

DELAYING THE AGE OF MARRIAGE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CONTEMPORARY FIQH AND MAQĀSID AL-SHARĪ'AH

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Abstract: The trend of delaying marriage in contemporary Muslim societies has increased in line with social, economic, and cultural changes. This phenomenon has sparked normative debates in Islamic law as it conflicts with the recommendation to marry early and raises concerns about moral and social impacts. This study aims to analyze the social and moral implications of delaying marriage age through the perspective of contemporary fiqh using the *maqāsid al-syārī'ah* approach. The research uses a qualitative method with a literature review, with data sources in the form of classical and contemporary fiqh literature, works on *maqāsid al-syārī'ah*, as well as secondary data from official reports from the Central Statistics Agency and BKKBN and relevant scientific articles. The analysis was conducted descriptively and analytically by considering the practice of postponing marriage based on the principle of *jalb al-maṣāliḥ wa dar' al-mafāsid*. The results of the study show that postponing marriage can be beneficial if it serves to mature economic, psychological, and social readiness, but has the potential to become harmful if it opens up space for moral violations and weakens self-control. A reinterpretation of the concept of *istiṭā'ah* based on *maqāsid* is necessary so that legal assessments are contextual and proportional.

Keywords: Delayed Marriage, Contemporary Fiqh, Istiṭā'ah

Abstrak: Tren penundaan usia pernikahan dalam masyarakat Muslim kontemporer menunjukkan peningkatan seiring perubahan sosial, ekonomi, dan budaya. Fenomena ini memunculkan perdebatan normatif dalam hukum Islam karena berhadapan dengan anjuran penyegeraan pernikahan serta kekhawatiran terhadap dampak moral dan sosial. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis implikasi sosial dan moral penundaan usia pernikahan melalui perspektif fikih kontemporer dengan pendekatan *maqāsid al-syārī'ah*. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian kepustakaan, dengan sumber data berupa literatur fikih klasik dan kontemporer, karya-karya *maqāsid al-syārī'ah*, serta data sekunder dari laporan resmi Badan Pusat Statistik dan BKKBN serta artikel ilmiah relevan. Analisis dilakukan secara deskriptif-analitis dengan menimbang praktik penundaan pernikahan berdasarkan prinsip *jalb al-maṣāliḥ wa dar' al-mafāsid*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penundaan pernikahan dapat bernilai maslahat apabila berfungsi mematangkan kesiapan ekonomi, psikologis, dan sosial, namun berpotensi menjadi mafsadah jika membuka ruang pelanggaran moral dan melemahkan kontrol diri. Reinterpretasi konsep *istiṭā'ah* berbasis *maqāsid* diperlukan agar penilaian hukum bersifat kontekstual dan proporsional.

Kata Kunci: Penundaan Pernikahan, Fikih Kontemporer, Istiṭā'ah

INTRODUCTION

The trend of delaying marriage age in recent decades has developed into a prominent global social phenomenon, including in countries with a Muslim majority such as Indonesia. Data from the Central Statistics Agency and the National Population and Family Planning Agency show a significant increase in the average age of first marriage, particularly among urban women and individuals with higher education. In many cases, the average age of first marriage has exceeded 25 years, a condition that was previously relatively rare (Antara News, 2023). This phenomenon reflects structural changes in society influenced by various multidimensional factors, such as extended education, career development demands, economic instability, and a shift in social values towards individualistic and rational orientations in life decisions (Azizah et al., 2025).

In classical Islamic law, marriage is positioned as a highly recommended institution (*sunnah mu'akkadah*) and has a fundamental function in maintaining the continuity of social and moral life of the community. The *fuqahā'* encourage individuals who have *istiṭā'ah*, or the ability that includes physical, mental, and financial readiness, to get married as soon as possible (Dahlan R., 2015). However, classical fiqh does not set a fixed chronological age limit, but emphasizes the principles of maturity, maturity, and functional independence. This shows that from the outset, Islamic law has had normative flexibility in responding to

variations in individual and social conditions, although this flexibility is often understood in a limited way in contemporary socio-religious practice.

