International Journal Social and Political Sciences
(I J S P S)
e-ISSN: 3089-5936 p-ISSN: 3089-5987
Vol 3, No 2 August (2026): Page no: 133-146
Available online at
https://journal.austrodemika.org/index.php/ijsps

Governance of Human Relationships: 'Alpha Male' and 'High-Value Woman' Constructs versus Shariah Solutions

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https://doi.org/10.69812/ijsps.v3i2.406

Article Info

Article History

Received:
July 30, 2026
Revised:
August 15, 2026
Accepted:
August 31, 2026

Abstract:
Digital subcultures promoting the "Alpha Male" and the "High-Value Woman" have turned intimate life into a market in which human worth is priced by dominance, income, appearance, and mate-selection value. This article argues that the phenomenon signals a governance problem in the regulation of human relationships and not merely a lifestyle trend. Its purpose is to compare how secular, market-driven gender constructs and the Islamic social system (An-Nizhâm Al-Ijtimâ'î) govern relations between men and women. The study uses a qualitative normative-legal design, a comparative governance framework, and critical discourse analysis of contemporary self-help and manosphere-related discourse alongside classical and contemporary Islamic legal sources, notably Taqiyuddin an-Nabhani, Al-Mawardi, and Ibn Taymiyyah. The analysis finds that the two constructs convert intimacy into a transaction, encouraging hyper-individualism, emotional dissociation, and the weakening of family institutions, while offering no authority that binds the parties beyond personal advantage. By contrast, Shariah governance replaces market value with taqwa as the measure of honor, assigns qawwamah as a responsibility tied to maintenance and accountability, and structures complementary roles within regulated marital and public relations. The article concludes that policy reform in the spirit of siyasah syar'iyyah, covering education, media governance, family law, and economic support for household responsibility, offers a more coherent route to family resilience and social stability, subject to the limits of a conceptual study.

Keyword: Governance, Human Relationships, Constructs, Solutions

INTRODUCTION

Few areas of social life are as dense with norms as the relations between men and women, and few have been reorganized as quickly by digital media. Over the past decade two figures have become fixtures of online self-improvement culture: the "alpha male," defined by dominance, status, and sexual success, and the "high-value woman," defined by self-sufficiency, curated appearance, and selectivity toward partners who can match her market position. Both figures circulate as aspirational identities, but they also operate as rules. They tell men and women how to rank one another, what to demand, what to

withhold, and when a relationship has stopped being worth the investment. In the vocabulary of governance studies, they function as informal regulatory frameworks for intimacy: unwritten, commercially promoted, and enforced through reputation, algorithmic reward, and peer pressure rather than through law or recognized moral authority (Foucault, 1991; Rose et al., 2006).

The alpha male belongs to the digital milieu usually called the manosphere, in which masculinity is imagined as a hierarchy of "alphas," "betas," and involuntary celibates, and in which women are treated as scarce resources allocated by status. Research on the online Red Pill movement shows how this vocabulary converts personal grievance into a worldview that explains social life through dominance and sexual market value. Hegemonic masculinity explains part of the appeal: such models promise membership in an idealized manhood that few men embody (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Dignam & Rohlinger, 2019; Ging, 2019).

The high-value woman has a different genealogy. She descends from the postfeminist sensibility, in which empowerment is expressed through self-monitoring, grooming, and individual choice, and from neoliberal feminism, which asks women to manage their own advancement as a personal enterprise. Hakim's notion of erotic capital, although contested, supplies the economic language in which beauty, charm, and sexual appeal are treated as assets that can be invested (Banet-Weiser et al., 2020; Gill, 2007; Hakim, 2010; McRobbie, 2004; Rottenberg, 2014).

The discourse is not monolithic, and a fair analysis must say so. Self-help texts addressed to women, such as Magnetic Muse's Become That Girl, speak warmly of inner worth, intuition, emotional intelligence, and the balance of "feminine" and "masculine" energies. Yet the same text frames relationships and opportunities as things a woman learns to attract, and it measures presence by its effect on others. Transcribed public conversations about masculinity reveal a more vulnerable side of the male counterpart: a speaker describes work as a man's "place in the world," and the anxiety of younger men who fear that automation and changing labor markets are closing that place. The constructs are best understood as responses to real social strain that offer market-shaped answers (Magnetic Muse, n.d.).

