

Islamic Legal Perspectives on the Meja Waris Wedding Contribution Tradition in Jambi

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Abstract

This study explores the “meja waris” tradition, a form of collective wedding contribution practiced in Teluk Dawan Village, Tanjung Jabung Timur Regency, Jambi Province. The tradition embodies strong social values of solidarity and mutual cooperation, yet it raises academic concerns due to its potential tension with Islamic legal principles. The research aims to analyze the socio-cultural significance of the “meja waris” practice and to examine its conformity with Islamic law based on the perspectives of traditional leaders, religious leaders, community figures, and local residents. This study adopts a qualitative approach, utilizing in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation. Data validity was reinforced through triangulation to ensure accuracy and reliability. Findings reveal that the “meja waris” tradition serves as a social mechanism to reduce the financial burden of wedding ceremonies, reinforcing social capital within the community. However, its transformation into a binding norm that demands reciprocity has the potential to contradict Islamic legal values, particularly when coercion undermines sincerity and voluntarism. From an Islamic legal perspective, the practice remains permissible when grounded in ikhlās (sincerity), tabarru‘ (voluntary giving), and ta‘āwun (mutual assistance), but becomes problematic when enforced as a social obligation. The study concludes by emphasizing the need to reinterpret and contextualize the “meja waris” tradition in accordance with Islamic values, with active involvement from the village government, religious and traditional authorities, community leaders, and academic institutions. Such collaboration is essential to preserve the tradition while ensuring alignment with Islamic legal and ethical principles.

Keywords: *Meja Waris, Wedding Contribution, Social Solidarity, Islamic Law, Reinterpretation*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji tradisi *meja waris*, yaitu bentuk kontribusi pernikahan kolektif yang dipraktikkan di Desa Teluk Dawan, Kabupaten Tanjung Jabung Timur, Provinsi Jambi. Tradisi ini merepresentasikan nilai sosial berupa solidaritas dan gotong royong, namun sekaligus menimbulkan problem akademik karena berpotensi bertentangan dengan prinsip-prinsip hukum Islam. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis makna sosial-budaya dari praktik *meja waris* serta meninjau kesesuaiannya dengan hukum Islam berdasarkan perspektif tokoh adat, tokoh agama, tokoh masyarakat, dan warga setempat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa wawancara mendalam, observasi langsung, dan dokumentasi. Validitas data diperkuat melalui teknik triangulasi untuk menjamin keakuratan dan reliabilitas temuan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tradisi *meja waris* berfungsi sebagai mekanisme sosial untuk meringankan beban biaya pernikahan serta memperkuat modal sosial masyarakat. Namun, transformasinya menjadi norma sosial yang bersifat mengikat dengan tuntutan balas jasa menimbulkan potensi pertentangan dengan nilai-nilai hukum Islam, khususnya ketika unsur keterpaksaan mengurangi ketulusan dan kesukarelaan. Dari perspektif hukum Islam, praktik ini tetap dibolehkan selama dilandasi ikhlās (ketulusan), tabarru‘ (pemberian sukarela), dan ta‘āwun (tolong-menolong), tetapi menjadi bermasalah jika dipaksakan sebagai kewajiban sosial. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa reinterpretasi dan kontekstualisasi tradisi *meja waris* sangat diperlukan agar sejalan dengan

nilai-nilai Islam. Upaya ini menuntut keterlibatan aktif pemerintah desa, otoritas agama dan adat, tokoh masyarakat, serta lembaga akademik untuk menjaga keberlangsungan tradisi tanpa mengabaikan prinsip hukum dan etika Islam.

Kata Kunci: Meja Waris, Kontribusi Pernikahan, Solidaritas Sosial, Hukum Islam, Reinterpretasi

A. Introduction

Marriage in the Malay Jambi community is not merely viewed as a union between a man and a woman but also as a social event involving the entire community. In every wedding celebration, a series of inherited traditions plays a vital role in maintaining cultural identity¹. One such tradition still preserved today is *meja waris*, a practice in which guests contribute financial support to the host family. This tradition serves as a medium to strengthen social ties, reinforce kinship bonds, and uphold community solidarity. However, behind its social values lies a dynamic process of change and shifting meanings that deserves careful scholarly attention². The *meja waris* tradition originally stemmed from a spirit of mutual cooperation and communal support. Contributions were made voluntarily, without any form of coercion or expectation. Its primary purpose was to ease the financial burden of wedding expenses, which are often significant for the host family. Over time, this practice established a reciprocal system in which families who received contributions would later return the favor when the contributors held their own events³. As a result, *meja waris* developed into a social mechanism that benefited both economic and emotional well-being.

