



## Marriage Postponement in the Mandailing Community: A Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah-Based Socio-Legal Analysis of Bujing-Bujing Tobang and Poso-Poso Tobang in Sibual-Buali Village

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examines the phenomenon of marriage postponement among bujing-bujing tobang (unmarried adult women) and poso-poso tobang (unmarried adult men) in Sibual-Buali Village, Padang Lawas, through the lens of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah. Employing a qualitative design with an empirical-juridical approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 12 informants across three age groups (25–27, 27–30, and 30+), alongside local customary leaders and religious scholars, complemented by library research on the Qur'an, Hadith, the Compilation of Islamic Law, and classical fiqh literature. Findings indicate that the dominant factors contributing to delayed marriage include economic instability, caregiving responsibilities, prior emotional experiences, and aspirations for education and career development. Analysis through the maqāṣid al-sharī'ah framework reveals that these reasons align with the preservation of religion (ḥifz al-dīn), life (ḥifz al-nafs), intellect (ḥifz al-'aql), lineage (ḥifz al-nasl), and wealth (ḥifz al-māl). Thus, marriage postponement is understood not merely as an individual preference but as a strategy to balance personal, familial, and spiritual obligations. The study recommends strengthening premarital education grounded in maqāṣid, refining marriage dispensation mechanisms, and applying the maqāṣid cum-mubādalāh approach. These findings provide actionable insights for policymakers, religious leaders, and scholars to integrate Islamic legal principles with contemporary social realities.*

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## 1. Introduction

Marriage is a fundamental social institution recognized across nearly all religious traditions, including Islam, as a means to establish families, continue lineage, and achieve tranquility in life (*sakinah, mawaddah, wa rahmah*). However, global patterns increasingly reflect a decline in marriage rates, which is also evident in Indonesia. According to Statistics Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik/BPS, 2024), the number of registered marriages in 2023 totaled 1,577,255,<sup>1</sup> marking a decrease of approximately 128,000 from 2022 and a 28.63% decline over the past decade.<sup>2</sup> Several provinces experienced notable reductions, including West Java (29,000), Central Java (21,000), East Java (13,000), and Jakarta (4,000).<sup>3</sup> These figures reflect not only demographic shifts but also broader sociocultural changes, as marriage is increasingly delayed due to educational, economic, and personal factors.

In Islamic legal tradition, marriage is regarded as both an *'aqd* (legal contract) and a *mīthāqan ghalīẓan* (solemn covenant), imbued with spiritual, social, and moral dimensions. The Qur'an emphasizes its significance in verses such as Q.S. An-Nūr: 32, which encourages believers to marry the single among them, and Q.S. An-Nisā': 1, which affirms the sanctity of kinship and human creation. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ also emphasized the ethical function of marriage, stating: "*O young people, whoever among you can afford it should marry, for it helps lower the gaze and guard chastity...*" (Ibn Mājah, 1835). In Indonesian positive law, marriage is regulated by Law No. 1 of 1974 as amended by Law No. 16 of 2019,<sup>4</sup> which sets the minimum age of marriage at 19 for both men and women (Article 7) and requires parental consent for those under 21 (Article 6).<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI) frames marriage as an act of worship and a social institution aimed at fostering mutual love, responsibility, and religious observance. Both normative systems underscore marriage as a moral safeguard and foundation for social harmony.

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<sup>1</sup> [BPS] Badan Pusat Statistik, "Nikah dan Cerai Menurut Provinsi, 2023," 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Frisca Rizti, "Angka Pernikahan RI Terus Menurun, Tahun 2023 Terendah!," <https://data.goodstats.id>, 2024, <https://data.goodstats.id/statistic/angka-pernikahan-ri-terus-menurun-tahun-2023-terendah-mgbMB>.

<sup>3</sup> Cindy Mutia Annur, "Angka Pernikahan Turun pada 2023, Rekor Terendah Sedekade Terakhir," *Databoks.Katadata.Co.Id*, 2024, [https://databoks.katadata.co.id/demografi/statistik/dc95658b883c7ff/angka-pernikahan-turun-pada-2023-rekor-terendah-sedekade-terakhir?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://databoks.katadata.co.id/demografi/statistik/dc95658b883c7ff/angka-pernikahan-turun-pada-2023-rekor-terendah-sedekade-terakhir?utm_source=chatgpt.com).

<sup>4</sup> Aidil Aulya dan Ahmad Irfan, "Koeksistensi Hukum Perkawinan Islam di Indonesia: Interpretasi Mahkamah Konstitusi Terhadap Pernikahan Beda Agama di Indonesia," *Al-Adalah: Jurnal Hukum dan Politik Islam* 8, no. 1 (2023): 109–27, <https://doi.org/10.30863/ajmpi.v8i1.4149>.

<sup>5</sup> Muljan et al., "Preventing Child Marriage in Bone District, South Sulawesi: Perspective of Islamic Family Law," *El-Usrah* 7, no. 1 (2024): 110–27, <https://doi.org/10.22373/ujhk.v7i1.22482>; Sandio Abid Aurian Putra dan Mas Anienda Tien Fitriyah, "Implementation of the Marriage Dispensation: Exploring the Legal and Social Complexities in Preventing Early Marriage," *Al-Adalah: Jurnal Hukum dan Politik Islam* 9, no. 1 (2024): 24–39, <https://doi.org/10.30863/ajmpi.v9i1.4592>.