As interdisciplinary studies have developed, literature from the fields of public health, sociology, and gender studies has paid close attention to the issue of marriage age, particularly in the context of early marriage. A number of studies conducted by international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO, 2013) and UNICEF (2023) consistently show that child marriage is correlated with an increased risk of maternal and infant mortality, low levels of education among women, high vulnerability to domestic violence, and entrapment in a cycle of structural poverty. These findings provide a strong basis for various national and international policies to raise the minimum age of marriage as part of the agenda for child protection and improving the quality of human resources.

Unlike early marriage, delaying the age of marriage in socio-economic literature is often understood as a rational adaptive strategy in facing the complexities of modern life. A number of studies show that delaying marriage is positively correlated with increased educational attainment, higher female labor force participation, household economic stability, and increased subjective well-being. In this context, delaying marriage is seen as a form of more mature and responsible life planning, especially amid increasing economic pressures and

competitive professional demands (Nazla Raihana & Abdullah, 2024).

However, the dominance of health and socio-economic approaches leaves fundamental issues when the phenomenon of delayed marriage is viewed within the normative framework of Islam. On the one hand, there are concerns that the longer people remain single, the greater the risk of premarital sex, weakening moral control, and violating religious norms. On the other hand, social reality shows that rushing into marriage without adequate preparation also has the potential to create new problems, such as domestic conflict, divorce, and family economic instability. It is this tension between the normative ideal of marriage and the social reality of delayed marriage that has not received adequate attention in contemporary Islamic legal studies.

The majority of current Islamic legal research still focuses on the issue of early marriage and normative efforts to raise the minimum age of marriage. Meanwhile, the legitimacy, ethics, and legal implications of delaying the age of marriage itself are still relatively marginalized. Sociological and economic studies tend to highlight social and financial impacts, such as career and welfare, without deeply linking them to the moral-spiritual dimensions and normative objectives of Islamic law. This situation indicates a significant research gap, especially in bridging the gap between modern social realities and a comprehensive Islamic value framework.

It is in this context that the *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* approach becomes relevant and

strategic. *Maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* allows Islamic law to be understood as a value system that aims to bring about benefits and prevent harm, rather than merely as a collection of legal-formal rules. Through this perspective, the phenomenon of delayed marriage can be analyzed more holistically by considering the protection of religion (*hifz al-dīn*), life (*hifz al-nafs*), intellect (*hifz al-'aql*), lineage (*hifz al-nasl*), and wealth (*hifz al-māl*) in the context of contemporary Muslim societies that continue to undergo change.

Based on this framework, this study aims to critically analyze the phenomenon of delayed marriage in from the perspective of contemporary fiqh and *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, by examining the accompanying social, moral, and normative implications. This study is not intended to justify or reject the postponement of marriage age *a priori*, but rather to assess the extent to which this practice can be understood as a life strategy that is in harmony with or contrary to the basic objectives of Islamic law.

The distinction of this research lies in its attempt to position the delay of marriage age as an independent object of study in Islamic family law, rather than merely as an antithesis to early marriage. By integrating contemporary fiqh and *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, this research offers a more balanced and contextual analytical perspective. The expected scientific contribution is to enrich the discourse of Islamic law in responding to modern social problems in a normative and ethical manner, while also providing conceptual

references for policymakers, education practitioners, and Muslim families. The novelty of this research lies in the formulation of a new assessment framework for delaying marriage age that is oriented towards public interest, moral balance, and the sustainability of Muslim family institutions in the contemporary era.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a normative-conceptual library research design. This approach was chosen because the study aims to examine and analyze the phenomenon of delayed marriage not merely as an empirical symptom, but as a normative issue that requires legal, ethical, and welfare assessments within the framework of contemporary fiqh and *maqāṣid al-shari‘ah*. Library research allows researchers to trace, examine, and synthesize the views of classical and contemporary scholars and *maqāṣid* thinkers in responding to social changes related to the institution of marriage.

The data sources in this study are divided into primary and secondary data. Primary data includes classical fiqh works discussing the concepts of marriage, maturity, and *istītā‘ah*, as well as contemporary fiqh literature relevant to modern Islamic family law issues. In addition, major works in the study of *maqāṣid al-syarī‘ah* are used as conceptual references to construct a normative analytical framework for the phenomenon of delayed marriage. The selection of primary sources is based on scientific

authority, thematic relevance, and contribution to the development of Islamic legal thought.