The wider sociology of intimacy has long warned about this drift. Giddens described the "pure relationship," sustained only for as long as it satisfies both parties; Bauman called the resulting bonds "liquid"; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim traced the normal chaos of love under individualization; and Illouz and Hochschild showed how market logic reshapes emotional life itself (Bauman, 2003; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995; Giddens, 1992; Hochschild, 1983; Illouz, 2007).

The empirical record is consistent with concern, although it is associative rather than causal. Social relationships are strongly linked with survival, conformity to certain masculine norms is linked with poorer mental-health outcomes, and marriage has become a more optional, individualized, and less institutionally protected arrangement. The problem statement of this article follows: when human worth in relationships is reduced to utility, economic output, and mate-market metrics, nothing in the arrangement obliges anyone to bear the cost of fragility, whether the fragile party is a spouse, a child, or the self (Cherlin, 2004; Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010; Wong et al., 2017).

Most criticism of the two constructs comes from within secular frameworks: feminist theory, social psychology, and cultural sociology. Islamic scholarship on gender, for its part, has largely concentrated on interpretive debates over specific texts or on the lived piety of Muslim women (Barlas, 2002; Mahmood, 2005; Mir-Hosseini, 2011; Wadud,

1999). Few studies treat the regulation of male–female relations as a governance problem and compare whole regimes of regulation by their normative foundations, mechanisms of accountability, and social outcomes. This article addresses that gap by reading the "alpha male" and "high-value woman" as competing informal regimes and by setting them against the Islamic social system, an-nizhâm al-ijtimâ'î, as systematized by Taqiyuddin an-Nabhani and situated within the wider tradition of siyasah syar'iyyah represented by Al-Mawardi and Ibn Taymiyyah. The novelty lies in comparing governance logics and not merely moral opinions, and in a conceptual clarification: An-Nabhani uses an-nizhâm al-ijtimâ'î in a narrow technical sense, for the system that regulates the meeting of men and women and the relations arising from it, which differs from the broad English phrase "social system" (Al-Mawardi, 1996; An-Nabhani, 2007, 2014; Ibn Taymiyyah, 1982).

The urgency is practical. Young people, including those in Muslim-majority societies such as Indonesia, are readily exposed to these constructs through short-video platforms, podcasts, and self-help publishing, while family institutions, schools, and religious authorities struggle to offer an equally compelling account of how men and women should relate. A governance perspective shifts the question from individual taste to institutional design: who sets the rules of intimacy, on what authority, and with what protection for the vulnerable. The author writes as a postgraduate scholar of Islamic religious education at Institut Islam Mamba'ul 'Ulum Surakarta and advances this comparative perspective from within the Islamic intellectual tradition. The standpoint is declared openly because it shapes the questions asked and the sources privileged.

Three questions guide the study. First, how do the "alpha male" and "high-value woman" constructs function as informal relational governance, and where are their structural weaknesses? Second, what principles does the Islamic social system supply for governing relations between men and women, and how do qawwamah and complementary roles operate within it? Third, what policy implications follow for contemporary social governance under siyasah syar'iyyah? The study adopts a qualitative normative-legal approach combined with comparative governance analysis and critical discourse analysis, described in the next section.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative design with three integrated components: normative-legal analysis of Islamic sources, critical discourse analysis of contemporary gender discourse, and comparative governance analysis. The design is interpretive and conceptual. It does not test hypotheses or estimate prevalence; it examines how two regimes of relational regulation define worth, allocate authority and obligation, and handle vulnerability. Governance is understood broadly, following Rhodes, as the set of self-organizing arrangements, formal and informal, through which collective conduct is directed (Rhodes, 1996).