Despite its normative significance, the postponement of marriage is increasingly observed at the local level, including among the Mandailing people in Sibual-Buali Village, Ulu Barumun District, Padang Lawas Regency. Within this community, terms such as *bujing-bujing tobang* (unmarried women aged 30 and above) and *poso-poso tobang* (unmarried men aged 30 and above) are used to describe individuals who have remained unmarried past socially acceptable ages. These individuals often face social stigma, labeling, and symbolic exclusion from cultural and religious activities, including participation in *Naposo Nauli Bulung* (NNB), a youth organization that plays a central role in community cohesion. However, this phenomenon is not limited to older individuals. Delayed marriage is also prevalent among younger age cohorts (25–27 and 27–30 years), often driven by educational pursuits, employment precarity, and shifting gender roles within familial and social structures.

A growing body of research has investigated the determinants of marriage postponement. Vijay (2024) and Gündoğdu & Bulut (2022) identified aspirations for higher education and financial independence as key contributing factors.<sup>6</sup> Baydar (2023) explored how delayed marriage has led to the rise of unregistered (secret) marriages, potentially undermining the legal and social protections afforded to spouses and children.<sup>7</sup> Firdawaty et al. (2024) criticized traditional practices such as *semenda lekok* for reinforcing gendered expectations that hinder marriage readiness and called for their reform in line with Islamic legal justice.<sup>8</sup> Studies from Japan and Europe have further shown that employment insecurity and precarious labor conditions significantly contribute to delayed marriage, particularly among young men.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, many of these studies fail to incorporate a *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* perspective or to consider how marriage postponement affects the lived religious and social experiences of indigenous Muslim communities such as the Mandailing.

There remains a notable gap in Islamic legal scholarship concerning the integration of marriage postponement phenomena with the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* - particularly within local contexts like the Mandailing. While existing studies have examined the sociological and economic dimensions of delayed marriage, few have

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<sup>6</sup> Bhawna Vijay -, "Exploring the Dynamics of Late Marriage: the Role of Education in Shaping Marital Timings," *International Journal For Multidisciplinary Research* 6, no. 2 (2024): 6–9, <https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2024.v06i02.16726>; Aleyna Hatice Gündoğdu dan Sefa Bulut, "The Positive and Negative Effects of Late Marriage," *Open Journal of Depression* 11, no. 04 (2022): 63–71, <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojd.2022.114005>.

<sup>7</sup> Tuba Erkoc Baydar, "A Secret Marriage and Denied Rights: A Critique from an Islamic Law Perspective," *Religions* 14, no. 4 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14040463>.

<sup>8</sup> Linda Firdawaty, Habib Shulton Asnawi, dan Siti Mahmudah, "Semanda Lekok in the Sai Batin Community, Lampung: Wife's Domination of Marital Assets from Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah Perspective," *Samarah* 8, no. 3 (2024): 1734–62, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjkh.v8i3.19894>.

<sup>9</sup> Ryota Mugiyama, "Disaggregating the relationship between precarious employment and delayed marriage in Japan: Incorporating non-cohabiting partnerships," *Social Science Research* 124 (November 2024): 103093, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2024.103093>.

explored how such delays interact with the five foundational objectives of Islamic law: the preservation of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-ʿaql*), lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and wealth (*ḥifẓ al-māl*). This analytical void limits the ability of both scholars and policymakers to develop culturally grounded yet normatively consistent strategies to address marriage postponement in Muslim societies.

This study contributes to the field of Islamic family law by offering a maqāṣid-oriented analysis of delayed marriage across multiple age groups in the Mandailing community. By combining empirical fieldwork with doctrinal legal analysis, the research provides a nuanced understanding of how structural pressures, cultural expectations, and personal choices converge to delay marriage, and how this delay affects the fulfillment of Islamic legal objectives. The study also offers practical insights for religious scholars, community leaders, and policymakers seeking to design culturally sensitive interventions that uphold the values of justice, dignity, and social welfare enshrined in Islamic law.

This study aims to analyze the factors contributing to marriage postponement among *bujing-bujing tobang*, *poso-poso tobang*, and younger unmarried adults (ages 25–30) in Sibual-Buali Village. It further seeks to assess the socio-legal implications of delayed marriage through the framework of maqāṣid al-sharīʿah and to provide academic and policy-oriented recommendations for interventions that align with Islamic legal and ethical principles.

## 2. Legal Material and Methods

This study adopts a qualitative empirical-juridical design, integrating normative legal analysis with empirical fieldwork to examine marriage postponement within the framework of maqāṣid al-sharīʿah. This combined approach enables a comprehensive exploration of the doctrinal foundations of Islamic family law alongside the lived realities of individuals delaying marriage<sup>10</sup>.

Primary data were gathered through semi-structured interviews using purposive sampling. Respondents included unmarried adults aged 25–27, 27–30, and 30+ (*bujing-bujing tobang* and *poso-poso tobang*), as well as community leaders (*tokoh adat*) and religious scholars (*ulama*) in Sibual-Buali Village, Ulu Barumun District, Padang Lawas Regency. This generational categorization facilitated comparative insights into evolving expectations and constraints related to marriage. Secondary data were sourced from classical and contemporary Islamic legal texts, including the Qurʿan, Hadith, the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI), Law No. 1 of 1974 as amended by Law No. 16 of 2019, and relevant academic literature.