However, the passage of time has brought notable changes to the implementation of *meja waris*. In several areas, including Teluk Dawan Village in Tanjung Jabung Timur Regency, the tradition has shifted from a voluntary act to an unwritten social obligation. Many community members now view giving contributions less as an act of sincerity and more as a moral duty that must be fulfilled. This shift can lead to social pressure, especially when individuals feel compelled to contribute in order to maintain their reputation or avoid social sanctions. Such developments raise important questions about the alignment of this practice with Islamic legal principles⁴.

¹ Afrohah Aljamilah, "Analisis Hukum Islam Terhadap Tradisi Sumbangan Dalam Walimah Al-'Urs," *Lisyabab: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Sosial* 4, no. 2 (2023): 117–28.

² Muh Saleh, "Tradisi An-Nyumbang Pada Pesta Perkawinan Menurut Perspektif Hukum Islam (Studi Kasus, Desa Berutallasa, Kecamatan Biringbulu, Kabupaten Gowa)." (Institut Agama Islam STIBA Makassar, 2020).

³ St Maryam and Azman Arsyad, "Analisis Urf Terhadap Tradisi Appasumbang Doe Sebagai Piutang Dalam Perkawinan Di Kecamatan Bontoramba Kabupaten Jeneponto," *Shautuna: Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Perbandingan Mazhab*, 2022, 250263.

⁴ Farid Muzaki, "INTERPRESTASI HUKUM MENYUMBANG DALAM RESEPSI PERNIKAHAN PADA MASYARAKAT KABUPATEN KARAWANG" (Fakultas Syariah dan Hukum UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, n.d.).

From an Islamic legal perspective, all forms of giving should be rooted in sincerity and free will. The Qur'an and Hadith emphasize that charity and gifts hold spiritual merit when performed without coercion⁵. When an element of compulsion becomes dominant, the spiritual essence of the act may diminish or even disappear. It is therefore crucial to examine whether the *meja waris* tradition in Teluk Dawan still aligns with the Islamic principle of voluntary giving or whether it has transformed into a practice that deviates from religious teachings. This analysis is necessary to provide communities with a clearer understanding of the issue. Beyond its religious dimension, *meja waris* also carries complex socio-economic implications. On one hand, it helps distribute the financial burden of weddings and acts as a form of social investment that can be reciprocated in the future. On the other hand, the expectation to return contributions in equal or greater amounts can create financial strain, particularly for those with limited economic resources⁶. Such conditions may lead to social anxiety and even disrupt harmony within the community. Thus, any assessment of *meja waris* must consider both its socio-economic realities and its compliance with Islamic law⁷.

Teluk Dawan Village, located in Tanjung Jabung Timur Regency, Jambi Province, represents one of the Malay communities where this tradition remains strongly practiced. The village's residents maintain close kinship ties, making *meja waris* a symbol of unity and collective identity. Yet, the increasing cost of living and the influence of modernization have posed challenges to its continuation. There are cases in which residents feel financially burdened by the unwritten obligation to contribute. This situation highlights the urgency of studying how the tradition is perceived and practiced amid social change. Previous studies indicate that similar practices to *meja waris* exist in various regions of Indonesia under different names and mechanisms. For example, in some areas, it is known as *nyumbang*, *bawon*, or *pajegan*. While the underlying idea of reciprocal support is common, each region has its own customary regulations and social contexts that shape the practice. In Teluk Dawan, the uniqueness lies in the meticulous recording of contributions, which facilitates future reciprocation. This system of documentation, however, also reinforces the expectation to return contributions in kind.

