

THE TRADITION OF POSTPONING COHABITATION UNTIL WALIMATUL ‘URSY IN CERENTI: DURKHEIM’S SOLIDARITY ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Marriage customs in Malay communities continue to evolve amid shifting social values, yet scholarly attention to how local traditions mediate the relationship between Islamic law and indigenous norms remains limited. Although various studies have examined marriage rituals in Indonesia, no research has specifically analyzed the tradition of postponing cohabitation until the walimatul ‘ursy in Cerenti District, nor how this custom functions as a socio-religious mechanism that maintains communal harmony. This gap highlights the urgency of investigating how the practice negotiates the potential tension between Islamic permissibility for immediate cohabitation and customary restrictions rooted in Malay moral philosophy. Its novelty lies in analyzing Malay marriage traditions through the perspective of social cohesion, demonstrating how local and religious values interact in shaping social order. This study discusses the tradition of postponing cohabitation until walimatul ‘ursy (wedding celebration) in the Malay community in Cerenti District as a socio-religious practice that reflects the balance between Islamic customs and sharia, and functions as a social mechanism that strengthens community cohesion. The purpose of the research is to analyze the social function

and religious value of the tradition through Emile Durkheim's theory of social solidarity. The research uses a qualitative approach with field data through in-depth interviews with four indigenous figures, data analysis is carried out descriptive-analytically using Durkheim's concept of mechanical and organic solidarity. The results of the study show that postponing cohabitation serves as a mechanism of self-control, family respect, and guardian of the sanctity of marriage. These findings confirm that the tradition strengthens social unity through the common values and collective norms of the Cerenti community. Practically, this research provides insights applicable to family development and the preservation of customs based on Islamic values. In conclusion, this tradition does not restrict individuals freedom but plays a role in maintaining the moral and social balance of the community.

Tradisi pernikahan dalam masyarakat Melayu terus mengalami dinamika seiring perubahan nilai sosial, namun kajian ilmiah mengenai bagaimana adat lokal memediasi hubungan antara hukum Islam dan norma budaya masih terbatas. Meskipun sejumlah penelitian telah membahas ritual pernikahan di Indonesia, belum ada studi yang secara khusus menganalisis tradisi penundaan tinggal bersama hingga pelaksanaan walimatul 'ursy di Kecamatan Cerenti, maupun bagaimana praktik tersebut berfungsi sebagai mekanisme sosial-keagamaan yang menjaga keharmonisan komunal. Kekosongan kajian ini menunjukkan urgensi untuk menelusuri bagaimana tradisi tersebut merundingkan potensi ketegangan antara kebolehan syariat untuk langsung tinggal bersama dan pembatasan adat yang berakar pada filosofi moral masyarakat Melayu. Kebaruan penelitian terletak pada analisis tradisi pernikahan Melayu melalui perspektif kohesi sosial yang menunjukkan bagaimana nilai lokal dan religius berinteraksi dalam membentuk ketertiban sosial. Penelitian ini membahas tradisi penundaan tinggal bersama hingga walimatul 'ursy pada masyarakat Melayu di Kecamatan Cerenti sebagai praktik sosial keagamaan yang mencerminkan keseimbangan antara adat dan syariat Islam, serta berfungsi sebagai mekanisme sosial yang memperkuat kohesi masyarakat. Tujuan penelitian adalah menganalisis fungsi sosial dan nilai religius tradisi tersebut melalui teori solidaritas sosial Emile Durkheim. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan data lapangan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan empat tokoh adat, analisis data dilakukan secara deskriptif-analitis dengan menggunakan konsep solidaritas mekanik dan organik Durkheim. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penundaan tinggal bersama berfungsi sebagai mekanisme pengendalian diri, penghormatan keluarga, dan penjaga etika kesucian pernikahan. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa tradisi tersebut memperkuat kesatuan sosial melalui kesamaan nilai dan norma kolektif masyarakat Cerenti. Secara praktis, penelitian ini memberikan wawasan yang dapat diterapkan dalam pembinaan keluarga dan pelestarian adat berbasis nilai Islam. Kesimpulannya, tradisi ini tidak membatasi kebebasan individu, tetapi berperan menjaga keseimbangan moral dan sosial dalam komunitas.

Keywords: *Collective norms, Malay customs, postponing cohabitation, social solidarity, Walimatul ‘ursy*

Introduction

Marriage is a fundamental aspect in social life that is not merely understood as a natural bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife, but also as the foundation for forming a family that plays an important role in ensuring the continuity of generations and the stability of society. The quality and integrity of the family are crucial factors in realizing social welfare and human happiness. In Islamic view, the institution of marriage receives great attention, as sharia provides clear guidelines along with its rules and procedures (Malisi, 2022).

Islam views marriage as a sacred covenant and an act of worship to Allah, as well as a form of practicing the Prophet’s Sunnah. Its implementation is based on the principles of sincerity, responsibility, and adherence to religious law. In line with that, regulations in Indonesia through Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage, Chapter I Article 1, define marriage as an innate bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife, aimed at forming a happy, eternal family founded on the belief in the One God (Musyafah, 2020).

