

Oha mina and the Making of Women's Religious Agency in Bima, Indonesia

Ang Rijal Anas¹, Ahmad Fauzan², Ang Rijal Amin³, Than Tie Amirah⁴, Miftahur Rahmah⁵

UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Indonesia. Email: angampao@gmail.com¹. Ganesha University of Education, Indonesia. Email: ahmad.fauzan@student.undiksha.ac.id². Islamic University of Indonesia, Indonesia. Email: angrijalamin05@gmail.com³. Open University of Mataram, Indonesia. Email: thantie.amirah4@gmail.com⁵. Al-Azhar University, Egypt. rahmahmiftahur780@gmail.com⁵

Abstract

*To this day, women are still viewed as a vulnerable group. This stigma renders women's roles in social, political, and religious life insignificant and leaves them feeling powerless. This patriarchal culture fosters gender-biased societal perspectives and perpetuates women's subordination. Yet, within religious traditions, women's roles as key participants in religious rituals cannot be underestimated. For example, in the *doa wuru bola* religious tradition of the Bima community, women hold a crucial role as makers of *oha mina*. This study aims to explore the relationship between women, religiosity, and the formation of agency in the making of *oha mina*. This study employs a qualitative approach, using interviews and a literature review, to explore the relationship among women, food, and religiosity from the perspective of Anthony Giddens' theory of agency. The findings of this study indicate that food in Bima society is an expression of religiosity and a means of reconciling local values with Islamic traditions. The *doa wuru bola* tradition involves an equal division of roles and distribution of power between women and men. Furthermore, the practice of making *oha mina* is the locus where agency is formed, and new religious authority is consolidated for women.*

Keywords: *oha mina, women's agency, doa wuru bola, religiosity*

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Introduction

Historically, Bima was part of the Bima Sultanate, which was influenced and Islamized under the Makassar Kingdom. Therefore, in its subsequent development, the people of Bima practiced Islam in a way that was acculturated with the local culture. This is evident in the many traditions in Bima society that intersect with Islamic culture, for example, *rimpu* (Yunus dkk., 2024; 159-170), *doa kasar* (Wahid, 2020a; 361-383), dan *doa wuru bola* (Maryati, 2024). With such diverse traditions, the Bima community is considered a religious community in Eastern Indonesia, similar to Maluku, Makassar, Luwu, and Kupang, which grew from the bottom up along with the strengthening of independent authority and agency, as seen in the religious practices carried out by the Bima community (Wahid, 2020b; 599). The tradition of *wuru bola* (*bola* prayer) is a practice of spiritual purification among the people of Bima in welcoming the holy month of *Ramadan* (See, Sila, M. Adlin. 2012, 26 Juli. Doa Bola: Ritual Penyucian Jiwa Pada Bulan Sya'ban. Bimakini.com. <https://www.bimakini.com/2012/07/doa-bola-ritual-penyucian-diri-pada-bulan-syaban/>) practiced by the people of Bima, West Nusa Tenggara, contains an important element called *oha mina*.

Oha mina comes from two words, namely *oha*, which means rice, and *mina*, which means oil. *Oha mina* is often served during religious activities (See, Rafiin, 2025, 23 Februari). *Oha mina* dan Oha Santa, Kudapan Wajib Saat Hajatan Warga di Bima. Detik.com. <https://www.detik.com/bali/kuliner/d-7791818/oha-mina-dan-oha-santa-kudapan-wajib-saat-hajatan-warga-di-bima>). *Oha mina* is a form of gastronomic tradition among the Bima people that reveals the relationship between female agency, food, and religious behaviour as a form of obedience to religious teachings in the process of its preparation and moral obligations that are believed to be a form of devotion to God. Women, as important subjects in preparing for the practice of *wuru bola* prayer by making *oha mina*, preparing snacks, cakes, and so on, must be seen as agents who demonstrate their agency in the public sphere, which is also influenced by the culture, society, and religion that shape women's knowledge (Wahid & Wardatun, 2025). In this case, the collective solidarity built by the women of Bima in making *oha mina* as part of the *wuru bola* prayer tradition is a form of agency that they practice.

A more specific study of the relationship between food and religiosity and its implications for social class is seen as a form of human relationship with the cosmos, and in creating class conflict (Brumberg-Kraus, 2024); (Ramos, 2025). In this study, food is viewed not merely as a substance the body needs but also as a marker of socio-religious identity and a factor that reinforces social class. In this study, social fragmentation and class conflict are also significantly influenced by food resources. On the other hand, in Islamic tradition, studies on food take an Islamic perspective as a theoretical basis and the traditions of the Prophet as a tool of analysis. Their impact on industrialization and tradition in Indonesia can be seen in the many foods that serve as social glue and display the acculturation of local cultures in the archipelago (Zaki et.al., 2024); (Syarifuddin & Cikusin, 2022). Food served during religious ceremonies strengthens bonds and fosters unity among communities across the Indonesian archipelago. This is also the case in Bima society, as reflected in the tradition of *oha mina*. However, *oha mina* is prepared only for specific

