Al'Adālah Vol. 29, No. 1 (2026) Journal of Islamic Studies
P-ISSN 1410-7406 | E-ISSN 2684-8368
Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat (LP2M)
Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq of Jember, Indonesia
https://aladalah.uinkhas.ac.id

Family authority and marriage mediation after *Londo Iha* in Wera, Bima Regency, Indonesia

Nurfah[1], Muhammad Wildan[2]*, Moh Soehadha[3]

OPEN ACCESS

Received: May 19, 2026
Revised: August 1, 2026
Accepted: September 24, 2026
Published: October 7, 2026

*Corresponding Author:
Muhammad Wildan, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia
muhammad.wildan@uin-suka.ac.id

About Authors:
[1] Nurfah, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia
[2] Muhammad Wildan, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia
[3] Moh Soehadha, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

Londo Iha, a local Bimanese practice of elopement, continues to occur when marriage plans encounter parental refusal, financial pressure, pregnancy, or relationship conflict. Its persistence raises a broader question about what happens after elopement, when personal choice still meets family authority, local religious mediation, and formal marriage requirements. This study examines five *Londo Iha* cases in Wera District, Bima Regency, Indonesia, between 2023 and 2025, focusing on the circumstances surrounding the practice, digital communication, mediation, and outcomes. Using a qualitative design based on ethnographic fieldwork, data were drawn from interviews with 12 participants, field observations, documentary materials, and selected digital materials provided by participants. Four cases proceeded to marriage after family or local mediation and the completion of relevant legal requirements, while one ended without marriage. Digital communication made private coordination easier and, in the unresolved case, made parts of the dispute visible beyond the immediate parties. The findings show that *Londo Iha* can interrupt the ordinary family process without displacing family authority. They also suggest that mediation should be assessed by the conditions under which agreement is reached and by the consequences that remain when it fails.

Keywords: *Londo Iha*; elopement; family authority; marriage mediation; legal pluralism.

Introduction

Marriage decisions among Muslim communities in Indonesia often involve more than the preferences of the couple. Parents and extended families may influence partner choice; customary expectations may shape marriage arrangements; religious considerations remain important; and the marriage must also meet formal legal requirements (Fauzi, 2019; Platt, 2017). Tension can arise when these expectations do not align, particularly over parental approval and the financial arrangements surrounding marriage (Wardatun, 2016, 2024). Elopement makes this tension especially visible because leaving the ordinary family process does not necessarily resolve the disagreement.

To cite this article (APA Style 7th Edition): Nurfah, Wildan, M., & Soehadha, M. (2026). Family authority and marriage mediation after *Londo Iha* in Wera, Bima regency, Indonesia. *Al'Adalah: Journal of Islamic Studies, 29*(1), 137-156. https://doi.org/10.35719/aladalah.v29i1.693

Copyright © 2026 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

Family acceptance, religious concerns, and formal recognition may still matter afterward (Platt, 2012). In Wera District, Bima Regency, this situation can be seen in *Londo Iha*, a local Bimanese practice of elopement that continues to occur when marriage plans face difficulties within the usual family process.

In Bima, *Londo Iha* has been associated with marriage expenses, parental refusal, customary expectations, and tensions surrounding Islamic norms (Hasan et al., 2022; Kadir et al., 2026). A similar pattern appears in *merariq* in Lombok, where elopement may give young people room to pursue a partner while family, religious, and legal recognition remain important afterward (Apriansyah et al., 2025; Platt, 2012). The cases examined here concern situations in which *Londo Iha* became part of an effort to continue a relationship or marriage plan after difficulties arose in the ordinary family process. They do not concern unilateral physical abduction or forced marriage. The important question begins after *Londo Iha* has occurred: whether family opposition ends, how the dispute is handled, and under what conditions the marriage eventually proceeds or stops.

Freedom in choosing a partner does not necessarily reduce the influence of parents and extended families in Muslim marriage (Smith-Hefner, 2005). Formal recognition also does not by itself determine whether a marriage is socially accepted. Family approval and customary expectations may remain important even when the marriage must satisfy state requirements (Ahmad et al., 2023; Jannah et al., 2025; Muhyidin & Setyawan, 2025). Digital communication adds another dimension. Mobile phones and online platforms allow couples to maintain relationships and arrange communication beyond direct family supervision (Halim & Pratiwi, 2025; Wahib & Raushan, 2025). However, the room for private communication does not remove the family, religious, customary, and legal concerns surrounding marriage.

What remains less clear is the period after *Londo Iha* has occurred. The closest studies on *Londo Iha* have concentrated mainly on the circumstances surrounding its persistence, while giving less attention to what follows after elopement (Hasan et al., 2022; Kadir et al., 2026). Leaving the ordinary family process does not end the marriage dispute. Families still have to respond, and local religious figures known as *Lebe Na'e*, who also take part in family and local mediation in Wera, may become involved. If the marriage proceeds, the parties must still meet the formal requirements involving the Office of Religious Affairs (*Kantor Urusan Agama*, KUA) and, when legally required, the Religious Court. Digital communication may make coordination easier before *Londo Iha*, while an unresolved dispute may later become visible to people beyond those directly involved. Mediation may also fail, leaving the marriage unfinished and the conflict unresolved. What happens

during this period is important to understanding whether *Londo Iha* replaces family authority or changes the way a blocked marriage plan is pursued.