The discussion of marriage can be analyzed from two main dimensions. First, it represents a religious obligation that has a normative basis in Islamic teachings. Second, it serves as the only legitimate means for fulfilling human sexual needs within the framework permitted by religion. Hence, the practice of marriage is not solely intended to satisfy biological desires inherent in human nature but also carries religious significance that affirms obedience to Shari’a (Ichrom et al., 2024).

In Islamic law, marriage is considered part of the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, serving as both a moral and spiritual foundation for the ummah. The essence of marriage lies in the *ijab-qabul* procession, symbolizing mutual consent and acknowledgment of the rights and responsibilities of husband and wife. Family involvement, particularly the role of *wali* (guardian), reflects the importance of social support in building a household. Islamic Shari’a regulates in detail the relationship between husband and wife in order to create balance and prevent the occurrence of adultery that can damage the morals of society. While marriage is highly esteemed, Islam also allows for divorce as a final resort, provided it is pursued justly and with caution. Thus, marriage in Islam extends beyond worldly concerns—it is a path toward

spiritual closeness to Allah SWT and the attainment of happiness in the hereafter (Amalia, 2009).

The commandment of marriage is explicitly stated in the Qur'an, including in surah An-Nahl verse 72 that means: "Allah has made for you spouses (husband or wife) of your own kind, made for you from your spouses children and grandchildren, and bestowed upon you good sustenance". In this verse, Allah explains His favor of creating a pair for them of their own kind, through whom humanity continues its lineage and fulfills its divine duty as caliphs (stewards) on earth. Furthermore, Allah reminds believers that He provides sustenance, encouraging them not to fear scarcity but to focus on nurturing and educating their offspring to become righteous successors (Al-Qur'an, 2019).

For the Malay community, marriage is not merely a union between two people of different sexes but a social institution imbued with cultural, religious, and symbolic meanings. Marriage is viewed as a means of ensuring lineage continuity, preserving family honor, and strengthening relationships between social groups. In Indonesia, marriage also symbolizes the union of two extended families rooted in traditional values and local customs, each with its own distinct character. One such example is found in Cerenti District, Kuantan Singingi Regency, Riau Province. The wedding procession there in accordance with local customs, including the tradition of postponing cohabitation until the *Walimatul 'ursy*, a wedding celebration held at the bride's residence.

From an Islamic perspective, *walimah* represents a form of gratitude and celebration that should be conducted in moderation, without extravagance. It is encouraged as a means of expressing hospitality and fostering social solidarity. However, the implementation should align with the economic capacity of the bride and groom to avoid hardship. Islam emphasizes that *walimah* should never impose undue burden or cause social harm (Azizah, 2023).

Unlike most other regions, the people of Cerenti observe the tradition of postponing cohabitation for newlywed couples. This customary practice does not simply delay the couple's physical union but embodies moral and social purposes deeply valued by the local community. From an Islamic standpoint, marriage is not limited to the contract itself but encompasses a system of rights, obligations, and ethical conduct between spouses. Accordingly, the tradition of postponing cohabitation in Cerenti may be understood as an effort to uphold social order and ensure the realization of a harmonious and ideal family life.

The explanation is rooted in the philosophy of the Cerenti Malay Community, which states:

“Balanggang ka urang banyak
Basulua ka Matoaghi”

This expression reflects that the marriage tradition in Cerenti carries profound social meaning, particularly concerning the public legitimacy of marriage. After the marriage contract, the bride and groom are not fully considered “legitimate,” creating the potential for public misunderstanding or slander if the union is not promptly announced. To address this, the local community holds a special procession known as *pendudukan Niniak Mamak*, a symbolic handover from the groom’s family to the bride’s family through the intermediary of the *Niniak Mamak* (customary elders). This procession serves as a formal affirmation of the marriage according to custom before proceeding to the *Walimatul ‘ursy* or wedding celebration. Thus, the postponement of cohabitation among newly married couples is understood as a customary mechanism in Cerenti society to secure social recognition and prevent negative prejudices within the community (Syahid, 2025).

Several previous studies have explored marriage and social solidarity from Emile Durkheim’s theoretical perspective. These include Zakia et al. (2024), who examined *sipaindongan* marriage in Mandar its deviation from established customs; Dayanti and Hidayat (2023), who investigated changes in social solidarity resulting from the introduction of catering services at weddings; and Naibaho et al. (2015), who analyzed the symbolic meaning of *jambar* in traditional Batak Toba marriages. Other relevant research includes Kurniawan and Suharman (2022), who studied social solidarity in the *Samadiyah* tradition of Aceh, and Perwitasari (2017), who examined solidarity practices through marriage donations in Cepokojajar Village, Yogyakarta. In contrast to these studies, the present study specifically investigates the tradition of postponing cohabitation until the *walimatul ‘ursy* in Cerenti District, which combines religious and customary values as a form of social legitimacy, analyzed through Durkheim’s theory of solidarity to reveal its role in sustaining community cohesion.