occasions as an expression of gratitude and prayer. The study examines the relationship between food and religiosity from the perspective of ecology and climate change. In addition, food is also a factor that shapes food security and sovereignty in a community (Markowitz & Avieli, 2022); (Universitea Spiru Haret dkk., 2023); (Millah dkk., 2020). These studies confirm the role of food and social mechanisms in safeguarding and preserving food resources as a vital element in the long-term resilience of communities. A community's food security is determined by the extent to which a group's society incorporates food as a vital element in religious rituals. In this researcher's study, *oha mina* serves as a key social cohesive force and a pillar of food security, characterized by the utilization of agricultural produce during ceremonial events.

Numerous researchers have conducted more comprehensive scientific studies on the Islamic religious practices of the Bima community and their intersection with the role of women in various spheres, such as worship, education, politics, and marriage customs (Sila, 2014); (Wardatun, 2024); (Putri, 2025); (Osım & Eteng, 2021). These studies show that being Muslim in Bima is an ongoing, context-dependent process. In Sila's view, the daily practices of the Muslim community in Bima, through cultural and political negotiations, also involve women as active participants in shaping the religious identity that defines Islam within that community. For instance, Sila identifies the *kiri loko* tradition as one of the Islamic religious rituals performed by Bima women. Meanwhile, in her research, Wardatun explains how marriage practices among the Bima community align with Islamic concepts through *rawi rasa*, which, in the Bima community's local language and customs, is understood as a sense of togetherness and kinship. In this context, women, as active participants, shape reciprocal practices that balance private and public interests, thereby accommodating women's needs. These practices shape a religious character that can also influence the development of educational culture. Islamic educational practices in Bima, as explained by Putri, have served since the Reformation era to reproduce the Salafi movement through women's movements in Bima. Note that in religious rituals, women must also maintain purity and uphold their sacredness. Therefore, through this study, the researcher further analyzes the Islamic practices of the Bima community through food, an aspect not yet discussed in the studies mentioned above.

The study of *wura* prayer practice is linked to the study of the living Qur'an through the recitation of Surat Yasin during the ritual process (Maryati, 2024). This study has not yet explained that in the *wura bola* prayer, *oha mina* plays a crucial role as a key element in the prayer's success. Through this research, the researcher seeks to further explore the roles of *oha mina* as a cultural and religious mediator and of women. Meanwhile, studies on *oha mina* in Bima society have not been widely discussed by scholars. However, the position of *oha mina* as an important food in religious rituals in Bima is mentioned in several scholarly writings (Wahid & Syukri, 2024). In the article, *oha mina* is mentioned as one of the snacks served during prayers performed by the people of Bima. However, the study has not yet comprehensively examined *oha mina* as a dietary entity of the Bima community in relation to the community's Islamic identity.

The above studies have not yet viewed women as important subjects in relation to food and religiosity. The majority of food research focuses on the role of women in the process of preparing or serving food. Therefore, according to researchers, there has been a reduction in the role of women, which has led to the marginalization of women in the public sphere.

This article aims to explain *oha mina* as a gastronomic tradition of the Bima community, focusing on three factors: the process of making *oha mina*, women's agency as makers of *oha mina*, *oha mina* as food and its connection to the religious values of the community, and the function of *oha mina* in the semi-urban Bima community. This study argues that *oha mina*, in the tradition of the Bima community, which is increasingly becoming an urban society, will be abandoned by the community due to various underlying factors. *Oha mina*, as one of the mandatory snacks in the religious activities of the Bima community, is influenced not only by women as its makers but also by regeneration factors that will increasingly shape the community's making of *oha mina* for the *wura bola* prayer ceremony. In addition, socio-cultural factors also greatly influence the role of women as makers of *oha mina*. Therefore, the research questions posed in this study are: *first*, how is *oha mina* made in Bima society? *Second*, how is *oha mina* related to the religious traditions of Bima society? *Third*, how is female agency formed in the tradition of *doa wura bola*?

Research Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a sociological perspective to provide a comprehensive explanation of *oha mina*, drawing on Anthony Giddens's theory of structuration, which emphasizes the equally important roles of agents and structures in shaping action (Giddens, 1984); (Wahid & Wardatun, 2025). Agents possess the capacity to act and are recognized as having awareness of the actions they perform. In relation to the agents involved in the process of making *oha mina* and the practice of the *wura bola* prayer, the agents—represented by women—are held to specific responsibilities and rules, thereby demonstrating their capability to create *oha mina*. The structures at play in the *oha mina* creation process include rules believed to be primary prerequisites, such as being in a state of purity (not menstruating), and resources acquired through the transmission of knowledge from a previous teacher during the learning process of the prayers involved in *oha mina* creation. It is the equal importance of these agent and structural roles that enables the *oha mina* creation process and the *wura bola* prayer practice to proceed effectively. Additionally, another important resource is the role of the assistant, who helps the *dou manggahi*, a person who recites prayers and leads the process of making *oha mina*. Giddens's duality of structure is used in this study as an analytical tool to interpret the findings.