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<sup>10</sup> Hanoch Dagan, Roy Kreitner, dan Tamar Kricheli-Katz, “Legal Theory for Legal Empiricists,” *Law and Social Inquiry* 43, no. 2 (2018): 292–318, <https://doi.org/10.1111/lsi.12357>.

Data analysis followed a thematic approach: (1) data reduction through coding into themes such as economic constraints, social pressures, emotional readiness, and religious perspectives; (2) data organization using thematic matrices and narrative summaries; and (3) interpretation through the lens of *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah* (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*, *ḥifẓ al-naḥs*, *ḥifẓ al-‘aql*, *ḥifẓ al-naṣl*, *ḥifẓ al-māl*), providing a holistic evaluation of the legal, ethical, and socio-religious implications of delayed marriage.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Marriage in Islamic Law: Concept, Pillars, and Objectives of Sharia (Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah)

Marriage occupies a central position in Islamic jurisprudence, serving as both a legal contract (*‘aqd*) and a spiritual covenant (*mīthāqan ghalīẓan* – ميثاقاً غليظاً)<sup>11</sup> that binds two individuals in the pursuit of companionship, family life, and divine obedience. Linguistically, the Arabic term for marriage, *nikāḥ* (نكاح), is derived from the trilateral root *n-k-h*, which carries two primary meanings in classical Arabic. The first is *al-waṭ’* (الوطء), meaning sexual intercourse, reflecting the physical dimension of marriage; the second is *ad-ḍamm* (الضم), meaning union or merging, which signifies emotional and social closeness. Some jurists also associate *nikāḥ* with *al-jam’* (الجمع), meaning gathering or uniting, further emphasizing the integrative nature of the marital bond. In classical *fiqh* discourse, the terms *nikāḥ* (نكاح) and *zawāj* (زواج) are used interchangeably to denote the lawful, contractual, and consensual union between a man and a woman within the framework prescribed by Islamic law.

From a normative legal standpoint, the Indonesian Marriage Law (Law No. 1 of 1974, as amended by Law No. 16 of 2019) defines marriage as “a physical and spiritual bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife with the aim of forming a happy and eternal family (household) based on the belief in the One and Only God.”<sup>12</sup> Similarly, the Compilation of Islamic Law (Kompilasi Hukum Islam or KHI) characterizes marriage as “a highly solemn contract (*mīthāqan ghalīẓan*) for the purpose of fulfilling Allah’s commands and carrying out an act of worship.”<sup>13</sup> These definitions underscore the dual dimensions of marriage, both its legalistic nature as a contract and its spiritual orientation as an act of devotion.

The scriptural foundations for marriage are firmly established in the Qur’an and Hadith. Among the most frequently cited verses is Qur’an 4:1 (An-Nisā’), which exhorts humankind to be mindful of their shared origin and the sanctity of human pairing. The verse reads:

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<sup>11</sup> See Qur’an, Surah An-Nisā’ [4]:21, which refers to marriage as a *mīthāqan ghalīẓan* (a solemn covenant).

<sup>12</sup> A Rahmaniar et al., “Analisis Yuridis Empiris Pencatatan Nikah Siri Pasangan di Bawah umur,” *Constitutional Law Review* 1, no. 2 (2022): 78–91.

<sup>13</sup> Eka Fajriani, Nur Fadhyatul Fajra, dan Fathurrahman, “Pelaksanaan Legislasi Hukum Islam di Bidang Hukum Keluarga di Indonesia,” *Constitutional Law Review* 2, no. 1 (2023): 58–72.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

*“O mankind! Be conscious of your Lord, who created you from a single soul, and from it created its mate, and from the two of them spread countless men and women. So be mindful of Allah, through whom you appeal to one another, and the ties of kinship. Surely Allah is ever Watchful over you.”* (Qur’an 4:1).

Another crucial verse, Qur’an 24:32 (An-Nūr), commands believers to marry off those who are single among them:

وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

*“Marry off those among you who are single, and the righteous among your male and female servants. If they are poor, Allah will enrich them out of His bounty. And Allah is All-Bountiful, All-Knowing.”* (Qur’an 24:32)

The Hadith literature reinforces this imperative, as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad’s (peace be upon him) exhortation: *“O young people, whoever among you can afford it should marry, for it helps lower the gaze and guard chastity. Whoever cannot afford it should fast, for it will be a shield for him.”* (Ibn Mājah, 1835).

In addition to its moral and spiritual imperatives, marriage in Islam has clearly defined pillars (arkān) and conditions (shurūṭ) to ensure its validity. According to the *jumhūr al-fuqahā’*, the pillars of marriage include: (1) the groom, who must be a Muslim, legally competent, and free of prohibitive impediments; (2) the bride, who likewise must be identifiable, competent to consent, and not under any legal prohibitions; (3) a guardian (*walī*), who represents the bride and must be a Muslim male of sound mind and maturity; (4) two witnesses, who are adult Muslim men present during the contract to attest its validity; and (5) a clear and connected offer and acceptance (*ijāb wa qabūl*), articulated in unambiguous terms of marriage (*nikāḥ* or *tazwīj*). These pillars establish the framework of consent, representation, and public acknowledgment that distinguish Islamic marriage from informal unions (Al-Nawawī, 1991).

