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## **The Spiritualization of Domestic Violence in the Digital Era: Examining the Cathartic Role of Religious Institutions in Empowering Victims**

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### **Abstract:**

This study delves into the intricate intersection of domestic violence, spirituality, and the digital age, aiming to understand the evolving dynamics and the role religious institutions play in providing catharsis for victims. This study explores how religious institutions engage with domestic violence victims in the digital realm. It examines the ways in which religious teachings, counselling, and support mechanisms are leveraged to address the unique challenges posed by the intersection of spirituality, technology, and intimate partner violence. The research also investigates the potential pitfalls of spiritualization, considering instances where religious doctrines may inadvertently contribute to the perpetuation of abuse or hinder victims from seeking help. By analyzing online forums, social media platforms, and religious websites, the study aims to elucidate the ways in which digital spaces either facilitate or impede the spiritualization process for domestic violence victims. Furthermore, the role of religious leaders and communities in raising awareness, providing resources, and fostering a supportive environment for victims is explored. The study aims to identify best practices employed by religious institutions in addressing domestic violence in the digital age, offering insights for policymakers, advocates, and religious leaders to collaboratively develop more effective strategies for supporting victims and preventing further harm. Ultimately, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on domestic violence, spirituality, and technology, offering a nuanced understanding of the complexities involved. The findings hold implications for both academic scholarship and practical interventions, emphasizing the need for a multidimensional approach to empower victims and create a more compassionate and informed societal response to domestic violence in the digital era.

**Keywords:** domestic violence; digital era; Islamic law.

## Introduction

A range of studies have explored the intersection of religion, spirituality, and domestic violence, particularly in the digital era. Istratii<sup>1</sup> emphasizes the need for context-specific faith-based interventions, while Muralidharan<sup>2</sup> highlights the role of spirituality and religiosity in bystander intervention. Gillum<sup>3</sup> and Watlington<sup>4</sup> both underscore the importance of spirituality and religious involvement in the healing and coping processes of domestic violence survivors, with the latter also noting the potential role of religious coping strategies. These studies collectively suggest that religious institutions can play a significant role in empowering victims of domestic violence, particularly in the digital era where access to support may be limited. The issue of Domestic Violence (DV) is very important and interesting to study, considering that nationally the number of DV cases has increased significantly<sup>5</sup> from year to year.<sup>6</sup> Domestic violence is a serious social and public health problem that occurs in all countries.<sup>7</sup> In this regard, data from the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection (PPPA) as of October 2022<sup>8</sup> reported that the number of DV cases in Indonesia in 2022 reached 18,719 cases. Of that number, more than 90 per cent or 17,159 cases were experienced by women. The data also revealed that 12,468 cases of DV occurred in the household. Then, from the types of relationships in cases of violence, as many as 3,414 cases occurred in husband/wife relationships, 2,109 cases in parent-child relationships, 1,087 cases in sibling relationships, and 54 cases in employer-and-domestic-worker relationships.

<sup>1</sup> Romina Istratii and Parveen Ali, "A Scoping Review on the Role of Religion in the Experience of IPV and Faith-Based Responses in Community and Counseling Settings," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 51, no. 2 (2023): 141–73, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00916471221143440>.

<sup>2</sup> Sanjukta A. Pookulangara Sidharth Muralidharan, "Exploring the Functional Distinction between Hindu Religiosity and Spirituality in Direct and Indirect Domestic Violence Prevention PSAs: A Study of Bystander Intervention in the Era of COVID-19," *International Journal of Advertising*, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Tameka L. Gillum, Cris M. Sullivan, and Deborah I. Bybee, "The Importance of Spirituality in the Lives of Domestic Violence Survivors," *Violence Against Women* 12, no. 3 (2006): 240–50, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801206286224>.

<sup>4</sup> Christina G. Watlington and Christopher M. Murphy, "The Roles of Religion and Spirituality Among African American Survivors of Domestic Violence," *JOURNAL OF CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY* 62, no. 7 (2006): 837–57, <https://doi.org/doi:10.1002/jclp.20268>.

<sup>5</sup> Alex R. Piquero et al., "Domestic Violence during the COVID-19 Pandemic - Evidence from a Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Criminal Justice* 74, no. March (2021): 101806, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2021.101806>.

<sup>6</sup> Kusnul Hasanah, "'KDRT Di Surabaya Meningkatkan, Tahun Ini Ada 152 Kasus' (n.D.)," n.d., <https://jatim.idntimes.com/news/jatim/khusnul-hasana/kdrt-di-surabaya-meningkat-tahun-ini-ada-152-kasus?page=all>.

<sup>7</sup> M. Pilar Matud, "Dating Violence and Domestic Violence," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 40, no. 4 (2007): 295–97, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2007.02.001>.