A qualitative approach is appropriate for this study because it allows for a thorough examination of the topic and contextual interpretation. Data were obtained through a literature review, collecting online sources such as books, journal articles, and media reports to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Additionally, offline data was collected through interviews with four individuals: two women who make *oha mina* (*dou manggahi*), one woman who is frequently involved in the making of *oha mina*, and one man

who recites prayers during the *wura bola* prayer practice namely Siti Muslimah from Sambinae Village and Fatimah from Jatibaru Timur Village, Bima City; a woman who is often involved in the making of *oha mina*, namely Nur Abidah from Nata Village, Bima Regency; and a man who recites prayers during the *Wura bola* prayer ceremony, namely Sarjan from Jatibaru Timur Village, Bima City. These informants were selected as representatives of key elements in the *Wura bola* prayer ritual. The maker of the *oha mina* (*dou manggahi*) is the most important agent in conducting the *Wura bola* prayer. A woman involved in the *oha mina*-making process assists with the tasks throughout the process. This assistant must also be in a state of purity and not menstruating, just like the *dou manggahi*. In addition, a man who leads the prayer process also plays a significant role in the success of the Bima community's *wura bola* prayer. The informant selected by the researcher is a village religious leader who is frequently called upon to serve as the prayer reader and leader.

This study was conducted in November–December 2025; during this period, the people of Bima had already begun preparing for *wura bola* (the month of Sha'ban). Specifically, this study was conducted at three locations: Nata Village, Sambina'E Subdistrict, and Jatibaru Timur Subdistrict, all located in Bima Regency and Bima City. These different research locations were chosen because women play a more prominent role in the practice of *wura bola* and because it was easier for the researcher to access informants. In addition, the selection of these locations different research locations was intended to identify variations in the practice of the *wura bola* prayer and the *oha mina*-making process, which differ from person to person and place to place. This was done to highlight specific differences in *oha mina*-making practices, such as recitations, prayers, and methods of handling materials. The selection of different locations also highlights the Bima community's religious pluralism, indicating a society that practices Islamic teachings. All collected data were qualitatively processed and analyzed using content analysis to identify themes and categories relevant to the research objectives.

Results and Discussion

The Making of *Oha mina* and the Women of Bima

Oha mina is one of the main snacks in the Bima people's religious traditions. The process of making *oha mina* involves women as the main actors in its production. According to Sarjan, a religious leader in Bima City, Bima tradition holds that the woman making *oha mina* must be in a state of purity and have performed wudu (Sarjan, 11 December 2025). This is to preserve the purity of the *oha mina*, and the sacred values believed to influence its taste when served to the congregation.

Furthermore, the sacred meaning of the preparation of *oha mina* lies in its being a series of religious rituals offered to the holy figures—namely, the Prophet Muhammad, Fatimah, and Sayyidina Ali bin Abi Thalib. These three names are always mentioned in every preparation of *oha mina*. This conceptual framework reinforces the impression that *oha mina* is among the foods favored and consumed by these three figures. Thus, according

to the researcher, this framework reinforces the belief among the people of Bima that *oha mina* is also a sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

This belief makes the tradition of the *wura bola* prayer and serving *oha mina* a sacred act worthy of reward. This "sunnah" motif is one of the key factors why the people of Bima continue to perform the *wura bola* prayer and prepare *oha mina*.

In making *oha mina*, several ingredients are needed, including sticky rice, coconut, galangal, turmeric, shallots, lemongrass, lime, salt, and tamarind. These main ingredients are prepared in advance based on the production scale and the size of the celebration. The composition of *oha mina* also depends on the needs and economic status of the family holding the celebration. After that, the ingredients are processed and cooked, beginning with prayers.

In this research, the researcher found differences in the wording of the prayers recited by the three women interviewed. Fatimah, the researcher's informant, revealed the prayer that must be recited:

"Bismillahissaafi bismillahilkafi bismillahilmaafii bismillahilladzii la yadurru maasmin syaiin fil ardy wa huwa samiun alim wa laa hau laa wa laa kuwwataa illaa billa hil aliyyul adziim. Qul hasbunallahu wani'mal wakiil ni'mal maulaa wani'mannasiir wa laa hau la atwa laa kuwwataa illaa billa hil aliyyul adziim. After that, the person leading the process of making the *oha mina* must mention "Nabi Muhammad saw, Fatimah, Sayidina Ali" (Fatimah, 11 December 2025).