This normative framework is also reflected in the Indonesian Marriage Law No. 1 of 1974, as amended by Law No. 16 of 2019. Article 6 stipulates that marriage must be based on the consent of both prospective spouses and regulates the requirement of parental or guardian consent for those under the age of 21, with provisions for court approval if necessary. Article 7 sets the minimum age of marriage at 19 years for both men and women, with possible dispensation granted by the court under certain urgent circumstances. Article 8 explicitly prohibits marriages between individuals related by blood, marriage (*semenda*), nursing relationships (*susuan*), and other prohibited relationships under religious or statutory law, aiming to preserve family sanctity and social order. Furthermore, the Compilation of Islamic Law (Kompilasi Hukum Islam or KHI), particularly Articles 14–27, codifies these classical fiqh principles in greater detail, regulating the pillars of marriage, the qualifications and types of guardians (*walī nasab* and *walī ḥākim*), witness requirements, and the procedural validity of the marriage contract.

The KHI also incorporates the minimum marriageable age provision, aligning religious mandates with Indonesia's national legal framework.

Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) offers a nuanced view of the legal rulings (*ahkām taklīfiyyah*) governing marriage, recognizing that the obligation or permissibility of marriage varies according to individual circumstances. The majority of jurists (*jumhūr al-fuqahā'*)<sup>14</sup> classify marriage as *wājib* (obligatory) for those who have the means and fear falling into sin if they remain unmarried; *sunnah* (recommended) for those who are capable but do not fear sin; *makrūh* (discouraged) for those who lack the ability to fulfill marital rights or may cause harm to their spouse; *ḥarām* (prohibited) if marriage would certainly result in harm; and *mubāḥ* (permissible) when none of these conditions apply (Al-Nawawī, 1991). These rulings illustrate the adaptability of Islamic law in addressing diverse personal and social realities.

The Shāfi'ī school, which heavily influences Indonesian Islamic jurisprudence, generally considers marriage to be *mubāḥ* by default but elevates it to *sunnah* when the intention is to safeguard chastity or procreate, and to *wājib* when avoiding illicit sexual behavior is otherwise impossible.<sup>15</sup> This framework underscores that marriage is not merely a social arrangement but a moral and spiritual necessity, aimed at preserving individual and communal integrity. Abu Hanīfah, on the other hand, emphasized a broader conception of maturity (*rushd*), linking marriageable age not only to biological puberty but also to the intellectual capacity for managing personal and financial responsibilities - a perspective particularly relevant for contemporary societies where psychological readiness is critical.<sup>16</sup>

Age of marriage remains an area of scholarly debate. While classical jurists often cited biological puberty as the minimum threshold—15 years for boys and girls according to Imam al-Shāfi'ī, and up to 19 for females and 25 for males according to Abu Hanīfah—modern scholars such as Wahbah al-Zuhaylī and Quraish Shihab emphasize psychological maturity and socio-economic preparedness as equally significant determinants.<sup>17</sup> In the Indonesian context, the legislated minimum marriage age of 19 years for both men and women reflects an attempt to align traditional jurisprudence with contemporary understandings of adulthood and social responsibility.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> D. H. I. Muzammil, *Fiqh Munakahat (Hukum Pernikahan Dalam Islam)* (Bandung: TSmart, 2019)

<sup>15</sup> Nurhasnah Nurhasnah, "Hukum Pernikahan dalam Islam: Analisis Perbandingan Konteks Menurut 4 Mazhab," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 2 (2023): 15, <https://doi.org/10.47134/pjpi.v1i2.72>.

<sup>16</sup> Zaenul Mahmudi dan Khalimatus Sa'diyah, "The Minimum of Marriageable Age in Maqāsid al-Sharia and Psychological Perspectives," in *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Recent Innovations* (SCITEPRESS - Science and Technology Publications, 2018), 1189–95, <https://doi.org/10.5220/0009924711891195>.

<sup>17</sup> Aulya dan Irfan, "Koeksistensi Hukum Perkawinan Islam di Indonesia: Interpretasi Mahkamah Konstitusi Terhadap Pernikahan Beda Agama di Indonesia."

<sup>18</sup> Agus Purnomo et al., "Dimensions Maqāsid Al-Sharī'ah and Human Rights in The Constitutional Court's Decision on Marriage Age Difference in Indonesia," *Samarah* 7, no. 3 (2023): 1397–1421, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjkh.v7i3.13283>; Sapriadi, Hannani, dan Fikri, "The Controversy of Unregistered

Central to understanding marriage in Islam is the concept of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*—the higher objectives of Islamic law. Linguistically derived from the word *maqṣad* (purpose) and *sharī'ah* (divine law), it refers to the wisdom, meanings, and intended benefits behind the divine rulings. Al-Shātibī (d. 790 AH) famously articulated the five essential objectives (*al-darūriyyāt al-khams*): the preservation of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and wealth (*ḥifẓ al-māl*). Contemporary scholarship expands this framework by emphasizing justice ('*adl*), equality, and the protection of human dignity as integral to the *maqāṣid* of marriage.<sup>19</sup>

Marriage contributes directly to fulfilling these objectives. It safeguards religion by offering a lawful means of satisfying sexual desires, thus protecting individuals from moral corruption. It preserves life by fostering emotional stability and providing mutual care between spouses. It enhances intellect by enabling partners to share in decision-making and intellectual growth within a family structure. It protects lineage by ensuring legitimate procreation and the continuity of family heritage - an aspect reinforced by international instruments like the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, which underscores the protection of lineage and equal rights for children.<sup>20</sup> It secures wealth by creating a framework for financial cooperation and stewardship between spouses. Thus, marriage is more than a private contract; it is a public good that sustains both individual well-being and societal harmony.