Data came from three kinds of sources. The first comprises primary Islamic texts and authoritative works in Islamic political and social jurisprudence: An-Nabhani's Sistem pergaulan dalam Islam, the Indonesian translation of An-Nizham al-Ijtima'i fi al-Islam, and his Peraturan hidup dalam Islam, the translation of Nizham al-Islam, together with Al-Mawardi's treatise on government, Ibn Taymiyyah's work on public duties and the institution of hisba, Al-Ghazali's discussion of marriage, and the maqasid literature (Al-Ghazali, 1984; Al-Mawardi, 1996; An-Nabhani, 2007, 2014; Auda, 2008; Ibn Ashur, 2006; Ibn Taymiyyah, 1982; Kamali, 2008). The second kind is a purposive corpus of contemporary discourse: the text of Magnetic Muse's self-help book on feminine energy and high-value

presence, and a transcribed public interview on masculinity, work, and family roles, which is treated as illustrative data and whose speakers are not identified here. The third kind is the secondary scholarly literature cited in the Introduction (Magnetic Muse, n.d.).

Selection was purposive. Islamic sources were chosen because they articulate, in systematic form, a regulation of relations between men and women grounded in revelation as articulated by An-Nabhani and place it within the wider tradition of public governance addressed by Al-Mawardi and Ibn Taymiyyah. The corpus is deliberately small and cannot represent the full variety of manosphere or self-help content on social-media platforms. The findings are therefore analytic generalizations about the logic of the constructs, not statements about the prevalence of beliefs or behaviors (Al-Mawardi, 1996; An-Nabhani, 2014; Ibn Taymiyyah, 1982).

Analysis proceeded in three steps. First, the discourse materials were examined with critical discourse analysis, attending to how worth, power, intimacy, and obligation are represented, and the reading was organized thematically around five themes: the pricing of personal attributes, the ranking of persons by relative value, self-sovereignty as the highest good, the management of emotion as a resource, and the absence of obligation beyond voluntary exchange. Second, the Islamic sources were read through normative-legal analysis, identifying the defining concepts: civilization (hadhârah) versus its material products (madaniyyah), the narrow definition of an-nizhâm al-ijtimâ'î, household leadership (qawwamah) and maintenance (nafaqah), piety (taqwa) as the criterion of honor, and public oversight (hisba). Third, the two bodies of findings were placed in a comparative governance matrix across eight dimensions, presented as Table 1 (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1993).

Credibility rests on triangulating Islamic, sociological, and discourse-analytic sources, citing primary texts by edition and translation, and stating the author's standpoint openly. An-Nabhani founded Hizb ut-Tahrir, and his work is treated here as a systematic statement of one school of contemporary Islamic thought and not as the only legitimate reading; contrasting interpretations are engaged in the discussion (Barlas, 2002; Mir-Hosseini, 2011; Wadud, 1999). Technical terms are transliterated because the study relies on Indonesian translations of Arabic originals. No human participants or personal data are involved, and all discourse materials are published or publicly available.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Structural Failure of Secular Relational Governance

a. The Monetization of Intimacy: 'Alpha Male' and 'High-Value Woman' as Capitalist Commodities

The first finding is that both constructs define human worth through marketable attributes and then rank persons by those attributes. In manosphere discourse the ranking is explicit: status, dominance, income, and physical capital sort men into tiers, and women are positioned as the prize for success. In the high-value woman model the ranking is more diffuse but equally present. Value is something to be built, displayed, and protected, and a partner is evaluated by whether he meets a standard of provision, confidence, and emotional capability (Ging, 2019).

Hakim's erotic capital and Bourdieu's forms of capital give the underlying logic: attributes become assets, assets are invested, and returns are expected. Brown calls this the economization of spheres once governed by other values, and Sandel asks what is lost when such goods are traded. Men and women thus appear as commodities competing in a market, and the relationship as a transaction priced by relative position (Bourdieu, 1986;

Brown, 2015; Hakim, 2010; Sandel, 2012). Evolutionary reasoning often supplies the legitimizing story. The language of mate value and hypergamy borrows from sexual strategies theory, which proposes that men and women have evolved different mating preferences, but it often presents contested hypotheses as settled law of nature. Research on social structure suggests that many sex differences in mate preference shrink as women's and men's economic roles converge, which implies that a "market" ordered by dominance and provision is a product of social arrangements and not a fixed fact (Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Eagly & Wood, 1999).