This article examines five *Londo Iha* cases in Wera District between 2023 and 2025. It asks two questions. Under what circumstances does *Londo Iha* occur, and how does digital communication affect its coordination and visibility? How do families, *Lebe Na'e*, and formal marriage institutions respond after *Londo Iha*, and what happens when mediation succeeds or fails? The article argues that *Londo Iha* can interrupt the ordinary family process without displacing family authority. In the cases examined, family discussion and local mediation remained important after elopement, while formal legal requirements continued to shape whether marriage could proceed. Digital communication changed how plans could be coordinated and, in one unresolved case, how parts of the dispute became visible to others. The contrast between successful and failed mediation shows why *Londo Iha* needs to be understood through what happens after elopement, rather than through the decision to elope alone.

Literature Review and Analytical Perspective

Marriage, Custom, and Plural Authority

Marriage among Muslim communities in Indonesia may involve personal choice while remaining closely connected to parents, extended families, religious expectations, customary practices, and state law (Ahmad et al., 2023; Platt, 2017; Smith-Hefner, 2005). In Bima, parental approval, kinship, and marriage payments are especially important in preparations for marriage. The locally negotiated *co'i* differs from Islamic *mahr* and may include *mahr* together with other components agreed upon between the families (Wardatun, 2016, 2024). Marriage conflict in Bima can involve more than disagreement over partner choice. It may also involve family approval and the economic arrangements surrounding marriage.

Formal recognition does not by itself determine whether a marriage is socially accepted (Jannah et al., 2025; Muhyidin & Setyawan, 2025). Family agreement and customary expectations may still matter even when a marriage must satisfy state requirements. Islamic norms, local understandings of marriage, and state regulation may shape the same marriage process (Ahmad et al., 2023; Jannah et al., 2025; Muhyidin & Setyawan, 2025). A marriage dispute may involve family acceptance, local expectations, religious considerations, and the formal requirements for the marriage to proceed.

Legal pluralism helps explain why marriage disputes cannot always be reduced to a single source of authority (Menski, 2006). Moore (1978) shows how communities may

maintain their own expectations and ways of resolving disputes while remaining subject to wider state law. Menski (2006) similarly draws attention to state law, religious norms, social expectations, and personal choice within the same social setting. For *Londo Iha*, this matters because elopement does not place the people involved outside these relationships. Families may still decide whether reconciliation is possible, *Lebe Na'e* may assist in mediation, religious considerations continue to matter, and the Office of Religious Affairs, or KUA, addresses formal marriage requirements. Legal pluralism helps explain how these sources of authority meet after *Londo Iha* has occurred.

Elopement, Partner Choice, and Digital Communication

Elopement can give young people room to pursue a relationship when parental approval, marriage payments, or other family expectations make the ordinary marriage process difficult (Apriansyah et al., 2025; Hasan et al., 2022; Kadir et al., 2026; Platt, 2012). In Lombok, *merariq* may give young people room in choosing a partner while family, religious, and formal recognition remain important afterward (Apriansyah et al., 2025; Platt, 2012). A similar tension appears in Bima, where marriage expenses and parental refusal have been associated with the persistence of *Londo Iha*, alongside continuing questions about customary expectations and Islamic norms (Hasan et al., 2022; Kadir et al., 2026). Elopement may change how a marriage is pursued without necessarily ending the relationships and expectations that shaped the dispute.

Personal choice in this setting cannot be understood simply as the opposite of family authority. A decision that challenges parental refusal can still be followed by efforts to regain family acceptance. Abu-Lughod (1990) cautions against equating resistance with liberation. A challenge may reveal where a particular decision is opposed while the wider relationship remains intact. For *Londo Iha*, acting against a particular family decision does not necessarily mean seeking independence from family involvement in marriage as a whole.

Digital communication has changed how couples maintain relationships and discuss marriage plans (Halim & Pratiwi, 2025; Wahib & Raushan, 2025). Mobile phones and online platforms allow couples to stay in contact and communicate beyond direct face-to-face family supervision. For *Londo Iha*, the important question is not whether digital technology causes elopement, but what it changes in practice. Private communication may make it easier to arrange meetings or plans, while an unresolved relationship dispute may later become visible to people beyond those directly involved. The dispute itself may

still involve parental approval, financial pressure, pregnancy, or problems within the relationship.

Elopement does not by itself complete the marriage process. Family acceptance and formal requirements may still matter afterward (Apriansyah et al., 2025; Platt, 2012). Mediation can then lead to different outcomes. When agreement is reached, the marriage process may continue toward family acceptance and formal registration. When agreement fails, the dispute may continue even after the proposed marriage has stopped. Social and reputational consequences may also continue, particularly in settings where women face stronger public judgment after unresolved marriage disputes (Darwis et al., 2026; Kadir et al., 2026). Failed mediation deserves attention alongside cases that end in reconciliation.