The meaning contained in this prayer is an affirmation that Allah, the Almighty, knows all that is good and harmful in this world. In other words, these things, both good and harmful, refer back to the *oha mina* currently being prepared. The person reciting this prayer asks that the *oha mina* being prepared be food that is safe to consume and suitable to be served to those present at the *wura bola* prayer. On the other hand, the mention of the Prophet Muhammad, Fatimah, and Sayyidina Ali as descendants of the Messenger of Allah who enjoy *oha mina* further underscores the significance and the deeper meaning embedded in the *wura bola* prayer (Fatimah, 11 December 2025).

Meanwhile, informant Siti Muslimah said that the prayer in the process of making *oha mina* must begin with *taawuz*. Siti Muslimah explained:

"Audzubillaiminasyathanirrajim. Bismillaahirrahmanirrahim. Asyhadu allaa ilaaha illallaahu wa asyhadu anna muhammadar rasuulullah. Allahumma sholli 'ala Muhammad wa 'ala ali Muhammad. Ma Indakum Yanfadu Wa Ma Inda Allahi Baqin" (Siti Muslimah, 13 December 2025).

The prayer recited by Siti Muslimah is primarily in Arabic. It begins with a prayer of blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, as a way of affirming that this *oha mina* is food intended for Muslim religious activities. This declaration is necessary to ensure that the maker of the *oha mina* and the food prepared do not stem from any intention other than worshiping Allah, the Almighty.

In this prayer, Siti Muslimah also recites a portion of Surah An-Nahl, verse 96, which implies that what is intended solely for Allah Swt will endure. This relates to *oha mina*: only when intended solely for Allah will this *oha mina* be blessed, delicious, long-lasting, and fit for consumption. Conversely, *oha mina*, which is intended solely for human consumption without the intention of worship, is believed to be unfit for consumption and will spoil quickly. This attitude of surrender to Allah in all matters further reinforces the belief that making *oha mina* is a form of sunnah worship (interview with Siti Muslimah, 13 December 2025).

The third informant was Nur Abidah, a woman who often followed people who made *oha mina*. In this study, Nur Abidah interviewed the person she often helped make *oha mina*, namely Tamu (real name: Fatimah). Nur Abidah revealed:

“Bismillahiraahmanirrahim. Siti Hawaku ma samona kai oi maulhaya. Fatimaku ma salungana. Umi Sulaimanku ma mancango rampana. La Hadijahku mancambuna. Niu tuta, kepala iti tuta, saha isi mada, cengke de rima, lau de hi'i, pataha mpori de kau'a, ra'a de huni. Asyhadu allailahailallah wa asyhadu annamuhammadarrasulullah (three times). Bintia Rasulullah gantia Rasulullah. Doro Arafah Nabi Ismail ma doho ese wawo doro. Songko Arami ndai Muhammad Rasulullah” (Nur Abidah, 11 December 2025).

According to this account, *oha mina* is the embodiment of a human figure. In other words, the human in question is a new human being. This refers to the prayer that begins with the recitation of the *basmallah*, followed by the invocation of the name of Siti Hawa, who serves as the one who washes the glutinous rice in the *oha mina* with the water of life. According to Fatimah, as explained by Nur Abidah, the reference to the name Siti Hawa signifies the mother of humanity's ancestors, the origin of life (interview with Nur Abidah, 11 December 2025).

In addition, Fatimah (the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him) acted as the person who cooked the glutinous rice, Umi Sulaiman as the one who fried the spices to make *oha mina*, and Hadijah (Siti Hadijah) as the one who mixed the glutinous rice and spices in making *oha mina*. According to researchers, references to these names provide evidence that people around the Prophet and those of earlier generations also made *oha mina*.

As for the human representation in this *oha mina*, the ingredients used to make it are interpreted as human organs. According to researchers, this is intended to symbolize a new, pure human being during the month of Sha'ban before entering the holy month of Ramadan. For example, the coconut is interpreted as the head. Inside the head are the brain and other organs, which form its core. Chili peppers represent the two eyeballs, cloves represent the hands, galangal represents the flesh, lemongrass symbolizes the veins, and turmeric represents the blood. These meanings represent a new, pure human being as they navigate the months of *Sha'ban*, Ramadan, and Shawwal.



Figure 1 *Oha mina* making process

The prayer is followed by the Shahadah and a mention of the Prophet's children and followers. This affirmation serves as a testimony that this *oha mina* is a form of worship and obedience to Allah and the Prophet, intended for the Prophet's followers and the Muslim community. Furthermore, in this version of the prayer by Mother Fatimah, it is mentioned that Prophet Ishmael sat atop Mount Arafat and that the Prophet Muhammad serves as the protector and shelter for all. This prayer signifies that this *oha mina* is also dedicated to the Prophet Muhammad, and that the most exalted of all humanity is the Prophet Muhammad.

According to researchers, the differences in the prayers recited during the *oha mina*-making process are closely related to differences in the scientific *sanad* studied by the *oha mina* makers. In addition, elderly female *oha mina* makers, aged approximately 60-80 years old, mostly use vocabulary in the Bima language when reciting prayers for making *oha mina* (informant Nur Abidah). Meanwhile, female *oha mina* makers aged 40-50 still use many Arabic words when reciting prayers to make *oha mina* (informants Fatimah and Siti Muslimah).