An-Nabhani identifies a family resemblance at the level of worldview: capitalism and socialism, though they disagree about the origin of the universe, agree that the highest values are set by human beings and that happiness is the greatest possible bodily pleasure. When these premises govern gender relations, he argues, society treats the relationship between the sexes as essentially sexual and deliberately multiplies the stimuli that arouse desire. The observation fits the commercial logic of attention, in which desirability is both the product and the advertisement (An-Nabhani, 2007, 2014).

The discourse materials also show the fragility behind the branding. In the interview transcript, work is described as what gives men a place in the world, and the speakers connect young men's anxiety to deindustrialization, automation, and women's entry into the labor force, while noting that younger men increasingly expect two-career households. The alpha ideal can therefore be read as compensation for precarity: where stable work no longer grants social standing, performed dominance offers a substitute. The high-value woman ideal, in parallel, turns the burdens of self-reliance in an individualized labor market into a narrative of choice. Both offer individual solutions to structural problems, a characteristic move of neoliberal governance (Banet-Weiser et al., 2020; Rottenberg, 2014).

From a governance standpoint, this regime has three structural features. First, its authority is borrowed from the market: rules are enforced by visibility, followers, and social comparison, and no actor is answerable for their effects. Second, commitments are revocable at low cost, so the party who invests more in a relationship, typically by caring for children or forgoing income, is exposed when the other party exits. Third, the regime offers no shared account of the purpose of the relationship beyond mutual satisfaction, so disputes can only be resolved by recalculating relative value. The constructs are therefore poorly equipped to sustain obligations that are long, unequal in time, and costly, such as raising children and caring for the sick and the old.

b. Psychosocial Pathology and Family Breakdown in Modern Secular Societies

The second finding concerns consequences, and here the evidence must be handled with care. The literature does not show that the alpha and high-value constructs alone cause psychological harm or family breakdown. It shows associations between market-shaped intimacy, certain masculine norms, relational instability, and distress, and these associations are consistent with the structural weaknesses described above. Meta-analytic evidence indicates that conformity to masculine norms, as measured by instruments such as the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory, is on average associated with poorer mental-health-related outcomes, with norms of self-reliance and sexual promiscuity among the more consistent correlates. Both norms are central to the alpha ideal, which prizes emotional self-sufficiency and sexual conquest.

At the same time, a large body of evidence links the quality and quantity of social relationships with survival, which means that a model that makes bonds conditional and

easy to exit has consequences for health that reach beyond the private sphere (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010; Mahalik et al., 2003; Wong et al., 2017). The institutional side shows a similar pattern. Cherlin describes the deinstitutionalization of marriage: the weakening of the social norms that once defined the behavior of spouses, so that marriage becomes a means of personal fulfillment whose success is judged by the individual. Giddens's pure relationship and Bauman's liquid love describe the same shift, and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim argue that individualization makes love more precious and more precarious at once. The alpha and high-value constructs do not create this trend, but they supply it with a vocabulary of strategy and standards that intensifies its logic. A person who evaluates a partner continuously against alternatives, in the manner of a consumer, is less likely to build the trust that long commitments need. The weakening of family institutions in secular societies should therefore be read as a governance outcome: when the only regulator is individual preference, institutions that depend on obligations beyond preference have no ground on which to stand (Bauman, 2003; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995; Cherlin, 2004; Giddens, 1992).

Emotional dissociation is the third observable outcome. Hochschild showed how commercial settings train workers to manage feeling as a resource, and Illouz argues that capitalist culture has made emotional skill a form of capital and a criterion for ranking others. The discourse of "energies," "presence," and "boundaries" in popular self-help is partly of this kind: it offers real tools for self-awareness, and it also invites readers to treat feeling as something to regulate for effect. In both cases emotion becomes an instrument of positioning and not a means of connection. A limit of the evidence should be stated: family change has many drivers, including economic insecurity and the transformation of work, and secular societies differ widely. The argument is not that every secular family is unstable, but that these constructs offer no resources for repairing the instability they help to normalize (Hochschild, 1983; Illouz, 2007; Magnetic Muse, n.d.).