Secondary data includes scientific journal articles, academic books, official reports from state institutions such as the Central Statistics Agency and the National Population and Family Planning Agency, as well as publications from international organizations relevant to the issue of marriage age. This secondary data is used to enrich the social and demographic context, as well as comparative material in assessing the relevance and normative implications of fiqh views on the reality of contemporary Muslim society.

Data collection was carried out through documentary study techniques by searching, inventorying, and classifying written sources relevant to the research focus. Each source was critically analyzed to identify concepts, arguments, and legal principles related to the age of marriage, both from the perspective of fiqh and *maqāṣid al-syarī‘ah*.

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive-analytical methods through a *maqāṣidī* approach. In the descriptive stage, the researcher systematically presented classical and contemporary fiqh views on marriage, maturity, and readiness for marriage, as well as mapping the social reality related to the postponement of marriage age. Furthermore, in the analytical stage, the data was analyzed by placing *maqāṣid al-shari‘ah* as the main evaluative framework. The assessment is carried out by weighing the practice of delaying marriage based on the basic

objectives of sharia, particularly the protection of religion, life, reason, offspring, and property, as well as the principle of *jalb al-masālih wa dar' al-mafāsid*.

To maintain the validity and consistency of the analysis, this study uses a strategy of comparing sources and strengthening arguments through cross-references between classical and contemporary literature. Thus, the conclusions reached are not subjective, but are based on coherent scientific arguments that are academically accountable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Trends in Delayed Marriage Age

Delayed marriage is a social phenomenon that is becoming increasingly prominent in modern society. Shifts in cultural values, economic demands, and changes in individual life orientations have influenced perceptions of the institution of marriage (Azizah et al., 2025). Whereas in the past marriage was considered part of adulthood and social stability, in the contemporary era marriage is more often positioned as a personal choice that requires multidimensional readiness.

Based on data obtained from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the trend of postponing marriage in Indonesia has shown a consistent increase over the last decade (Central Statistics Agency, 2024). This data reflects significant social changes in the marriage behavior of the community, especially among the productive and highly educated age groups.

Analysis of BPS data shows a downward trend in the number of marriages in Indonesia between 2020 and 2024. In 2020, there were 1.78 million marriages (), which decreased to 1.74 million in 2021 and 1.70 million in 2022. A sharper decline occurred in 2023 with a total of 1.58 million marriages (down 7.52 percent), and a further decline to 1.47 million in 2024 (down 6.27 percent). Overall, the number of marriages has declined by about 17 percent in five years, marking a significant demographic change.

The postponement of marriage has two main implications. From a social perspective, this phenomenon allows for greater emotional, psychological, and financial readiness, while also enabling individuals to complete their education and develop their careers. However, these benefits are accompanied by normative pressure from the environment, stigma surrounding marriage age, and the potential for loneliness and reduced social relationships.

From a moral perspective, the period of delaying marriage requires stronger self-control. Data from the National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN) shows high rates of premarital sex among adolescents, namely 43.8% among those aged 10–14 and 41.8% among those aged 15–19 (Badan Kependudukan dan Keluarga Berencana Nasional, 2018), confirming that the risk of moral transgressions increases when social and digital

conditions are not balanced with adequate self-regulation. Overall, delayed marriage is ambivalent: it provides opportunities for self-improvement, but also presents potential social and moral challenges that require serious attention in analysis and policy.

Various internal and external factors cause many individuals to choose to delay marriage until they are considered truly ready physically and mentally (Usmi et al., 2025).

1. Education

The factor of education is one of the main causes of delayed marriage among the younger generation. Increased access to and awareness of the importance of education encourages individuals to prioritize academic achievement before entering married life (Livia et al., 2025). Many students or young professionals choose to focus on their studies in order to obtain better qualifications and careers in the future. This view stems from the belief that education is a long-term investment that can support stability in life after marriage (Putra & Dewi, 2021). However, in a social context, this orientation often causes a delay in the age of marriage because education is considered more urgent than starting a family.

2. Economics

Economic factors have a significant influence on the decision to delay marriage. Unstable economic conditions, high living costs, and increasing social demands such as

wedding expenses, housing, and household needs make many people feel financially unprepared for marriage. Therefore, many individuals choose to delay until they have a stable job or income that is considered sufficient to support a family.