As for the preparation process, the informants provided similar information: the sticky rice is cooked until fluffy, then drained. After that, coconut milk, lime juice, and salt are slowly mixed until evenly distributed with the fluffy sticky rice. Then, spices such as galangal, shallots, turmeric, and lemongrass are fried in oil until cooked. Then, the mixed glutinous rice is cooked again with the fried spices until it is fully cooked.

After cooking, everything is drained and gently mixed in a prepared container according to the ratio deemed appropriate by the *oha mina* maker. This is done to preserve the flavour and shelf life of the *oha mina*. According to Siti Muslimah, *oha mina* made without following the methods and requirements taught by her teacher will be bland, unpalatable,

and spoil quickly (Interview with Siti Muslimah, 13 December 2025). Additionally, the *oha mina* production process requires assistance from helpers, who are typically women. During production, these helpers play a crucial role in ensuring ingredient availability and preparing the necessary materials throughout the process. For example, they handle tasks such as gathering firewood, tending the fire, cleaning cooking utensils, and performing other labor-intensive tasks required during production.

Throughout this production process, women stand out as key actors in the creation of *oha mina*. Women hold authority over the *oha mina* production process through various structures, ranging from knowledge (prayers) passed down from teacher to teacher to the experience gained through training and participation in the *oha mina* production process from one ceremonial event to the next. This agency is held by the makers of *oha mina* as part of the village's communal spirit and the awareness that the practice of making *oha mina* will continue to be carried out by the people of Bima. In this role, women in Bima hold an important position in the community's social hierarchy. These women are respected because they are regarded as respected figures. This does not directly impact changes in the patriarchal structure of society. However, the active role they demonstrate in society through the creation of *oha mina* proves that women in Bima society have another significant role in religious rituals. This softens the view that religious authority is exclusively held by men.

***Oha mina* in the Religious Diversity of the Bima Community**

Food in religious traditions around the world holds an important place in religious rituals. In Islamic tradition, food is treated with respect as if it were a living being for example, it must not be stepped on or thrown away. Therefore, food is an inherent part of religious rituals and shapes a community's identity and culture (Hidayat, 2024). Furthermore, in the traditions of the Abrahamic religions, food symbolizes humanity's partnership with God, grounded in God's generosity yet always dependent on human effort. Furthermore, cultural adaptation has occurred in relation to this food, and cultural preservation is evident in food rituals and efforts to ensure the community's survival through food self-sufficiency.

Oha mina, an important food in every religious tradition of the Bima people, is integral to the role of food as a bridge connecting humans with God. The local belief of the Bima people, namely *toho dore* (offerings), which are kept in places considered sacred, also uses *oha mina* as one of the ingredients offered. This tradition is a unique aspect of Bima culture, positioning food as a bridge to the sacred. In addition, food also serves as a symbol of the community's cosmopolitanism, where people's identities are carried over and reimagined as new customs in a new setting. Another tradition related to food and religion in the Bima community is the prayer for sustenance (prayer for the earth), known as *ngaha karedo* (eating porridge). According to Muhammad Adlin Sila, the prayer for sustenance aims to provide spiritual and communal strength, so that the Muslim community of Bima can overcome their fear of volcanoes, natural disasters, and endemic diseases (Sila, 2014; 137). This supremacy of Islamic culture is reflected in the daily practices of the Bima community and

mirrors the pattern of a close-knit, agrarian society (Wahid, 2024: 18). This agrarian religious pattern has also greatly influenced the people of Bima in carrying out their religious rituals.

Meanwhile, in the tradition of *wura bola* prayers, *oha mina* is also an important food to be served in rituals (See, Atina. 2022, 27 Maret. Doa Wura B'ola dan *Oha mina*, Tradisi Warga Bima Menjelang Ramadhan. Tribunnews.com. <https://lombok.tribunnews.com/2022/03/27/doa-wura-bola-dan-oha-mina-tradisi-warga-bima-menjelang-bulan-ramadhan>). This is a belief that has been passed down from generation to generation among the people of Bima, that *oha mina* is one of the foods liked by the Prophet Muhammad (interview with Fatimah, 11 December 2025). The researcher's interview with Fatimah revealed that in the prayer for making *oha mina*, one must mention the names of the Prophet Muhammad, Sayyidina Fatimah, and Sayyidina Ali (interview with Fatimah, 11 December 2025). According to Sarjan, the mention of these names is the reason why this *oha mina* was created (interview with Sarjan, 11 December 2025). Thus, religious legitimacy grew stronger, and the community no longer believed there was anything "wrong" with this practice. The making of *oha mina* in Bima society is only done in a few religious rituals, such as the *wura bola* prayer, the 40-day tahlilan prayer, and the *toho dore* prayer. Therefore, it is religious values such as these that shape and strengthen the Islam of the Bima community.