The framework of *maqāṣid* also mandates the prevention of harm (*dar' al-mafṣadah*) as a priority over pursuing benefits. This principle underpins legal policies such as establishing minimum marriage ages to protect minors from physical, psychological, and social risks associated with early marriage.<sup>21</sup> Likewise, the emphasis on fairness and justice in marital relations requires equitable distribution of marital assets and the reform of cultural practices - such as the *semenda lekok* tradition, which grants unilateral control of assets to the wife - so that they align with the broader objectives of Sharia.<sup>22</sup>

Another critical aspect of contemporary *maqāṣid* discourse is gender justice and equality. Emerging methodologies like the *maqāṣid cum-mubādalah* approach integrate

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Marriage Trends from the Perspective of Maqāṣid Mukhallaf: Preventing Underage Marriage in Wajo Regency,” *Al-Adalah: Jurnal Hukum dan Politik Islam* 10, no. 2 (2025): 367–82.

<sup>19</sup> Haleema Ashfaq dan Shahzadi Pakeeza, “Right of Progeny and Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam,” *Journal of Islamic and Religious Studies* 2, no. 1 (Juni 2017): 19–30, <https://doi.org/10.12816/0037077>; Faquiddin Abdul Kodir et al., “Maqāṣid cum-Mubādalah Methodology of KUPI: Centering Women’s Experiences in Islamic Law for Gender-Just Fiqh,” *Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum dan Pranata Sosial* 19, no. 2 (2024): 519–45, <https://doi.org/10.19105/al-lhkam.v19i2.16617>.

<sup>20</sup> Ashfaq dan Pakeeza, “Right of Progeny and Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam.”

<sup>21</sup> Kamarusdiana Kamarusdiana dan Naili Farohah, “Reform on The Marriage Age Limit by Jakarta Women’s Health Organizations in Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah Perspective,” *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 6, no. 1 (27 Juni 2022): 198, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhc.v6i1.12892>; Purnomo et al., “Dimensions Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'ah and Human Rights in The Constitutional Court’s Decision on Marriage Age Difference in Indonesia.”

<sup>22</sup> Firdawaty, Asnawi, dan Mahmudah, “Semanda Lekok in the Sai Batin Community, Lampung: Wife’s Domination of Marital Assets from Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah Perspective.”

women's perspectives into Islamic legal reasoning, promoting greater balance and equity within marital relationships.<sup>23</sup> This development reflects the evolving nature of Sharia in addressing the needs of modern Muslim societies, ensuring that marriage functions not only as a spiritual and social institution but also as a platform for upholding justice and human dignity.

In sum, marriage in Islamic law transcends mere legality. It is an act of worship, a means of personal development, and a vehicle for achieving the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. Yet, balancing traditional practices with contemporary interpretations remains a significant challenge. Issues such as unregistered (secret) marriages, child marriage, and inequitable gender norms underscore the need for reform to ensure that marital practices truly reflect the higher objectives of Sharia- justice, protection of rights, and the well-being of all parties involved.<sup>24</sup> This dynamic understanding of *maqāṣid* provides the foundation for analyzing complex phenomena like delayed marriage within the broader socio-cultural and legal contexts of Muslim communities.

### 3.2. The Dynamics of Marriage Postponement among Bujing-Bujing Tobang and Poso-Poso Tobang in Sibual-Buali Village

The phenomenon of delayed marriage among the Mandailing community, particularly within the bujing-bujing tobang (unmarried adult women) and poso-poso tobang (unmarried adult men) groups, reflects a complex interaction between social, economic, cultural, and individual preference factors. In Sibual-Buali Village, Ulu Barumun District, Padang Lawas Regency, these terms refer to individuals aged 30 years and above who remain unmarried and often experience social stigma.<sup>25</sup> This stigma manifests in the form of negative labeling, environmental pressure, and symbolic exclusion from socio-cultural activities, such as Naposo Nauli Bulung (NNB), which traditionally serves as a space for youth interaction and social engagement.<sup>26</sup> Thus, marriage postponement in this context is not merely a matter of personal choice but also reflects structural conditions that shape the lived experiences of these groups.

Based on interviews conducted with 12 community members in Sibual-Buali Village - comprising eight bujing-bujing tobang and four poso-poso tobang - this study found that the reasons for delaying marriage varied according to age group. In the 25–27 age range, most participants expressed that their priorities revolved around career

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<sup>23</sup> Kodir et al., "Maqāṣid cum-Mubādalah Methodology of KUPI: Centering Women's Experiences in Islamic Law for Gender-Just Fiqh."

<sup>24</sup> Erkoç Baydar, "A Secret Marriage and Denied Rights: A Critique from an Islamic Law Perspective"; Muh. Sholihuddin, Saiful Jazil, dan Syamsun Ni'am, "Remarriage in the 'Iddah Perspective of Maqāṣid Al-Ushrah: Study in Wedoro Waru, Sidoarjo, Indonesia," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 8, no. 2 (2024): 263–68, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjkh.v8i2.15061>.

<sup>25</sup> Hasat Nasution (traditional leader in Sibual-Buali Village), personal interview, 2025..