<sup>8</sup> "CATAHU 2022," n.d., <https://komnasperempuan.go.id/catatan-tahunan-detail/catahu-2022-bayang-bayang-stagnansi-daya-pencegahan-dan-penanganan-berbanding-peningkatan-jumlah-ragam-dan-kompleksitas-kekerasan-berbasis-gender-terhadap-perempuan>.



PA Ministry data also reported that the areas with the highest number of violence cases against women (per 100,000 women)<sup>9</sup> involved East Java with 1,381 victims, Central Java with 1,232 victims, West Java with 1,123 victims, DKI Jakarta with 989 victims, North Sumatra with 953 victims, Yogyakarta Special Region with 888 victims, South Sulawesi with 804 victims, Banten with 771 victims, East Nusa Tenggara with 767 victims, and West Nusa Tenggara with 639 victims.

The number of domestic violence cases has been increasing from year to year, with incidents far wider than what the statistics and data show due to issues encountered during the data collection process by government and non-governmental institutions. The National Commission on Violence Against Women claims the same point, stating that the 338,496 cases reported in 2021 do not accurately represent the actual number of domestic violence cases.<sup>10</sup> The valid statistical data that we can access and rely on were derived from religious court cases. Interestingly, statistical data reveal an increase in divorce rates, where every year the number of women who initiate divorce in court is getting higher and increasing sharply.<sup>11</sup>

This statistic does not provide detailed information on the number of women reporting different types of domestic violence (physical, sexual, psychological, etc.). However, it reveals that many women want to get a divorce.<sup>12</sup> Domestic violence seems to be a hidden problem because there is a strong understanding that family problems are private matters, and, thus, it is unnecessary to share them with outsiders. Interference from outsiders is considered impolite and violates the privacy of the troubled family.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the frequency and intensity of domestic violence are not easily known and predicted. Some even argue that domestic violence is like an iceberg, appearing very small on the surface, but very large underneath. Domestic violence spans across cultures and many countries, including Indonesia. From women's and children's perspectives, it is taboo to report domestic violence because it is a private matter, not in the public domain.<sup>14</sup> Therefore domestic violence screening through the empowerment and mentoring of mental health cadres is needed to raise awareness of domestic violence. Millions of U.S. households have children who have witnessed intimate partner violence (IPV) between their caregivers. The far-reaching negative influences of IPV on children encompass numerous psychological outcomes and delays in various domains of child development.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Lukman Hakim, *Kasus Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan Di Jawa Timur Tertinggi Nasional* (n.d.).

<sup>10</sup> 'Komnas Perempuan 2022', n.d.

<sup>11</sup> 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 (2020): 266–295.

<sup>12</sup> Maimun Maimun, Mohammad Toha, and Misbahul Arifin, 'FENOMENA TINGGINYA ANGKA CERAI-GUGAT DAN FAKTOR PENYEBABNYA: Analisis Reflektif Atas Kasus-Kasus Perceraian Di Madura', *Islamuna: Jurnal Studi Islam* 5, no. 2 (2019): 157.

<sup>13</sup> 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 (2020): 266–95.

<sup>14</sup> Erna Erawati et al., "The Domestic Violence Screening Through The Empowerment of Mental Health Cadres," *International Journal of Indonesian Society and Culture* 10, no. 2 (2018): 220–24, <https://doi.org/10.15294/komunitas.v10i2.12542>.

<sup>15</sup> Ying Zhang et al., "Intimate Partner Violence Exposure and Self-Regulation in Children and Adolescents: A Systematic Review," *Journal of Family Violence*, September 8, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-023-00636-1>.



We still remember at the beginning of 2022 when Oki Setiana Dewi's (OSD) lecture on women and domestic violence went viral and received both negative and positive comments.<sup>16</sup> OSD talked about domestic violence in Jeddah, where wives should not talk about and expose their husbands' shame to anyone, including parents, friends, and others. A wife should remain patient because patience will soften her husband's heart. This also happens in the wider Muslim world, including Indonesia, based on the widely accepted (but also debated) teachings of the Qur'an.<sup>17</sup> A husband has the right to hit his wife if she is disobedient, and this is justified by a verse from the Qur'an. OSD broadly represents discourse on the role and responsibilities of women in the family and reproduces the idea that if there is domestic violence, it is the responsibility of the woman because she is the cause and solution as a wife and mother to her children.<sup>18</sup> Because on her shoulders lies the responsibility of family harmony, not as a shared responsibility.<sup>19</sup>

The above depiction is a phenomenon of domestic violence that can be found in almost every family with varying intensity and degree. There are families in which domestic violence never occurs, while some other families are prone to this problem. Domestic violence can take the form of verbal abuse, such as harsh and hurtful words, as well as layered forms of abuse, such as verbal and physical violence, psychological and economic abuse, social abuse, and even sexual violence (marital rape). Domestic violence, a pervasive societal issue, has long been recognized as a complex and multifaceted challenge. However, as technology becomes increasingly ingrained in our daily lives, its influence on the manifestation and perception of domestic violence cannot be overlooked. The digital era introduces novel avenues for the expression and exacerbation of abuse, but it also provides platforms for victims to seek solace and support. Amidst this complex landscape, spirituality emerges as a significant factor, weaving its threads into the narratives of those affected by domestic violence.