On the other hand, the representation of the relationship between humans and God in *oha mina* is also revealed in the prayers recited by Tamu. Humans are considered important among the main ingredients used to make *oha mina*. For example, whole coconuts are likened to heads. Then the contents of the head are likened to pieces of coconut. Chili peppers are interpreted as the eyes, cloves as the hands, galangal as the flesh, lemongrass as the veins, and turmeric as the blood (interview with Nur Abidah, 11 December 2025).

In this symbolism, according to researchers, it can be interpreted as humans shaping themselves as servants facing God. This is a sign that in *oha mina*, religious or divine representation is interpreted in the offering or prayer of *wura bola* as a form of purification of the human soul in welcoming the month of Ramadan. Therefore, the people of Bima believe that every *wura bola* prayer and other prayers, *oha mina*, must be part of the ritual.

This eschatological belief also shapes the Bima people's religious diversity as a society. The representation of food in maintaining harmony with God for a high degree of piety must be based on its social role in the world (Nuriyanto dkk., 2025). Therefore, this diversity of practices also gives rise to differences in religious discourse between traditionalists, who tend to be accommodating towards prayer practices (including *wura bola* prayers), and modernists, who tend to be resistant to such practices. However, the space for negotiation in the name of shared life and harmony, as the Bima community remains the benchmark in the practice of *wura bola* prayer. Within the religious diversity of Bima society, traditionalist and modernist discourses are not typically presented as mutually exclusive. However, in Bima society, harmony is evident in symbols, religious practices, and even food.

It is this harmonious way of life that the people of Bima collectively aspire to a state that, according to Bowen's framework, arises from the contextualization of religious resources within the dynamics of social life (Wahid & Wardatun, 2025: 42). Within this

religious diversity, *oha mina*, in particular, serves as a tool to strengthen communal bonds among women who collaborate to create *oha mina*. Furthermore, within a broader framework, the *doa wuru bola* in Bima society is a religious practice comprising the recitation of the Qur'an, *zikir*, and *tahlil*, culminating in a prayer for those with specific intentions. On the other hand, social interactions within the community are fostered through these gatherings. Consequently, social cohesion and a sense of mutual dependence among community members are strengthened, particularly within the community's religious and social life. The religious sphere of Bima society, rich in cultural heritage, is a treasure in its own right, embodying a culture preserved through the community's religious practices.

The Formation of Women's Agency in *Doa Wuru bola*

Giddens, in his structuration theory, as quoted by Zainal Abidin Ahmad, explains that structure and agency are inseparable and form a duality of structure (Ahmad, 2021, 112). Giddens identifies three types of structures in social systems: signification, legitimation, and domination. The first is signification, which produces meaning through organized language networks (semantic codes, interpretive schemes, and discursive practices). Giddens expands the role of actors to include the ability to interpret and manipulate structured language with interpretive meaning. The second is legitimacy, a moral order comprising norms, values, and social standards. When individual agents interact, they demonstrate the conscious, subconscious, or unconscious meaning of their behaviour. The third is domination, which focuses on the production (and exercise) of power, which stems from control over resources. Giddens identifies that the power of domination and submission exists in power relations. Basic human actions and the activities that result from them are two abilities that define humans as agents.

The formation of Bima women's agency in the tradition of *wuru bola* prayer occurs during the making of *oha mina*. In the process of making *oha mina*, women act as the dominant force. The main requirement for making *oha mina* is that women must be in a state of purity (not menstruating). An informant, Siti Muslimah, explained:

"In the process of making *oha mina*, there are usually five to six women who are in charge, all of whom must be in a state of purity (not menstruating). One woman acts as the main maker, and the rest are her assistants. If one of them makes *oha mina* while not in a state of purity, it is believed that the *oha mina* will spoil quickly and taste bad. The main maker's job is to wash the glutinous rice, which is the base ingredient for *oha mina*, while the others' jobs are to make sure the place, fire, and other stuff needed to make *oha mina* are ready to go" (Siti Muslimah, 13 December 2025).

The legitimacy of women's social status in making *oha mina* constitutes a form of spatial division between women and men. In addition, during the process of making *oha mina*, the main maker appointed by the person who needs it will usually gather a team of volunteers to help them make it. Through this process, they reach agreements with the client on the amount of sticky rice needed and who is responsible for ensuring everything goes smoothly. So, according to the researcher, this is where women create the language network

they use during the *oha mina*-making process. Furthermore, the language network that women create in the *oha mina*-making process is more discursive. Siti Muslimah explains:

“Before everything begins, we must ensure the number and capability of personnel because the preparation process is complicated and difficult. So, like it or not, an agreement between the client and the manufacturer must be determined at the outset” (interview with Siti Muslimah, 13 December 2025).