In the realm of community education, the tradition holds instructive value in teaching solidarity, social responsibility, and family financial management. Younger generations can

⁵ Subadar Alwy, "Tradisi Ontalan Di Madura: Perspektif Hukum Syafi'i Dalam Pernikahan Islam," *Al-Inṣāf* 3, no. 2 (2024): 50–69.

⁶ Febi Putri, "Analisis Fiqh Tabarru Terhadap Sumbangan Perkawinan Di Desa Cijengkol Kecamatan Setu Kabupaten Bekasi" (UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2024).

⁷ Saleh, "Tradisi An-Nyumbang Pada Pesta Perkawinan Menurut Perspektif Hukum Islam (Studi Kasus, Desa Berutallasa, Kecamatan Biringbulu, Kabupaten Gowa)."

learn that helping others is an essential aspect of communal life. However, without proper value management, the tradition can also pass down a culture of social prestige and competition. This underlines the need for guidelines that preserve the positive aspects of *meja waris* while minimizing potential negative effects. Islamic law can serve as a normative foundation to achieve such a balance⁸. Methodologically, this research adopts a qualitative approach aimed at exploring the perspectives of traditional leaders, religious leaders, community figures, and local residents in depth. Such an approach allows for an understanding of *meja waris* not only as an economic phenomenon but also as a culturally rich practice. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. Triangulation was applied to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. This methodology enables a comprehensive Islamic legal analysis of the tradition⁹.

The findings of this research are expected to offer practical contributions for the people of Teluk Dawan in redefining the implementation of *meja waris*. By understanding its position within the framework of Islamic law, the community can safeguard the sincerity of giving while maintaining social solidarity. Furthermore, the study can provide recommendations for village authorities and religious institutions to develop policies or guidelines that prioritize sincerity and voluntary participation. This will allow the tradition to endure without conflicting with Islamic principles. The study also has theoretical implications for the fields of Islamic law and cultural anthropology. It enriches the literature on the interaction between religious law and customary practices in Muslim societies. The findings from Teluk Dawan can be compared with similar traditions in other regions to identify patterns and differences. This comparative analysis will demonstrate how Islamic law can function as a normative filter for cultural practices, ensuring that custom complements rather than contradicts religious values.

In sum, *meja waris* in Teluk Dawan Village is a deeply rooted socio-cultural phenomenon that embodies both positive and problematic dimensions. Its transformation from a voluntary act to a social obligation necessitates critical examination, particularly from an Islamic legal perspective. This research aims to address that need through an academic and analytical approach, balancing cultural preservation with the Islamic principle of sincere giving. The expected outcome is a body of knowledge that can guide the community and policymakers in sustaining *meja waris* as a meaningful and beneficial tradition aligned with religious teachings.

⁸ Sri Astuti A Samad and Munawwarah Munawwarah, "Adat Pernikahan Dan Nilai-Nilai Islami Dalam Masyarakat Aceh Menurut Hukum Islam," *El-USRAH: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 3, no. 2 (2020): 289–302.

⁹ Muhammad Rohim, Fathullah Rusly, and Irzak Yuliardy Nugroho, "Analisis Sosiologi Hukum Islam Terhadap Tradisi Sombhengan Dalam Perkawinan Di Desa Brani Wetan," *Indonesian Research Journal on Education* 5, no. 4 (2025): 1671–75.

B. Reseach Method

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore and analyze the *meja waris* tradition in Teluk Dawan Village, Tanjung Jabung Timur Regency, Jambi Province, from an Islamic legal perspective. The qualitative method was chosen because it enables the researcher to examine social and cultural phenomena in their natural settings and to interpret meanings from the participants' viewpoints. Data were collected through three main techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. The interviews involved traditional leaders, religious leaders, community leaders, and local residents, selected through purposive sampling to ensure relevance and depth of information. Participant observation allowed the researcher to directly witness the implementation of the *meja waris* tradition during wedding celebrations, capturing non-verbal cues and contextual nuances. Documentation of written records, contribution logs, and related village archives provided additional insight into the historical continuity of the practice.

