a density of 694 people/km^2. Bima district in the same year had a population of 532,677 people, with a population density of 156 people/km^2.[26] Kota Bima is characterized by urban life, where more people work as traders and are employees in the bureaucracy. Meanwhile, Kabupaten Bima is mostly rural, where the people's main livelihoods are farming and cattle raising. Several villages that are close to the capital city of Kabupaten Bima, where the Bima Regent's office is located, are currently experiencing a transition from rural to urban life. It is supported by road access and various facilities that allow them to blend into a more heterogeneous life.[27]

Interestingly, the geographical and lifestyle differences mentioned above do not significantly affect their marriage traditions, especially regarding reciprocity and communality as will be discussed in this article. The expression of these two aspects may be different but it indicates that both social values of the marriage tradition are still held in urban, transitional, and rural areas. This can be observed in the wedding feast, the attitudes and perceptions of the newly built family, and the cultural values reflected in the folk songs that are mandatory for every wedding feast for Bimanese Muslims, as will be discussed further below. However, it must be noted that the privatization of family is more noticeable in the urban and transitional areas than in rural areas, as I will discuss in the last part of this article.[28]

Cultural Acknowledgement of Reciprocity and Communality

This section highlights the value of reciprocity and communality. In doing so, it will introduce the popular song instilling those values culturally and outline the type of marriage and how the marriage negotiation process involves several parties (the prospective bride and groom, their respective parents, and their extended families). During my fieldwork, I observed ten wedding parties (*jambuta*) of the Bimanese Muslims. Although they all differed in terms of the number of guests and the display of wealth, one thing that was common to all was a folk song entitled *'sodi angi'* (literally, asking each other) as background music. This duet (either played on a tape recorder or sung live by one male and one female singer) is about the value of reciprocity (*cua ro angi*) and collectiveness (*kasama weki)* in Bimanese marriage. It depicts how a man approaches a woman and negotiates what should be given and what is received

[25] See: Field Notes from Observation, March-July 2017; Field Notes from Observation, July and August 2021; Field Notes from Observation, July and August 2022. See also: Muhammad Mutawali, "The Dialectics of Customary Law and Islamic Law: An Experience from Dou Donggo Customs of Bima, Indonesia," *AHKAM: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 21, no. 1 (June 30, 2021): 45–64.

[26] "Kabupaten Bima in Figures 2022" (Development Planners Office (BAPPEDA) in Cooperation with The Center of Statistic Data Office (BPS), 2022), 12.

[27] "Kota Bima in Figures 2023" (Development Planners Office (BAPPEDA) in Cooperation with The Center of Statistic Data Office (BPS), 2023), 8.

[28] Field Notes from Observation, July and August 2022.

as a sign of their desire to unite in marriage. It also mentions that the marriage ceremony is meant to entertain the community, and there is a ritual bathing ceremony that symbolizes the local recognition of a newly established family. The lyrics of the song are as follows:[29]

Male singer (M):
Ngawa si ka iyo nggahi nahu arie
(Dear, if you are pleased and agree to my request)
Kone lao ndeumu ti kauku lampa ndaimu
(I will not let you walk alone even when you go for a bath)
Honda bou dinente, ancu nahu dinenti
(We will ride the new bike, and you will hold my shoulders)
Mpona wara tandana ba ra meci su'u ra tundu (2x)
(As a sign of our mutual love and commitment) (2x)

Female singer (F):
Wara si ne'e di wekiku amania
(If there is something you want from me, dear)
Hanta ca da pu uma ma sampuru dua ri'i
(Lift a house with twelve pillars to the north)
Na ini mbua si ri'ina kuhaju ka'a sara'a
(If it only has six poles, I would make it into firewood)
Na ciwi mbua rau si mada ku londo rai (2x)
(And if only nine pillars, I will run out of the house) (2x)

Male singer (M):
Ngawa si ka iyo nggahi nahu arie
(If you agree to my request, my darling)
Kuweli wea ku kariro mantika monca roro
(I will buy you a set of shiny yellow earrings)
Wa'usi weli wea kariro aina lampa
(If I do this, you should not go anywhere)
Rero tanda meci ra ca'u ndai ma sama to'i (2x)
(These are the signs of young people who love each other) (2x)

Female singer (F):
Poda si ne'e di wekiku amania
(If you really love me, my darling)
Tu'u kaboupu uma talaga balebae
(Please renovate the house with a porch on two sides to hold a party and entertain the crowds)
Doho jambuta kai weki ndai ma mboto wa'u si wara ede, kungawa lalo mpa ade
(If it is available, then my heart will greet you)

Male singer (M):
Ndadi poda si nika ndai ta ede
(If our marriage does take place)

[29] Field Notes from Observing 10 Wedding Parties, September 2017.