This phenomenon illustrates the dynamic interaction between customs and religion in Malay society. From an Islamic perspective, the marriage contract (*akad nikah*) constitutes the essential element of marital validity, whereas the *walimah* is regarded as a *sunnah mu’akkadah* (a highly recommended practice in Islam). However, for the Malay community of Cerenti, the *walimah* represents

the culmination of social legitimacy in marriage. In other words, it serves to reinforce social solidarity, ensuring that a marriage is recognized not only in the eyes of religion but also within the customary social order.

The central issue lies in the potential normative tension between Islamic law and local customs. Islam does not prohibit married couples from cohabitation after the marriage contract, while the Cerenti custom imposes social restriction that forbids it prior to the *walimah*. This divergence highlights the importance of examining the tradition through the lens of social solidarity, in order to understand why the community preserves such practices and how they function to maintain social integration. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the social function and religious significance of the tradition of postponing cohabitation in the Cerenti Malay community. This research also contributes to a broader understanding of the interaction between Islamic custom and sharia in shaping social cohesion within contemporary Malay society.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using field research methods (Abdussamad, 2021) to explore the tradition of postponing cohabitation until the *walimatul 'ursy* in Cerenti District. The primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with four traditional leaders who possess extensive knowledge of the rules, values, and meanings embedded in local marriage traditions. The selection of informants was conducted purposively to ensure that the data accurately represented customary perspectives on social practices that continue to be preserved within the Malay community of Cerenti.

The interview data were analyzed through the theoretical framework of Emile Durkheim's concept of social solidarity, which distinguishes between mechanical and organic solidarity. The concept of mechanical solidarity was applied to examine how this tradition reinforces shared values and collective norms within society, while organic solidarity was used to identify the functional roles of each actor involved in the traditional wedding procession. Accordingly, this study not only provides a descriptive account of the tradition but also interprets how it contributes to maintaining social cohesion and strengthening the collective bonds of the Cerenti community.

Finding and Discussion

The findings of the study reveal that the Malay Muslim community of Cerenti continues to uphold the tradition of postponing cohabitation

between the bride and groom until the implementation of the *walimatul 'ursy*. This practice is understood as an ancestral heritage that remains relevant and consistent with the principles of Islamic law. The postponement is interpreted as a means of preserving marital honor, preventing slander, and fostering prudence in beginning domestic life. The values embodied in this custom demonstrate a harmonious relationship between local customs and Islamic teachings.

From the perspective of Emile Durkheim's theory of social solidarity, this practice represents mechanical solidarity—a collective adherence to customary and religious norms that serve as shared moral guidelines. Through commitment to these norms, the tradition strengthens social cohesion and nurtures moral consciousness within the Cerenti Malay community. Beyond its social dimension, the practice also encompasses psychological and cultural aspects, providing couples with time for adjustment before cohabitation, maintaining harmony among extended families, and strengthening overall social integration. Thus, the tradition reflects the integration of custom and sharia in maintaining marital dignity and promoting community stability.

Wedding Traditions in Malay Islam in Cerenti

Similar to other traditional wedding traditions in general, wedding ceremonies in Cerenti comprise a series of ritual stages rich with symbolic meaning (Akmal, 2015). In the Malay Islamic community of Cerenti, marriage is regarded as a sacred event that unites not only two individuals but also two extended families, thereby strengthening social networks within the community. Accordingly, each stage of the wedding procession is performed systematically—from the preliminary ceremonies to the culmination of the *walimah* celebration—reflecting the harmonious synthesis of Malay cultural values and Islamic teachings.

The first stage in Malay wedding customs is *merisik*, an exploratory process officially conducted through a *telangkai penghulu* (intermediary leader). At this stage, the groom's family gathers information regarding the conditions and requirements set forth by Islamic customs and teachings. The female representatives convey these stipulations in detail through the *telangkai* leader. After obtaining a response from the female side, the male family holds deliberations with relatives to discuss the *merisik* results and to determine an appropriate time for the marriage ceremony (Takari et al., 2014).

After the *merisik* stage, the procession continues with *meminang* or

antar tanda. Once both families agree to the proposed marriage, the groom's family sends a representative to formally convey the intention to propose to the bride. The messengers are typically respected family elders or traditional leaders known for their wisdom and deep understanding of local customs. The proposal ceremony is conducted in a traditional manner using poetic language and meaningful *petatah-petitih* (proverbs), beginning with the singing of Malay betel nut as a symbol of respect and the initiation of sacred marital bond (Juswandi, 2018).

In the Malay Islamic wedding tradition of Cerenti, the proposal or *intersigning* marks an important stage following mutual agreement between the two families. At this stage, the groom's side formally sends parents or traditional leaders to deliver the proposal to the bride's family. The procession is performed in poetic form, filled with rhymes and proverbial expressions, and begins with the presentation of betel nut symbolizing the sanctity of custom. During the event, both family representatives sit facing one another, and through their spokespersons, deliver introductions and the formal declaration of the marriage intention. After the exchange of betel nut symbolic gifts, the bride's family responds by either accepting or rejecting the proposal. If the proposal is accepted, the ceremony concludes with the placement of a ring on the bride-to-be's ring finger, signifying the official bond of the two families (Taswin, n.d.)