To ensure the credibility and validity of the data, triangulation was applied by cross-checking information from multiple sources and methods. This strategy minimized the potential bias that could arise from relying solely on one perspective. Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. In the context of Islamic legal analysis, the findings were examined using *fiqh* principles and relevant Qur'anic and Hadith references to determine the alignment of *meja waris* with religious teachings. The integration of socio-cultural exploration with Islamic legal assessment provided a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. This methodological design ensured that the study not only documented the tradition but also critically evaluated its religious and social implications.

C. Result And Discussion

1. Characteristics of *Meja Waris* as a Social Institution

The *meja waris* tradition in Teluk Dawan Village is a unique social practice that centers on the recording of wedding contributions with the purpose of maintaining social balance within the community. When a family organizes a wedding celebration, attending guests present a monetary contribution as a gesture of goodwill and support. These contributions are carefully recorded by the organizing committee in a dedicated ledger, referred to locally as the *meja waris* book. The meticulous recording of the donor's name and the amount given is more than simple bookkeeping; it forms the basis of a reciprocal

system that ensures fairness in future exchanges. This process transforms a single act of generosity into part of a larger social cycle that connects families over time¹⁰.

The primary function of recording contributions is to provide a clear reference for repaying similar amounts when the donor's family hosts a wedding in the future. This repayment is not seen as a commercial transaction but rather as the fulfillment of a social obligation rooted in communal reciprocity. In the eyes of the local community, keeping accurate records is essential to maintaining trust and preventing misunderstandings. Failure to reciprocate an equivalent amount can damage relationships and may even lead to social tension¹¹. As a result, the *meja waris* ledger serves not only as a practical tool but also as a safeguard for social harmony.

From the researcher's observations, the practice extends beyond mere financial assistance, functioning as a form of social savings or moral debt. Individuals accumulate a kind of "reputational credit" through their contributions, which they can draw upon when hosting their own events. Even those who have not yet organized a wedding are encouraged to participate, building goodwill and strengthening their social standing within the community. In this way, participation in *meja waris* is a proactive investment in future mutual support. It fosters a sense of belonging and reinforces interdependence among community members.

The roots of the *meja waris* tradition lie in the collective need to share the financial burden of wedding expenses. Historically, weddings in Teluk Dawan have been elaborate social events involving extended families, neighbors, and friends. In the absence of formal financial institutions or insurance systems, the community developed its own mechanism for risk-sharing through mutual aid. Initially, this system was entirely voluntary and egalitarian, with contributions viewed as pure gifts or *hibah*. No explicit expectation of repayment existed; the act of giving was considered an expression of goodwill and solidarity¹².

Over time, however, social dynamics shifted, and the voluntary nature of *meja waris* gradually transformed into a binding reciprocal arrangement. As weddings grew in scale and cost, families became increasingly dependent on the assurance of receiving

Yoga Tri Ambudi, Ahmad Syafi'i, and Diyan Putri Ayu, "Analisis Hukum Islam Pada Tradisi Mbecek Pernikahan (Studi Kasus Di Desa Talun Kecamatan Ngebel Kabupaten Ponorogo)," in *AICOMS: Annual Interdisciplinary Conference on Muslim Societies*, vol. 4, 2024, 127–36.

¹¹ Zaimuariffudin Shukri Nordin and Ismail Ruslan, "Integrating Islamic Law and Customary Law: Codification and Religious Identity in the Malay Buyan Community of Kapuas Hulu," *J. Islamic L.* 6 (2025): 89.

¹² Imam Suhadi, "PANDANGAN ULAMA KECAMATAN GONDANG DAN TOKOH ADAT SETEMPAT TERHADAP TRADISI SASRAHAN DALAM PERKAWINAN," *AL MUNAZZHARAH* 6, no. 1 (2022).

contributions in return for their past generosity. This shift created an informal yet powerful obligation to repay exactly what had been given. In effect, the tradition evolved into a moral contract, in which reciprocity became an unspoken but universally understood requirement. While this transformation ensured fairness and continuity, it also altered the spirit of the original practice.