2. The Islamic Social System (An-Nizhâm Al-Ijtimâ'î) as a Governance Alternative

The second set of findings concerns the Islamic social system. Its main contention, as stated by An-Nabhani, is that relations between men and women need a system derived from a worldview that is correct about human nature and purpose, and that borrowing the products of another civilization without examining its premises produces confusion and not progress (An-Nabhani, 2014).

a. Redefining Human Honor: From Market Value to Taqwa (Piety)

A conceptual clarification is necessary first. An-Nabhani objects to the common use of an-nizhâm al-ijtimâ'î for every rule of communal life and prefers anzhimah al-mujtama' (systems of society) for the broad set of economic, political, educational, and penal regulations. He reserves an-nizhâm al-ijtimâ'î for the system that regulates the meeting of men and women and the relations that arise from it, such as the prohibition of seclusion (khalwah), the conditions under which a wife may seek dissolution of marriage, and the allocation of custody. In this sense the Islamic social system is a specialized regime of relational governance, which makes it a direct counterpart of the informal regimes of the alpha and high-value constructs and not a general theory of society (An-Nabhani, 2014).

The foundation of this regime is an anthropology in which honor does not depend on market position. An-Nabhani begins from the verse that addresses humankind as created from a male and a female so that peoples may know one another (Q.S. al-Hujurât

[49]: 13), and argues that legal obligation (taklif) is addressed to the human being and not to a sex: man and woman share the same humanity, the same reason, and the same basic needs and instincts, and neither exceeds the other in that respect. The same verse concludes that the most honored before God is the most pious, so that honor is measured by taqwa, a quality that cannot be bought, displayed, or ranked by another person. This is the decisive contrast with the secular constructs. Worth is not comparative: one person's taqwa does not lower another's, and no partner can bid it up or down (An-Nabhani, 2014).

On this foundation the system defines the purpose of the relationship. An-Nabhani holds that the instinct of procreation (gharîzah an-naw') exists for the continuation of humankind and that the relationship between the sexes should be viewed in light of that purpose and not as the pursuit of sexual pleasure alone. He does not deny pleasure; he argues that pleasure is a natural accompaniment that Islam legitimizes within marriage, and that the relationship should be governed by piety and the pursuit of God's approval instead of by the search for gratification. Because arousal, in his analysis, is triggered by perceptible stimuli and imagined scenes, a society oriented toward procreation and cooperation must regulate those stimuli, whereas one that treats the relationship as primarily sexual will multiply them. The rules of lowering the gaze, covering the awrah, avoiding seclusion, and confining the sexual relationship to the lawful bond follow from this analysis. They do not remove men and women from public life. An-Nabhani explicitly argues that cooperation between them in trade, medicine, and teaching is necessary, and he treats the belief that all contact is impermissible as one of two errors, the other being the unregulated mixing he associates with Western models (An-Nabhani, 2014).

Governance in this system works in layers. The first is internal: taqwa as a regulator of conduct that operates where no one is watching, which is why the Islamic tradition treats character formation as a matter of public concern. Al-Ghazali treats marriage as a field of reciprocal rights and duties and as a discipline of character, not only a contract of convenience. The second layer is legal: detailed rules fix obligations, prohibitions, and remedies. The third is public: the tradition of hisba, described by Al-Mawardi and Ibn Taymiyyah, assigns an officer and, more broadly, a community the duty of upholding public standards in markets and public places (Al-Ghazali, 1984; Al-Mawardi, 1996; Ibn Taymiyyah, 1982).