<sup>26</sup> Hasat Nasution (traditional leader in Sibual-Buali Village), personal interview, 2025.; Aulia dan Sri Hidayah, "Bujang Tuha: Konstruksi Sosial Terhadap Perempuan Lambat Menikah di Desa Jelapat Kabupaten Barito Kuala," *Huma: Jurnal Sosiologi* 3, no. 3 (17 Agustus 2024): 298–308, <https://doi.org/10.20527/h-js.v3i3.208>.

development, self-exploration, and finding a suitable partner. They also indicated a sense of financial instability, leading them to postpone marriage until they achieved greater independence. These findings are consistent with Vijay (2024) and Gündoğdu & Bulut (2022), who identified career aspirations and financial independence as primary determinants of delayed marriage across various societies.<sup>27</sup>

In the 27–30 age range, marriage postponement was more influenced by social and familial pressures, as well as previous relationship failures. Several participants acknowledged that the emotional impact of ending relationships with partners they had hoped to marry left them more cautious in forming new commitments. This pattern aligns with Baydar (2023) and Hassan & Vellymalay (2018), who argue that emotional experiences in past romantic relationships significantly influence individuals' levels of caution toward long-term commitments.<sup>28</sup>

Meanwhile, among those aged 30–35, family responsibilities and economic instability emerged as the primary factors influencing marriage postponement. A number of participants indicated that they delayed marriage in order to support their siblings' education or to care for aging parents. Additionally, job insecurity contributed to this decision, consistent with the findings of Geist (2017), who identified a strong correlation between economic uncertainty and delayed marriage across different societal contexts.<sup>29</sup>

To provide a clearer overview of these findings, the following table summarizes the reasons for marriage postponement by age group and their relevance to the objectives of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah:

**Table 1. Reasons for Marriage Postponement and Their Relevance to Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah**

Age Group	Reasons for Marriage Postponement	Relevance to Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah
25–27 years	Focus on career development, self-exploration, searching for a suitable partner, financial instability	Hifz al-'Aql (protection of intellect), Hifz al-Māl (protection of wealth)
27–30 years	Social and familial pressure, previous relationship failures, cautiousness in choosing a partner	Hifz al-Nafs (protection of life), Hifz al-Dīn (protection of religion)
30–35 years	Family responsibilities (caring for parents, supporting siblings), economic instability, difficulty in finding a suitable partner	Hifz al-Nasl (protection of lineage), Hifz al-Māl (protection of wealth), Hifz al-Nafs (protection of life)

Source: Field Interviews, Sibual-Buali Village, 2025.

<sup>27</sup> -, "Exploring the Dynamics of Late Marriage: the Role of Education in Shaping Marital Timings"; Gündoğdu dan Bulut, "The Positive and Negative Effects of Late Marriage."

<sup>28</sup> Erkoc Baydar, "A Secret Marriage and Denied Rights: A Critique from an Islamic Law Perspective"; Hassan Nurul Ain dan N Vellymalay Suresh Kumar, "Wanita Bekerja dan Kahwen Lewat: Satu Kajian di Kuantan Pahang," *Journal of Social Science and Humanities* 15, no. 5 (2022): 128–44, <http://journalarticle.ukm.my/20836/>.

<sup>29</sup> Claudia Geist, "Marriage formation in context: Four decades in comparative perspective," *Social Sciences* 6, no. 1 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci6010009>.

This table illustrates the shifting motivations for marriage postponement across age groups. Among individuals aged 25–27, the primary focus was self-development - pursuing education, career advancement, and personal independence - which aligns with the objectives of *hifz al-‘aql* (protection of intellect) and *hifz al-māl* (protection of wealth). For those aged 27–30, marriage postponement was driven more by emotional caution and social pressures, closely linked to *hifz al-nafs* (protection of life) and *hifz al-dīn* (protection of religion). By ages 30–35, family obligations and economic conditions became dominant factors, corresponding to efforts to safeguard *hifz al-nasl* (protection of lineage) and *hifz al-māl*.

The perspectives of customary and religious leaders reinforce these findings. Customary leaders viewed the age of 25 as the ideal time for marriage but recognized the reality of younger generations postponing it to pursue education, careers, or socially comparable partners.<sup>30</sup> Conversely, religious leaders emphasized the spiritual dimension of marriage as an act of worship, warning that excessive delays could hinder the fulfillment of *maqāṣid* such as *hifz al-dīn* (protection of religion) and *hifz al-nasl* (protection of lineage).<sup>31</sup> These insights highlight the tension between traditional values, modern demands, and the principles of *maqāṣid*, signaling the need for more contextual social policies and religious guidance.

This phenomenon also reflects broader cultural shifts. Globalization and the adoption of modern values have driven greater acceptance of marriage at later ages, replacing the earlier pattern of early marriages.<sup>32</sup> However, this transition brings dilemmas: on one hand, it opens opportunities for personal growth; on the other, it extends the phase of delayed marriage, which may lead to stigma, particularly for women.<sup>33</sup>

Thus, marriage postponement among *bujing-bujing tobang* and *poso-poso tobang* is a multidimensional phenomenon that requires an integrative approach: strengthening access to education and economic resources, implementing responsive policy reforms, and providing religious guidance that bridges traditional values with contemporary realities. Such reforms are essential to ensure that marriage practices in the modern era remain aligned with the objectives of *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*, which emphasize the protection of rights, welfare, and justice for all parties involved.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Hasat Nasution (Traditional leader in Sibual-Buali Village), personal interview, April 25, 2025..