Today, the *meja waris* operates as a complex social mechanism balancing solidarity with obligation. On one hand, it enables families to manage significant wedding expenses without taking on formal debt. On the other hand, it imposes a form of social pressure, particularly on households with limited financial resources. The expectation to match prior contributions, even during times of hardship, can create strain and anxiety. This duality underscores the tension between communal support and personal financial freedom in traditional societies¹³.

The *meja waris* system also functions as a repository of communal memory. The ledger serves as a historical record, documenting decades of social interaction and mutual assistance. Families can trace patterns of giving and receiving across generations, reinforcing a sense of identity and continuity. This archival function deepens the social significance of the tradition, embedding it in the cultural heritage of Teluk Dawan. Such records are often treated with great care, reflecting the value placed on maintaining accurate and trustworthy accounts.

Nevertheless, the evolution of *meja waris* has sparked debates among local leaders, particularly regarding the shift from voluntary giving to obligatory repayment. Traditional leaders acknowledge the system's role in promoting solidarity and easing the financial burden of weddings. However, they also express concern over the erosion of sincerity in gift-giving. When contributions become calculated transactions, the original intention of helping one another out of compassion may be diminished. This change has prompted calls for reflection and possible reform of the practice.

From a sociological perspective, the *meja waris* represents an example of how informal institutions adapt over time to changing economic and social realities¹⁴. As communities face new challenges, traditional systems evolve to meet practical needs, sometimes at the expense of their original values. The interplay between tradition, economy, and morality in *meja waris* reflects broader patterns found in many communal

¹³ Imam Thobroni, "Analisis Hukum Islam Terhadap Tradisi Mruwat Kala Atas Pernikahan Anak Tunggal Di Desa Kedungguwo Kecamatan Sukomoro Kabupaten Magetan," *Prodi Hukum Keluarga UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya*, 2019.

¹⁴ M Shodiq, "Pesantren Dan Perubahan Sosial," *Islam, Jurnal Sosiologi* 1, no. 1 (2011): 112–22, <http://jurnalfisip.uinsby.ac.id/index.php/JSI/article/view/12>.

societies. Understanding these dynamics is essential for evaluating the sustainability and ethical implications of such practices.

Religious leaders in Teluk Dawan bring another dimension to the discussion, viewing the *meja waris* through the lens of Islamic ethics and jurisprudence. While Islam encourages mutual assistance and generosity, it cautions against forms of giving that are tied to coercion or conditional repayment. If the spirit of *meja waris* shifts toward enforced reciprocity, it risks contradicting the principle of *ikhlas* (sincerity) in charity. Thus, some religious authorities advocate for restoring the voluntary essence of the tradition while preserving its social benefits.

Community leaders emphasize the importance of dialogue in addressing the changing nature of *meja waris*. They argue that any reform should involve broad participation from villagers, ensuring that cultural heritage is respected while adapting to modern needs. Such reforms might include introducing flexibility in repayment expectations or creating communal funds to support families in hardship. By doing so, the community can maintain the positive aspects of *meja waris* without perpetuating undue financial pressure.

Ultimately, the *meja waris* tradition in Teluk Dawan stands at a crossroads between preservation and adaptation. It continues to play a vital role as a social safety net, fostering solidarity and reciprocity among villagers. Yet, without careful management, it could become a source of social division rather than unity. The challenge lies in reinterpreting the practice in a way that honors its historical significance while aligning it with ethical and religious values¹⁵. This ongoing process requires the active engagement of all stakeholders, including families, community leaders, religious authorities, and policymakers.

2. Religious, Gift, and Customary Perspectives in the Review of Islamic Jurisprudence

From the standpoint of Islamic law, a *hibah* is defined as a voluntary gift given sincerely, without any expectation of return. The act of giving is intended solely to please Allah and to foster goodwill between the giver and the recipient. In its pure form, a *hibah* carries no conditions, no hidden obligations, and no implied reciprocity. The reward for the giver is sought in the hereafter, not through material repayment. The *meja waris* tradition in Teluk Dawan is formally described by the community as a *hibah*, yet in

¹⁵ Asrizal Saiin et al., "Tradisi Pemberian Sumbangan Dalam Hajatan Pernikahan Perspektif Fiqhul Islam," *TERAJU* 1, no. 02 (2019): 59–72.

practice, it operates differently. The recorded contributions create a system in which the recipient is expected—sometimes compelled—to give back an equal amount in the future.