The central issue is what happens after *Londo Iha*, rather than the decision to elope alone. The circumstances surrounding elopement—parental refusal, marriage expenses, family expectations, and personal choice—are already relatively well documented (Hasan et al., 2022; Kadir et al., 2026; Platt, 2012). Less clear is how families respond after *Londo Iha*, how *Lebe Na'e* becomes involved, how formal marriage requirements enter the process, how digital communication affects coordination and visibility, and what follows when mediation fails. Legal pluralism helps explain how family authority, local religious mediation, personal choice, and state requirements meet within the same marriage process. Abu-Lughod's (1990) discussion of resistance has a narrower role. It cautions against assuming that a challenge to one family decision amounts to a rejection of family authority itself.

Methodology

This study used a qualitative design based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Wera District, Bima Regency, between 2023 and 2025. Five cases of *Londo Iha* were examined to understand the circumstances surrounding the practice, the family and local mediation that followed, the role of digital communication, and the eventual outcome of the marriage process. Wera District was selected because *Londo Iha* continues to occur in a setting where marriage decisions involve couples, families, local religious figures, customary expectations, and formal marriage administration. Comparing the five cases made it possible to identify shared patterns and important differences while retaining the social context of each dispute (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study followed what happened before and after *Londo Iha* instead of focusing only on the moment of elopement.

The study involved 12 participants selected for their involvement in marriage mediation, religious guidance, village affairs, marriage administration, or the cases examined. They included HH, a *Lebe Na'e* involved in local mediation; SL, a former *Lebe Na'e*; ZM, the Head of KUA Wera; FR, an Islamic religious counselor; DN, a BKKBN staff member; village and community figures HS, SD, and AL; HK, the male participant in Case 3; SIN, the female participant in Case 5; and both parents of MA in Case 5. Trusted local contacts helped the researcher reach participants when family disputes required sensitivity. Access to the five cases differed. Cases 1, 2, and 4 were reconstructed mainly through interviews with HH, who had been involved in their mediation, together with available supporting records. Case 3 included a direct interview with HK and information from community figures. Case 5 included a direct interview with SIN, interviews with both of MA's parents, KUA records, and digital materials provided by a participant. MA was invited to participate but did not agree to be interviewed. The cases were selected because each involved *Londo Iha* followed by family or local mediation, while their circumstances and outcomes differed. Four eventually proceeded to marriage, whereas Case 5 did not.

Data were collected through individual interviews, one group interview, field observations, documentary materials, and selected digital materials provided by participants. Interviews were conducted in Indonesian, *Nggahi Mbojo*, the local Bima language, or a combination of both. They were audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed for analysis. Field observations focused on marriage-related social activities and gatherings in Wera. Documentary materials included KUA marriage records, village documents, family-related records, and materials connected to local mediation. These materials were used mainly to check dates, administrative steps, and details discussed during interviews. Digital communication was examined mainly through participants' retrospective descriptions. The study did not monitor social media activity in real time, scrape online content, or systematically collect social media posts. In selected cases, participants provided digital materials related to the events they described. This was particularly important in Case 5, where screenshots of WhatsApp statuses and related digital communication were used to support and clarify the interview material rather than as a separate body of digital data.

Interview transcripts, field notes, documentary materials, and participant-provided digital materials were examined through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014). The first reading identified recurring issues, including marriage expenses, parental rejection, pregnancy, digital communication, family

mediation, religious concerns, marriage registration, and the consequences that followed mediation. These issues were grouped into broader themes and compared among the five cases. The analysis examined both shared patterns and differences in outcome, especially the difference between Cases 1–4, which eventually proceeded to marriage, and Case 5, which did not. Information from interviews was checked against field observations and available records whenever possible. When several participants discussed the same case, their descriptions were compared to identify points of agreement and difference. Selected transcripts and translated quotations were also checked with key participants to reduce misunderstanding of local expressions and meanings. The researcher's familiarity with *Nggahi Mbojo* and *Mbojo* social life assisted in interpreting local expressions, while the researcher had no kinship relationship or formal authority over the families involved.

The study involved sensitive information concerning intimate relationships, family disputes, pregnancy, and a case involving a person who was below the legal marriage age at the time of the event. Participants gave informed consent for interviews and audio recording, permission was obtained for the use of direct quotations, and participation was voluntary. MA's decision not to participate was respected. Real names were replaced with codes, while specific village details, family information, and other identifying details were omitted where necessary. Participants who provided digital materials also gave permission for their use in publication. Digital materials selected for publication were anonymized by removing names, profile photographs, usernames, telephone numbers, and other unnecessary identifying information. Interviews conducted in Indonesian and *Nggahi Mbojo* were translated into English for publication. Direct quotations were lightly edited for clarity and readability without changing their substantive meaning. Local expressions without a direct English equivalent were retained when relevant and explained at their first use.

