



THE IMPACT OF UNREGISTERED (SIRI) MARRIAGE IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF INDONESIAN MARRIAGE LAW: A CASE STUDY IN RACEK VILLAGE, TIRIS DISTRICT, PROBOLINGGO REGENCY

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E-ISSN : 3109-9777

Received: November 2025

Accepted: November 2025

Published: Desember 2025

Abstract:

The phenomenon of underage unregistered (siri) marriages remains prevalent in various rural areas of Indonesia, including Racek Village, Tiris District, Probolinggo Regency. This practice is often carried out without official state registration and involves couples who have not yet reached the legal age of adulthood. This study aims to analyze the causes of underage unregistered marriages, examine their impact on household harmony, and review the practice from the perspectives of Indonesian marriage law and Islamic law. The research employs a juridical-empirical and sociological approach, collecting data through interviews and observations involving underage married couples, community leaders, and village officials. The findings reveal that economic hardship, low educational attainment, and the persistence of local cultural traditions are the primary factors driving underage unregistered marriages. The impacts include emotional instability, economic pressure, domestic conflict, and the deprivation of legal rights for both spouses and children. From the perspective of positive law, this practice contradicts Law No. 16 of 2019 on Marriage and the principles of child protection. From the standpoint of Islamic law, it is inconsistent with the objectives of maqāṣid al-syarī'ah, particularly the principle of hifz al-nasl (protection of lineage). This study recommends strengthening the roles of government institutions, religious authorities, and local communities in legal education and family guidance programs to prevent child marriage.

Keywords: child marriage, marriage law, *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, unregistered marriage

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a social and religious institution that holds a central position in the life of Indonesian society. In Islam, marriage is regarded as an act of worship and a means to achieve a harmonious and peaceful life (*sakinah, mawaddah, warahmah*). However, in social reality, marriage practices do not always conform to legal regulations or principles of public welfare. One of the persisting phenomena in rural communities is the practice of *siri* (unregistered) underage marriage, namely marriages conducted without official state registration and involving individuals below the legal marriageable age. (Himawan, Bambling, & Edirippulige, 2018)

The phenomena of early and unregistered underage marriages are often religiously justified as efforts to preserve family honor or to prevent immoral acts. Such interpretations reflect a gap between religious texts and social contexts. On the other hand, these practices create serious legal, social, and psychological problems, particularly for women and children. In the context of Indonesian



positive law, underage marriage is strictly regulated under Law No. 16 of 2019, which sets the minimum marriageable age at 19 years for both men and women. This provision aims to ensure the physical and psychological readiness of the couple and to guarantee their legal protection. (Widiyanto, Zumrotun, & Saputra, 2024)

The situation in Racek Village, Tiris District, Probolinggo Regency illustrates that underage siri marriages continue to occur due to various factors such as economic hardship, limited education, cultural traditions, and misinterpretation of religious teachings. This condition creates a contradiction between legal norms, religious values, and social realities. Therefore, this study seeks to comprehensively examine the social conditions of Racek Village, the factors driving the persistence of underage siri marriages, and how both Indonesian positive law and Islamic law interpret this phenomenon. (Rahmi, Warman, & Effendi, 2025)

Previous studies have examined the issue of early marriage from various perspectives. Amalia Najah (2015) found that early marriage is closely related to the psychological and economic unpreparedness of young couples. Asep Irama (2018) highlighted the weakness of legal protection for women in unregistered marriages, while Ainur Rofiqoh (2019) emphasized that child marriage negatively affects family welfare. Nevertheless, studies integrating positive legal analysis with the principles of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*) remain limited, particularly in rural communities with strong religious and customary traditions, such as those in Probolinggo.