This expectation changes the fundamental nature of the gift. When the return of the same value becomes a binding social rule, the act no longer fits the definition of a *hibah* in the Sharia sense. Instead, it begins to resemble a mutual exchange, where the initial gift is made with the anticipation of a future return. While such arrangements may be permissible in trade or partnership contexts, they contradict the ethics of voluntary charity. Islamic jurisprudence holds that true charity should be free from transactional motives¹⁶. In this sense, the *meja waris* system, while socially functional, departs from the spiritual ideal of gift-giving in Islam.

The Prophet Muhammad strongly emphasized sincerity in acts of charity. In several hadiths, he warned against seeking worldly gain from acts that are meant to be acts of worship. One well-known hadith states that the best charity is that which is given with the right hand so discreetly that the left hand is unaware of it. This metaphor highlights the principle that charity should be free from social calculations or pressures. The *meja waris* tradition, by contrast, is structured around public record-keeping, where every gift is noted and future repayment is expected. Such transparency, while helpful for accountability, may also create unintended pressure and diminish the spirit of *ikhlas* (sincerity)¹⁷.

Islam also teaches that believers should avoid asking or compelling others for material support except in genuine need. The prohibition against *su'al* (begging) is not limited to verbal requests; it extends to indirect forms of compulsion or systems that effectively force contributions. In the context of *meja waris*, compulsion does not occur through explicit demand but through the social expectation embedded in the system. Failure to meet this expectation may result in social stigma, which functions as an indirect form of coercion. From an Islamic legal perspective, such coercion could undermine the voluntary nature of the original gift¹⁸.

In examining *meja waris* through the lens of reciprocity theory, it becomes clear that the tradition operates within a binding logic of give-and-take. This logic is reinforced by the community's detailed record-keeping, which transforms the relationship between

¹⁶ Riniarty Djamaal, "The Role of Customary Law in the Formation of Islamic Law," *At-Tasyrih: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Hukum Islam* 10, no. 2 (2024): 349–60.

¹⁷ Khaled Al-Farsi, "Exploring Sharia Law in Islamic Jurisprudence," *Social Science Chronicle* 2, no. 1 (2022): 1–20.

¹⁸ Fathul Hamdani and Ana Fauzia, "Tradisi Merariq Dalam Kacamata Hukum Adat Dan Hukum Islam," *Jurnal Hukum Lex Generalis* 3, no. 6 (2022): 433–47.

giver and receiver into a long-term, mutually binding agreement. Social capital theory also explains how these reciprocal obligations strengthen communal bonds, but at the cost of personal autonomy. In Islamic law, mutual assistance is commendable when it arises from free will, but problematic when it becomes a non-negotiable debt-like obligation. Thus, the social benefits of *meja waris* must be weighed against the risk of violating the principles of voluntary charity.

In *fiqh*, the principle of *'urf* (custom) acknowledges that established community practices can be considered legally valid if they do not contradict Sharia. A *'urf sahih* (sound custom) is one that aligns with Islamic values, reinforces justice, and avoids harm. Conversely, a *'urf fasid* (corrupt custom) is a practice that conflicts with Sharia, even if it is widely accepted by society. The transformation of *meja waris* from voluntary gift-giving into a compulsory exchange raises the question of whether it still qualifies as *'urf sahih*. If the practice introduces coercion or transactional intent into what should be a sincere act of charity, it risks being classified as *'urf fasid*¹⁹.

Another concern is the potential for *riba ma'nawi* (usury in a non-financial sense) within the *meja waris* system. Although no interest is charged, the expectation of an equal return turns the initial gift into something akin to a loan. In Islamic jurisprudence, any benefit stipulated as a condition for a loan—or for something resembling a loan—is considered a form of *riba*, which is prohibited. While *meja waris* is culturally framed as mutual help, its operational logic parallels that of debt repayment, thereby blurring the line between charity and credit. This raises a serious ethical concern in the eyes of Islamic scholars.