The next stage, known as *mangampuang*, represents a tradition of communal cooperation in preparing for the wedding celebration. This activity involves neighbors, relatives, and villagers who gather to assist in fulfilling the wedding needs prior to the ceremony. Typically, the mothers work together to cook, while in the evening, the *niniak mamak* (customary elders) from both sides gather at the bride's house for deliberation. Residents are invited to share meals, and voluntarily contribute monetary donations to support the host family. This tradition not only strengthens social bonds and friendship but also embodies collective participation in helping the financial responsibilities of the wedding and the *walimah* (Hendri, n.d.).

Before the wedding day, the people of Cerenti observe the tradition of *manggiliang ghompah*, a form of communal cooking carried out through *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation). This activity usually takes place on the day preceding the main ceremony, when the community jointly prepares dishes for the guests. Public participation in this event is remarkably high, with residents working together until late at night, or even until dawn, as an expression of

social solidarity. For the Cerenti Malay community, this tradition is an inherited ancestral practice that continues to be preserved because it reflects the values of kinship, togetherness, and the spirit of mutual cooperation. Furthermore, its preservation serves as a means of safeguarding cultural identity amidst the pressures of modern social change. (Noviandri, 2011).

After all the preparations were completed, the marriage contract (*akad nikah*) was conducted. In the Malay tradition of Cerenti, this procession typically begins when the groom's entourage arrives at the bride's house and is welcomed through customary rituals. The ceremony commences with the exchange and communal sharing of *tepak sirih* as a gesture of respect and hospitality. Following this, the *ijab qabul* is performed led by the guardian (*wali*) and witnessed by two witnesses, signifying the formalization of the marriage contract. The ceremony is then followed by the *tepung tawar* (unsalted flour) ritual, conducted by elders as a prayer of blessing for the newlyweds. During the *ijab qabul*, the bride remains in a separate room and listens to the proceedings. Afterward, the *sighat taklik* is recited, serving as the husband's solemn vow to treat his wife kindly and fulfill his obligations in accordance with Islamic law. This entire sequence affirms the validity of the marriage in both religious and customary terms while embodying the values of sacredness, respect, and responsibility in family life (Budiawan, 2021).

Following the marriage contract, the ceremony proceeds with the *bararak* or *manjapuik tabak* procession—one of the sacred traditions of the ancestral heritage of the Malay people that continues to be observed today. This ritual takes place after the wedding ceremony, with the *tabak* (ritual offering) typically prepared at the house of *mak bako* (the father's sibling) who belongs to the same tribe as the groom. This tradition consists of three stages: first, the preparation stage involves deliberation at the bride's house to determine the wedding day and the customary day. Second, the preparation of the *tabak* includes preparing ingredients and arranging ritual items in accordance with customary rules. Third, the procession of *bararak tabak* entails the symbolic delivery of the *tabak* from *Mak Bako's* residence to the bride's home (Restika et al., 2023). In Cerenti, this tradition is often enlivened by the performance of *randai* (a traditional Malay theatrical art) performed between family households, reflecting communal joy and unity (Marlis, n.d.).

Another significant tradition is the *khatam al-Qur'an* (Qur'an recitation completion ceremony), which is usually carried out after the procession of *berandam* (purification bath rituals) to reject reinforcements as a form of

self-improvement of the bride-to-be, symbolizing the bride's spiritual and physical preparation. This ceremony signifies that the bride has completed her Qur'anic studies under her parents' guidance and is spiritually prepared to assume her role as a wife and future mother. It also demonstrates the family's commitment to Islamic education and moral upbringing. The procession of *khatam al-Qur'an* is led by a Qur'an teacher or a respected religious figure appointed by the family, with the bride accompanied by her parents, peers, or recitation teachers. During the ritual, selected surahs—such as al-Dhuha, al-Fatihah, and others—are recited, followed by a collective supplication (*doa khatam Qur'an*) for seeking Allah's blessings (Ashsubli, 2018).

The next tradition is *malam berinai* (henna night). In the Malay community, including Cerenti, this procession is not merely an act of applying *inai* (henna) to the bride's hands and nails, but a symbolic expression of emotional and spiritual readiness for married life. The patience of the bride while waiting for the henna to deepen in color symbolizes inner beauty, virtue, and preparedness for her new role. This ceremony is typically held at night, either before or after the wedding day, depending on family custom. In addition to *inai* procession, the ritual includes various symbolic acts led by *Mak Andam* (the traditional beautician) with the assistance of close female relatives. When conducted before the wedding, each bride and groom performs the ritual separately; when held afterward, it is performed jointly at the bride's house. In Cerenti, the atmosphere of *malam berinai* is made more festive with tambourine (*rebana*) performances, creating a sacred yet joyful ambiance (Ashsubli, 2018).