Based on these considerations, this research aims to analyze the practice of underage siri marriage in Racek Village from two perspectives: first, to identify the social conditions and causal factors behind the phenomenon; and second, to examine how Indonesian positive law and Islamic law view this practice in relation to the protection of women, children, and family welfare. Through this approach, the study seeks to make an academic contribution to understanding the relationship between state law and Islamic law while also offering practical recommendations to help prevent early marriage at the community level.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using field research as its primary method. This approach was chosen because the phenomenon of underage *siri* (unregistered) marriage is a complex social reality that cannot be fully understood through normative legal analysis alone; it must also be examined empirically through the lived experiences and perspectives of the community. The objective of this research is to understand the social meanings, causal factors, and legal implications of underage *siri* marriages in Racek Village, Tiris District, Probolinggo Regency. (Ahrens & Chapman, 2006)

The research site was purposively selected in Racek Village due to its high prevalence of underage *siri* marriages and the strong influence of religious traditions in community life. The research subjects include religious leaders, village officials, parents who married off their underage children, and young

couples who entered into unregistered marriages (Grijns & Horii, 2018).

The data consist of both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants knowledgeable about the phenomenon of *siri* marriage, including religious figures, parents, and individuals involved in early marriage. Secondary data were gathered from primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials such as Law No. 16 of 2019 on Marriage, the Compilation of Islamic Law (*Kompilasi Hukum Islam*), as well as relevant academic literature and prior research on early marriage and child protection. (Abisatya & Prasetyo, 2024)

Data Collection Techniques Three main techniques were used In-depth interviews, conducted in a semi-structured format to explore informants' experiences and perceptions regarding underage *siri* marriages. Field observation, aimed at understanding the social conditions and community interactions related to early marriage practices. Documentation, involving the collection of village archives, records from the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), and relevant legal documents concerning marriage. (Baba, Yendork, & Atindanbila, 2020)

Data were analyzed qualitatively and descriptively through three stages data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Interview data were categorized according to thematic areas (causal factors, impacts, and legal perspectives) and analyzed using social theory and the principles of *maqāṣid al-syārī'ah*. This analytical approach seeks to integrate empirical field findings with legal norms both Indonesian positive law and Islamic law to produce a holistic understanding of the phenomenon of underage *siri* marriage. (Mezmir, 2020)

The validity of the data was ensured through source and method triangulation. Information obtained from interviews was cross-checked with observation results and official documents to ensure consistency. Additionally, member checking was conducted with several informants to confirm that the researcher's interpretations accurately reflected the realities encountered in the field. (Moon, 2019)

Through this methodology, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of underage *siri* marriage practices, not only from a social perspective but also in relation to the underlying legal and Islamic values that shape them

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Social Conditions and Contributing Factors to Underage Unregistered (*Siri*) Marriages in Racek Village

Racek Village, located in Tiris District, Probolinggo Regency, is a rural area characterized by strong traditional values, close family ties, and deep-rooted religious influence. Geographically, it is an agrarian region where most residents have a relatively low level of education and unstable economic conditions. The majority of the population work as farmers, agricultural laborers, or informal workers with uncertain income. These socioeconomic realities have significantly shaped the community's perception of marriage, including the practice of

underage *siri* marriages.(Abisatya & Prasetyo, 2024)

In the local community's view, marriage is often perceived as a solution to various social and economic problems. Parents of teenage daughters frequently worry about their children's social interactions and the family's reputation in society. Such concerns often drive them to marry off their daughters at a young age, especially if they are already in a relationship. Marriage is seen as a moral responsibility to preserve family honor and to prevent sinful acts (*zina*). This mindset remains strong among rural communities that highly value modesty, morality, and social reputation.(Khaerunisa, 2021)

The phenomenon of underage *siri* marriage is also closely related to misinterpretations of religious teachings. Some community members understand religious texts literally, believing that early marriage is recommended to avoid immorality. They tend to view marriage solely as an act of worship without considering the psychological, emotional, and economic readiness of the couple. In fact, Islam emphasizes that marriage is not only a legally valid contract but also a moral commitment that requires responsibility and ensures mutual welfare.(Dalimunthe, 2023)

Interviews with several informants indicate that economic factors are the main drivers of early marriage in Racek Village. One respondent, a parent who married off her daughter at the age of 16, explained that the decision was made due to financial hardship. The family hoped that by marrying their daughter, the household's economic burden would be reduced. This statement reflects a broader social reality where structural poverty often becomes a major catalyst for early marriage, particularly in families that view daughters as economic dependents.

