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KUA Transformation Towards Inclusive Marriage Registration: Criticism of the Minister of Religion's Proposal and Practical Challenges in Implementation

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the proposed transformation for the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) towards inclusive marriage registration in Indonesia. This proposal, submitted by the Minister of Religion, raises various questions and challenges regarding the effectiveness and relevance of this policy. Through a qualitative approach with literature studies and document analysis related to marriage registration policies, this article identifies criticisms directed at the Minister of Religion's proposal as well as practical challenges in its implementation. The results of the analysis show that there are various responses from the community and related parties to the transformation of the KUA, with criticism stating the relevance, effectiveness and social impact of the policy. Practical challenges in implementation include regulatory changes, increasing human resource capacity, and integration with other institutions in population administration. However, with a careful approach, the KUA has the opportunity to become an inclusive and effective marriage registration center in Indonesia.

Keywords: KUA Transformation, Marriage Registration, Inclusiveness, Criticism, Implementation

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INTRODUCTION

Starting from the plan of the Minister of Religion who proposed that the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) as a place to register marriages for all religions needs to be considered. Although there are obstacles in legal regulations to implementing this proposal, this effort is important to increase supervision of marriage registration, especially for non-Muslims. Changing the KUA to become a marriage registration place does not only mean determining the location of the marriage, but also accommodating marriage registrations carried out in other places, such as homes or places of worship.

Although regulatory obstacles currently hinder such a proposal, steps such as streamlining marriage administration laws, reforming the attributive authority of the Population and Civil Registration Service, as well as restructuring the authority of the penghulu and KUA could help overcome this problem. With the right commitment, the KUA can become a more effective center for registering marriages from all religions in Indonesia (el-Saha, 2024).

Hidayat Nur Wahid, Deputy Chair of the MPR-RI and Member of DPR-RI Commission VIII, criticized the Minister of Religion's plan to consolidate marriage registration from all religions at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA). HNW emphasized that this plan is not in accordance with the history of the KUA in Indonesia, the mandate of the constitution, and has the potential to cause social and psychological problems. According to him, the division of marriage registration between the KUA for Muslims and the Civil Registry for non-Muslims has been going well without any problems, and the Minister of Religion's proposal could trigger tensions, especially for non-Muslims who feel connected to Islam. He also highlighted the proposed policy as irrelevant and burdensome for the KUA which already lacks human resources and facilities. He emphasized the need to focus on the role of Islamic Guidance, including improving services and solving internal problems, not adding to the KUA's burden by arranging marriages from other religions (Wahid, 2024).

Marriage registration is an important aspect of a country's population administration. In Indonesia, the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) has a crucial role in this matter, especially in registering marriages for Muslims. However, recently, there has been a proposal from the Minister of Religion to change the KUA into a center for registering marriages for all religions. This raises various questions and challenges regarding the effectiveness and relevance of these policies. This article aims to review the proposed transformation for the KUA towards inclusive marriage registration, as well as highlight the criticisms that have emerged against the proposal and the practical challenges in its implementation (Zamroni & Miarsa, 2018).

The main objective of this research is to analyze the transformation of the KUA in the context of inclusive marriage registration, as well as identifying criticisms directed at the Minister of Religion's proposal. It is hoped that the benefits of this research will provide a better understanding of the proposed changes to the KUA and their potential impacts, as well as contribute to policy discussions regarding population administration in Indonesia.

The transformation of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in the context of inclusive marriage registration refers to efforts to change the role and function of the KUA so that it can serve the registration of marriages from various religions or beliefs, not just from one particular religion. This aims to create a system that is more inclusive and accommodates the diversity of religions and beliefs in Indonesia. This transformation can include changes in regulations, administrative procedures, and cultural and social approaches to providing services (Safaruddin et al., 2023). An example of the KUA's transformation towards inclusive marriage registration is the official recognition of

interfaith marriages. Previously, the KUA might only provide marriage registration services for couples who adhered to the same religion. However, with this transformation, the KUA will open its services to couples from different religions, thereby allowing them to obtain official recognition for their marriage (Pangestu & Muharman, 2023).

In addition, KUA transformation can also include increasing the training and capacity of KUA staff in handling interfaith marriages with the required sensitivity and expertise. This can include an understanding of various wedding traditions and rituals from various religions, as well as handling documents and administration in accordance with applicable regulations (Safaruddin et al., 2023).