Results

The five cases arose under different circumstances and did not follow the same course. Financial pressure surrounding marriage, parental rejection, pregnancy, and relationship conflict appeared in different combinations. Four cases eventually proceeded to marriage after family or local mediation and the completion of relevant legal requirements, while Case 5 ended without marriage. Digital communication was present in several cases, although its role differed. In some cases, it helped with private coordination; in Case 5, parts of an unresolved dispute later became visible to people beyond those directly involved. Table 1 summarizes the circumstances, mediation, digital communication, and outcomes of the five cases.

Table 1

Overview of the Five Londo Iha Cases in Wera, Bima Regency

Case	Main circumstances	Family and local mediation	Digital communication	Formal process and outcome
Case 1	Pregnancy, financial pressure, and a partner below the legal marriage age at the time of the event	Family discussion and mediation involving *Lebe Na'e*	Mobile communication was described retrospectively; no participant-provided digital materials were available	Judicial dispensation was required before the marriage proceeded to registration
Case 2	Relationship conflict and financial disagreement surrounding the proposed marriage	Families and local figures were involved in mediation	WhatsApp communication was described retrospectively	Sufficient agreement was reached for the marriage to proceed and be registered
Case 3	Parental rejection related to family background and social considerations	Further family discussion eventually led to acceptance	Smartphones were used to coordinate communication and movement	The marriage proceeded and was registered
Case 4	Long-distance relationship, pregnancy, and financial pressure within the family	Family and local mediation followed *Londo Iha*	Private mobile communication helped the couple remain in contact	The marriage proceeded and was registered
Case 5	Prolonged relationship and family disputes, including disagreement over financial preparation	Mediation did not lead to an agreement for the marriage to proceed	Participant-provided digital materials showed private exchanges and later wider visibility through WhatsApp statuses and related posts	The marriage application was withdrawn; the marriage was not registered, and the dispute continued afterward

Note. Access to the cases differed. Cases 1, 2, and 4 were reconstructed primarily through interviews with HH, the *Lebe Na'e* involved in their mediation, together with available supporting records. Case 3 included a direct interview with HK and information from community figures. Case 5 included a direct interview with SIN, interviews with both of MA's parents, KUA records, and participant-provided digital materials. MA did not participate in an interview.

Marriage Costs, Family Rejection, and the Choice of Londo Iha

The cases show that *Londo Iha* could arise when an ordinary marriage process became difficult to continue. Financial pressure was one recurring issue, although it did not take the same form in every case. HH, a *Lebe Na'e* who had mediated several of the cases, distinguished the Islamic *mahr* from the wider expenses surrounding marriage preparation:

> *"Islam and the state actually make marriage easier. The Prophet even allowed an iron ring as mahar. But our customs can delay marriage because families are expected to go through stages such as Panati, Mbolo Weki, and large wedding receptions (Jambuta). When families cannot meet these costs, some couples see Londo Iha as the only way to move forward"* (HH, personal communication, September 4, 2025).

In HH's explanation, *Panati* refers to the formal proposal process, *Mbolo Weki* to a family gathering associated with marriage preparation, and *Jambuta* to the wedding reception. His explanation shows that the financial difficulty surrounding marriage extended beyond *mahr* itself. Case 5 provides one example. The proposed marriage was affected by disagreement over money intended for marriage preparation after part of the funds was used for another family obligation. Financial pressure also appeared in other cases, although it did not by itself explain why *Londo Iha* occurred.

Parental rejection created a different kind of difficulty. In Case 3, HK and his partner wanted to marry, but her father rejected the relationship because of concerns about HK's family background. The refusal continued despite HK's stable employment and his intention to proceed with the marriage. HK described the point at which he no longer expected the ordinary family process to succeed:

> *"Waiting for formal approval meant the marriage would never happen. Her father even said he would rather eat pork than accept me as his son-in-law. That was why we chose Londo Iha. We felt it was the only way to make the marriage possible"* (HK, personal communication, August 28, 2025).

Case 3 shows that *Londo Iha* could be used to challenge a particular parental refusal without ending the couple's relationship with the family. HK and his partner still sought acceptance afterward, and the marriage eventually proceeded following further family discussion. In the five cases, financial pressure, parental rejection, pregnancy, and relationship conflict sometimes appeared separately and sometimes overlapped. *Londo Iha* changed how the marriage was pursued when the ordinary process had stalled. Mobile communication also affected how such plans could be arranged before families became involved again.

Digital Communication and Wider Visibility

Digital communication changed how *Londo Iha* could be arranged. SL, a former *Lebe Na'e*, recalled an earlier setting in which young people depended more heavily on physical opportunities to meet outside the home:

> *"Before smartphones, young women had to find a reason to leave the house without raising suspicion. They might say they were going to fetch water from the river (weha*

> *oi awa sori) or attend an evening Qur'an lesson (lao tana'o ngaji), and then use that opportunity to meet outside. At that time, people in the neighborhood paid close attention to where young people went"* (SL, personal communication, July 31, 2025).

SL's description shows that coordination depended on place, timing, and face-to-face contact. Leaving the house could itself attract attention from relatives or neighbors. Arranging a meeting required an opportunity to be physically away from home.