Alongside these ceremonies, the *tepung tawar* (unsalted flour) ritual is also performed, symbolizing prayers for the well-being of the couple and protection from harm. In Malay custom, this ritual represents purification from misfortune, the expression of gratitude, and the hope for harmony in family life. This procession begins with the sprinkling of water mixed with powder, citrus, and rose petals onto the bride's palms, which rest on a white pillow. This is followed by the sprinkling of turmeric rice, washed rice, and potpourri, while special guests sprinkle water onto the bride's head accompanied by *salawat* (praises to the Prophet). The next stage is to sprinkle the couple with fresh flour water, followed by the application of henna to the hands, and conclude with a collective prayer. The number of participants performing the sprinkling—always an odd number such as three, five, seven, nine, or thirteen—symbolizes balance and prosperity in Malay custom (Maini & Perdamean, 2023).

In addition, the Malay community—particularly in Cerenti—also preserves the tradition of *Makan Sepughun*, which refers to a communal meal shared during celebratory or traditional events. This tradition is usually performed after a certain procession within a series of wedding or traditional ceremonies, during which all invited guests, families, and community participants dine together. The core meaning of “*Makan Sepughun*” extends beyond the act of eating; it symbolizes togetherness, equality, and the strengthening of social bonds. Through this tradition, the values of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) and gratitude are expressed, while fostering solidarity and friendship among community members (Salim, n.d.).

The highlight of the entire wedding series is the *walimah* or wedding reception. Over time, its implementation has evolved no longer limited to the bride’s house, but also held public venues such as hotels, multipurpose buildings or community halls, or other appropriate places. Unlike earlier stages that emphasize ritual and religious symbolism, the *walimah* focuses more on joy, social interaction, and strengthening kinship ties. The essential purpose of *walimah* is to gather family, friends, and community members in a spirit of togetherness to celebrate the sanctity of marriage (Takari et al., 2014).

The final event in the Cerenti Malay wedding tradition is the post-wedding visitation to close relatives, particularly the *niniak mamak* (maternal uncles and customary elders). In the Malay tradition of Cerenti, the bride and groom are expected to visit the homes of their close relatives from both the husband’s and wife’s families. The visits serve not only as social gatherings but also accompanied by bringing traditional dishes or food as acts of respect for the family visited. In return, the hosts customarily offer gifts—often in the form of money or household items—to the newlyweds. According to local belief, failure to present such gifts during the visit is viewed as an inauspicious sign that may bring misfortune to the family (Ferawati et al., 2023).

Thus, the sequence of wedding ceremonies in Malay Islam in Cerenti shows a harmonious integration between customs and Islamic teachings. While customs contribute warmth, symbolism, and communal values, Islam provides the normative and spiritual framework that ensures the sanctity and legitimacy of marriage. The two dimensions complement one another, transforming marriage from a mere formal ritual into a cultural and spiritual celebration that reinforces Malay Islamic identity and community solidarity.

Postponement of Cohabitation: Between Custom and Sharia

The phenomenon of postponing cohabitation or living together after marriage represents a local customary practice that continues to be preserved within the Cerenti Malay Community. This tradition—commonly referred to as “living separately”—refers to a situation in which a married couple does not immediately reside together for a certain period following the marriage contract. This practice is seen as a mechanism of social and cultural transition in establishing domestic life. In Cerenti District, this custom has been passed down generations and is maintained under the supervision of customary authorities, especially *Niniak Mamak* or tribal elders, who serve as custodians of traditional governance and moral order.

In Cerenti there are four tribes—*Malay*, *Pitopang*, *Plyang Loe*, and *Plyang Soni*. Each—each led by a tribal elder serving as chief. According to Marlis Salim and Fadel, the tradition of postponing cohabitation after the marriage contract is rooted in a customary philosophy grounded in sharia, as the saying “*adat bersendi syara’, syara’ bersendi Kitabullah*” (custom is founded upon religious law, and religious law is founded upon the Book of Allah). Islam regards marriage as a sacred covenant, while local custom introduces an additional stage following the religious and administrative formalization of the contract at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA). At this stage, *Niniak Mamak* deliberated to formally acknowledge the couple’s marital status within the customary framework. Before the traditional inauguration was carried out, the couple is not permitted to live in the same house, as affirmed in the local proverb saying “*Balanggang ka urang banyak, basulua ka mato aghi*,” which emphasizes the importance of social validation through traditional processions (Marlis, n.d.).

This inauguration process is carried out during *Makan Sepughun* ceremony, a symbolic handover of the male nephew by the *Niniak Mamak* to the woman’s family, signifying that the couple is now recognized as husband and wife according to custom. The event is attended by *Niniak Mamak* from both families, along with the village leaders, officials, and local residents, indicating that customary ratification is a communal affair. Once the *Makan Sepughun* procession concludes, the bride and groom carry out *Walimatul ‘ursy* as the highlight of the wedding celebration (Marlis, n.d.).

According to Hendri and Taswin, the tradition of postponing cohabitation represents an ancestral heritage that remains integral to the community’s cultural identity. This practice not only perpetuates tradition but also serves as an educational and moral means for the bride and groom.

The postponement period offers time for the bride and groom to prepare for the *Walimatul 'ursy* and to internalize the values of family life. As a process of social learning, this stage instills discipline, etiquette, and moral conduct in marital relationships. Moreover, the postponement functions as a period of emotional and spiritual maturation, fostering responsibility and readiness before living a married life. Thus, this tradition not only preserves traditional values but also serves as a social mechanism that cultivates marital readiness to face family life (Hendri, n.d.).