However, the proposal to transform the KUA towards inclusive marriage registration has also received criticism from various parties. One common criticism concerns the relevance and need for such transformation. Some parties may argue that the existing system, where the KUA only provides marriage registration services for Muslims, is effective enough and does not need to be changed. Other criticisms may relate to technical issues, such as changes to complex administrative procedures or a lack of human resources and budget to support this transformation (Ali & Khusaini, 2022).

By conducting in-depth research on the KUA transformation, it is hoped that a better understanding will be gained about the benefits and impacts of the proposal. This can help in making more precise and effective policies regarding population administration in Indonesia, as well as ensuring that this transformation can create a more inclusive and equitable system for all citizens, regardless of religion or belief.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach by conducting literature studies and document analysis related to marriage registration policies in Indonesia. The data was analyzed descriptively to identify trends, criticisms and challenges that emerged regarding the KUA's transformation towards inclusive marriage registration (Rosyadi & Kahar, 2023).

The qualitative approach used in this research emphasizes an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Literature studies and document analysis related to marriage registration policies in Indonesia are relevant methods for collecting the necessary information. In the context of the transformation of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) towards inclusive marriage registration, a qualitative approach allows researchers to understand in depth the social, cultural and political dynamics involved in the process (Fauziah et al., 2023).

Literature studies involve searching various sources of information such as scientific journals, books, government reports, and official documents related to marriage policy in Indonesia. Document analysis is also an important part of identifying regulations, policies and views related to KUA transformation. The data obtained from literature studies and document analysis were then analyzed descriptively to reveal trends, criticisms and challenges related to the KUA's transformation towards inclusive marriage registration (Grijns & Horii, 2018).

An example of applying this qualitative approach is by reviewing a number of literature which discusses the role of the KUA in registering marriages, the regulations governing this process, as well as the views and responses of various parties regarding the transformation of the KUA. Apart from that, document analysis was also carried out on various policies and official documents related to population and marriage administration in Indonesia.

The results of this research will provide a comprehensive picture of various aspects related to the KUA's transformation towards inclusive marriage registration, including an understanding of the relevance, effectiveness and social implications of this policy. Thus, qualitative approaches make a valuable contribution in deepening understanding of the phenomenon and provide a solid foundation for sustainable and inclusive policymaking.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The need for developing inclusive marriage laws without religious discrimination in Indonesia

The need to develop inclusive marriage laws without religious discrimination in Indonesia emphasizes the importance of justice and equality for all citizens, regardless of their religion or beliefs. This is important to create a social environment that is inclusive and respects religious freedom and human rights (Romadhon & Bahori, 2023). For example, in the marriage registration process, all couples, both Muslim and non-Muslim, must have equal access and be legally recognized without any discrimination. This means that marriage registration rules and procedures must be designed to cover all religions and beliefs, and provide equal legal protection for all couples.

Developing inclusive marriage laws can also include recognition and protection of various types of marriage, such as interfaith marriages or same-sex marriages. In this way, all couples can live a family life with dignity and justice, without being constrained by the boundaries of certain religions or beliefs (Sidiqah, 2023). The need to develop inclusive marriage laws without religious discrimination in Indonesia is based on the principles of equality, justice and respect for human rights (Aditya et al., 2023). In a diverse society like Indonesia, where there are various religions and beliefs, it is important to ensure that all individuals have the same rights to live a family life without discrimination based on their religion or beliefs (Yuliana, 2021).

One of the reasons why the development of inclusive marriage laws is necessary is to accommodate differences in religion and belief among the Indonesian population. Without inclusive laws, there is a risk that couples who belong to different religions or who do not follow the majority religion will face difficulties in gaining legal recognition for their marriages. This can result in inequalities in legal protection and access to rights such as inheritance, joint property ownership, and child custody (M. I. Firdaus, 2023). A concrete example of the need for inclusive marriage laws is the recognition of interfaith marriages. In Indonesia, where there are various religions such as Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc., many couples from different religions choose to get married. Without inclusive laws, the process of registering their marriages may become difficult or

even impossible, as regulations may only recognize marriages in certain religious contexts. This may result in the couple losing the legal and administrative rights afforded to couples married within the same religion. With inclusive marriage laws, all couples can have the same legal protection, independent of the religion or beliefs they adhere to. This helps create a more inclusive and tolerant society, where all individuals are respected and recognized in their rights to live a family life in accordance with their beliefs and values.