AL, a village official familiar with local marriage disputes, described how smartphones changed this practical situation:

> *"Today, a couple can arrange everything through their phones without other people knowing. They can agree on where to meet, get on a motorcycle, and leave the area before their parents even realize they are gone"* (AL, personal communication, August 28, 2025).

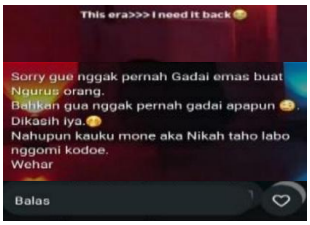
The difference between what SL and AL described lies in coordination rather than the reasons behind *Londo Iha*. Smartphones made it easier to agree on a meeting place, timing, and movement without first meeting in person. The disputes themselves still involved parental rejection, financial pressure, pregnancy, and relationship conflict. Digital communication changed how a plan could be arranged, but the problems that preceded it remained.

Digital communication also mattered after *Londo Iha*. This was clearest in Case 5. Materials provided by a participant showed that private exchanges and parts of the relationship dispute later appeared through WhatsApp statuses and related digital posts. The posts referred to the prolonged marriage process, financial disagreement, and conflict between the people involved. They show that parts of a dispute that had previously been discussed within the relationship and family became visible to people beyond those directly involved.

The digital materials do not show that this pattern occurred in every *Londo Iha* case. They show what happened in one unresolved dispute. The interviews and digital materials show two different roles of digital communication in the cases examined. Private coordination could become easier before *Londo Iha*, while an unresolved conflict could later become visible to others. Neither role determined the eventual outcome of the marriage process.

Figure 1

Digital Materials Related to the Wider Visibility of Case 5

Digital Material	Description	Screenshot
Reposted Private Communication	A screenshot of private communication circulated through a WhatsApp status, showing how communication related to the dispute became visible beyond the original exchange.	
Financial Dispute	A status referring to a disagreement concerning gold or financial obligations related to the relationship and marriage process.	
Comment on the Marriage Process	A WhatsApp status commenting on the prolonged and unresolved marriage process, illustrating how the dispute became subject to wider social judgment.	
Appeal and Response	A status referring to requests for assistance and unresolved relationship concerns, showing how personal matters associated with Case 5 entered semi-public digital communication.	

Note: The figure presents selected digital materials provided by a participant in Case 5. The materials illustrate how private communication and relationship disputes became visible to people beyond those directly involved through WhatsApp statuses and related digital posts. They were used to support and clarify the interview material rather than as a separate body of digital data. Permission for publication was obtained from the participant who provided the materials, and identifying details were removed before publication.

Family and Local Mediation before Marriage Registration

After *Londo Iha*, families were contacted and mediation began in several cases. The *Lebe Na'e* became involved when a couple came to him or when family members asked for assistance. HH described what he usually did when a couple arrived:

> *"We do not let the couple stay alone because we want to prevent sinful behavior (kemaksiatan). We ask them to stay in the common room, and we contact both families as soon as possible. Nothing should be hidden. They should tell us honestly what happened"* (HH, personal communication, September 4, 2025).

HH's explanation shows two immediate concerns. One involved religious conduct before marriage, particularly avoiding circumstances that could lead to conduct considered improper. The other involved the families. Both sides were contacted because the couple's decision had not removed the need for family discussion. In the cases handled by HH, *Londo Iha* had already changed the immediate situation, but discussion was still needed to determine whether the marriage could continue and under what conditions.

The content of mediation differed among the cases. Discussions could involve parental acceptance, financial arrangements, pregnancy, and the conditions for proceeding with marriage. In Cases 1, 2, 3, and 4, the families eventually reached enough agreement for the marriage process to continue. Case 1 required an additional legal step because one partner was below the legal marriage age at the time of the event, and the marriage proceeded after judicial dispensation. Family agreement and formal legal requirements addressed different parts of the process.

ZM, the Head of KUA Wera, described this division from the perspective of marriage administration:

> *"KUA handles the administrative side of the marriage. We do not settle the family or customary dispute itself. When a case of Londo Iha occurs, the immediate problem first needs to be resolved with the Lebe Na'e and village elders. Once the families have reached an agreement and the required documents are ready, KUA checks whether the marriage meets the legal requirements, including the age requirement"* (ZM, personal communication, August 11, 2025).

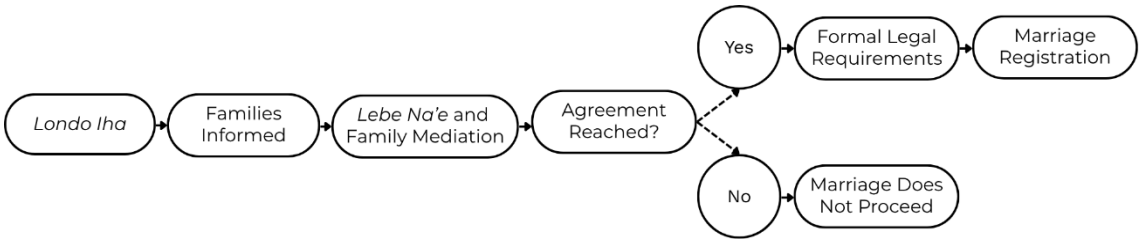
ZM was describing how these cases were handled in Wera, not a general legal rule requiring customary mediation before every marriage. In the cases examined, family and local mediation normally came before registration because the dispute remained unresolved after *Londo Iha*. Once the families had reached enough agreement for the marriage to continue, KUA dealt with the formal requirements within its administrative role. In Case 1, the Religious Court also became involved because judicial dispensation was required.