<sup>31</sup> Ahmad (Religious leader in Sibual-Buali Village), personal interview, April 25, 2025.

<sup>32</sup> Abdul Shukur Abdullah et al., “Correlates and consequences of delayed marriage in malaysia,” *Institutions and Economies* 13, no. 4 (2021): 5–34, <https://doi.org/10.22452/IJIE.vol13no4.1>.

<sup>33</sup> Aulia dan Hidayah, “Bujang Tuha: Konstruksi Sosial Terhadap Perempuan Lambat Menikah di Desa Jelapat Kabupaten Barito Kuala.”

<sup>34</sup> Firdawaty, Asnawi, dan Mahmudah, “Semanda Lekok in the Sai Batin Community, Lampung: Wife’s Domination of Marital Assets from *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah* Perspective”; Kodir et al., “*Maqāṣid cum-Mubādalah* Methodology of KUPI: Centering Women’s Experiences in Islamic Law for Gender-Just Fiqh.”

### 3.3. Marriage Postponement in the Perspective of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*: An Analysis of *Bujing-Bujing Tobang* and *Poso-Poso Tobang* in Sibual-Buali Village

The phenomenon of marriage postponement among the *bujing-bujing tobang* (unmarried adult women) and *poso-poso tobang* (unmarried adult men) in Sibual-Buali Village is not merely a personal choice but a form of response to social, economic, and cultural realities experienced by the community. Within the framework of Islamic law, this postponement can be examined through *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* - the higher objectives of Islamic law - which encompass the preservation of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), life (*ḥifẓ al-naḥs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*). This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of how delaying marriage affects individual well-being and broader social welfare.<sup>35</sup>

In the Islamic tradition, permanent celibacy or indefinite postponement of marriage is referred to as *tabattul*. The Qur'an mentions this in the verb form *tabattala*, meaning "to cut off oneself" (Q.S. Al-Muzzammil:8). Ibn Hajar defines it as abstaining from marriage to devote oneself solely to worship (Ibn Hajar in Al-Syatibi, 2003). However, Islam prohibits *tabattul* as it contradicts human nature. This is reinforced in the Prophet's hadith:

رَدَّ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى عُثْمَانَ بْنِ مَظْعُونٍ النَّبَيْلِ ، وَلَوْ أَدِنَ لَهُ لِأَخْتَصِينَا<sup>36</sup>

"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not permit 'Uthmān ibn Maz'ūn to practice *tabattul*. If he had permitted it, we would have surely castrated ourselves."

This hadith illustrates that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ discouraged excessive asceticism, including lifelong celibacy. According to al-Ṭabarī, what 'Uthmān ibn Maz'ūn intended by *tabattul* was not merely abstaining from marriage, but also renouncing perfumes and worldly pleasures. Thus, the Prophet's rejection of *tabattul* underscores Islam's balanced approach to spirituality—affirming that personal piety should not come at the expense of natural human needs or social responsibilities such as marriage and family life.

Likewise, Q.S. Al-Mā'idah [5]:87 warns against excessive self-denial::

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَحْرِمُوا طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

"O you who believe! Do not prohibit the good things which Allah has made lawful to you, and do not transgress. Verily, Allah does not love the transgressors."

<sup>35</sup> Juliyana Junaidi, Latifah Abdul Majid, dan Mohd Arif Nazri, "Revisiting Social Justice: Exploring the Qur'anic Paradigm in Addressing Contemporary Challenges," *Afkar* 25, no. 2 (2023): 153–92, <https://doi.org/10.22452/afkar.vol25no2.5>.

<sup>36</sup> Abu Abdillah Muhammad bin Ismail bin Ibrahim bin al-Mughirah bin Bardizbah al-Ju'fi al-Bukhari, *Shahih Bukhori* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n.d.).

This verse emphasizes that marriage is a permissible and noble act, functioning as worship and as a means of preserving chastity. Thus, prolonged postponement that undermines the purposes of marriage may conflict with the objectives of the Shari'ah.

Findings from field interviews in Sibual-Buali indicate that economic instability, family responsibilities, and the pursuit of financial independence are the primary reasons for marriage postponement. For instance, NR (31) delayed marriage to care for ailing parents, while JK (31) prioritized funding his younger siblings' education—decisions that strongly reflect the dimensions of *hifz al-māl* (preservation of wealth) and *hifz al-nafs* (preservation of life). RZ (31) cited financial limitations and familial obligations as central factors in his decision to delay marriage.

These findings are supported by existing literature, which highlights economic pressures - including rising living costs and job insecurity - as significant determinants of delayed marriage.<sup>37</sup> The *maqāsid* framework offers solutions by advocating for economic justice and equitable resource distribution, as emphasized in the welfare-state model based on *Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah*.<sup>38</sup>

Marriage postponement also intersects with emotional and psychological needs. FK (35) reported trauma from witnessing divorces among peers, choosing to focus on career development instead - a decision aligning with *hifz al-nafs* (preservation of life) and *hifz al-'aql* (preservation of intellect).<sup>39</sup> However, prolonged delays can also produce moral risks, such as exposure to extramarital relationships, which contravene *hifz al-dīn* (preservation of religion).<sup>40</sup> In this context, marriage functions as a legitimate outlet for biological and emotional needs while safeguarding the intellect from destructive thoughts and behaviors (Al-Ghazali, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*).