3. Career

Career factors are also an important consideration in the phenomenon of postponing marriage. The demands of a competitive work environment make individuals more focused on self-development and professional achievement before starting a family. For some people, getting married at a young age is considered to hinder career mobility or reduce opportunities to achieve strategic positions in the workplace. As a result, marriage is often postponed until one's career is considered stable and established. This phenomenon shows a change in life orientation, where professional success is prioritized over starting a family at a productive age.

4. Modernization

Modernization has brought significant changes to society's view of marriage. Modern values such as independence, individual freedom, and a focus on personal achievement increasingly influence the decision to marry. The influence of mass media and global culture has reinforced the perception that happiness and success do not always depend on married life. As a result, many people view marriage as a choice, not a necessity. This mindset has

caused a shift in social norms, where delaying marriage is no longer considered taboo, but rather understood as a form of rationality and careful life planning.

Reinterpretation of Istitaah Marriage from a Contemporary Fiqh Perspective

The concept of istitaah in marriage is classically understood as the ability of the prospective husband to fulfill the basic obligations of marriage, especially financial ability and biological readiness. This understanding is rooted in the hadith of the Prophet which emphasizes the recommendation to marry for those who have *al-bā'ah*. The Prophet said:

يَا مَعْشَرَ الشَّبَابِ! مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ مِنْكُمُ الْبَاءَةَ فَلْيَتَرْوَجْ.
فَإِنَّهُ أَعْضُلُ لِلْبَصَرِ، وَأَحْسَنُ لِلْفُرْجِ. وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ
فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصَّوْمِ. فَإِنَّهُ لَهُ وِجَاءٌ . (رواه مسلم)

The majority of fuqaha interpret this as the ability to provide for a wife and engage in marital relations (az-Zuhaili, 1984). In the social context of pre-modern societies, the indicators of istitaah were relatively simple because the economic structure, gender relations, and demands of life were not as complex as they are today.

Contemporary social dynamics show that the parameters of the ability to marry can no longer be limited to material and biological aspects alone. Urbanization, changes in work patterns, increased living costs, and psychological demands in family relationships require an expansion of the meaning of istitaah.

In this situation, many individuals are biologically mature and have an income, but are not yet psychologically, emotionally, or socially ready to build a stable household (Rafliyanto, 2025).

This condition encourages a reinterpretation of the concept of istitaah in marriage to remain relevant to contemporary social realities. This reinterpretation is not intended to negate the classical understanding, but rather to broaden its scope by considering the substantive purpose of marriage in Islam. In other words, istitaah is no longer understood in a minimalistic way, but as a comprehensive readiness to create a stable and sustainable family.

Economic capacity (*istithā'ah māliyyah*) is basically understood as the minimum ability to fulfill the legal consequences of marriage, especially those related to financing the marriage contract and providing basic sustenance (Yulis, 2025). Fuqaha generally consider the ability to provide a dowry and support a wife as one of the main benchmarks of istitaah, without requiring economic stability in the sense of long-term stability. Therefore, as long as a person is able to pay the dowry and meet basic needs after the contract, he is considered to have met the minimum requirements to be recommended for marriage, even if his economic conditions are still limited or fluctuating.

The construction of economic istitaah in classical fiqh was born in a social context that is different from the reality of contemporary society. Simple

family structures, limited consumption patterns, and uncomplicated household economic relations meant that the costs of marriage and maintenance were relatively small (Olivia, 2015). Within this framework, classical fiqh emphasized the continuity of formal legal obligations rather than the potential for long-term social risks that might arise from economic instability.

The meaning of economic istitaah has undergone a substantial expansion. Family needs are no longer limited to basic fulfillment, but also include the costs of education, health, decent housing, and protection against economic vulnerability. The inability to fulfill these aspects has been shown to contribute significantly to domestic conflict and increased divorce rates. Thus, economic istitaah should not be understood merely as the temporary ability to enter into a contract, but must be seen as a sustainable capacity to support family life.

This approach is in line with *maqāṣid al-syārī'ah*, particularly in preserving offspring (*hifz al-nasl*) and preserving wealth (*hifz al-māl*). When economic instability has the potential to give rise to structural harms such as neglect of financial obligations, domestic violence, or divorce, the affirmation of a more comprehensive standard of economic capacity becomes a normative necessity. Thus, the reinterpretation of economic capacity is not intended to negate the classical fiqh view, but rather to develop it contextually so that it

remains relevant in maintaining the welfare of the family in contemporary social realities.