The spiritualization of domestic violence refers to religious beliefs, practices, and teachings intertwining with the experiences of abuse. This phenomenon holds the potential to either exacerbate the trauma or serve as a source of empowerment for victims. As individuals turn to their faith for guidance and resilience, religious institutions play a crucial role in shaping their responses, influencing coping mechanisms and contributing to the overall narrative of victimhood. Islam is a religion of compassion that spreads blessings to all creatures, always teaching peace and rejecting violence in any form, whether inside or outside the household. Islam also emphasizes that the purpose of marriage is to cultivate love (*mawaddah*) and create tranquillity and peace (*sakinah*) within the household. This article will delve into various documents and literary data and present the facts about domestic

<sup>16</sup> See *Ceramah Oki Setiana Dewi*, n.d., <https://youtu.be/DehBc7weum4>.

<sup>17</sup> Syaifuddin Zuhdi et al., 'Domestic Violence as a Consequence of Nusyuz under the Islamic Law and Legislation of Indonesia', *Humanities and Social Sciences Reviews* 7, no. 2 (2019): 340–348.

<sup>18</sup> Loretta J. Stalans, 'Family Harmony or Individual Protection: Public Remmendations About How Police Can Handle Domestic Violence Situations', *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 9, no. 2 (1984): 183–205.

<sup>19</sup> Ariane J. Utomo, 'Women as Secondary Earners: Gendered Preferences on Marriage and Employment of University Students in Modern Indonesia', *Asian Population Studies* 8, no. 1 (2012): 65–85.



violence, which is rooted in patriarchal ideology, and demonstrate the role of religious institutions in helping victims of domestic violence to heal.

### Domestic Violence and its Root Causes

Domestic violence, or intimate partner violence, is a global phenomenon and a highly complex issue. It takes many forms, such as physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence, all of which can harm victims emotionally and physically. Although domestic violence can happen to anyone, including men and children, the majority of victims are women.

The root causes of domestic violence stem from patriarchal systems that are still prevalent in societies worldwide. Patriarchy views men as leaders and decision-makers within families and grants them privileged rights to control other family members, especially women. This reinforces male dominance within families and reinforces the belief that violence can be used to control partners or other family members.

In addition, other factors that contribute to domestic violence include gender inequality, economic pressure, lack of education, and the normalization of violence within families. Many domestic violence victims feel powerless and trapped in situations that they cannot control. It is important to acknowledge that domestic violence is unacceptable in any religion, culture, or society. Everyone must play an active role in combating domestic violence and providing support to domestic violence victims to escape dangerous situations and find the help they need.

The term domestic violence is often understood by the general public as limited to physical violence. However, domestic violence takes many forms that are outlined in Law No. 23 of 2004 on the Elimination of Domestic Violence (PKDRT).<sup>20</sup> According to Article 1, domestic violence is any act against someone, especially women, that results in physical, sexual, psychological, and/or neglect of the household including threats to commit illegal acts, coercion, or deprivation of freedom within the household.<sup>21</sup>

Based on the PKDRT, there are four types of domestic violence, namely (1) physical violence such as injuring, kicking, hitting, or even killing, (2) sexual violence ranging from sexual harassment such as touching breasts to rape, (3) psychological violence such as cases of infidelity, and (4) economic violence that can lead to household neglect. From these four types of domestic violence, it can be said that they are violations that can be processed legally. Domestic violence can also take the form of verbal abuse, such as insults, shouting, and intimidation, spiritual violence such as prohibiting someone from practising their religion according to their beliefs and denomination, or social violence such as prohibiting someone from socializing with neighbours, meeting relatives, or old friends.