The maqasid framework supplies the purposive logic that binds the layers together. Preservation of lineage and family (hifz al-nasl) is among the recognized objectives of the law, and the family is understood as an institution whose stability serves wider social interests (Auda, 2008; Ibn Ashur, 2006; Kamali, 2008). An-Nabhani's distinction between hadhârah, a body of concepts about life and the way of life that flows from them, and madaniyyah, the material forms and tools that serve it, explains how the system can accept technology without accepting its accompanying worldview. On this reading, social media platforms are tools that may be used, but the commodifying concepts of value that currently shape their dominant uses are not neutral and need not be adopted. The point echoes Al-Attas's argument that secularization is a worldview and not simply a set of institutions, and Hallaq's claim that the modern state lacks the moral resources of a shared ethical order; both claims are contested (Al-Attas, 1993; An-Nabhani, 2014; Hallaq, 2013).

Two caveats are in order. Piety-based honor is not immune to misuse: communities can turn the language of taqwa into social pressure, and a regime that ranked persons by visible piety would reproduce the problem it criticizes. And although

Mahmood has shown that Muslim women's agency is often exercised through the cultivation of piety, which challenges the assumption that regulated relations are necessarily oppressive to them, others warn that patriarchal readings can pass as divine intent. Taqwa as a criterion of honor therefore needs institutional safeguards against abuse as discussed in Section 3 (Barlas, 2002; Mahmood, 2005).

b. Qawwamah and Takamul: Institutionalizing Complementary Relational Governance

The second pillar of the system is qawwamah, the leadership of the household that An-Nabhani assigns to the husband. His argument rests on the verse that describes men as qawwamun over women because of what God has given them and because of what they spend from their wealth (Q.S. an-Nisâ' [4]: 34). He ties the leadership to concrete burdens: the husband's duty to provide the dower, food, clothing, and housing, together with other responsibilities assigned to men, such as guardianship in marriage and the right of pronouncing divorce. Authority, in this account, is the counterpart of responsibility and not a status conferred by dominance. The wife holds rights that restrain authority. She is entitled to maintenance, she is not compelled to remain in a marriage that has lost the possibility of a good married life, and the law gives her the right to seek dissolution (fasakh) so that the home does not become a place of distress (An-Nabhani, 2014).

An-Nabhani describes the woman's principal role as that of mother and household manager (ummun wa rabbatul bayt), grounded in the legal rules of pregnancy, nursing, and child care, which apply to women alone. Yet he holds that women may engage in trade, agriculture, and industry, and he criticizes both those who would bar women from every public activity and those who would assign women tasks outside their legal responsibilities in the name of equality. This article uses takamul, an Arabic term for integration or complementarity, as an analytic label for the resulting structure, with the caveat that it is not An-Nabhani's own term. The Qur'an describes marriage as a source of tranquility, affection, and mercy (Q.S. ar-Rûm [30]: 21). The concept expresses what An-Nabhani's analysis implies: roles are distinct in their legal burdens but directed toward a common good, cooperation instead of competition (An-Nabhani, 2014).

Set against the secular constructs, the contrast is structural. The alpha ideal claims authority as a personal prerogative earned through dominance and demands deference without corresponding duties; qawwamah, as An-Nabhani explains it, binds authority to maintenance, accountability, and a woman's right to leave a harmful marriage. The high-value ideal protects a woman's autonomy by building individual capital and selectivity; the Islamic system protects her through obligations that others owe her, namely dower, maintenance, custody rules, and the cooperation of a guardian, so that her security does not depend entirely on her market position. The Islamic regime allocates risk to the party better placed to bear it, while the secular constructs leave risk where it falls. It also relieves men of the performance of dominance: a man's standing arises from discharging duties that are visible and verifiable, not from outcompeting others.

The discussion would be incomplete without the disagreement within the Islamic tradition. Wadud and Barlas read qawwamah as a conditional, functional arrangement bound to financial support and to the historical context of revelation, and not as an ontological ranking of men over women, while Mir-Hosseini cautions that the opposition between "Islam" and "feminism" has become too loaded to be analytically useful and urges attention to women's own trajectories and contexts. An-Nabhani's reading is more

hierarchical in the household, although it shares with these scholars the premise that authority is justified only by responsibility.