In addition to economic hardship, low educational attainment is another significant factor. Many children in Racek Village do not continue their studies beyond junior high school due to financial constraints. Once they drop out, the likelihood of marrying young increases. Limited understanding of marriage law and reproductive health leads to a lack of awareness of the long-term risks associated with early marriage. Many young couples are unaware of the legal consequences of unregistered (*siri*) marriages.(Sobolewski & Amato, 2005)

The patriarchal nature of the community further reinforces the prevalence of this practice. Women are often positioned as passive recipients of family decisions, with little agency to refuse arranged marriages(Zaidi & Shuraydi, 2002). In this context, obedience and respect for parental authority often outweigh individual rights and legal consciousness. As one 17-year-old female respondent stated, she married "because my parents told me to, and I would be ashamed to refuse." This statement highlights the significant social pressure faced by young girls to conform to traditional norms regardless of personal readiness.

Cultural and social traditions also play a crucial role. In some cases, early marriage is seen as a normal and even honorable event. When a young girl is known to have a close relationship with a boy, the community encourages them to marry immediately to avoid gossip or dishonor, even if they are not of legal

age. Such a mindset illustrates that early marriage is perceived more as a tool of social control than as a religious or legal institution imbued with responsibility.

The *siri* form of marriage is often chosen because it is considered simple, inexpensive, and quick. The ceremony only requires the presence of a guardian (*wali*), two witnesses, and a local religious leader (*modin* or *ustadz*) to conduct the *akad nikah* (marriage contract). These marriages are typically performed modestly without official registration at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA). When asked why they did not register their marriages, most respondents cited financial constraints or believed that registration was unnecessary as long as the marriage was valid under religious law. Others explained that they were unable to register because the bride or groom had not yet reached the legal age for marriage. (Pawalluri, 2022)

From the perspective of Indonesian positive law, this phenomenon reveals a lack of public awareness regarding the importance of marriage registration as mandated by Law No. 16 of 2019. Registration is not merely an administrative formality but a legal safeguard for women and children. The lack of understanding about these legal implications leads many to overlook potential future problems, such as difficulties in obtaining birth certificates for children, inheritance rights, or legal protection in cases of divorce. (Nawir, Suarning, Aris, & Haq, 2024)

From the standpoint of Islamic law, this phenomenon reflects a misunderstanding of *shari'ah* principles. While Islam permits marriage for those who meet the necessary conditions, it also emphasizes the principles of *maslahah* (benefit) and *dar'u al-mafāsīd* (prevention of harm). When marriage at a young age results in suffering, violence, or poverty, it contradicts the objectives of *shari'ah*. Within the framework of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, such practices conflict with the protection of life (*hifz al-nafs*) and lineage (*hifz al-nasl*). (Tohari, Fawwaz, & Swadjaja, 2022)

In conclusion, low socioeconomic conditions, limited education, cultural and religious pressures, and weak legal understanding are the main factors contributing to the prevalence of underage *siri* marriages in Racek Village. This phenomenon not only represents individual challenges but also reflects a broader imbalance between religious understanding, legal awareness, and social realities. Therefore, early marriage in this context should not be viewed as a cultural norm, but rather as a violation of the principles of social justice and child protection upheld by both Indonesian positive law and Islamic law.