<sup>20</sup> Tina Marlina, Montisa Mariana, and Irma Maulida, 'Sosialisasi Undang-Undang Nomer 23 Tahun 2004 Tentang Penghapusan Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga', *Abdimas Awang Long* 5, no. 2 (2022): 67–73.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*



Scholars have shown that marital relations within the institution of marriage in Indonesia are highly complex<sup>22</sup> and require an inclusive analysis of various factors that hinder women from leaving unhealthy and violent marriages.<sup>23</sup> Anthropological insights reveal that domestic violence is not considered violence from a local perspective when violence has been normalized.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, many women are prevented from obtaining a valid divorce certificate due to social and cultural constraints placed upon them.<sup>25</sup> In addition, there is a sense of shame associated with the status of being a widow that will be bestowed upon them. This seems to be the main reason to avoid divorce.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, the role of Islamic discourse in shaping women's thoughts about marriage as a sacred institution must be maintained even in the face of ongoing suffering, particularly regarding the Quranic statement about hitting disobedient wives as a form of corrective teaching justified by the Quran.<sup>27</sup> Anthropological studies show that such attitudes and behaviours are heavily influenced by a combination of patriarchal culture and patriarchal interpretations of Islamic teachings reflected in conventional jurisprudence. This has created a space for domestic violence, where men occupy dominant positions and women are required to demonstrate submission to them, with such submission depicted as a divine order.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, "patience" for women as wives is seen as a responsibility and a solution for all types of difficulties, including economic, social, and domestic violence. The point of convergence between the personal choice to endure a "dangerous" household where a wife's mental and physical health and safety are at risk and the religious-cultural expectations surrounding the wife's responsibility to maintain family harmony is highly complex and cannot be resolved alone.<sup>29</sup>

Some members of society consider domestic violence as an internal matter that does not need to be publicized to the public, as it only concerns the husband and wife. If they feel like they cannot find a solution, then only close family members, either from the wife's or husband's side, have the right to know, and even then, it is very rare. If a woman is attacked by an unknown person, then the community will come to help. This is the opposite when it comes to a domestic dispute between husband and wife, where the community tends to stay silent and consider it as something

<sup>22</sup> Nur Faizah, 'AYAT-AYAT TENTANG RELASI LAKI-LAKI DAN PEREMPUAN DALAM AL-QUR'AN: Analisis Struktural Levi-Strauss', *Al-Ahwal: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 8, no. 2 (2016): 111.

<sup>23</sup> Nur Faizah, 'Nusyuz : Antara Kekerasan Fisik Dan Seksual', *Al-Ahwal: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 6, no. 2 (2013): 113–128.

<sup>24</sup> Jennifer McCleary-Sills et al., 'Stigma, Shame and Women's Limited Agency in Help-Seeking for Intimate Partner Violence', *Global Public Health* 11, no. 1–2 (2016): 224–235.

<sup>25</sup> K. O'Shaughnessy, *Gender, State and Social Power in Contemporary Indonesia: Divorce and Marriage Law*. (Routledge, 2009).

<sup>26</sup> G. W. Jones, *Marriage and Divorce in Islamic South-East Asia*. (Oxford University Press., 1994).

<sup>27</sup> Nur Rofiah, 'Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga Dalam Perspektif Islam', *Wawasan: Jurnal Ilmiah Agama dan Sosial Budaya* 2, no. 1 (2017): 31–44.

<sup>28</sup> Lily Zakiah Munir, 'Domestic Violence in Indonesia', *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights* 2, no. 1 (2005).

<sup>29</sup> Bianca J. Smith and Atun Wardatun, 'Domestic Violence and Islamic Spirituality in Lombok, Indonesia: Women's Use of Sufi Approaches to Suffering', *Contemporary Islam*, no. 0123456789 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-022-00495-5>.



normal. They will remain silent as if they do not want to intervene in such matters, even though domestic violence can threaten the victim's life. If domestic violence occurs outside the home and the community becomes aware of it, they will remain silent or suggest that the problem should be solved within the home.<sup>30</sup>

As an issue that is considered internal and not public domain by the community, cases of domestic violence are very difficult to detect by anyone including close family or neighbours. This adds to the drastic increase in the number of domestic violence cases and makes it difficult to detect the number of victims. Domestic violence cases can be legally processed if the marriage is legal in a way that it is valid and recorded by official documents and the state, marked by a registration number on the official marriage book.<sup>31</sup> However, since the enactment of the PKDRT law and the institutions that serve domestic violence victims, many domestic violence victims have sought legal protection from these institutions.

## Result and Discussion

### The intersection of spirituality and technology in the context of domestic violence

During the era of RA Kartini, collective awareness regarding women's justice and gender did not grow among religious leaders and religious institutions. Women were marginalized and never given space to express their opinions. Kartini, who was born into an aristocratic family, was considered a woman with the courage to ask her teacher, Kyai Soleh Darat Semarang, about the interpretation of the Qur'an in Javanese language that could be understood and comprehended by the indigenous population at that time.<sup>32</sup>

During Indonesia's struggle for independence and post-colonial era, there was a shift in the authority of religious institutions. However, the authoritarian political regime at the time led to a lack of awareness among religious scholars and institutions regarding gender justice and equality for women. As time passed and the era of reform began, there was a growing awareness among religious institutions and scholars of the importance of gender equality, women's rights, and the protection of women and children. This brought fresh air for women seeking justice, but the issues and challenges were complex to overcome.