The cases followed a broad sequence in which families were informed, mediation took place, and the parties either reached enough agreement for the marriage process to continue or they did not. Where the marriage proceeded, formal legal requirements still

had to be completed. Case 5 shows that the sequence could end differently when mediation failed.

Figure 2

Family Mediation and Marriage Registration after Londo Iha in Wera, Bima Regency



Note. The figure summarizes the sequence identified in the five cases examined in Wera based on field interviews, observations, and documentary materials. It does not represent an official KUA or court procedure. Where the marriage proceeded, formal legal requirements were completed through KUA, with court dispensation when legally required.

When Mediation Fails and Gendered Consequences

Case 5 differed from the other four cases because mediation did not lead to marriage. The relationship had already involved prolonged disagreement over commitment, family relations, and financial preparation. According to SIN, the conflict continued even after the marriage process had reached KUA. She described a moment when MA asked her to choose between proceeding with the marriage immediately under the threat of divorce or withdrawing the application and waiting until he was financially ready:

> *"MA gave me two choices. If I insisted on marrying that day, he said he would divorce me immediately, and I would become a divorcee (janda). Or I could sign the withdrawal form at KUA and wait until he had enough money. I chose to trust his promise"* (SIN, personal communication, July 27, 2025).

From SIN's perspective, signing the withdrawal form did not initially mean that the relationship had ended. She understood the decision as a delay and expected the marriage to continue later. However, KUA records show that the proposed marriage did not proceed to registration. This is an important difference from Cases 1–4, where mediation was followed by further steps toward marriage.

The dispute continued after the documents were withdrawn. SIN described continuing uncertainty, while participant-provided digital materials showed that parts of the disagreement later appeared through WhatsApp statuses and related posts. These materials do not establish how everyone in the surrounding community understood the

case. They do show that the conflict had moved beyond private communication between the people directly involved.

FR, an Islamic religious counselor familiar with marriage disputes in the area, described the reputational consequences that could follow when mediation failed:

> *"When a couple cannot reach an agreement after Londo Iha, or when the man withdraws the marriage documents at KUA, the consequences tend to fall much more heavily on the woman. The tradition (adat) may require a payment such as ndeu ro isu to settle the immediate dispute between the families, but it cannot remove the gossip and stigma that continue to follow the woman afterward. People may continue to judge her for a long time"* (FR, personal communication, August 20, 2025).

FR's explanation shows a difference between settling an immediate family dispute and ending its social consequences. A customary payment locally referred to as *ndeu ro isu* could form part of a settlement in some disputes, but such a payment did not necessarily end later gossip or reputational harm. In Case 5, SIN's interview and the digital materials show continuing public judgment after the proposed marriage had ended. The available evidence does not allow the same level of detail about MA's longer-term experience because he did not participate in the study.

Cases 1–4 eventually proceeded to marriage after family discussion and the completion of relevant legal requirements. Case 5 followed a different course. Mediation did not lead to an agreement; the marriage was not registered, and the dispute continued after the formal process had ended. The comparison shows that *Londo Iha* does not necessarily lead to reconciliation or marriage. It also shows why the consequences of failed mediation need to be examined carefully. In Case 5, those consequences were especially visible in the experience reported by the female participant.

Discussion

The five cases show that *Londo Iha* can emerge from different kinds of difficulties in the marriage process. Financial pressure, parental rejection, pregnancy, and relationship conflict appeared in different combinations, and the outcomes were not the same. Four cases eventually proceeded to marriage, while one did not. What remained consistent was that *Londo Iha* did not settle the dispute on its own. Families became involved again, local mediation followed, and formal requirements still had to be met when the marriage continued. Digital communication changed some of the circumstances surrounding this process by making private coordination easier and, in Case 5, allowing parts of an

unresolved dispute to become visible to others. *Londo Iha* changed the immediate course of a marriage dispute without determining its final outcome.

Family authority remained important even when a particular family decision had been challenged. Freedom in choosing a partner does not necessarily remove parents and extended families from marriage decisions among Indonesian Muslims (Smith-Hefner, 2005). In Bima, marriage also remains closely connected to parental approval, kinship, and the economic expectations surrounding marriage (Wardatun, 2016, 2024). The Wera cases show how these relationships continue after elopement. Case 3 is especially clear: HK and his partner acted against the father's refusal, yet family acceptance was still sought afterward, and the marriage proceeded only after further discussion. A challenge to parental refusal can alter a particular decision without making family authority irrelevant to the marriage process.