Ta weli menaku janga siwe mone
(Both of us will buy a rooster and a hen for us)
Dicua ngaha ndai cumpu boho oi ndeu ngenge kali cempe tanda bou pu campo (2x)
(To eat together after we are bathed and we will take turns holding and biting the roasted chicken to indicate that we have just come together) (2x)

The song above illustrates the bargaining process and the bride and groom's mutual contribution (reciprocity) to the newly established family. The bargaining involves taking into account the expectations of both parties. It takes place before the marriage, especially if the couple has had a courtship rather than an arranged marriage (in which case it is primarily the couple's parents who do the bargaining). The man is seen to initiate the relationship and offer his affection and love if the woman accepts his proposal. Interestingly, in the negotiation in the song, the man offers cheaper goods than what are requested by the woman. In the first verse, for example, the man offers to buy a new motorcycle, and the woman replies by requesting a house with twelve poles (poles indicate the size of a house). In response, the man offers jewelry (earrings), and the woman is prepared to compromise and accept a smaller house on condition that he adds to its size by providing two porches to accommodate the guests whom they will invite to celebrate their wedding party (collectiveness). The ritual of *boho oi ndeu* (bathing) takes place in this house. The mutual contribution (reciprocity) of both bride and groom is indicated in that the man is only required to move the house – as requested with the phrase *'hanta ca da pu uma'* (lift the house to the north) – which indicates that the woman already has the land on which to put the house. Since she has already relieved him of the burden of providing the land, she feels entitled to a house to her liking.[30]

The following section describes two types of marriage in Bima society to show that "good" and "bad" are determined by whether the marriage listens to the decisions of many parties. The second part will present the marriage process as an expression of togetherness and interconnectedness in the cultural values named "*angi*." It shows that marriage does involve various actors and agreed-upon norms.

Nika Taho *(Good Marriage) and* **Nika Iha** *(Bad Marriage)*

In addition to the requirements laid down by Islamic family law regarding marriage, the Bimanese stipulate that the bride, groom, and their parents should all agree upon the chosen partner, no matter who made the initial selection. A marriage that fulfills the Islamic requirements is regarded as *nika ma saha* (a valid marriage), but to make it a *nika taho* (good marriage) with a harmonious relationship between the couple and both families, the local principle of mutual agreement should be met. "*Loa nika na sabua sih nggahi"* (We will go ahead if we all agree!).[31] It is a typical statement delivered by both parties, including families and parents, to signify mutual agreement during the process of negotiations. The following stories illustrate what they mean by those statements.

[30] Field Notes from Observation, March-July 2017.
[31] Field Notes from Observation, March-July 2017.

It was my ninth month in Bima, and I was about to head to the city to buy some groceries and a new handbag for the wedding party to be held in the village the following week. I received a phone call from *Pak* (Mr.) Ahmad (an officer in the village office), the bride-to-be's uncle, telling me that his niece's wedding party appeared to have been canceled. I was so surprised because I knew that all the villagers had prepared for the wedding party and traditional initiation rituals. However, the 18-year-old bride had just run away with a man of her choice to a neighboring village, leaving the man who was supposed to be her groom. Her family was furious and felt ashamed at losing face. The male family members were about to seek her out and force her to return. However, a group of women, loosely related to her, gathered in the front yard of her house to discuss the case, telling the parents they should not allow the planned marriage to take place because it started in the wrong way; it would always be wrong, and the young woman needed to decide her future.[32]

I had been invited to attend the meeting and was sitting there, observing the exchange of opinions and how the group of men paid attention to what the women said. Finally, the wedding was canceled as it was agreed that they should not force the girl to marry a man of her parent's choice. The following day, I learned that the couple had run away to Lombok and gone to her uncle because her father refused to be guardian (*wali*) to marry her to the man of her choice. Four months later, when I left the village after finishing my fieldwork, the couple had not visited the girl's parents and had gone to East Nusa Tenggara, where they had both found jobs.[33] If there is a conflict of interest among them – for example, if the bride and/or groom decide to marry against the parents' wishes (as in the above story) – the marriage is regarded as *nika iha* (literally, bad or wrong marriage). A marriage could be considered *nika iha* if it is based on love, in which the children find their partners and get married without the approval of their parents (*londo iha*). *Nika iha* could also be a forced marriage (*nika paksa*) where the children are pushed to accept the marriage partner of their parent's choice.[34]

One case of *nika paksa* (recounted to me by an informant) involved the daughter of a practical nurse (*mantri*) who, in 2012, was forced to marry a teacher chosen by her parents after they discovered that she was in love with a Javanese peddler who came to their village weekly to sell kitchen tools. Her *mantri* father had a high social status as a health worker since there were very few for the number of villagers, and doctors could charge a lot. The parents were worried about allowing their only daughter to marry the peddler as he came from a far-off island and did not have a secure and prestigious job. The arranged marriage only lasted one month because the bride refused to allow her husband to touch her and slept with scissors in her hands. The husband and parents gave up and let her go with the man she had chosen, assisted by her relatives and neighbors.[35]

Suppose Sherry B. Ortner's categorization of the agency is applied in the two sample cases related above. In that case, the form of agency covers both "the agency of the project," as it requires the assistance of others (solidarity), and "the agency of power" as a means to

[32] Personal Journal, January-September 2017.
[33] Personal Journal, January-September 2017.
[34] UR, Interview with a Female Matchmaker (*Panati Siwe*), August 2017.
[35] MG, Interview with a Religious Leader, February 2017.

resist parental domination.[36] These two forms of agency enrich the discussion of women's agency in Asia, as suggested by Lyn Parker.[37] The absence of either parent's permission or children's consent is socially discouraged by the Bimanese Muslims. They even could interfere with the family's decisions, especially by female relatives and interestingly they put children's concerns as the primary consideration rather than parental permission.