Highlighting the Need for Inclusive Marriage Laws for All Religions in Indonesia

Highlighting the need for inclusive marriage laws for all religions in Indonesia refers to the need to develop regulations that take into account and accommodate the diversity of religions that exist in Indonesia. This is important because Indonesia is a country with a society of diverse religions and beliefs (Agustian et al., 2023). First of all, inclusive marriage laws will ensure that every individual, regardless of religion or belief, has equal access and equal rights in the marriage process. This is a basic principle in creating a just and inclusive society. When marriage law does not differentiate between religions, then every citizen has the same opportunity to obtain legal protection and security in marriage.

A concrete example of the need for inclusive marriage law is in the marriage administration process. For example, in registering marriages at civil registry offices, inclusive laws will ensure that registration procedures do not differentiate between the religions of the married couple. All couples, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, will be treated fairly and equally in the eyes of the law (Desimaliati, 2022). In addition, inclusive marriage laws will also cover aspects such as family rights, inheritance, and legal protection for couples from various religions. This will encourage the creation of harmonious relations between religions and avoid discrimination that may arise due to religious differences in marriage. Thus, highlighting the need for inclusive marriage laws for all religions in Indonesia is not only about legal justice, but also about building a harmonious, inclusive society and respecting diversity as one of the nation's important assets.

Practical Challenges in Managing KUA in the Middle of a Heterogeneous Society and Legal and Administrative Aspects of Marriage for Non-Muslim Religions

The practical challenges in managing a Religious Affairs Office (KUA) in a heterogeneous society include various aspects, especially those related to the legal and administrative aspects of marriage for non-Muslim religions. In Indonesia, where society is very diverse in terms of religion and belief, the KUA is responsible for various religious matters, including marriage registration (Musta'in, 2022). The following is a further explanation along with concrete examples: Limited Resources: One of the practical challenges faced by KUA is limited human resources, budget and infrastructure. In managing marriage registration for heterogeneous communities, the KUA may experience difficulties in providing adequate services for all religions in its area. Example: A KUA in an urban area with a religiously diverse population may have a limited number of staff to handle the registration of marriages performed by people of different religions. Diverse

Legal Aspects: The KUA needs to handle diverse legal aspects related to marriage, especially when non-Muslim religions are involved. This includes understanding the various religious regulations and civil laws that apply to each religion in the marriage process. Example: A KUA officer in a rural area may need to understand marriage procedures in the Hindu religion to serve Hindu couples who want to get married (Adjie, 2021).

Documentation Management: Managing marriage documentation for non-Muslim religions requires precision and caution, especially in terms of identifying valid documents and ensuring that all administrative requirements are met. Example: An KUA officer needs to check documents such as birth certificates, unmarried certificates, and parental consent letters carefully to ensure that marriages can be recorded correctly. **Respect for Culture and Beliefs:** KUA must respect the diversity of cultures and beliefs in providing marriage services, including ensuring that the marriage process is carried out in accordance with the religious beliefs and traditions of each couple. Example: An KUA officer needs to ensure that the marriage ceremony performed by a Buddhist couple is accommodated in accordance with the teachings and beliefs of Buddhism (Tridiatno, 2023).

In facing these challenges, the KUA needs to develop strategies and policies that are inclusive and responsive to the religious and cultural diversity of the local community. This is important to ensure that all citizens, regardless of their religion or belief, can access marriage services that are fair, transparent and meet their needs.

Highlighting the Importance of Responding to the Views of Interfaith Figures to Realize an Inclusive KUA

Highlighting the importance of responding to the views of interfaith figures to create an inclusive Religious Affairs Office (KUA) is a crucial aspect in developing religious services that are responsive and pay attention to religious diversity in Indonesia. Interfaith figures have great influence in society and can be the main movers in shaping inclusive attitudes, policies and practices at KUA (Daffa & Anggara, 2023). The following is a further explanation along with concrete examples:

1. **Increase Understanding and Awareness:** Interfaith figures can help increase public understanding and awareness about the importance of inclusivity in religious services. They can educate the public about the values of tolerance, respect for differences, and the need to respect the religious rights of each individual. Example: A religious leader may give a talk or lecture about the importance of inclusivity in religious services in various forums, such as churches, mosques, or other places of worship.
 2. **Encourage Interreligious Dialogue:** Interfaith figures can act as mediators in interreligious dialogue to build better understanding between religious communities. Through open dialogue and discussion, they can help reduce tensions and increase cooperation between religious communities. Example: An interfaith leader may organize an interfaith dialogue event where representatives of different religions can gather to share their views and experiences.
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3. Providing Input in Decision Making: Interfaith figures can act as advisors in making decisions regarding policies and practices at KUA. By considering their views, the KUA can develop policies that are more inclusive and sensitive to religious diversity. Example: An KUA may establish an interfaith advisory council consisting of representatives of religious figures to provide input on how to improve inclusive religious services.
4. Become role models: Interfaith figures can be role models in practicing the values of inclusivity and tolerance in everyday life. In doing so, they can inspire society to adopt the same attitude in interfaith relations. Example: A religious leader who is active in promoting inclusivity may demonstrate a friendly and open attitude towards individuals of various religions in their daily lives.

By responding to the views and input of these interfaith figures, the KUA can become more inclusive in providing religious services that meet the needs and diversity of religions in society. This is an important step in building a harmonious society based on the values of tolerance and respect for differences.

KUA as a Center for Interfaith Religious Services, through Regulatory, Organizational and Human Resource Transformation to Build an Inclusive KUA in Indonesia

The Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) as a center for interfaith religious services has great potential to become a center that is inclusive and responsive to the needs of religions in Indonesia. Transforming the KUA through regulations, organization and human resources (HR) is a key step in building an inclusive KUA in Indonesia (Ahyani et al., 2021). The following is a further explanation along with examples:

Regulatory Transformation: Changes in regulations can provide a legal basis that supports the principle of inclusivity in religious services at KUA. This includes drafting regulations or laws that accommodate the needs of religious minorities and ensure fair treatment for all individuals regardless of religion. Example: Ratification of a law ensuring that the KUA not only serves Muslims, but also provides equivalent services to people of other religions in terms of marriage registration and other religious services (Nurhartanto, 2017).

Organizational Transformation: Changes in the KUA's organizational structure can help expand the scope of religious services and increase the involvement of minority religions. This includes increasing accessibility, establishing special units or departments to serve minority religions, and expanding the inter-KUA cooperation network. Example: Establishment of a special unit at the KUA whose task is to serve religious minorities, such as Christians, Hindus, Buddhists and other religions, with personnel who have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the needs of these religions (Hubbart, 2023).

HR Transformation: Human resource development which includes training, education and religious formation will help build an inclusive KUA. Quality human resources can provide services that are sensitive to religious and cultural diversity and strengthen interfaith dialogue. Example: Training for KUA officers on the principles of

inclusivity, religious tolerance, and handling cases involving minority religions, so that they can provide better and more inclusive services to all individuals. Through transformation of regulations, organization and human resources, KUA can become a center for inclusive religious services and play a more active role in building harmony and tolerance between religions in Indonesia. This will create a supportive environment for all individuals to practice their religion without discrimination or unnecessary barriers (Riani, 2024).

From the explanation above, the author concludes that the KUA's transformation towards inclusive marriage registration received various responses from the community and related parties (Olabiyyi, 2023). Although the aim of this proposal is to increase oversight of marriage registration, especially for non-Muslims, there is still criticism leveled at the relevance, effectiveness and social impact of the policy. Some critics have argued that this transformation is inconsistent with the history of the KUA in Indonesia, and could cause social and psychological problems, especially for non-Muslims who feel connected to Islam. The KUA's transformation towards inclusive marriage registration is an effort to expand the scope of the KUA's religious services so that it not only serves Muslims, but also people of other religions in the marriage registration process. Even though it has a positive aim, this transformation has received mixed responses from the community and related parties (Ronaydi & Castrawijaya, 2023).

Some positive responses might include support for efforts to ensure that all individuals, regardless of religion (Pangestu & Muharman, 2023), have equal access to the marriage registration process. This can strengthen legal protection and the rights of individuals from various religious backgrounds in Indonesia (Rajafi et al., 2024). However, a number of criticisms have also emerged against this transformation. First, several parties question the relevance of this proposal to the history and traditional function of the KUA in Indonesia. The KUA has historically focused more on serving Muslims, and turning it into an interfaith marriage registration center could disrupt the structure and identity of the institution. Criticism was also directed at the effectiveness of this transformation in improving supervision of marriage registration. Although the aim is to expand the scope of services, implementation of this policy may face challenges in terms of regulatory changes, increasing human resource capacity, and integration with other population administration institutions (Sidqi & Rasidin, 2023).

Additionally, there are concerns that this transformation could cause social and psychological problems, especially for non-Muslims who feel connected to Islam. Too drastic a change in the KUA's functions and how it works could create uncertainty and confusion among society, as well as give rise to inter-religious tensions.