Social, Psychological, and Legal Impacts of Underage Unregistered (Siri) Marriages

Underage *siri* marriages occurring in Racek Village have produced complex consequences that extend beyond the private realm, affecting individuals, families, and the broader community. These impacts are not limited to psychological and social dimensions but also extend into the legal sphere, where women and children are the most vulnerable to injustice and legal uncertainty. Field interviews revealed that most young couples struggle to adapt to the responsibilities of household life, economic pressure, and the social stigma

resulting from their unregistered marital status.

Psychologically, child brides and grooms lack the emotional maturity necessary to manage the complexities of married life. When faced with economic hardship and interpersonal differences, they are prone to stress and conflict. A 16-year-old female respondent admitted, *"I wasn't ready to be a wife,"* and often felt pressured because her husband had no stable job. This reflects how early marriage often leads to emotional imbalance, which, in turn, threatens family stability. (Ahmed1&2, Khan, Alia, & Noushad, 2013)

Emotional maturity in marriage is crucial because it involves the ability to manage conflict, regulate emotions, and communicate effectively. In the context of Islamic family law, this readiness forms part of *al-ahliyyah* (legal and moral competence), which should ideally be met before entering marriage. The absence of such maturity often results in disharmony and even early divorce. Community leaders in Racek Village reported that *"most young couples do not last long; they often quarrel and eventually separate without any legal process."* (Ab Hamid et al., 2023)

Beyond psychological consequences, the social impacts are also significant. Young couples face social pressure due to their inability to perform adult marital roles effectively (Saladino, Algeri, & Auriemma, 2020). Child brides, in particular, lose the opportunity to pursue education and social participation, which, over time, diminishes the quality of local human resources. Moreover, girls who marry young become negative role models for the next generation, perpetuating a recurring social cycle of early marriage that is difficult to break without educational intervention.

Another major social consequence is the heightened risk of household poverty. Young couples with limited education and skills struggle to find decent employment, often depending on their parents or extended families for support. This dependency exacerbates the village's overall economic fragility. As one 18-year-old male respondent stated, *"We don't have stable jobs yet, so we live with our parents and often feel like a burden."* This statement underscores how underage marriage perpetuates structural poverty rather than alleviating it. (Perry-Jenkins & Gerstel, 2020)

Legally, the most serious consequence of underage *siri* marriage is the lack of legal protection for the spouses and their children. Since these marriages are not officially registered with the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), they lack legal recognition before the state. Couples are unable to obtain marriage certificates or family registration documents, and children born from such unions often face difficulties obtaining birth certificates. This leads to significant civil law implications, especially concerning inheritance, child support, and legal protection in cases of separation or domestic conflict.

According to Article 7(1) of Law No. 16 of 2019 on Marriage, marriage is only permitted if both the man and woman have reached the age of 19. Furthermore, Article 2(2) stipulates that every marriage must be registered according to prevailing laws to gain legal validity. Therefore, underage *siri* marriage not only violates administrative requirements but also undermines

fundamental legal principles that guarantee legal certainty and protection for women and children (Murni, 2020).

In many cases, women are the most disadvantaged because they cannot legally claim their rights. In the event of divorce, a wife cannot demand financial support (*nafkah*) or property division (*harta bersama*). Similarly, a child born from an unregistered marriage is legally recognized only as the mother's child, in accordance with Article 43(1) of Law No. 16 of 2019. This not only results in legal disadvantages but also exposes the child to social stigma due to unclear legal status (Ganty, 2021).