In addition, the process of making *oha mina* involves specific prayers at each stage. For example, washing the sticky rice, the main ingredient in making *oha mina*, must begin with *taawuzd* and *basmallah*. This is followed by reciting the shahada and *salawat* to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and reading one of the verses from the Qur'an. When washing the sticky rice, the number of washes must also be odd. The requirements that must be met in making *oha mina* are also obtained from the process of learning from religious experts or people who previously had knowledge in making *oha mina*. In this context, Islamic religious values are significantly embedded in the process of making *oha mina*. This is also confirmed by Ayu Maryati, who states that the main factor in the community's acceptance of the *wura bola* prayer tradition, which includes the important element of *oha mina*, is religious (Maryati, 2024). Siti Muslimah acknowledges that she learned this knowledge from her mother. Siti Muslimah explains:

"I learned how to make *oha mina* and the prayers used in the process from my mother, Umi Siti Khadijah. My mother told me that she also learned from Abu Sao (H. Mansyur's nickname), who was a *lebe* (village cleric) who had studied religion at Pondok Tebuireng. Anyway, my mother came to him to learn, and he gave her the prayers that H. Mansyur had written on a piece of cloth, without any complicated requirements. This is because, in some people's experience, learning to make *oha mina* also entails certain requirements, such as bringing Ambon bananas or other items. This is because different teachers of this subject use different methods. For example, when I make *oha mina*, all the prayers are recited at the beginning of the process. There are also prayers that must be recited briefly before performing certain actions during the process, such as when washing rice or when lighting the fire” (Siti Muslimah, 13 December 2025).

This is where women's agency in the tradition of *wura bola* prayer in Bima society was formed. The social structure that requires women to remain in the domestic sphere (the kitchen) does not completely restrict women. The agency shown by Bima women in making *oha mina* in the tradition of *wura bola* prayer demonstrates collective agency that stems from their mastery of the knowledge of making *oha mina* (Wahid & Wardatun, 2025: 21). In addition, this determines the success of the *wura bola* prayer that is performed.

The practice of *wura bola* prayers also became an arena for negotiation between women and men. In this case, women provided the necessary items, such as *oha mina*, bananas, food, and provisions (*jangko*). Meanwhile, men in the *wura bola* prayer process act as prayer leaders or attendees who come to pray at the invitation of those who have made

a request. After that, women take responsibility once the *wura bola* prayer practice is complete.

Women's agency, shaped and reproduced through religious practices, constitutes a distinct arena and sphere of power in which women can demonstrate their capacity for action. The duality of the legitimizing structure rooted in the moral values and knowledge acquired by women in the creation of *oha mina*, and in the recognition of men as equal partners in the *wura bola* prayer ritual serves as a foundation for the agency of Bima women in their public actions within the religious sphere and daily practices (Wahid & Wardatun, 2025: 26). This structure operates as an integral part of the collective consciousness of Bima women. This serves as a precedent that one of the key factors shaping Bima women's agency lies within the tradition of the *wura bola* prayer and the process of creating *oha mina*.

Dou Manggahi and Women's Agencies

In modern religious discourse, female religious scholars are often considered to be only found in Islamic boarding schools or those who pursue formal education or are descended from *habaib* (Hidayati, 2022); (Rijal, 2022). However, little attention has been paid to the role of local women in the formation of new authorities within society. Abdul Wahid describes the formation of religious authority in Eastern Indonesia as a particular endeavour through the minor roles played by village leaders (Wahid, 2020b; 602). This is also due to the decentralization of power and the expanding role of religious authorities. Consequently, this has led to the emergence of new religious authorities in various regions (Seise, 2021; 57). Thus, the roles of women in the religious practices of the Bima community, such as the *wura bola* prayer, are important to consider. This is because the current situation fosters a diversity of religious practices and, as a result, religious authorities reproduce more actors and a wide variety of options among them.

The roles and agency formed by the women of Bima, as well as the informal reproduction of knowledge from one student to another in creating *oha mina*, are the embryo of a new authority outside the formal education system for female scholars. However, as teachers, such as Siti Muslimah (a village Quran teacher), can fulfil their social roles and maintain their networks with communities that need their services as *oha mina* makers. This is one example of how grassroots religious dynamics play a key role in determining authority and expertise within religious traditions.

The process of religious discourse contestation faced by female *oha mina* makers in Bima is reformist religious discourse and the modernization of religious life, which increasingly leaves tradition behind. In addition, this is due to the migration of Bima women abroad for work or other reasons, which causes them to leave behind their native culture. This phenomenon leads to a weakening of traditional values as they live in a different environment, however, women have the opportunity to express themselves in ways that allow their abilities and potential to be recognized by the public (Jati dkk., 2024). This raise concerns in the process of spreading knowledge. For example, Siti Muslimah confirmed her concerns:

"Because making *oha mina* is difficult, especially in large quantities, it also affects people's desire to learn how to make *oha mina*. Moreover, after many snacks and cakes became available to order online, people became less interested in making them themselves. However, because this has become a religious tradition every time Ramadan arrives, *insha'Allah*, people will continue to learn how to make *oha mina*, at least for the needs of *wura bola* prayers at home or with close family" (Siti Muslimah, 30 November 2025).