Furthermore, the principle of *tabarru'* (voluntary benevolence) in Islam emphasizes that acts of giving should not be burdened with the anticipation of material benefit. In *meja waris*, however, participants often give with the certainty that the same amount will be returned to them in the future. This anticipation alters the giver's intention, making it less about helping others and more about securing future assistance for oneself. While such planning may be practical from a social standpoint, it dilutes the selflessness that Islam seeks to cultivate in charitable acts.

Islamic scholars who have studied similar traditions in other regions often call for a recalibration rather than a complete abandonment of such practices. The goal is to preserve the elements of solidarity and mutual assistance while removing the coercive

¹⁹ Nordin and Ruslan, "Integrating Islamic Law and Customary Law: Codification and Religious Identity in the Malay Buyan Community of Kapuas Hulu."

aspects. This could involve shifting the cultural narrative of *meja waris* back toward voluntary giving, where repayment is appreciated but not demanded. Such adjustments would help align the practice with Islamic ethics while maintaining its role as a social safety net²⁰.

Local religious leaders in Teluk Dawan recognize the delicate balance between cultural heritage and Sharia compliance²¹. They often serve as mediators in cases where disputes arise over *meja waris* repayments. In their view, the system should be reformed so that it fosters generosity without generating resentment or hardship. This requires not only legal guidance but also community education about the Islamic principles of charity, sincerity, and non-coercion. Over time, such efforts could gradually reshape the practice into one that is both socially beneficial and religiously sound.

Reform is also supported by the *maqasid al-sharia* (objectives of Islamic law), which prioritize the protection of faith, life, intellect, wealth, and lineage. In the case of *meja waris*, preserving wealth and protecting social harmony are key objectives. Any practice that leads to unnecessary financial strain or social division contradicts these goals. Therefore, reforms that reduce compulsion and allow flexibility in repayment would not only be ethically justified but also aligned with the higher objectives of Sharia²².

In conclusion, the *meja waris* tradition in Teluk Dawan reflects a valuable cultural mechanism for mutual assistance, but its current form raises concerns under Islamic law. While its origins in voluntary *hibah* align with Sharia, the evolution toward obligatory reciprocity risks undermining the sincerity and freedom essential to charitable acts. By applying principles of *‘urf*, *hibah*, and *maqasid al-sharia*, it becomes possible to reform the practice in a way that honors both cultural heritage and religious ethics. The challenge lies in ensuring that the spirit of generosity remains intact while addressing the structural elements that create compulsion.

3. Analytical Sociological and Fiqh Perspective on the *Meja Waris* Tradition

The *meja waris* tradition in Teluk Dawan Village operates as a deeply rooted social institution that regulates the circulation of wedding contributions within the Malay community. At its core, the system involves meticulously recording monetary gifts

²⁰ Ali Akhbar Abaib Mas Rabbani Lubis and Muhammad Abdul Khaliq Suhri, “Relasi Hukum Islam Dan Adat Dalam Tradisi Pamogih Pada Perkawinan Masyarakat Muslim Bondowoso,” *Volksgeist: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum Dan Konstitusi*, 2020, 45–63.

²¹ Ahmad Faishal Rasyid, “Kontribusi Pemikiran Hazairin Tentang Ahli Waris Pengganti Dalam Kompilasi Hukum Islam: Kajian Aspek Hukum Dan Implementasinya” (Universitas Islam Indonesia, 2024).

²² Rohim, Rusly, and Nugroho, “Analisis Sosiologi Hukum Islam Terhadap Tradisi Sombhengan Dalam Perkawinan Di Desa Brani Wetan.”

received during wedding celebrations in a dedicated ledger, noting the donor's name and the exact amount given. While the practice initially emerged as a form of voluntary mutual aid, it has gradually evolved into a binding social obligation. This evolution reflects the dynamic nature of local customs (*adat*), in which economic support is intertwined with moral accountability. In this transformation, *meja waris* has shifted from being purely a vehicle of generosity to an instrument of social reciprocity²³.