Meanwhile, *nika taho* can also take two forms, love marriage (*ne'e angi*) and arranged marriage (*taho angi);* the partner selection can be made either by children or parents, but all parties finally agree after the process of persuasion or arguing with each other. Consent and mutual agreement are the basic principles of *nika taho* and *nika iha*, while love marriage and arranged marriage are a matter of who first finds the partners. The local concept of *nika taho* implies that when choosing an ideal partner, the decision has to be made based on the mutual agreement of children and parents. This implication is embedded in the whole process of decision-making regarding a potential spouse through the local traditions of *taho angi* (getting to know), *ne'e angi* (courtship), and *sodi angi* (engagement). *Angi* is a local concept of reciprocity and complementarity between both parties involved in the relationship, including the husband and wife (as marriage partners) and parents.[38]

Two-Sided Agreement: Taho Angi *(Getting to Know),* Ne'e Angi *(Courtship), and* Sodi Angi *(Engagement)*

Recognized as marking an important turning point in life, a Bimanese marriage receives much attention and requires extensive preparation before it can take place.[39] There are three initial steps – *taho angi*, *ne'e angi*, and *sodi angi* – to be taken by a couple before they can procure the marriage contract (religious), formally register their marriage (state), and have a wedding party (cultural). The way those three steps were taken in the past is somewhat different from how they are taken now. The process used to be very time-consuming and strictly adhered to all these three steps, but nowadays, there is a common tendency to simplify it. *Ne'e angi* is the most obvious of the initial processes. *Taho angi* is part of *ne'e angi,* and *sodi angi* is a consequence. This shortening of the process is partly due to the fact that children have "begun to be better educated than their parents"[40] and enjoy a higher degree of independence in choosing their partners than was permitted in previous generations.

During the initial period, when the couple gets to know each other and develops a good relationship (*taho angi*), the parents on both sides are usually involved. When the woman and man decide they want to make a future together (*ne'e angi*), they need the agreement of

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36 Sherry B. Ortner, *Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power, and the Acting Subject* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 1–18.

37 Lyn Parker, "Introduction," in *The Agency of Women in Asia* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic, 2005), 1–25.

38 Wardatun, "Matrifocality and Collective Solidarity in Practicing Agency," 43–57.

39 See: Peter Just, "Dou Donggo Social Organization: Ideology, Structure, and Action in an Indonesian Society" (PhD Thesis, Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania, 1986), 365; M. Fachrir Rachman and Nurmukminah, *Nika Mbojo: Antara Islam dan Tradisi* (Mataram: Alam Tara Institute, 2011); Muhammad Adlin Sila, "Being Muslim in Bima of Sumbawa, Indonesia: Practice, Politics and Cultural Diversity" (PhD Thesis, Canberra, Australian National University, 2014); Atun Wardatun et al., *Jejak Jender* (Mataram: Pusat Studi Wanita IAIN Mataram, 2010).

40 Just, "Dou Donggo Social Organization," 346.

both families in order to formalize their arrangement (*sodi angi*). If it is an arranged marriage, *taho angi* involves the parents and families (especially in the quest to find the right partner), and when the children feel comfortable with each other, they can take the next step, which is to show interest in each other (*ne'e angi*). This *ne'e angi* stage is sometimes skipped because as long as the young couple has verbally given their consent, the parents and families can proceed to the next stage, *sodi angi*.[41]

Ne'e angi is the bond between the children when they feel good together. Whether or not the *ne'e angi* is a result of parental arrangement is, at this phase, of no importance. This stage used to last a short period of time, as the parents worried about their children changing their minds, and the principal objective of *ne'e angi* was actually to gain the children's consent. There was no point in drawing out this process (as can happen nowadays, where society permits the opposite sexes to socialize), and the parents would rush to the next process, *sodi angi*. In recent marriage arrangements, the step of *ne'e angi* precedes, and to some extent overshadows, the *taho angi* process, as the couple usually initiate the marriage, and when they are certain about their choice, they introduce their partner to their respective parents and families. The parents will then need time to consider this announcement and learn more about their child's choice of marriage partner.[42]

If they are happy with the proposed marriage, then the next step is *sodi angi*. *Sodi angi* is affected through *wi'i nggahi* (literally, putting into words). It refers to a promise made by the future groom's family, who formally visit the family of his prospective bride, entering into an agreement with her parents that they will create a closer relationship by marrying their children. The *taho angi* and *ne'e angi* take place more casually and informally. They are therefore less binding than the *sodi angi,* which demands more commitment from both sides, involving not only the parents and the couple but also their extended families. This process of *sodi angi* was used to allow time to make sure the decision to unite the couple was the right one.[43]

Maintaining the Public Value of Togetherness

This section shows how the marriage process involves the community as *rawi rasa* (public concern), demonstrating the value of collectiveness as illustrated in the popular wedding song above. Rachman and Nurmukminah have underlined that marriage, for the Bimanese, is an institution where reciprocal obligations between the bride and groom and between their families on both sides and the commonality of society are created and reinforced.[44] The wedding celebration is considered a *rawi rasa*, in which all married and/or adult members of society should participate to ensure the celebration is a success. For many people who turn up to help, accepting the host's invitation indicates their commitment. However, they expect that what they have given in *pamaco* (material contribution) will be paid back one day when they, in turn, are in need of help.[45]

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41 Peter Just, *Dou Donggo Justice: Conflict and Morality in an Indonesian Society* (Lanham (Md.): Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 214–5.