Marriage postponement has implications for *hifz al-nasl* (preservation of lineage). RN (33), for example, postponed marriage after the cancellation of her engagement due to family issues, redirecting her focus toward supporting her siblings. Prolonged delays can open the door to secret marriages (*nikah sirri*), which often fail to protect the rights of spouses and children.<sup>41</sup> *Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah* therefore demands that marriages be conducted transparently and with legal recognition to safeguard all parties' rights.

Summary of the Impacts of Marriage Postponement on Maqāsid Dimensions

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<sup>37</sup> Abdullah Azzam, Luthfiyah Jasmine, dan Rana Ramadhania Wati, "Marital Economics: Relationship Between Inflation and Age of First Marriage Among Indonesian Youth," *Jurnal Keluarga Berencana* 9, no. 1 (2024): 38–50, <https://doi.org/10.37306/mqsp4y26>.

<sup>38</sup> Elviandri et al., "The formulation of welfare state: The perspective of Maqāid al-Sharī'ah," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 8, no. 1 (2018): 117–46, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v8i1.117-146>.

<sup>39</sup> Nurul Ain dan Suresh Kumar, "Wanita Bekerja dan Kahwen Lewat: Satu Kajian di Kuantan Pahang."

<sup>40</sup> Kamarusdiana dan Farohah, "Reform on The Marriage Age Limit by Jakarta Women's Health Organizations in Maqāsid al-Syarī'ah Perspective."

<sup>41</sup> Erkoc Baydar, "A Secret Marriage and Denied Rights: A Critique from an Islamic Law Perspective."

**Table 2. Impacts of Marriage Postponement on the Dimensions of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah**

Informant	Reason for Postponement	Affected Maqāṣid Dimensions
NR (31)	Caring for sick parents	<i>ḥifẓ al-dīn, ḥifẓ al-nafs</i>
JK (31)	Funding siblings' education	<i>ḥifẓ al-nafs, ḥifẓ al-māl</i>
FK (35)	Trauma from others' divorces, career focus	<i>ḥifẓ al-'aql, ḥifẓ al-nafs</i>
RN (33)	Canceled marriage due to family circumstances	<i>ḥifẓ al-nasl, ḥifẓ al-nafs</i>
RZ (31)	Financial limitations and family obligations	<i>ḥifẓ al-māl, ḥifẓ al-nafs</i>

Source: Field Interviews, Sibual-Buali Village, 2025.

The table illustrates how the reasons for marriage postponement among informants align with various *maqāṣid* dimensions, particularly in preserving life, intellect, wealth, and lineage. This indicates that delaying marriage is not purely an individual preference but reflects a broader attempt to balance personal, familial, and social responsibilities with the principles of Shari'ah.

Integrating *maqāṣid* into the discourse on marriage postponement calls for reforms at both social and legal levels. The *maqāṣid cum-mubādalah* (reciprocal jurisprudence) approach, which incorporates gender justice perspectives, offers a framework for reducing the disproportionate financial burden on men as primary providers.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, revising legal age policies for marriage and implementing economic empowerment programs can help harmonize marriage practices with the objectives of *maqāṣid* in modern contexts.<sup>43</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

This study highlights that marriage postponement among *bujing-bujing tobang* (unmarried adult women) and *poso-poso tobang* (unmarried adult men) in Sibual-Buali Village is not merely an individual preference but reflects a complex interplay of social, economic, and cultural realities. Key findings indicate that financial instability, family caregiving responsibilities, previous emotional experiences, and aspirations for personal development are the dominant factors influencing delayed marriage. When analyzed through the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, these reasons align with the preservation of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and wealth (*ḥifẓ al-māl*), suggesting that marriage postponement is intertwined with efforts to balance individual, familial, and spiritual obligations.

From an academic perspective, this study recommends adopting an integrative approach to address delayed marriage within Muslim communities. Policy implications include enhancing premarital education programs that incorporate *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, refining marriage dispensation mechanisms to prioritize psychological, social, and

<sup>42</sup> Kodir et al., "Maqāṣid cum-Mubādalah Methodology of KUPI: Centering Women's Experiences in Islamic Law for Gender-Just Fiqh."

<sup>43</sup> Muhammad Harfīn Zuhdi dan Mohamad Abdun Nasir, "Al-Mashlahah and Reinterpretation of Islamic Law in Contemporary Context," *Samarah* 8, no. 3 (2024): 1818–39, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjkh.v8i3.24918>.

economic preparedness, and implementing frameworks such as *maqāṣid cum-mubādalah* to reduce the disproportionate financial burden placed on men. Religious leaders and community institutions should also play a more proactive role in providing contextual guidance that bridges traditional values with contemporary realities, ensuring that marriage continues to fulfill its spiritual, social, and economic purposes.

This study has several limitations. Its qualitative nature, based on interviews with only 12 participants in a single village, restricts the generalizability of the findings to broader Mandailing or Indonesian Muslim populations. Future research should adopt comparative and multi-site approaches, incorporating quantitative data to examine correlations between socio-economic indicators and marriage postponement patterns. Such studies will enrich scholarly discourse on harmonizing cultural practices, legal frameworks, and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* to address marriage challenges in modern Muslim societies.

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