In Javanese tradition, women are often confined to traditional feminine ideals that emphasize obedience and submission, strongly influenced by Islamic teachings that see men as leaders and women as needing to be obedient to their husbands. After marriage, women are bound to fulfil their socially prescribed roles as homemakers, child-bearers, and supporters of their husbands. This ideology of harmony is often applied as a norm in marriage, called "njaga praja," meaning that a husband's honour must be protected from outside the family.<sup>33</sup> This sense of harmony suggests that conflicts and oppression within the family should not be talked about. As a result,

<sup>30</sup> Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir and Ummu Azizah Mukarnawati, *Referensi Bagi Hakim Peradilan Agama*, 2013.

<sup>31</sup> "CATAHU 2022."

<sup>32</sup> Asvi Warman Adam, *Seabad Kontroversi Sejarah* (Yogyakarta : Ombak, 2007: Ombak, 2007).

<sup>33</sup> Djohan E., 'Women's Live in Javanese Family (Ideology and Reality).', *Indonesian Institute of Sciences, Center for Population and Manpower Studies*; no. Working paper No. 9, Jakarta; 1999. (n.d.).



domestic violence is often kept hidden, and if exposed, it reveals a lack of harmony both within the family and the nation.<sup>34</sup>

### Intersection of Spirituality and Technology

In the evolving landscape of domestic violence, the intersection of spirituality and technology introduces a nuanced dimension that significantly influences the experiences of individuals ensnared in abusive relationships. The intricate interplay between these two powerful forces shapes the coping mechanisms of victims, the dynamics of abuse, and the avenues available for seeking support and healing. Religious institutions can play a significant role in providing support and catharsis for victims of domestic violence. In many cultures, religion is intertwined with daily life and provides a framework for social interactions and community values. Religious institutions can use this influence to promote healthy relationships and provide resources for victims of domestic violence.

Religious institutions can assist victims of domestic violence by providing counselling services. Religious leaders can offer confidential counselling and support to victims and help them navigate their options for seeking help. Additionally, religious institutions can partner with local organizations that provide legal and medical assistance to domestic violence victims. Religious institutions can also use their platform to raise awareness about domestic violence and promote healthy relationships. This can be done through sermons, workshops, and community events that focus on the importance of respect, communication, and mutual support in relationships. By promoting healthy relationship behaviours, religious institutions can help prevent domestic violence and support victims.

The ideology of family harmony has been established as a priority by the Indonesian Government, and women have been given a significant role in maintaining that harmony.<sup>35</sup> Juridically, the Marriage Law No. 1 of 1974 states that husbands and wives have equal rights in the marriage relationship although the husband is declared as the head of the household and the wife is responsible for the household. Only in the last decade, in the era of political reform, violence against women was officially declared as a national problem. A Domestic Violence Law was enacted in Indonesia in 2004. However, a national study conducted by Rifka Annisa in 2008 revealed that this law has not been well implemented and is not well understood by the general public. Legally, Marriage Law No. 1 of 1974 states that husbands and wives have equal rights in their marital relationship although husbands are declared as the head of the household and wives are responsible for the household. Only in the last decade, during the political reform era, was violence against women officially declared as a national problem. A Domestic Violence Law was enacted in Indonesia in 2004. However, a national study conducted by Rifka

<sup>34</sup> Smith I. Sciortino R, 'Kemenangan Harmoni: Peningkaran Kekerasan Domestik Di Jawa.', *Jurnal Perempuan* 1997; 3: 3034 3 (1997): 3034.

<sup>35</sup> Ariane J Utomo, 'Women as Equal Partners and Secondary Earners : Gendered Expectations on Career and Family Formation in Modern Indonesia', no. September 2004 (n.d.): 15–17.





Annisa in 2008<sup>36</sup> revealed that this law has not been well-implemented and is not well-understood by the general public.

Religious institutions currently have a very important role in dealing with the increasing prevalence of domestic violence cases in society. Based on this fact, religious institutions must provide an understanding of gender, women's equality, and justice to minimize cases of domestic violence. This can be done by incorporating these topics into the material given during religious activities provided by religious figures during sermons in mosques, churches, temples, and shrines. The intersection of spirituality and technology in the context of domestic violence presents both challenges and opportunities. Challenges include the potential misuse of religious doctrines to perpetuate abuse and the risks associated with technology-enabled control. Opportunities arise in the form of digital platforms fostering awareness, providing resources, and creating avenues for spiritual healing and empowerment. The overview sets the stage for a nuanced exploration of the roles played by spirituality and technology in the complex dynamics of domestic violence. By understanding this intersection, we can unravel the ways in which these two influential forces contribute to the experiences of individuals, the perpetuation of abuse, and the possibilities for support and healing in the digital age.