Table 1. Matrix Comparison of Secular Relational Governance ('Alpha Male' & 'High-Value Woman') vs. Islamic Social Governance (An-Nizhâm Al-Ijtimâ'î)

Dimension	Secular relational governance ('Alpha Male' & 'High-Value Woman')	Islamic social governance (An-Nizhâm Al-Ijtimâ'î)
Foundation of worth	Market-defined value: status, dominance, income, appearance, and mate value	Shared humanity of man and woman; honor measured by taqwa (Q.S. 49:13)
Source of normative authority	Market signals, peer ranking, platform visibility, and individual preference	Revelation read through jurisprudence; internalized taqwa, legal rules, and public oversight
Purpose of the relationship	Mutual satisfaction, status, and selective advantage; terminable when relative value falls	Continuation of humankind, tranquility and mercy, and God's approval within marriage
Allocation of roles and duties	Fluid, negotiated by relative position; dominance for men, independence for women; few enforceable duties	Distinct legal burdens: qawwamah paired with nafaqah; mother and household manager; cooperation in public life (takamul)
Mechanisms of accountability	Reputation, social comparison, and exit; no actor answerable for effects	Three layers: taqwa, legal remedies (e.g., maintenance, fasakh), and hisba
Treatment of vulnerability	Individualized: protection depends on one's own capital; costs fall on the more invested party	Obligations owed to the weaker party: dower, maintenance, custody rules, and the right to seek dissolution
Expected outcomes	Hyper-individualism, instrumental emotion, and fragile bonds (associative evidence)	Relational equilibrium, stable family, and cooperation, conditional on faithful implementation and safeguards against abuse
Policy orientation	Lightly regulated media and self-help markets; private remedies	Education, ethics of public communication, family-law enforcement, and economic support (siyasah syar'iyyah)

Source: Author's analysis of the relevant governance frameworks (Al-Mawardi, 1996; An-Nabhani, 2007, 2014; Ging, 2019; Ibn Taymiyyah, 1982; Magnetic Muse, n.d.).

The point for governance is that the principle of coupling authority with accountability can be defended from several interpretive positions, and that policy should be built on that shared ground without claiming that a single reading exhausts the tradition. The claim that motherhood is a woman's primary role has likewise been read both as protection and as constraint, and policies restricting women's lawful public and

economic participation would go beyond even An-Nabhani's own position. Table 1 synthesizes the comparison (An-Nabhani, 2014; Barlas, 2002; Mir-Hosseini, 2011; Wadud, 1999).

3. Policy Implications for Contemporary Social Governance (Siyasah Syar'iyyah)

The comparison suggests that stability in relations between men and women depends on three conditions: a measure of worth that is not set by a market, a pairing of authority with accountability, and institutions that protect the vulnerable. Siyasah syar'iyyah, the tradition of governing in accordance with the objectives of the law, provides the framework for translating these conditions into policy. Ibn Taymiyyah presents public oversight as an obligation of governance exercised through hisba, and Al-Mawardi describes the muhtasib as concerned with public conduct in markets and public places. In contemporary terms, the tradition authorizes attention to the public environment of relations, namely education, media, and family law, while leaving private conscience to the individual. The recommendations below are principles for policy design, not a legislative program (Al-Mawardi, 1996; Ibn Taymiyyah, 1982).