42 See: Field Notes from Observation, July and August 2021; Field Notes from Observation, July and August 2022.

43 HR, Interview with a Female Matchmaker (*Panati Mone*), March 2017.

44 Rachman and Nurmukminah, *Nika Mbojo*, 2–10.

45 Field Notes from Observation, March-July 2017.

The invitation card for the wedding party includes the names of successful or influential members of both the groom's and bride's families, as the hosts (*turut mengundang*) want to attract many guests from their network of acquaintances to attend the ceremony. This *turut mengundang* list is also used to show off their kinship ties because those listed have prestigious occupations – with their titles put after their names on the invitation even though these people may not necessarily be known to the hosts and will not directly participate in or even attend the ceremony. Thus, the *jambuta* is used to display the family's social connections.[46] Furthermore, the arrangement of 'the proper time' for the couple to consummate their marriage is officially made through *boho sura ndeu* (ritual bathing). *Pamaco*, *jambuta*, and *boho sura ndeu* show that the Bimanese marriage is a very public ceremony.

Pamaco: *You Get What You Give!*

There is no clear literal meaning of the word *'pamaco.*' However, it refers to the tradition of all the villagers and the close relatives of the couple coming to the houses of both the groom and the bride to offer money and rice (which I refer to as 'public contribution'). This tradition is also called *teka ro ne'e* (go up and climb), as the visitors have to go up steps to go inside the traditional houses to make their contributions.[47] Each household has one book reserved for recording the amount of money they have contributed to other families and another for contributions they receive. The host lists the names of the people who have contributed and how much money should be given to those people later in return. Every time the host's family has reciprocated, the names will be ticked off, indicating that these people have been paid (that is, the host no longer has that debt). According to one of the informants, this *pamaco* tradition does not only take place before a wedding (*nika ra neku*); there are two other celebrations, or thanksgivings, in which *pamaco* is carried out: *suna ro ndoso* (circumcision of children) and *lao haji* (going on a pilgrimage). However, at the *pamaco* for *nika* people are always more generous because the money is not only for the ceremony and the parties but also to help the new couple fund their new life together.[48]

Contribution to the *pamaco* seems to be an obligation for all married villagers because anyone who fails to participate will be socially stigmatized as *'ne'e mori kese'* (wants to live alone, does not need help from others). People who (for whatever reason) do not have any money to contribute will bring whatever they have and work harder to help. Villagers do not feel they need to hold back from participating in the wedding party. Inflation is also taken into account when paying back money that one has received. The price of meat at the time is used as the benchmark. The *pamaco* money is divided up and put into two envelopes: one portion is for returning what the host has previously received (*cola nconggo*), and the other is kept as a contribution that the host will, in turn, pay back later (*wa'a mpungga*). However, this is not treated as a real debt, in that should anyone die or for some reason not be able to pay the money back, the payment can be waived.[49]

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46 Field Notes from Observation, March-July 2017.
47 UH, Interview with a High School Teacher, May 2017.
48 Field Notes from Observation, July-September 2017.
49 Field Notes from Observation, July-September 2017.

The invitation to *pamaco* is usually given informally. The man in charge of the village office, or a religious leader, will announce the venue and time of the forthcoming *pamaco* using a microphone in the mosque. In the past, the invitation was announced by a group of women tapping in rhythm on a special long wooden rice grinder (*kareku kandei*), and the villagers would just come to the house from wherever they were when they heard that sound. Now, because people no longer grind the rice by hand (as grinding machines are used), that traditional way of inviting people is no longer used by the villagers. In fact, the announcements just serve as a reminder because the villagers will have already known about the *pamaco* for some time, having been involved in the scheduling and plans, and even those who are not involved will have heard about it through word of mouth.[50]

Two people are responsible for writing down the contributions. They sit in the front of the house behind a desk, welcoming everyone and ensuring they do not miss the name of anyone who has contributed. They each have a large basket or box near to them into which they put the money. When the guests have all left, they will count the money (with the host and relatives present as witnesses) and give it to the mother of the bride or groom for safekeeping. It will be used as funding for the wedding, with some put aside as start-up capital for the couple's new life.[51]

It can be seen, therefore, that *pamaco* represents reciprocal needs between people (as members of the village) and their neighbors, considered an integrated part of their everyday lives. This co-dependency is physically expressed through joint material investment, where the wedding, as a part of the personal life cycle, becomes a public responsibility. It involves every community member, but without giving a sense of burden, because the villagers know they will receive back as much as, or even more than, they have given.[52] The dialectic represented by marriage is a social truth that helps to sustain the integrity of communal values, which are framed in communal standards,[53] preserving the continuity of noble cultural values[54] and fostering a sense of togetherness among Indonesian society.[55]

Jambuta: *Public Show and Showing to the Public*

On my return to Bima after being away for a week in August, I noticed there was no sign of Umrah, a twenty-eight-year-old woman who had been an active member of the group who sat on the front porch of a small stall next door to my rented house. I noticed her absence,