The meaning of the biological dimension in marriage eligibility in modern society is no longer limited to physical ability, but has been expanded to include reproductive health readiness, physical safety, and awareness of long-term biological consequences (Sri Gusniyati & Tahun, 2024). This framework positions marriage as an institution that demands mature biological responsibility, not merely the legitimization of sexual relations. In this context, early marriage becomes a crucial issue because it often takes place when biological readiness is not yet fully formed.

Early marriage has the potential to cause various biological harms, such as an increased risk of pregnancy complications, high maternal and child mortality rates, and long-term reproductive health disorders (Zelharsandy, 2022). Biological immaturity also implies physical unpreparedness to engage in a healthy and sustainable marital relationship (Irani & Roudsari, 2019). Therefore, early marriage is not only a social problem but also a biological issue that directly affects the quality of family life.

Within the framework of positive law, the establishment of a minimum age for marriage in state legislation can be understood as a response to these biological risks (Nur et al., 2025). This policy is in line with *maqāṣid al-syārī'ah*,

particularly the protection of life (*hifz al-nafs*) and the protection of offspring (*hifz al-nasl*). Age restrictions serve as a preventive mechanism to prevent greater harm, without negating the basic principles of classical fiqh that were born in a different social context.

The psychological dimension is an essential element in the construction of marriage because the success of a husband-wife relationship is largely determined by mental readiness, not merely the fulfillment of formal requirements. Emotional maturity is reflected in the ability to control oneself, manage conflicts in a healthy manner, and make rational decisions in stressful situations. The readiness to share roles and bear joint responsibilities also requires a psychological transition from an individual orientation to a collective commitment in family life (Rahmah et al., 2018).

When psychological readiness is not fulfilled, marriage has the potential to lose its substantive purpose, even though it is legally valid. Mental unpreparedness often gives rise to fragile relationship patterns, destructive communication, and an inability to deal with household problems, which can ultimately lead to disharmony or divorce (Indraswari, 2019). Therefore, psychological readiness cannot be positioned as an additional factor, but rather as an integral part of istitaah in a more substantial sense, because it serves to maintain the purpose of marriage as a space for tranquility, affection, and long-term family welfare.

The reinterpretation of istitaah in contemporary fiqh is oriented towards *maqāṣid al-syari‘ah*, particularly the protection of life, offspring, and honor. Marriage is positioned as a means of realizing long-term welfare, not merely the fulfillment of biological urges or social demands. Therefore, the expansion of the meaning of istitaah becomes a normative basis for the development of Islamic family law policies and practices that are more adaptive, contextual, and oriented towards family sustainability.

The Impact of Delayed Marriage in the Perspective of Contemporary Fiqh

Delaying marriage is not merely a deviation from normative recommendations, but rather a social choice born out of the complexities of modern life. Therefore, the focus of analysis is directed at the impacts of delaying marriage and its relevance to the substantive objectives of Sharia. The assessment of this practice of postponement is based on the rules of fiqh that weigh between *maslahat* and *mudarabat*, especially the principle of bringing benefit and preventing harm (Ibn 'Āshūr, 2004).

Postponing marriage contributes positively to achieving a more complete istitaah. Postponement gives individuals space to mature economically, complete their education, and build career stability (Wulandari, 2023). Istitaah is not understood as a minimum ability, but as a continuous readiness to fulfill household responsibilities. Contemporary fiqh

considers this condition to be in line with the objectives of protecting life and offspring, as families built on mature readiness tend to be more stable and resilient.

Delaying marriage also has an impact on the psychological and emotional maturity of individuals (Indraswari, 2019). A more mature age generally correlates with self-control, healthier communication, and readiness to deal with domestic conflicts. From the perspective of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, this aspect has significant importance because the quality of the husband-wife relationship determines the realization of the values of *sakinah* and *rahmah*.