a. Education and Public Discourse; Education is the first line of governance because taqwa and the Islamic concept of the relationship are acquired and not imposed. Islamic religious education, the author's own field, can integrate a curriculum on relations between men and women that teaches the anthropology of shared humanity, the purposes of marriage, the rights and duties of spouses, and the critical analysis of online gender discourse. Pre-marital education programs can supplement the curriculum, and teacher training should include media literacy that lets educators discuss the alpha and high-value constructs candidly, acknowledging what is sound in them, such as discipline, self-respect, and boundaries. Credible engagement is more persuasive than prohibition.
b. Media and Platform Governance; The second domain is the public information environment. The hisba tradition, translated into contemporary regulation, supports ethical standards for content that sexualizes relations or commodifies persons, transparency about the commercial incentives behind self-help and coaching content. Such measures should target commercial practices that exploit insecurity, not ideas as such, and they should be proportionate, transparent, and open to appeal, so that oversight of public conduct does not become a pretext for suppressing legitimate debate.
c. Family Law and Economic Support; Third, the qawwamah–nafaqah structure imposes duties on society as well as on husbands. If maintenance is the ground of household leadership, the state and the community must make the fulfillment of that duty possible and enforce it. This calls for effective enforcement of maintenance and custody orders, accessible and affordable family courts and mediation, and clear procedures through which a wife can seek dissolution when a marriage has failed, consistent with the right An-Nabhani describes. It also calls for economic policy. The interview material shows that men's anxiety about work and purpose is a social fact, and a regime that assigns men the duty of provision should treat access to livelihood, through vocational training, employment programs, and support for young men entering marriage, as a public responsibility. Women's lawful participation in education, trade, and public service should also be protected (An-Nabhani, 2014).
d. Institutional Safeguards and Cautions; Finally, the proposals carry risks that should be addressed in their design. First, qawwamah must not be used to license harm. Because

the principle couples authority with responsibility, abuse by a husband is a breach of the principle and not an application of it, and protective mechanisms, including accessible complaint channels and swift remedies, should be part of any family-law program. Second, policy should recognize interpretive pluralism. Scholars within the tradition read qawwamah, women's roles, and the scope of public regulation differently, and legislation should draw on consultative processes that include women scholars and practitioners. Third, the role of the state should be limited to the public order of relations and the protection of rights, leaving room for communities to develop their own educational and mediation practices. Fourth, any program should be evaluated empirically, because the claims in this article about the effects of regulation remain to be tested (Barlas, 2002; Wadud, 1999).

CONCLUSION

This article examined the governance of human relationships by comparing two informal secular regimes, the "alpha male" and the "high-value woman," with the Islamic social system, an-nizhâm al-ijtimâ'î. Its findings can be summarized in four points. First, both constructs measure worth by marketable attributes and rank persons accordingly, which converts intimacy into a transaction regulated by comparison and exit. Second, the associated literature links market-shaped intimacy, certain masculine norms, and the individualization of marriage with distress and fragile bonds; the evidence is associative, but it fits the structural weaknesses identified: borrowed authority, revocable commitments, and no account of obligation beyond satisfaction. Third, the Islamic social system replaces market value with taqwa as the measure of honor, pairs qawwamah with maintenance and accountability, and organizes complementary roles within layers of internal piety, legal rules, and public oversight. Fourth, these principles translate into policy in education, media governance, family law, and economic support under the framework of siyasah syar'iyyah.

The study contributes a governance reading of popular gender constructs, a clarification of the narrow technical meaning of an-nizhâm al-ijtimâ'î, and a comparative matrix that other researchers can test. Its practical implication is that family resilience and public morality are better served by institutions that link authority to responsibility and protect the vulnerable than by a market of self-presentation. The recommendations are to integrate relational ethics and media literacy in Islamic education, adopt proportionate standards for content that commodifies intimacy, enforce maintenance, custody, and dissolution rights, treat access to livelihood as a public duty, and build safeguards against abuse into every program.

The study has limits. It is conceptual and textual, relies on a small purposive corpus, and rests on Indonesian translations of Arabic originals; its claims about consequences rest on associative evidence; it addresses secular thought only as it appears in two market-shaped subcultures, not the full range of secular, feminist, and egalitarian approaches, many of which share its concern about commodification; and its Islamic framework follows one school among several. Future research could test the arguments empirically through surveys or interviews on the exposure of Muslim youth to these constructs and its effects on attitudes toward marriage; compare Islamic regulation with other religious and secular traditions; engage Islamic feminist hermeneutics more fully in dialogue with the framework used here; and evaluate pilot programs in pre-marital education and family-law enforcement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
The author thanks the Postgraduate Program of Institut Islam Mamba'ul 'Ulum Surakarta for the academic environment that supported this study.

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