50 Field Notes from Observation, July-September 2017.
51 Field Notes from Observation, July-September 2017.
52 Personal Journal, January-September 2017.
53 Wiwik Setiyani, Saprudin Saprudin, and Nurhairunnisa Nurhairunnisa, "Inclusive and Exclusive Dynamics in Local Community Wedding Tradition in East Java and West Nusa Tenggara," *Islamica: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 18, no. 2 (March 1, 2024): 123–41.
54 See: Benediktus Peter Lay, Stefanus Don Rade, and Maria Theresia Geme, "Implementation of Customary Law Values in a Traditional Marriage of the Timorese in Realizing Laws Based on Local Wisdom," *The International Journal of Politics and Sociology Research* 11, no. 2 (September 13, 2023): 349–58; Arif Sugitanata and Muhammad Lutfi Hakim, "The Domination of Customary Law in Muslim Matrimonial Procedures: Prohibiting Khiṭbah in the Sade Muslim Community," *Al-Ahwal: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 16, no. 2 (December 30, 2023): 302–19.
55 Argitha Aricindy, Wasino, and Atika Wijaya, "Local Wisdom for Mutual Cooperation in Indonesia: An Etnographic Investigation on Value of Marsiadapari Tradition, Sianjur Mula-Mula Sub-District, Samosir Regency, North Sumatera Province," *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences* 44, no. 2 (June 21, 2023): 555–64.

as she had been one of my loyal companions who had taken me around the village and introduced me to new people. After not seeing her for three days, I asked the storekeeper, who told me Umrah was busy helping her aunt sew new clothes because the number of orders always increased from August to December, the marriage period (*oru nika*). I wondered about the correlation between *oru nika* and high orders for sewing new clothes and was told, "*To look gorgeous at wedding parties, each person needs a set of clothes. We do not wear the old ones, even if we still owe money for them.*"[56]

I was slightly surprised because I had not seen any evidence of the villagers being smartly dressed during my seven-month stay and visits to the village. Indeed, clothes were very simple – for women, mostly consisting of a shirt, a house dress (*daster*), and a sarong tied around their hips (*sanggentu*). Men typically wore a T-shirt, shorts, and a sarong tied in a specific way around the stomach (*katente*). While contemplating this interesting new information, I set off to see Umrah at her aunt's house to ensure all was well because she was also six months pregnant. I found her happily sewing, surrounded by piles of colorful fabric and garments waiting to be sewn. Those finished were hanging in a cupboard, waiting for the owners to collect them, ready to wear when the parties began.[57]

The purpose of telling the above story is to illustrate the excitement felt by the villagers when it comes to the wedding parties, which are clearly a special occasion for them. Not only are the bride and groom well prepared, but all the villagers, especially the women, also need to spend money (or even borrow it if necessary) in order to look their very best. The new clothes and the dressing up for *jambuta* are partly to liven up the wedding party and bring joy to the bride and groom. However, it is also an opportunity for people to express themselves and enjoy life after spending seven to eight months laboring on the farm, especially when they have to leave the village and plant their onions elsewhere, in places such as Dompu and Sumbawa, three to six hours away.[58]

More recently, another term, *'resepsi'* (originally meaning 'reception') has appeared about the wedding party. This term is used to describe the livelier parties, which, instead of having the traditional *biola* (violin), have a band that plays some modern music, such as pop, but mostly dangdut (Indonesian music). Local people tend to use this new name to differentiate between parties held by average people (non-government employees) and the government employees' parties, with *resepsi* considered a higher-class event. Since government employees usually have a large network of friends and colleagues, their *resepsi* tends to be grand events, with many more guests than at the commoners' weddings. The stage on which the bride and groom sit (with both sets of parents) is made to look very classy, and the feast takes the form of a buffet. The program's structure, however, is the same for both wedding styles.[59]

The MC will then introduce the bride and groom to the assembled guests, outlining their most recent educational qualifications and current occupations. He or she will refer to

[56] Personal Journal, January-September 2017.
[57] Personal Journal, January-September 2017.
[58] Personal Journal, January-September 2017.
[59] See: Field Notes from Observation, July and August 2021; Field Notes from Observation, July and August 2022.

the good social standing of certain members of the bride's and groom's families, even if these 'people of significance' are absent at the wedding. It is how both families strive to show their connections and their kindred group to the public in the best possible light. In the case of government employees, they will also list their bosses, principals or directors, and even the *bupati* or governor if they happen to work in the local government office or a provincial one.[60]

Boho Sura Ndeu: *Personal is Public*

Even after the wedding ceremony and celebration party, there is one more tradition to be observed before the bride and groom are allowed to sleep together, even though they are legally husband and wife. This tradition is called *boho sura ndeu* (pouring water to take a bath), also known as *boho oi ndeu*.[61] The water is believed to ensure a sacred relationship and eternal love between the couple, and the bathing ritual is believed to expel any 'awkwardness' (*kalao kai maja*) the couple may feel with each other, enabling them to enjoy their intimate relationship without inhibition.

I was lucky to have the chance to observe one *boho sura ndeu* ritual during my fieldwork. The couple remained clothed while the sando (traditional leader and healer) bathed them. They sat side by side, holding hands and tied together with a white thread, facing the east (the prayer direction or *Ka'bah*). The water had been put in a new cooking pot with various flowers and pandan leaves to make it fragrant, and was prayed for by the sando as he stood behind the couple and then started bathing them. The groom was only wearing shorts, while the bride was completely dressed. It was not a private ritual, as around thirty people were watching. The lookers shared the couple's happiness and asked the sando to splash the water on them so that, if they were unmarried, they would soon find a partner with whom they would always stay and be happy.[62]

Boho sura ndeu has the symbolic meaning that the couple should be clean physically and mentally before officially beginning a new family. The white thread that is used to tie them together symbolizes that they have become one soul in two bodies, that their relationship is a holy one, which they have declared in front of the community and their God, and that they should not do any harm to each other. The couple is also reminded that, as members of the community, they have the responsibility to make the community life peaceful and joyful and that this starts from the family. They sit facing the praying direction for Muslims (west) to signal that they should not forget their obligation to pray to their God, as they will be role models for their generation following.[63]

The ritual process is concluded after the advice and prayers have been uttered. After the couple had dried themselves and changed their clothes, the guests congratulated them, shaking their hands and teasing them about enjoying their first night. It is an illustration of how a very personal matter draws much public attention. However, it is interesting that it is all done naturally, showing how marriage and creating a new family is understood as being

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60 See: Field Notes from Observation, July and August 2021; Field Notes from Observation, July and August 2022.