Several forms of authority met within the same disputes. Personal choice was visible when *Londo Iha* interrupted the ordinary family process; family members remained important in deciding whether reconciliation was possible; *Lebe Na'e* assisted in mediation with attention to family and religious concerns; and KUA dealt with formal marriage requirements. The Religious Court became relevant in Case 1 because judicial dispensation was required. Legal pluralism helps explain this coexistence because social expectations, religious norms, state law, and individual choice may shape the same dispute rather than appearing in separate spheres (Menski, 2006; Moore, 1978). Similar interactions between customary understandings, Islamic norms, and state regulation have been documented in other Indonesian marriage settings (Ahmad et al., 2023; Jannah et al., 2025; Muhyidin & Setyawan, 2025). In Wera, the significance of legal pluralism lies in how these sources of authority met during the same marriage process and became relevant at different moments.

This perspective also clarifies what *Londo Iha* changed and what it left unresolved. It could change the immediate direction of a blocked marriage plan by allowing the relationship to continue despite parental refusal or other difficulties. Smartphones could make coordination easier, while digital posts could widen the visibility of an unresolved dispute (Halim & Pratiwi, 2025; Wahib & Raushan, 2025). Yet the underlying problems did not disappear. Family disagreement, financial pressure, religious concerns, and formal marriage requirements still had to be addressed afterward. Nor did *Londo Iha* guarantee reconciliation. Case 5 ended without marriage and shows that the consequences of failed mediation may continue after the formal process stops. In that case, reputational consequences were especially visible in the experience reported by the

female participant, although the available evidence does not allow the same level of detail about the male partner's later experience.

The main contribution of the Wera cases lies in following *Londo Iha* beyond the decision to elope. Earlier studies have explained why the practice persists, particularly in relation to marriage expenses, parental refusal, customary expectations, and Islamic norms (Hasan et al., 2022; Kadir et al., 2026). Research on *merariq* likewise shows that elopement can widen room for partner choice while family, religious, and state recognition remain important afterward (Apriansyah et al., 2025; Platt, 2012). The present cases bring the period after elopement into clearer view. They show that challenging a particular family decision does not necessarily amount to leaving family authority behind. Abu-Lughod's (1990) caution against equating resistance with liberation is useful here: resistance can identify the point at which authority is challenged without implying that the wider relationship has been rejected. In the Wera cases, *Londo Iha* created room to challenge a blocked marriage decision, while family mediation and formal requirements continued to shape what happened next.

The findings also suggest that mediation should be understood through more than the eventual occurrence of marriage. Cases 1–4 reached enough agreement for the marriage process to continue, while Case 5 did not. The difference directs attention to the conditions under which agreement is reached, whether both parties remain able to express their consent, and what consequences continue when mediation fails. For families and local mediators, this means that resolving the immediate dispute should include attention to the position of both partners and to the social consequences that may remain afterward. Marriage officials have a different role: where a marriage proceeds, formal legal requirements and the parties' consent still have to be properly addressed. Looking at these different outcomes makes the post-*Londo Iha* period important to understanding how personal choice, family authority, local mediation, and formal law meet in practice.

Conclusion

The five cases show that *Londo Iha* does not end a marriage dispute when the ordinary family process breaks down. Financial pressure, parental rejection, pregnancy, and relationship conflict appeared in different combinations, and the outcomes were not the same. Four cases eventually proceeded to marriage, while one did not. What remained important after *Londo Iha* was the return of family discussion, local mediation, religious concerns, and formal marriage requirements. Digital communication changed how plans could be coordinated and, in one unresolved case, how parts of the dispute became visible

to others. *Londo Iha* can interrupt the ordinary course of a marriage decision without removing the influence of family authority over what happens next.

The main contribution of this study lies in shifting attention from why *Londo Iha* occurs to what follows after elopement. The cases show that challenging a particular family decision does not necessarily mean leaving family authority behind. Personal choice, local religious mediation, family acceptance, and formal legal requirements can remain involved in the same marriage process. This also gives legal pluralism a more concrete meaning in the Wera context: different sources of authority become relevant at different moments rather than operating as separate systems. The contrast between successful and failed mediation further shows that post-elopement outcomes deserve closer attention. In Case 5, the consequences of failed mediation remained visible after the marriage process had ended, especially in the experience reported by the female participant.

This study is limited by its focus on five cases in one district and by unequal access to the people involved in each case. The study did not include direct interviews with both partners in every case, and the available evidence therefore provides different levels of detail about their experiences. The digital materials were also limited to materials provided by participants rather than systematic observation of online activity. Further research could compare *Londo Iha* in other parts of Bima, include more direct interviews with both partners and their families, and follow cases over a longer period. This would help clarify how mediation outcomes affect later family relations, marital stability, and the longer-term social consequences of *Londo Iha*.

AI Usage Declaration

The authors confirm compliance with the Al'Adalah: Journal of Islamic Studies AI policy. Generative AI tools were used during manuscript preparation to support language editing, clarity, and revision of draft text. All sources, data, analysis, and interpretations were independently checked by the authors, who take full responsibility for the final content.