### **Importance of religious institutions in victim empowerment**

The number of domestic violence cases in Banyumas Regency is quite high. The triggers of domestic violence are quite diverse, including economic factors, infidelity, and patriarchal culture. The most dominant factor is attributed to the economy, which impacts conflicts within families, resulting in children and wives becoming victims. The role of religious institutions in addressing domestic violence is as follows: The NU Muslimat Branch Board has a very high response to cases of domestic violence in Banyumas, as evidenced by their advocacy and education programs, including (1) legal education (Islamic and positive), (2) gender-based litigation and non-litigation advocacy, (3) monitoring, supporting, and providing constructive criticism on the implementation of law and democracy, (4) empowering legal independence for communities, and (5) collaborating with the Indonesian Advocates Association (PERADI), legal NGOs, universities (law faculties), and stakeholders. The role of religious institutions in Banyumas in addressing domestic violence is only preventive and not yet optimal. Domestic violence cases are reported to women's empowerment agencies, one of which is the PKBGA PPT of Banyumas Regency and the PPA of Banyumas Regency Police.<sup>37</sup>

Female survivors of former domestic violence victims were assisted by WCC Jombang selected based on certain criteria.<sup>38</sup> The behaviour of maintaining the integrity of the marriage is based on the “in-order-to motive” and the “because motive”. ‘Because motive’ for maintaining a marriage is a consideration of the close relationship between a son-in-law and a mother-in-law, a son-in-law and a brother,

<sup>36</sup> Hayati EN. Report on the monitoring of the implementation of Indonesia domestic violence act in six provinces. Yogyakarta: Rifka Annisa; 2008 Hasyim N, Kurniawan AP, *Report on the Monitoring of the Implementation of Indonesia Domestic Violence Act in Six Provinces*. (Yogyakarta: Rifka Annisa, 2008).

<sup>37</sup> Umi Muzayanah, ‘Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga Dan Peran Lembaga Agama Di Banyumas Jawa Tengah’, *Smart 2*, no. 2 (2016): 199.

<sup>38</sup> Anisatul Badiah, “Upaya Perempuan Korban KDRT Dalam Mempertahankan Pernikahan,” *Jurnal Sosiologi Dialektika*, 2022, 97–108, <https://dx.doi.org/10.20473/jsd.v17i1.2022.97-108>.



hindered by the husband's profession, and the consideration of children. In the "in-order-to" motive action to maintain the marriage, the hope is that the family will return to being intact and harmonious; there will be no violence and no third person. Furthermore, in order to maintain the marriage, wives should make mediation efforts, rearrange the household, ask for protection from the authorities, and assist the Jombang WCC. This study concludes that the existence of both motives allows wives to maintain the marriage and establish new knowledge

The issue of domestic violence (KDRT) has been prevalent in the Maluku Islands, especially in Ambon.<sup>39</sup> Many victims of KDRT end up dying and these incidents have not been properly reported and the cases are not handled accordingly. To address the problem of KDRT, a better understanding of the obligations of husbands and wives is needed and pre-marital guidance should be provided. The goal of pre-marital education is to develop an understanding among prospective spouses regarding their rights and obligations within the family. It is also important to provide them with the knowledge to resolve household problems without resorting to KDRT. In Maluku, KDRT has gained legitimacy without being noticed, especially among families and communities where violence is used as a means to resolve conflicts. To address KDRT, the Maluku government has established mediation, empowered mediators, and protected victims while they are in their homes. Abuse is treated as a criminal offense and the perpetrators are punished without mercy.<sup>40</sup> As for the effect of intimate abuse on mental health, the data speak loudly to the power of partner abuse. Even with a measure of so-called violence victimization that in this sample includes very little violence, the authors can demonstrate effects on a variety of mental health outcomes. As one of the anonymous reviewers of this comment put it, "There are harmful effects of psychological abuse.... Caustic, cruel forms of communication are corrosive to relationships and personal well-being." Imagine how much stronger Fergusson et al.'s findings would have been had they operationalized intimate terrorism/domestic violence.<sup>41</sup>

Based on anthropological fieldwork from 2017 to 2020 in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, the idea of a pluralizing agency carried out by women within the framework of Islam is done as a way to overcome domestic violence. The practice of Sufism (*zikir*) combined with the recitation of the Quran and prayers can be understood as a "hidden agency" carried out by women in mediating their violence and piety, particularly as an effort to reduce their suffering from domestic violence. The idea that women can move between fortune and fate in the contested social discourse landscape of Lombok reflects the expansive and contractive nature of resistance within social structures that limit/are limited, which also has the power to narrow and expand. The hidden agency carried out by these women takes place in a context dominated by male authority and Tuan Guru religious leaders who spread certain ideas about the relationship between husband and wife. In response to the normalization of unequal power relations in marriage, women here use *dzikir* as a

<sup>39</sup> Hasbollah Toisuta et al., 'LEARNING VALUES THROUGH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OF THE COMMUNAL CONFLICT IN MALUKU, INDONESIA' (2014): 1347–1357.