The relatively complex production process, which requires significant effort, especially when carried out on a large scale for special occasions, is one of the factors contributing to the declining interest among some members of the public in learning how to make these treats. This complexity is not only related to the technical aspects of preparation but also to the time, effort, and high level of precision required at every stage of production.

On the other hand, the changing times have also presented new challenges. The availability of various types of modern snacks and pastries that can be easily ordered online offers the public a more practical alternative (Erwani & Siregar, 2024). This convenience can indirectly shift interest, particularly among the younger generation, away from the traditional process, which is perceived as more labor-intensive, toward instant options.



Figure 2 *Oha mina*

Nevertheless, the quote also emphasizes that *Oha mina* is not merely an ordinary food but holds a significant place within the religious traditions of the Bima community, particularly in welcoming the month of Ramadan. The sacred value and symbolic meaning attached to *Oha mina* are the primary factors ensuring the continuity of this tradition. The

collective belief that *Oha mina* is part of a prayer ritual keeps the community maintaining the practice of making it, albeit on a smaller scale.

Despite shifts brought about by modernization and changing lifestyles, the tradition of making *Oha mina* remains deeply resilient. At the very least, the community continues to strive to learn and preserve it, if only to fulfill family ritual needs such as the *wura bola* prayer. This demonstrates a compromise between the practical demands of modern life and efforts to preserve the cultural heritage and religious values deeply rooted in Bima society. The formation of Islamic religious authority within Bima society cannot be separated from the relationship between social structures, religious values, and daily practices carried out by the community, including women (Sila, 2014). In this context, religious authority is not solely monopolized by male figures such as ulama or imams but is also culturally shaped through the domestic and ritual roles performed by women.

Bima women hold a unique position in preserving and reproducing Islamic values in daily life. Through their involvement in various religious practices, such as preparing ritual meals, leading family prayers, and instilling religious values within the household, women indirectly build informal religious authority. This authority does not always manifest as formal leadership but exists through moral influence, practical knowledge, and cultural legitimacy recognized by the community.

One concrete example is the tradition of making *Oha mina*. In this practice, women serve not only as technical practitioners but also as guardians of the process's sacredness. The requirement to be in a state of purity and to perform wudu before preparing the food indicates the existence of religious standards attached to women's bodies and actions. Thus, women serve as an important medium for transmitting the values of purity and blessing in religious rituals. On the other hand, the formation of this authority is also influenced by broader social structures, where gender role divisions remain quite strong. Men tend to occupy positions of formal authority. This is where Bima women emerge as a strategic group capable of shaping their actions in more emancipatory ways. This has implications for the formation of new, more equitable power structures in the public lives of Bima women.

Therefore, according to researchers, the establishment of female religious authority in Indonesia also takes into account the roles of women at the grassroots level in ensuring that the Bima community's religious traditions are continued and recognized. This is because women at the grassroots level can reach out to and support the community through religious practices.

Conclusion

Oha mina, as one of the foods in the Bima community's *wura bola* prayer tradition, is an important food that serves as a link between humans and God. This is evidenced by the narrative that *oha mina* was one of the Prophet Muhammad's favourite foods. The religious values embedded in the prayers recited by women while making *oha mina*, along with the agency demonstrated by women as the makers of *oha mina*, reveal an equal relationship between women and men within the *Wura bola* prayer tradition. In the process of making

oha mina, there are differences in the recitation of prayers before the process begins. This is due to differences in the transmission of *dou manggahi* knowledge, which originates from different teachers and their respective experiences in the *oha mina*-making process. However, the prayer practices performed during the making of the *oha mina* both begin with the *basmallah* and with prayers of blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to seek blessings for the *oha mina* being made. For the women of Bima, the practice of making *oha mina* serves as a space to actualize their roles and agency within community life. This involvement is intended as an act of worship to collectively welcome the holy month of Ramadan. From this role, women's agency is shaped by their knowledge and experience gained through their involvement in making *oha mina* and the *wura bola* prayer practice. Thus, this agency entails the formation of a new religious authority, created by Bima women at the grassroots level, based on their knowledge of how to make *oha mina*. Women's agency in making *oha mina* operates within the religious sphere, alongside the practice of Islamic teachings.

Based on the research findings, which indicate that Bima women, in the practice of making *oha mina*, serve as the locus for the formation of female agency and authority, there is an equitable distribution of power between women and men within the realm of religious practices in Bima society. Since this study is limited to the formation of female agency using a qualitative approach, it is recommended that future researchers examine other aspects, more quantitative in nature and from a socio-economic perspective, along with their implications for *oha mina* makers. Given that the *wura bola* prayer is an annual ritual, it is recommended that the Ministry of Culture document the process of making *oha mina* as part of Indonesia's Islamic cultural heritage.

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