The primary purpose of the tradition of postponing cohabitation is to uphold the social legitimacy of marriage in the eyes of the customary community. Before obtaining customary legalization, newly married couples are not yet considered fully legitimate as husband and wife; hence, a transitional period is observed to prevent slander, gossip, or moral suspicion within the community. Through this traditional procession, the couple's marital status is publicly affirmed before the *Niniak Mamak*, relatives, and neighbors. Consequently, the tradition serves as a communal mechanism that reinforces social recognition, validating the marriage not only in religious terms but also within the moral and customary norms of the society (Salim, n.d.).

Throughout this series of traditional processions, the *Niniak Mamak* play a vital role reaffirming kinship structures and genealogical lines, including the recognition of familial roles such as uncles and ancestral elders. This demonstrates that the tradition of postponing cohabitation is not merely a ceremonial ritual but also a social institution for maintaining lineage, hierarchy, and customary authority within the indigenous community.

Taswin explained that the legitimacy of customary law in the practice of postponing cohabitation was collectively agreed upon by all *Datuk Suku* (tribal chiefs) as part of the Minangkabau customary heritage, originating from *Datuk Parpati Nan Sabatang*. Thus, this tradition is regarded as an ancestral legacy possessing both historical depth and cultural authority. One of the traditional leaders, the *Datuk* of the *Plyang Loe* Tribe, Mr. Taswin reaffirmed this principle through the customary expression, "*Dak lapuak dek ujan, dak lokang dek pane,*" meaning that inherited traditions will never fade despite the passage of time and the pressures of change. This expression reflects the community's belief that the preservation of traditions is ensured through continuous practice, transmitted across generations, and thereby remains alive within the socio-cultural order of the Cerenti Malay community (Taswin, n.d.).

The authority of customary law in Cerenti District is perceived as binding

and enforceable, as mutually recognized by all tribal leaders. Customary regulations cannot be disregarded without consequence, since any violation incurs sanctions in accordance with established customary provisions. This foundational principle emphasizes a causal and moral balance—sanctions are implemented in a fair and deliberative manner to maintain social harmony without inflicting harm upon either party. Nevertheless, the application of customary sanctions also accommodates flexibility and tolerance, allowing adjustments in cases of necessity or extenuating circumstances. Thus, customary law in Cerenti is not only binding but also adaptive, reflecting a dynamic legal culture that evolves in response to social change while preserving communal stability (Salim, n.d.).

The tradition of postponing cohabitation signifies that even after a marriage is formally registered at the Religious Affairs Office (KUA), the bride and groom must still obtain customary legitimacy through a special procession known as *Makan Sepughun*. This practice demonstrates that marital legalization is understood not solely in the religious or administrative domain, but also as an essential element within the socio-cultural system of the community. Through this dual process, religious validity and social recognition coexist harmoniously, reinforcing the unity between sharia and local tradition (Taswin, n.d.).

From the perspective of Islamic law, this tradition does not contradict the sharia but can instead be viewed as a form of *'urf* (customary practice) consistent with Islamic ethical values. This is because it generates positive outcomes—not only for the couple and their families, but also for the wider Cerenti community. The harmony between this tradition and Islamic teachings is further affirmed through the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH “*What is considered good by the Muslims, is also good in the sight of Allah; and what is considered bad by the Muslims, is also bad in the sight of Allah.*” (H.R. Ibnu Mas‘ud) (Hanbal, 2010). Accordingly, the custom of postponing cohabitation may be classified as *'urf sahih* (legitimate custom), as it supports social virtue, preserves marital sanctity, and strengthens communal morality.

Based on the analysis of the purpose behind the tradition of postponing cohabitation, it can be concluded that this practice embodies the value of togetherness, which plays a crucial role in strengthening family ties. This tradition not only serves as a medium for reinforcing kinship structures—including the recognition of the role of uncles and elders within the extended family system—but also as a social mechanism designed to protect newlyweds from potential slander, gossip, or social suspicion. Consequently, the underlying

intent of this custom is inherently positive, as it promotes harmony and mutual benefit for both families involved.

From the perspective of Islamic law, this tradition does not contradict the principles of sharia, as it can be categorized as *'urf sahih*, a legitimate social custom that supports the realization of moral and communal good. This interpretation aligns with the established rule of fiqh: "Benefits can be achieved through the prescribed means" (Hanbal, 2010). The principle emphasizes that as long as a customary practice produces social benefit (*maslahah*) and does not contravene fundamental sharia principles, it may be recognized as a valid and lawful social institution. Therefore, the tradition of postponing cohabitation represents a form of local wisdom that harmoniously integrates Islamic values with indigenous cultural practices, contributing to the preservation of social order and collective morality within the community.