Delaying marriage also has a negative impact, especially when it occurs for a long time in a permissive social environment (Rafliyanto, 2025). This condition has the potential to normalize dating, non-marital intimate relationships, and premarital relationships, thereby blurring the boundaries of ethical social interaction and weakening individuals' moral sensitivity (Wahid et al., 2025). In addition, postponing marriage is often accompanied by social pressure in the form of stigma regarding marriage age, loneliness, and social isolation, which can impact mental health. In the long term, this situation can reduce spiritual orientation and ethical commitment (Nazla Raihana & Abdullah, 2024). Therefore, postponing marriage requires strong self-control ('*iffah*) and adequate environmental support so that it does not

lead to *mafsadah*, which is contrary to the objectives of sharia.

Delaying marriage cannot be justified if it is proven to cause serious harm, whether in the form of moral damage, loss of self-control, or normalization of non-marital relationships that contradict sharia values. When delaying marriage opens the door to norm violations, severe psychological pressure, or degradation of ethical commitment, then this choice loses its legitimacy. In such conditions, postponing marriage no longer functions as a preparatory strategy, but rather has the potential to become a source of *harm* that must be avoided.

Conversely, postponing marriage can be considered valid and rational if it is done with a clear purpose and accompanied by strong self-control ('*iffah*). Postponement aimed at maturing economic, psychological, and social readiness without neglecting moral protection can be understood as part of an effort to realize *istitaah* in its entirety. For example, in the case of a girl who is not yet fully psychologically ready for marriage but is in a social environment that is vulnerable to violations of honor ('*ird*). In situations like this, postponing marriage can increase the risk of actions that are contrary to the values of purity and self-respect, while proceeding with the marriage is more likely to protect her honor and moral safety.

The assessment of the benefits and harms of postponing marriage is also relevant in the case of young people who

are only economically capable of covering the minimum costs of marriage, such as the dowry and the requirements for the marriage contract, but do not yet have long-term economic stability. In this situation, postponing marriage is often seen as a rational choice, but it can lose its value of maslahat if the postponement actually causes concern about falling into violations of sharia and weakening self-control.

Therefore, what should be prioritized in such circumstances is the recommendation to marry rather than delaying marriage, which is legitimized by Allah's words in QS. *An-Nūr* [24]: 32

وَأَنِّكُحُوا الْأَيْمَنِ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّلِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ
وَإِمَامِكُمْ إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءٌ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلَيْهِ

And marry the unmarried among you and the righteous among your male slaves and female slaves. If they should be poor, Allah will enrich them from His bounty, and Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

This verse indicates that economic limitations are not an absolute reason to delay marriage, as long as there is a commitment to maintain honor and live a responsible married life. Thus, in certain cases, marrying with minimal economic means can be considered more beneficial than delaying marriage, which risks causing greater harm.

This condition shows that the legal assessment of postponing marriage is not singular and absolute, but contextual. The

principles of *al-darar yuzāl* (harm must be eliminated) and *irtikāb akhaff al-dararayn* (choosing the lesser of two evils) are important foundations in determining the choice. If postponing marriage risks violating honor, then marriage can be prioritized even if psychological readiness is not ideal, provided that it is accompanied by adequate guidance and coaching.

In addition to its impact on the individual sphere, the massive postponement of marriage also has structural consequences at the social and national levels. The pattern of prolonged postponement contributes to a decline in birth rates and weakens population regeneration, as seen in countries with demographic crises such as Japan. From a contemporary fiqh perspective, this condition can be viewed as *mafsadah 'āmmah* because it threatens the protection of offspring (*hifz al-nash*), the balance of the population age structure, and the sustainability of human resources. Therefore, the assessment of marriage postponement should not only be based on personal interests, but must also consider its collective impact, requiring a balance between individual freedom, social responsibility, and the long-term interests of the people and the country.

CONCLUSION

The postponement of marriage age in contemporary Muslim societies is a social phenomenon that cannot be assessed in isolation, but must be understood

contextually by considering the substantive objectives of Sharia law. From a contemporary fiqh perspective, postponing marriage can be beneficial if it serves to mature economic, psychological, and social readiness, thereby supporting the creation of a stable and sustainable family. However, such postponement loses its normative legitimacy when it has the potential to give rise to mafsadah, such as moral transgressions, weakened self-control, and degradation of honor. Therefore, reinterpreting the concept of istititaah oriented towards *maqāṣid al-syārī‘ah* becomes an important basis for assessing the practice of postponing marriage, by placing the principle of balance between individual benefit, moral responsibility, and social impact as the main foundation for decision-making in contemporary Islamic law and family policy.

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