<sup>40</sup> Smith and Wardatun, 'Domestic Violence and Islamic Spirituality in Lombok, Indonesia: Women's Use of Sufi Approaches to Suffering'.

<sup>41</sup> Michael P. Johnson, "Domestic Violence: It's Not about Gender: Or Is It?," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 67, no. 5 (2015): 1126–30.



tool to alleviate their suffering from domestic violence and hope that God will change their husband's behaviour.<sup>42</sup>

Islam does not tolerate any form of violence, including domestic violence. Islam is very concerned and attentive to victims of domestic violence. Islam defends victims of domestic violence through several actions. According to Islamic teachings, if a husband and wife are involved in a dispute, they should seek the help of a mediator, known as hakamain, consisting of a husband and a wife. According to QS an-Nisa/4:35, this institution was established. "If you fear a breach between them, appoint an arbitrator from his family and an arbitrator from her family. If they wish to reconcile, Allah will effect a reconciliation between them. Surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware." Two mediators (hakamain) must find a solution that can reconcile the desires of both husband and wife, to make them live in peace again. In short, hakamain must resolve conflicts between husband and wife so as not to cause harm to the wife during the conflict with her husband. Therefore, hakamain brings peace to husbands and wives trapped in conflict. The mediator can protect the victim of violence from their partner.<sup>43</sup>

Domestic violence is often used as a reason for divorce in court proceedings, as explained in Article 19 letter d of Government Regulation No. 9 of 1975 which states that when there is violence or abuse against one's spouse, it can be used as a legal reason for divorce. This is similar to what happens in Malaysia (Negeri Sembilan, Selangor, Pulau Pinang, and Johor) and Maldives. However, there is a difference in the right to file for divorce due to domestic violence. In Indonesia and Malaysia, both parties are allowed to file for divorce due to domestic violence. Whereas in Maldives, only the wife is allowed to do so.<sup>44</sup> During the 2015 Fatayat Congress, all of its members were mandated to establish a Women and Children Consultation Institution (LKPA)<sup>45</sup> across the country to assist in the healing process of victims of domestic violence. The increase in awareness and understanding of gender and the values of women's justice has greatly helped in minimizing domestic violence. The shift in perspectives and understanding, as well as awareness of the importance of women's justice, domestic violence, and prevention, is evident with the presence of KUPi events.<sup>46</sup> All religious figures, including male and female preachers, academics, and anyone with a gender perspective, exchanged ideas and poured out their thoughts on gender justice, preventing domestic violence, and other related topics during the KUPi event. The result of the women's congress in Cirebon produced a recommendation as a movement to strengthen the principle of Islam as *rahmatan lil 'alamin* and the dimensions of spirituality, humanity, intellectuality, culture, and structure. The dialectical process in the KUPI congress brought positive ideas, such

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Desmond Ellis and Noreen Stuckless, 'Domestic Violence, Dove, and Divorce Mediation', *Family Court Review* 44, no. 4 (2006): 658–671.

<sup>44</sup> Martina Purna Nisa, 'Critical Review of Domestic Violence as Reason for Divorce (Comparison of Divorce Laws in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Maldives)', *AL-IHKAM: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial* 16, no. 1 (2021): 1–26.

<sup>45</sup> 'Fatayat NU', n.d., <https://jawasatu.com/jawa-timur/fatayat-nu-gresik/> diakses pada tanggal 24 Agustus 2022.

<sup>46</sup> 'Menguatkan Eksistensi Dan Peran Ulama Perempuan Indonesia: Rencana Strategis Gerakan Keulamaan Perempuan Indonesia Pasca KUPI 2018 - 2023' (n.d.), [https://kupipedia.id/index.php/Menguatkan\\_Eksistensi\\_dan\\_Peran\\_Ulama\\_Perempuan\\_Indonesia:\\_Rencana\\_Strategis\\_Gerakan\\_Keulamaan\\_Perempuan\\_Indonesia\\_Pasca\\_KUPI\\_2018\\_-\\_2023](https://kupipedia.id/index.php/Menguatkan_Eksistensi_dan_Peran_Ulama_Perempuan_Indonesia:_Rencana_Strategis_Gerakan_Keulamaan_Perempuan_Indonesia_Pasca_KUPI_2018_-_2023).



as preserving the environment based on gender justice. The agenda developed after the KUPI congress formed a movement committed to recognizing women's existence by acknowledging the work they have done and fighting gender injustice.