Durkheim's Social Solidarity Against Postponing Cohabitation

According to Emile Durkheim, social solidarity constitutes the fundamental basis of social cohesion within a community. In such a system, individuals tend to conform to the collective moral structure, since society itself functions as a moral entity that transcends the individual. Consequently, the scope for expressing personal autonomy becomes limited, as one's social identity is largely shaped by shared norms and collective values that form the moral conscience of society (Rahmat & Suhaeb, 2023). Durkheim emphasizes that solidarity is reinforced through moral discipline and commitment to communal values, enabling traditions to occupy a dominant social position while tempering individualism. In this sense, justice is expressed through loyalty to collective interests rather than personal desires.

From a Durkheimian perspective, the tradition of postponing cohabitation among the Malay community of Cerenti District is a reflection of mechanical solidarity, which is a form of cohesion rooted in the homogeneity of beliefs, values, and religious norms. This tradition derives its moral strength not merely from custom, but also from its integration with Islamic ethical principles, thereby enhancing its spiritual legitimacy. The collective awareness of safeguarding marital honor, preventing slander, and maintaining familial harmony operates as an effective moral glue that binds individuals to the collective order. Therefore, this tradition should not be viewed solely as a cultural ritual, but as a social mechanism that harmonizes Islamic moral values with indigenous customs, forming a mutually reinforcing normative system.

Furthermore, the implementation of *walimatul 'ursy* plays a significant role in broadening the network of social solidarity through shared emotional experiences. Within Durkheim's theoretical framework, rituals such as the *walimah* generate a sacred social atmosphere that strengthens social integration through a sense of togetherness. This celebration functions as a medium for reaffirming kinship and *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) within the Islamic social framework (Safitri, 2023). Hence the *walimatul 'ursy* is not merely religious observance but also a socio-cultural space that revitalizes communal spirit in an era increasingly shaped by modern individualism.

Durkheim further contends that in traditional societies, collective norms take precedence over personal interests. In the context of Cerenti, this principle is manifested when newlyweds willingly postpone living together, even when it contradicts personal preferences. Such compliance reflects the subordination of individual will to the authority of customary and religious norms. However, from a modern sociological standpoint, this practice also illustrates the community's capacity to preserve traditional values while adapting them to contemporary social dynamics. On one hand, the tradition cultivates moral discipline and self-restraint; on the other, it reveals how modernization, urbanization, and globalization introduce new negotiations between indigenous norms and global cultural trends, particularly concerning cohabitation and marital practices (Di Giulio et al., 2019; Lesthaeghe, 2020).

Critically, the interaction between Islamic values and local customs within this tradition reveals a dynamic and dialectical process. Islam as a universal value system of values provides both normative and spiritual dimension, while customs offer a tangible social framework through which these values are manifested. In practice, these two dimensions do not exist in opposition but rather operate in a mutually reinforcing relationship. Islamic teachings on preserving honor (*hifz al'ird*) and avoiding immorality are integrated with customary norms that emphasize family dignity and communal propriety. Thus, the traditions of Cerenti may be interpreted as local expressions of Islamic ethics that have been internalized within the culture of the community.

Nevertheless, this process of integration is not without tension. In contemporary times, some segments of the population—particularly younger generations influenced by modern and global lifestyles—tend to interpret Islamic values through a more individualistic lens. This shift has contributed to changing attitudes toward marriage and communal responsibility, reflecting broader sociocultural transformations within Malay Muslim society (Sukneva

& Baraskhova, 2019).

Durkheim posited that in traditional societies, norms are enforced through repressive laws emphasizing collective sanctions for violations (Ritzer, 2011). Such characteristics remain visible in Cerenti, where deviations from the custom of postponing cohabitation may lead to social stigma and is regarded as an affront to collective honor. However, in the context of a modern and increasingly open society, mechanisms of social control have gradually evolved toward more persuasive and symbolic forms. In this regard, the strength of mechanical solidarity now lies not solely in fear of sanctions, but also in the internalized moral and religious consciousness of individuals, inspired by reflection on Islamic and cultural values.

Ultimately, the relevance of Durkheim's theory in analyzing the Cerenti's traditions lies in its explanatory power to illuminate the social function of custom as a means of maintaining communal integration. The mechanical solidarity reflected in the postponement of cohabitation and the practice of *walimatul 'ursy* ensures that each individual remains integrated within the whole society. However, contemporary reflection requires that this conception of solidarity be understood as adaptive rather than static—capable of evolving in response to changing social realities. When local traditions are harmonized with Islamic principles, they form a vital reservoir of social capital that sustains cohesion in an era when individualism, rationalism, and technological advancement increasingly threaten communal bonds. Hence, the traditions of the Cerenti Malay community illustrate that the synergy between custom and Islam is not merely a relic of the past but constitutes an enduring ethical and cultural foundation for social harmony in the present.

Social Functions of the Tradition of Postponing Living Together

The tradition of postponing cohabitation after marriage among the Cerenti Malay community serves as a social mechanism that strengthens collective cohesion and moral order. In Durkheim's framework, solidarity emerges from a shared collective consciousness that unites individuals within a moral community. Through this tradition, newlyweds undergo a period of postponement before living together to preserve social harmony and kinship bonds. This period offers an opportunity for extended families to reinforce emotional ties, ensure the couple's psychological and social readiness, and prevent potential slander or conflict within the community. Thus, the custom benefits not only the bride and groom personally but also reinforces the

collective value of togetherness as a social virtue.