A concrete example of this criticism is the debate that occurred in society after the announcement of the KUA transformation plan. Some community groups, including religious leaders and human rights activists, may voice their concerns about the social, cultural, and religious implications of this policy through demonstrations, petitions, or public statements. Likewise, discussions may occur in various public forums, including

mass media and social media platforms, where a variety of views and opinions will be expressed (Pratama, 2023).

Thus, the KUA's transformation towards inclusive marriage registration elicited a variety of responses from the community and related parties, with some parties supporting efforts to expand access to religious services, while others voiced concerns about the social, psychological and religious impacts of the policy (Sahrasad et al., 2022). Practical challenges also arise in implementing this transformation, including regulatory changes, increasing human resource capacity, and integration with other institutions in population administration. However, with the right commitment, this transformation of the KUA has the potential to become an inclusive marriage registration center, which takes into account the needs of all religions in Indonesia (Widaryanti et al., 2021).

The practical challenges that arise in implementing the KUA's transformation towards inclusive marriage registration involve several aspects, including regulatory changes, increasing human resource (HR) capacity (Mei, 2024), and integration with other institutions in population administration (Husna et al., 2022).

Changes in Regulations: Transformation of the KUA requires changes in regulations related to marriage registration procedures. This includes revising laws or regulations that regulate the functions and authority of the KUA as well as procedures for registering marriages for non-Muslim religious communities (Daud et al., 2021). This regulatory change process requires time and consensus from various related parties. Example: The Indonesian government is formulating amendments or new regulations that regulate the role of the KUA in registering interfaith marriages. The process of discussing laws or regulations involves dialogue between the government, members of parliament and civil society (T. M. Firdaus et al., 2023).

Increasing HR Capacity: This transformation requires increasing HR capacity at KUA to serve marriages of various kinds religion well and professionally (Susano et al., 2023). This includes training for KUA officers on marriage registration procedures for non-Muslims, a deep understanding of the values of other religions, and skills in communicating sensitively with various religious groups (Ahyani et al., 2022). Example: The government provides training and professional development for KUA officers on the marriage practices and needs of minority religions. This training includes an understanding of rituals, traditions and marriage laws from various religions in Indonesia.

Integration with other institutions: KUA transformation requires good integration with other institutions in population administration, such as the Population and Civil Registration Service (Dukcapil) (antaranews.com, 2024). This integration is important to ensure the smooth process of registering interfaith marriages and efficient data exchange between institutions. Example: KUA collaborates with Dukcapil to ensure that marriage data from all religions is recorded correctly and integrated into the national population administration system (Linda & Wijaya, 2021). This collaboration involves information exchange and coordination between the two institutions.

Even though these challenges exist, the transformation of the KUA has great potential to become an inclusive marriage registration center in Indonesia with the right

commitment. With appropriate regulations, quality human resources, and good integration with other institutions, KUA can provide fair and equitable services for all religions, meeting the needs of Indonesia's multicultural society (Suhenda, 2024). The transformation of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) towards inclusive marriage registration is a complex and significant step in the context of religious administration in Indonesia. This step raised various criticisms and challenges in its implementation, especially because it involved major changes in an established and sensitive system, and faced various views from the community and related parties. One of the criticisms that arises is regarding the relevance and necessity of this transformation. Some may doubt the direct benefits of such changes or question whether such a transformation is necessary in the context of religious diversity in Indonesia. In addition, there has also been criticism of the effectiveness of this transformation, with some parties doubting the KUA's ability to handle various tasks related to various religions.

Challenges in implementing this transformation also include regulatory, organizational and human resource aspects. The regulatory changes required to support this transformation may require time and a complex legislative process. Apart from that, reorganizing the structure and function of the KUA as well as increasing the capacity of human resources is also a challenge in itself. However, despite facing various criticisms and challenges, the KUA's transformation towards inclusive marriage registration also carries great potential in building more inclusive and effective religious services in Indonesia. With a careful and responsive approach to input from various parties, KUA has the opportunity to become a religious service center capable of accommodating the needs of various religions in Indonesia. This can strengthen inter-religious harmony and improve overall population administration services.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the KUA's transformation towards inclusive marriage registration has raised various criticisms and challenges in its implementation. However, with a careful and responsive approach to input from various parties, KUA has the opportunity to become an inclusive and effective religious service center in Indonesia.

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