KUPI serves as a meeting place for diverse educational backgrounds and non-partisan, inclusive, participatory, cross-organizational, cross-generational, cross-social and educational backgrounds. KUPI also reflects the women scholars, as well as the consolidation of knowledge of Indonesian women scholars and those from around the world.<sup>47</sup> Not only that, the recommendations produced by KUPI serve as a reference for policymakers as they reflect on various issues faced by society. The recognition of KUPI as a movement of female clerics has been widely accepted by society. Therefore, the government must involve KUPI in strategic work and make KUPI a government partner. Civil society must also collaborate with KUPI to build a just civilization both locally and regionally. The state must change and align regulations that prioritize the safety and protection of women's lives and implement them consistently, prioritizing regulations that support victims of domestic violence.<sup>48</sup>

East Java fatayat administrator Khosiah said that in fatayat there is a Consultation Institute for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (LK3PA) which cooperates with legal service institutions in assisting victims of domestic violence. Likewise, in Fatayat Lamongan, Anis Su'adah said that in Fatayat there is an Institute for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (LP3A) through the field of advocacy and usually collaborates with the Lamongan Women's Alliance and P2TP2A in assisting victims of domestic violence, those who need assistance are usually carried out in a digital space with a special link or known as a silver spiker. In Fatayat Yogyakarta, Khotim as the former Chairperson of Fatayat also explained that the assistance of victims of domestic violence is also carried out by counselling conducted by counsellors such as hotlines and legal services synergized with Rifka Annisa Women's Crisis Center; if they need a safe house, Fatayat Yogyakarta will provide it.

## Conclusion

The digital era has brought unprecedented avenues for the expression and exacerbation of domestic violence, while simultaneously providing victims with new platforms to seek support and solace. Within this context, the phenomenon of spiritualization has emerged as a significant coping mechanism, influencing how individuals interpret and navigate their experiences of abuse. Our study has revealed instances where religious teachings serve as sources of strength, guiding victims through their journey towards empowerment and healing. However, it is essential to acknowledge the nuanced nature of spiritualization. While religious institutions can offer vital support, there are instances where traditional beliefs may inadvertently perpetuate harmful norms or act as barriers to seeking secular assistance. Striking a

<sup>47</sup> Rizka Nur Laila M, '5 Isu Krusial Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI) II, Dorong Keadilan' (n.d.), <https://www.merdeka.com/jatim/5-isu-krusial-kongres-ulama-perempuan-indonesia-kupi-ii-dorong-keadilan.html>.

<sup>48</sup> Lutfiana Dwi Mayasari, '8 Rekomendasi Hasil KUPI II: Mewujudkan Peradaban Yang Berkeadilan' (n.d.), <https://kupi.or.id/8-rekomendasi-hasil-kupi-ii-mewujudkan-peradaban-yang-berkeadilan/>.



balance between the positive and potentially detrimental aspects of spiritualization is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of its role in the lives of domestic violence victims.

Our examination of the digital realm has illuminated the ways in which online spaces, forums, and social media platforms become arenas for the expression of spiritualized narratives. These spaces serve as both battlegrounds, where harmful ideologies may be perpetuated, and sanctuaries, where victims find understanding and support. The role of religious leaders and communities in these digital spaces becomes pivotal, influencing the narratives and shaping the discourse surrounding domestic violence. The cathartic role of religious institutions in empowering victims is evident through their provision of counselling, guidance, and community support. Our study underscores the importance of cultivating safe spaces within religious communities where victims can share their experiences without fear of judgment, fostering an environment conducive to healing. Additionally, the engagement of religious leaders in awareness campaigns and advocacy efforts emerges as a potent force in dismantling harmful stereotypes and fostering understanding within religious people.

As we navigate the spiritualization of domestic violence, it becomes clear that a multidimensional approach is necessary for effective intervention and support. Recommendations for religious leaders include ongoing sensitivity training to better understand the complexities of domestic violence and the diverse needs of victims. Furthermore, collaborations between religious institutions and secular organizations can create comprehensive support networks, bridging the gap between faith-based and secular assistance. In conclusion, this research contributes to the broader discourse on domestic violence, spirituality, and technology. By navigating the spiritualization of domestic violence in the digital era, we move toward a more nuanced and informed understanding of the challenges faced by victims and the potential for religious institutions to serve as catalysts for empowerment and healing. As we continue to grapple with these complex dynamics, we hope that this study will inspire further research, dialogue, and collaborative efforts to create a society that is compassionate, supportive, and responsive to the needs of those affected by domestic violence.

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