Another essential social function of this tradition is its role in cultivating discipline and conformity to communal norms. As Durkheim asserts, in societies characterized by mechanical solidarity, tradition operates as a moral force that moderates individualism and aligns behavior with collective expectations (Zakia et al., 2024). Accordingly, the postponement of cohabitation functions as a subtle form of social control—encouraging individuals to prioritize communal welfare over personal desire. The bride and groom are perceived not merely as private individuals but as integral components of the broader social network encompassing family and society. Consequently, the principle of togetherness is elevated above individual interest, thereby preserving the continuity of inherited social norms and strengthening intergenerational solidarity.

Moreover, this tradition serves as an instrument for transmitting cultural and religious values to the younger generation. During the period of postponement, elders and extended families provide moral guidance, advice, and spiritual instructions to prepare the couple for their domestic roles. Islamic teachings, Malay customs, and social ethics converge to create a harmonious integration of religion and tradition. This process preserves cultural heritage while fostering collective awareness that marriage is not a private contract alone, but a social event reflecting family honor and community integrity.

Beyond its social dimension, the tradition of postponing cohabitation also possesses significant psychological implications. The transitional period after the marriage contract serves as a reflective and preparatory phase, allowing the bride and groom to internalize their new identities as husband and wife. From a cultural-psychological perspective, this interval facilitates a gradual adjustment from single life to family life, minimizing emotional and behavioral disruption. This aligns with Durkheim's conception that customary functions extend beyond regulating collective behavior—they also shape individual character through the internalization of communal norms (Naibaho et al., 2015).

Furthermore, this postponement period contributes to maintaining harmonious relations between extended families. In Malay society, marriage symbolizes not only the union of two individuals but also the alliance between kinship groups. The waiting period provides space for both families to strengthen interpersonal bonds, assess mutual responsibility, and affirm the sincerity and maturity of the couple's commitment. Thus, this custom should not be perceived merely as a restrictive measure, but as a social mechanism

ensuring that marriage is conducted with dignity, prudence, and communal legitimacy.

Fundamentally, the postponement of cohabitation until the *walimatul 'ursy* reaffirms the principle of integration between custom and sharia. Malay customs sustain their relevance through practices rooted in the values of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) and collective responsibility, while Islam provides the ethical and normative framework that sanctifies these practices. The synergy between the two produces a distinctive Malay-Islamic identity in Cerenti, wherein custom is not viewed as contradictory to religion but as a lived manifestation of Islamic moral ideals within the context of local culture. This demonstrates that when faithfully maintained, local traditions can serve as a bridge between indigenous wisdom and universal Islamic principles—preserving social cohesion, cultural identity, and moral integrity within the community.

Conclusion

This research aimed to explore the social and religious meanings underlying the tradition of postponing cohabitation until the implementation of *walimatul 'ursy* among the Cerenti Malay community, as well as analyzing it through the perspective of Émile Durkheim's theory of social solidarity. Based on the literature review and field analysis, it was found that this tradition functions not merely as an inherited cultural practice, but as a social mechanism that preserves harmony, morality, and social cohesion within the community. This tradition serves as a medium for the internalization of Islamic values such as holiness, responsibility, and respect for the family order—all of which strengthen social integration in accordance with Durkheim's concept of mechanical solidarity.

The postponement of cohabitation constitutes a tangible expression of the collective conscience of the Cerenti community, where adherence to customary norms and Islamic teachings mutually reinforce one another. In this context, religion plays a role not only as a theological belief system but also as a moral force that structures social relations and nurtures a sense of communal belonging. Therefore, this study confirms that the tradition of postponing cohabitation until the *walimatul 'ursy* represents a syncretic yet harmonious integration of Islamic teachings and local social structures, as well as an effective means of maintaining the continuity of social solidarity within the Riau Malay community.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the understanding of local religious traditions as “living traditions”—dynamic and adaptive social practices that demonstrate how religious expression extends beyond normative theology into symbolic systems that sustain social order. This study broadens the application of Durkheim’s theory within the context of *Islam Nusantara*, showing that Islamic social solidarity can be embodied in local customs without diminishing its spiritual and theological essence.

For future research, it is recommended to conduct comparative studies across other Malay regions to examine variations in the integration of religious and customary values in shaping social cohesion. Furthermore, an interdisciplinary approach that combines Durkheim’s theory with the concept of *maqasid al-shari’ah* (the higher objectives of Islamic law) or Bourdieu’s theory of *habitus* would provide deeper insights into the dynamics of local religious traditions amid modern social transformation.

Overall, the findings of this study hold significant implications for advancing the study of the sociology of religion and Islamic anthropology in Indonesia. They demonstrate that local traditions should not be regarded as barriers to modernity, but as enduring moral and cultural foundations that sustain social cohesion, strengthen Islamic identity, and foster harmony between religion and culture amid the ongoing transformation of contemporary society.

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