Such legal consequences contradict the principles of child protection outlined in Law No. 35 of 2014, which mandates the state to safeguard every child's right to life, development, and legal identity. In this regard, underage *siri* marriage represents a violation of one of the most fundamental rights of the child the right to legal recognition of lineage and civil identity. (Lawrence, Dodds, Kaplan, & Tucci, 2019)

From the perspective of Islamic law, these consequences clearly contradict the primary objectives of marriage, which should bring *maslahah* (benefit) and harmony. Islam regards marriage as a means to achieve tranquility, affection, and compassion (*sakinah, mawaddah, warahmah*). However, when marriage results in suffering, abuse, and legal uncertainty, it can no longer be justified under *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*. The principles of *hifz al-nafs* (protection of life) and *hifz al-nasl* (protection of lineage), which form the core of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, are directly violated by such practices. (Saiman & Mahadzir, 2024)

The *fiqh* maxim "*Dar' al-mafāṣid muqaddamun 'alā jalb al-maṣāliḥ*" ("Preventing harm takes precedence over obtaining benefit") further emphasizes that when early marriage causes more harm than good, it should not be pursued even if the marriage technically fulfills religious requirements. Therefore, underage *siri* marriage should be evaluated not only from the standpoint of legal validity but also in terms of its moral, social, and humanitarian implications.

The case in Racek Village demonstrates that the community continues to judge the legitimacy of marriage solely based on religious validity, neglecting the aspects of legal protection and long-term welfare. Yet Islam does not separate religious law from social responsibility. The purpose of Islamic law is not merely to validate a marriage contract but also to uphold justice and family welfare. In this sense, Islamic law and Indonesian positive law share a common goal: protecting women and children from the detrimental effects of early marriage.

In conclusion, the social, psychological, and legal impacts of underage *siri* marriages in Racek Village reveal not only individual hardships but also systemic issues requiring structural intervention. A synergistic approach between state law and Islamic legal values is necessary to raise public awareness that marriage is not merely a religious act but also a legal and social responsibility that must be undertaken with maturity, awareness, and accountability.

Legal Analysis of Unregistered Underage Marriage from the Perspective of Positive Law and Islamic Law

The phenomenon of unregistered (*siri*) underage marriage in Racek

Village must be understood not only as a social issue but also as a violation of fundamental legal principles recognized in both Indonesian positive law and Islamic law. Both legal systems share the same ultimate goal to safeguard the welfare of individuals, families, and society. However, in practice, the community's limited understanding of formal legal obligations and its reliance on a textual interpretation of religious teachings have resulted in an imbalance between religious intentions and legal responsibilities.

From the perspective of Indonesian positive law, underage marriage is explicitly regulated under *Law No. 16 of 2019 amending Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage*. Article 7(1) stipulates that the minimum legal age for marriage is 19 years for both men and women. This provision aims to ensure the physical and mental readiness of couples to establish a healthy and responsible household. Furthermore, Article 2(2) mandates that all marriages must be officially registered under the prevailing laws in order to obtain legal recognition and protection. (Murni, 2020)

In the context of Racek Village, the practice of unregistered underage marriages violates both of these provisions. First, marriages performed at an age below the legal threshold neglect the administrative and moral requirements set for marital readiness. Second, the absence of official registration means that such marriages are not recognized by the state, leading to far-reaching consequences particularly the denial of legal rights for women and children, such as rights to maintenance, inheritance, and legal recognition of lineage.

One of the most critical legal implications is the uncertainty of a child's legal status. According to Article 43(1) of *Law No. 16 of 2019*, a child born out of a legally unrecognized marriage has a civil relationship only with the mother and her family, unless a court ruling establishes otherwise. This situation contradicts the principles of justice and child protection enshrined in *Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection*, which guarantees every child the right to identity, legal status, and protection from discrimination (Lelliott, 2022).

Furthermore, underage marriage contradicts the *Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI)*, which serves as a judicial reference in religious courts. Article 15(1) of the KHI states that, for the benefit of family life, prospective spouses should reach physical and emotional maturity to marry responsibly. Thus, while unregistered marriages may fulfill the formal religious pillars (*rukun* and *syarat*), they fail to align with the higher objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*), which prioritize welfare (*maslahah*) and protection (Khomariyah & Syukur, 2025).