Author Contribution Statement

Nurfah was responsible for conceptualization, field investigation, data curation, formal analysis, and writing the original draft. Muhammad Wildan provided supervision, contributed to the methodological development of the study, and critically reviewed the substantive content of the manuscript. Moh Soehadha contributed to the validation of the theoretical analysis and undertook substantive editing and revision of the manuscript. All

authors reviewed and approved the manuscript before submission and its subsequent revisions and take responsibility for the final content.

Funding Statement

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest related to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

Acknowledgments

The authors gratefully acknowledge the participants and families in Wera District, Bima Regency, who shared their experiences during the research. The authors also thank the *Lebe Na'e*, community figures, and staff of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) Wera for their assistance during the fieldwork and for helping the authors understand the local context of *Londo Iha*.

References

Abu-Lughod, L. (1990). The romance of resistance: Tracing transformations of power through Bedouin women. *American Ethnologist, 17*(1), 41–55. https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.1990.17.1.02a00030

Ahmad, A. K., Sabara, Arafah, S., Nur, M., & Mappaselleng, N. F. (2023). Bunting lolo: The dialectics of state, Islamic law, and culture in marriage practice among island communities in South Sulawesi. *AL-IHKAM: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial, 18*(2), 443–466. https://doi.org/10.19105/al-lhkam.v18i2.10399

Apriansyah, J., Satispi, E., Park, T., Sahrul, M., & Bariyah, O. N. (2025). Negotiating merariq: Cultural continuity and state efforts to prevent child marriage in East Lombok. *Jurnal Antropologi: Isu-Isu Sosial Budaya, 27*(2), 309–316. https://doi.org/10.25077/jantro.v27.n2.p309-316.2025

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Darwis, R., Mahmudah, N., Faisal, A., Al Kautsar, M. S., & Fathan Aniq, A. (2026). Negotiating Sharia, customary law, and gender: Feminist legal pluralism in the Learo tradition of marriage in the Bintauna community, Indonesia. *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam, 11*(1), 436–458. https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v11i1.14890

Fauzi, M. L. (2019). Actors and norms in an Islamic marriage: A study of Madura community in rural Eastern East Java. *Journal of Indonesian Islam, 13*(2), 297–325. https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2019.13.2.297-325

Halim, A., & Pratiwi, E. P. (2025). Online ta'aruf as a medium for Islamic matchmaking: A socio-religious construction of Muslim young people in the digital era. *QIJIS (Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies), 13*(1), 117–158. https://doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v13i1.14333

Hasan, H., Jubba, H., Abdullah, I., Pabbajah, M., & Rahman R., A. (2022). Londo iha: Elopement and bride kidnapping amongst the Muslims of Monta, Bima, Indonesia. *Cogent Social Sciences, 8*(1), 2023973. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2021.2023973

Jannah, L. U., Ngazizah, I. F., & Kasdi, A. (2025). Social legitimacy versus state legal certainty: The dialectics of Kiai marriages as living law in Dusun Pondok Asem, Kertasemaya, Indramayu. *Al-Mazaahib: Jurnal Perbandingan Hukum, 13*(2), 173–198. https://doi.org/10.14421/al-mazaahib.v13i2.4392

Kadir, A., Sainun, S., & Syukri, S. (2026). Tradisi Londo Iha dalam perspektif sosiologi antropologi hukum Islam masyarakat Suku Mbojo di Kota Bima. *Empiricism Journal, 7*(2), 1379–1390. https://doi.org/10.36312/ej.v7i2.5222

Menski, W. F. (2006). *Comparative law in a global context: The legal systems of Asia and Africa* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511606687

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Moore, S. F. (1978). *Law as process: An anthropological approach.* Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Muhyidin, M., & Setyawan, B. (2025). Legal unification and pluralism in customary marriage registration: Lessons from the Baduy Indigenous community. *Masalah-Masalah Hukum, 54*(3), 462–485. https://doi.org/10.14710/mmh.54.3.2025.462-485

Platt, M. (2012). 'It's already gone too far': Women and the transition into marriage in Lombok, Indonesia. *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology, 13*(1), 76–90. https://doi.org/10.1080/14442213.2011.636063

Platt, M. (2017). *Marriage, gender and Islam in Indonesia: Women negotiating informal marriage, divorce and desire.* Routledge.

Smith-Hefner, N. J. (2005). The new Muslim romance: Changing patterns of courtship and marriage among educated Javanese youth. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, 36*(3), 441–459. https://doi.org/10.1017/S002246340500024X

Wahib, A. B., & Raushan, N. (2025). Promoting new Muslim romance in the digital world: State law in society in advocating early marriage. *Ulumuna, 29*(2), 701–730. https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v29i2.1057

Wardatun, A. (2016). Ampa co'i ndai: Local understanding of kafā'a in marriage among Eastern Indonesian Muslims. *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies, 54*(2), 311–336. https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2016.542.311-336

Wardatun, A. (2024). Knitting reciprocity and communality: Countering the privatization of family in Bimanese Muslim local marriage of Eastern Indonesia. *Journal of Islamic Law, 5*(2), 197–221. https://doi.org/10.24260/jil.v5i2.2771