61 Asbah Asbah, "The Analysis of Educational and Cultural Values of 'Boho Oi Ndeu' in Wedding Ceremony of Bimanese at Rabakodo Village," *Linguistics and ELT Journal* 5, no. 1 (March 5, 2019): 64–70.

62 Field Notes from Observation, March-July 2017.

63 UR, Interview with a Female Matchmaker (*Panati Sine*), August 2017.

far from a subjective individual matter and reflecting the communal life of which marriage is such an important part.[64]

The Privatization of Family Lives: Domestic Violence and Child Marriages

Ideally, family as an alliance becomes an institution that sustains the common good. It is one of the reasons why communities invest so much in family life, as reflected in the traditions of the Bimanese Muslims and elsewhere in Indonesia. However, some aspects of married life are often considered private decisions that do not require intervention from the public, such as state regulations and collective agreements. Among these are domestic violence and child marriages.[65]

These two aspects have long been considered the privacy of the family. One of them is because of the view that there is absolute ownership of one party over the other, especially by the husband over the wife, which results in power relations and can bring about domestic violence. Likewise, the power of parents over children has led to the decision to marry off children even though they are still below the legal age of marriage, which is 19 years old.[66] However, now some state regulations such as the law on the elimination of domestic violence, popularly known as PKDRT Law No. 23 of 2004, have been established, which regulates that domestic violence is a criminal act, and Law No. 16 of 2019 on the maturity of the age of marriage as a revision of Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage.[67] Domestic violence and underage marriages should no longer be normalized because the existence of these acts is to ensure the common good, starting from the family institution.

Generally, the Bimanese Muslim considers domestic violence committed by husbands against their wives as normal. Hamidsyukrie Zm, Syafruddin Syafruddin, and Nurlaili Handayani found that this happened and was perpetuated because of the religious understanding that gave legitimacy to this ownership, which then formed a culture of masculinity (*dou rangga*) where men are both protectors, yet dominating toward women.[68] The

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64 Field Notes from Observation, March-July 2017.

65 See: Syahrul Mubarak Subeitan, "Forced Marriage: Implementation of the Mandatory Provisions of the Bride's Consent in Indonesia," *JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah)* 21, no. 1 (June 10, 2022): 77–87; Yayan Sopyan et al., "Child Exploitation by Parents in Early Marriage: Case Study in Cianjur West Java, Indonesia," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 7, no. 3 (November 30, 2023): 1921–42; Nuruddin Nuruddin, Aisyah Wardatul Jannah, and Dwi Martini, "Evaluating the Effectiveness of Age Restriction on Marriage in Indonesia," *Volksgeist: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum dan Konstitusi* 6, no. 2 (December 31, 2023): 313–30; Sainun Sainun, Hery Zarkasih, and Arif Sugitanata, "Tuan Guru and the Efforts to Prevent Early Marriage Among Sasak Tribe," *De Jure: Jurnal Hukum dan Syar'iah* 16, no. 1 (June 21, 2024): 37–57.

66 "Law No. 16 of 2019 on Maturing the Age of Marriage."

67 See: Amal Hayati et al., "The Impact of the Minimum Age Limit Regulation for Continuing Child Marriage After the Birth of Law Number 16 of 2019 on the Child's Future," *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 6, no. 1 (July 1, 2023): 174–82; Ahmad Dakhoir and Sri Lumatus Sa'adah, "Meta-Juridical Analysis on the Legal Arguments beyond Changes in Indonesian's Marriage Age Rule," *AL-IHKAM: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial* 18, no. 1 (June 1, 2023): 80–101; Isroqunnajah Isroqunnajah, Agus Iqbal Hawabi, and Umdatul Khoirot, "Legal Capacity and Legal Authority of Adult Age in Indonesia: Medical, Psychological and Islamic Law Perspectives," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 8, no. 1 (January 20, 2024): 105–25.

68 See: Hamidsyukrie Zm, Syafruddin Syafruddin, and Nurlaili Handayani, "The Impact of the Idea of Rangga (Masculinity) Towards Domestic Violence in the Maja Labo Dahu Culture: Study of Sociology and Social Sciences Education," *QALAMUNA: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial, dan Agama* 14, no. 2 (December 30, 2022): 631–48; Dedi Afandi et al., "Prevalence and Pattern of Domestic Violence at the Center for Forensic Medical Services in Pekanbaru, Indonesia," *Medical Journal of Indonesia* 26, no. 2 (August 18, 2017): 97–101;

same is true for Sasaknese Muslims in West Nusa Tenggara, as Bianca J. Smith and Wardatun found.[69]

Child marriage, particularly in Bima, also continues and tends to increase, but for different reasons. Before the 1970s, most child marriage was caused by parents' desire to prevent their children from committing adultery, which Islam prohibits. Moreover, because children, especially girls, did not have many choices at that time, they agreed. Nevertheless, recent child marriage cases occur because the children are already pregnant outside of marriage, and inevitably, they are married off by the parents.[70] Vivi Silawati and Nana Silvana found that the main factor causing sexual relations outside marriage by teenagers in Bima City was a lack of parental attachment to children.[71] In both cases, the children's consent and parent permission for marriage still existed.