From the standpoint of Islamic law, early and unregistered marriages cannot be deemed ideal because they neglect the social and welfare dimensions of marriage (Büchler & Schlatter, 2013). Although Islam does not prescribe a specific minimum age for marriage, it emphasizes the necessity of readiness (*al-ahliyah*) moral, emotional, and economic capability to bear marital responsibilities. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "O young people, whoever among you has the means (*al-ba'ah*), let him marry." (Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim). This hadith indicates that *al-ba'ah* encompasses not only biological ability but also moral and financial preparedness.

This principle aligns with the framework of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, which emphasizes the protection of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*). In cases of underage marriage, these elements are often undermined. Immature couples are prone to domestic conflict and early divorce, contradicting the Islamic objective of *maslahah* promoting harmony and well-being. (Sunaryo & Fahmi, 2024)

Moreover, unregistered marriages may cause greater harm (*mafsadah*) than benefit (*maslahah*). Children born from such unions often face legal and social marginalization. The jurisprudential maxim "*Dar' al-mafāsīd muqaddam 'alā jalb al-maṣāliḥ*" (preventing harm takes precedence over pursuing benefit) is highly relevant here any practice that results in social harm must be prevented, even if it appears formally valid in religious terms. (Kurniawan, Samae, & Arbi, 2025)

From a broader legal theory perspective, the integration between Islamic law and positive law does not create contradiction but rather mutual reinforcement. Positive law ensures administrative structure and legal certainty, while Islamic law provides ethical and spiritual guidance, ensuring that marriage fulfills both legal and moral objectives. Both legal systems converge on a shared aim: the preservation of human welfare. Consequently, unregistered underage marriage causing social harm and legal uncertainty cannot be justified under either system (Husain, Ayoub, & Hassmann, 2024).

Efforts to harmonize Islamic and positive law should be reflected through policy and legal education. The government, in collaboration with religious institutions such as the *Office of Religious Affairs (KUA)* and the *Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI)*, should promote community legal awareness programs. A humanistic and faith-based legal approach is essential to help rural communities understand that marriage registration is not a mere bureaucratic formality but an embodiment of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* the protection of lineage, justice, and family integrity (Bakar, Firmansyah, & Abdeljelil, 2024).

In conclusion, unregistered underage marriage represents not only a violation of state law but also a deviation from the noble values of Islamic law. Both legal systems emphasize the importance of maturity, responsibility, and registration as prerequisites for a valid and beneficial marriage. Therefore, the synergy between Islamic and positive law is vital to ensure that every marriage in Indonesia is not only religiously valid but also legally protected, socially just, and dignified in the eyes of humanity.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the practice of unregistered underage marriage in Racek Village, Tiris District, Probolinggo Regency, constitutes a complex social and legal phenomenon. The main factors underlying this practice include low socio-economic conditions, limited educational attainment, imbalanced cultural and religious pressures, and a weak awareness of the importance of marriage registration. The community often views early marriage as a moral and social solution without considering the couple's mental, economic, and legal readiness.

Unregistered underage marriage generates multidimensional impacts. Psychologically, young couples often experience emotional immaturity, leading to domestic conflicts and stress. Socially, this practice reinforces the cycle of poverty and decreases women's educational opportunities. Legally, the absence of official registration deprives women and children of legal protection, including rights to maintenance, inheritance, and the child's legal identity.

From the perspective of Indonesian positive law, this practice violates *Law No. 16 of 2019 on Marriage* and *Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection*. In Islamic law, unregistered underage marriage contradicts the principles of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, particularly *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (protection of life) and *ḥifẓ al-nasl* (protection of lineage). Although such a marriage may be valid in a formal religious sense if it fulfills the essential pillars and requirements, substantively it produces greater harm (*mafsadah*) than benefit (*maṣlahah*).

Therefore, both positive law and Islamic law affirm that marriage must be conducted with maturity, responsibility, and official registration as a means of ensuring legal protection and certainty. The synergy between these two legal systems is essential to establish marriages that are just, dignified, and beneficial (*maṣlahah*) for society

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