In addition to the factors mentioned above, this study found that the tendency of the Bimanese Muslims to consider that they have full rights in determining how relationships are built without the intervention of state rules (which is new compared to religious rules that are believed to justify them) is also an important factor for domestic violences. It is an indication of the privatization of the family. MS stated:[72]

> "*Domestic violence cases are seen as a way for men to educate their wives, and it is their right to determine how to communicate. Many wives also do not realize that certain physical actions taken by their husbands are a form of violence*."

Similarly, the increasingly individualistic aspects of life now, especially in childcare patterns, make the process of community-based education and mutual cooperation looser. Meanwhile, schools are not ready to strengthen moral education, especially about the dangers of promiscuity, because the school curriculum emphasizes more on cognitive aspects.[73] This insularity exacerbates the situation and makes families contribute little to increasing awareness of implementing family laws as mandated by the law. AZ stated:[74]

> "*In the past, if a man came to our house after 9 pm, my neighbors would rebuke him and even throw the roof tiles, and we did not get angry. Our parents would remind us that it was time for our guests to go home without feeling offended by our neighbors' actions. In contrast, now, social control*

Elli Nur Hayati et al., "'Elastic Band Strategy': Women's Lived Experience of Coping with Domestic Violence in Rural Indonesia," *Global Health Action* 6, no. 1 (December 1, 2013): 18894.

69 See: Bianca J. Smith and Atun Wardatun, "Domestic Violence and Islamic Spirituality in Lombok, Indonesia: Women's Use of Sufi Approaches to Suffering," *Contemporary Islam* 16, no. 2–3 (October 2022): 427–47; Linda R. Bennett, Sari Andajani-Sutjahjo, and Nurul I. Idrus, "Domestic Violence in Nusa Tenggara Barat, Indonesia: Married Women's Definitions and Experiences of Violence in the Home," *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 12, no. 2 (April 2011): 146–63; Syaifuddin Zuhdi et al., "Domestic Violence as a Consequence of Nusyuz under the Islamic Law and Legislation of Indonesia," *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews* 7, no. 2 (May 19, 2019): 340–48.

70 MG, Interview with a Religious Leader, February 2017.

71 Vivi Silawati and Nana Silvana, "Prevalence and Factors Associated with Pre-Marital Sexual Intercourse Among Adolescents of School Age in Bima City," *Poltekita: Jurnal Ilmu Kesehatan* 17, no. 4 (February 29, 2024): 1456–63.

72 MS, Interview with a Youth Representative, July 2022.

73 See: UH, Interview with a High School Teacher, May 2017; A, Interview with a Female Ulama, August 2022.

74 AZ, Interview with a Village Leader, July 2022.

mechanisms no longer exist. Instead of guests going home, neighbors will fight because they are offended."

The clear-cut separation between public and private, as practiced by the above communities, is inappropriate because the distinction is imaginary, especially in these two cases of public stability needs. This kind of separation needs to be revisited to ensure the interrelationship of social life in the family.[75] This article has shown that the imaginary lines of private and public aspects of family lives (also known as privatization of family) have many detrimental effects, which necessitates ongoing discussion. This type of demarcation line is frequently used as justification for opposing changes to family law that prioritize public interests, such as raising the marriageable age and ending violence against women and children.[76] Considering the above discussions, this article suggests that families should acknowledge and carry out their roles in achieving the common good. Moreover, it highlights the significance of reciprocity and communality, enhances collectively exerted agency, and offering a more sophisticated comprehension of the ability to act within Indonesian Muslim communities.

Expanding Public Interest in Marriage to the Public Good of the Family

The narrative of the marriage tradition in the Bimanese Muslim has shown the existence of reciprocity and communality. It is illustrated in the procession of wedding traditions above that the family wants to get a good name, shown through invitations that mention all their family networks who are considered to have important positions. The family receives economic support through the *pamaco* tradition, showing the cooperation of the family network through the *jambuta*. *Boho sura ndeu* opens up space for the public to become part of the personal intimacy of the newly formed family.[77]

On the other hand, the community comes together to help financially and make the *jambuta* party, for example, an opportunity for them to show their identity. However, this reciprocity appears to be one-sided. The family gains a lot from the community, but how this reciprocal relationship leads the family to contribute much to realizing the public good is unclear.[78] There are still gaps that need to be filled to contextualize these values to the needs of family functioning in today's life challenges. The public interest referred to here is a public interest in family life and vice versa. Thus, the public good, in this sense, is the good of society pursued through the institution of the family. Families can do or not do something to contribute to this good. Families can endeavor to educate and direct their children so that they do not marry at a young age when they are not old enough to marry. By doing this,

[75] See: Karen Bogenschneider, *Family Policy Matters: How Policymaking Affects Families and What Professionals Can Do* (Mahwah, N.J: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006), 156–221; Paul R Amato, "The Impact of Family Formation Change on the Cognitive, Social, and Emotional Well-Being of the Next Generation," *The Future of Children* 15, no. 2 (September 2005): 75–96.

[76] Marcoes, "Memperkuat Perempuan di Ruang Privat."

[77] Personal Journal, January-September 2017.

[78] Personal Journal, January-September 2017.

many of the social problems that result from child marriage can be prevented, such as the cycle of poverty, low levels of education, and poor quality of the resulting generation.[79]

Families should also not use the excuse that they have the right to do things for reasons of autonomy without considering the rules of the state and social propriety. For example, violence against other family members, be they husbands, wives, or children, just because they are considered objects of ownership.[80] In the case of female circumcision, for example, Muslim families in various places still consider it an obligation due to hereditary tradition. The medical view and state regulations do not allow this. Moreover, there is no clear theological basis for this practice. However, because families feel that this is a private matter, they ignore these layers of rules. Even though, according to many recent studies, this is detrimental to women, it is a form of violence against women.[81] From the explanation above, this article provides suggestions for further discussions on social values in marriage that seem to exist in all tribes in Indonesia. The study of the marriage tradition should have a clear purpose, among others, to build epistemological reasons to strengthen the argument for the need for families to reciprocally contribute positively to the community's life. It begins with the family's willingness to become a site for implementing rules that guarantee public good.

Conclusion

This article has shown that marriage for the Bimanese is seen as *rawi rasa* (public interest) in connection with the neighbors' rights and obligations. For example, they can be invited to enjoy *jambuta* (wedding party) as a public festivity. In order to ensure a good party, they also help with funding for wedding expenses through the *pamaco* (public funding) tradition. Part of the funding is an investment from the community, which the host will pay back to the contributors when they have a wedding party. However, social changes have also affected the traditional marriage of the Bimanese, where family privatization also occurs. This marriage dynamic validates the theory used by this article that marriage is a sequenced, place-based, practical action. The above account does not exclusively happen in Bima, as communality values of marriage can be found almost elsewhere and across times. It must be noted, however, that views on families underwent substantial changes in the latter part of the

[79] See: Mark Cammack, Lawrence A. Young, and Tim Heaton, "Legislating Social Change in an Islamic Society: Indonesia's Marriage Law," *The American Journal of Comparative Law* 44, no. 1 (January 1, 1996): 45–73; Susan Lee-Rife et al., "What Works to Prevent Child Marriage: A Review of the Evidence," *Studies in Family Planning* 43, no. 4 (2012): 287–303;Sana Fatima, "Rural Development and Education: Critical Strategies for Ending Child Marriages," *Archives of the Social Sciences: A Journal of Collaborative Memory* 1, no. 1 (2023): 1–15.

[80] See: Atun Wardatun and Bianca J. Smith, "Woman-Initiated Divorce and Feminist Fiqh in Indonesia: Narrating Male Acts of Nushūz in Marriage," *Ulumuna* 24, no. 2 (December 31, 2020): 266–95; Hasanudin Hasanudin et al., "Phenomena of Domestic Violence Against Women and Divorce in 2020-2022 in Indonesia: An Islamic Perspective," *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 17, no. 2 (August 23, 2023): 137–52.

[81] See: Irwan Martua Hidayana, "The Medicalization of Female Genital Cutting (FGC) in Indonesia: A Complex Intersection of Tradition, Religion, and Human Rights," *Current Sexual Health Reports*, July 12, 2024, 1–4; Annisa Ariftha and Anang Anas Azhar, "Symbolic Violence Against Women in Medan's Patriarchal Culture," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 11, no. 2 (May 30, 2023): 709–28; Napsiah Napsiah, Muryanti Muryanti, and Yani Tri Wijayanti, "Inequality as a Construct of Customary Law: Access to Home Ownership Rights of Women in Lampung," *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 7, no. 1 (June 30, 2024): 184–203.

20th century. Nevertheless, despite these structural adjustments, the family's social roles have remained mostly unchanged.

There are three distinct local practices of the Bimanese regarding the marriage process, involving the bride and groom, the family, and the wider society. First, the local concept of *nika taho* (good marriage) implies that when choosing an ideal partner, the decision has to be made based on the mutual agreement of children and parents. Otherwise, the marriage is considered *nika iha* (bad marriage) and should be avoided. Second, the implication of those categories is embedded in the whole process of decision-making regarding a potential spouse through the local traditions of *taho angi* (getting to know), *ne'e angi* (courtship), and *sodi angi* (engagement). *Angi* is a local concept of reciprocity and complementarity between both parties involved in the relationship, including the husband and wife (as marriage partners) and parents. Third, even such a personal matter as the correct time for consummating the marriage is made by the Bimanese into a matter of public interest through the ritual of the couple's *boho sura ndeu* (taking a bath) after the wedding party. The couple also hopes that the prayers recited by the attendant will bless them in their new family life. Through the wedding party, the couple and their families can exhibit their good name and social status (and that of their guests) to the public.

The communal values of these three local practices are unfortunately not fully implemented in family relations, especially seen in two cases that also cause social instability, namely domestic violence and child marriages. In these two cases, the privacy aspect of the family is still held firmly, although marital age and domestic violence have been regulated by the state legal system, which requires legal awareness at the family level to implement these rules. This privatization hinders families from positively contributing to social control and public engineering. Therefore, this article illuminates the intersection of public and private values of marriage institutions to show the complex dynamics of family life influenced by various social factors. This paper contributes to raising awareness of the need for traditional values to be maintained as a defense mechanism for the tendency of family insularity that increasingly affects various aspects of life. The institution of marriage and family life should ideally be the last bastion of defense to maintain and revitalize local identity and communal values in the face of encroaching globalization.

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