From a sociological standpoint, the tradition embodies the principle of social capital, as described by Bourdieu (1986), in which networks of mutual obligation are maintained over time. However, the form of reciprocity embedded in *meja waris* exhibits ambivalence. On one hand, it reinforces solidarity and strengthens inter-family ties; on the other, it imposes an invisible social pressure to reciprocate equally. This dual function illustrates how symbolic systems can operate as mechanisms of "soft coercion," or *symbolic violence*, compelling individuals to conform to collective norms without explicit force. This is particularly evident in cases where non-reciprocation is perceived as a breach of social etiquette²⁴.

Interviews with community leaders reveal that they acknowledge the positive role of *meja waris* in alleviating the financial burden of hosting weddings. They note that without such a system, wedding expenses would be significantly more challenging to bear, particularly for lower-income families. Nonetheless, they express concern about the moral shift from voluntary giving to enforced reciprocity. The expectation of returning an equivalent amount transforms the nature of the contribution from a gift to a form of deferred debt. This shift risks undermining the sincerity that traditionally underpinned the custom.

Recipients of *meja waris* contributions echo this ambivalence. While they value the system's ability to distribute wedding costs more evenly across the community, they also report feeling the weight of a "social debt" that must be repaid in the future. This pressure often forces households to prioritize repayment over other financial needs, potentially creating economic strain. Such experiences resonate with Marcel Mauss's theory that there is no gift entirely free from the obligation to reciprocate. In this light, the *meja waris* tradition illustrates how gift economies can become tightly bound systems of exchange²⁵.

²³ Alwy, "Tradisi Ontalan Di Madura: Perspektif Hukum Syafi'i Dalam Pernikahan Islam."

²⁴ Romi Adetio Setiawan, "Impact of Islamic Jurisprudential on Traditional Financial Customs and Legal Integration in Indonesia," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 13, no. 2 (2023): 195–209.

²⁵ Isro Puad, Sasmita Nur Faradisa, and Ahmad Muzayyin, "TRADISI SUMBANGAN PADA PESTA PERKAWINAN (Benang Tipis Antara Respon Resiprositas, Adat-Hutang)," *Al-Hukmi: Jurnal Hukum Ekonomi Syariah Dan Keluarga Islam* 5, no. 1 (2024): 81–93.

The situation becomes even more complex for residents who have not yet hosted a wedding but have contributed to many others. For these individuals, *meja waris* functions as a form of “anticipatory obligation,” where current giving is essentially a social investment for future returns. While this reinforces community cohesion, it also embeds an expectation of repayment into the social fabric. The result is a delicate balance between altruism and economic calculation. This anticipatory aspect reveals the embedded logic of the gift economy in the community’s social structure.

From the perspective of Islamic law (*fiqh*), the practice raises important questions about the nature of *hibah* (gift-giving). In Islamic jurisprudence, a *hibah* is defined as a voluntary transfer of property without expectation of return, purely for the sake of goodwill. The Prophet Muhammad emphasized that such giving should be free of conditions, coercion, or self-interest. When the *meja waris* tradition imposes a moral—or de facto—requirement to reciprocate with an equivalent amount, it risks departing from the spirit of a true *hibah*. This raises potential concerns of the practice morphing into a transactional exchange rather than a charitable act²⁶.

The *fiqh* concept of *‘urf* (custom) provides a framework for assessing whether *meja waris* can be accommodated within Islamic law. According to Islamic legal theory, *‘urf shahih* (valid custom) is one that aligns with the objectives of Sharia (*maqasid al-shariah*) and does not contradict explicit textual sources. However, if a custom contains elements of compulsion, exploitation, or harm, it may be classified as *‘urf fasid* (corrupt custom). In the case of *meja waris*, the initial voluntary nature of the practice supports its acceptance, but the evolution into a binding expectation introduces problematic elements. This tension necessitates a careful reevaluation of the custom’s implementation.

The issue of coercion, whether explicit or implicit, is a central concern in Islamic ethics. Coercion is not limited to verbal or physical force but can also operate through social structures and expectations that leave individuals with no genuine choice. In *meja waris*, failure to reciprocate may lead to social exclusion, reputational harm, or strained relations, effectively compelling compliance. Such conditions undermine the sincerity of the act and can transform a gift into a form of social compulsion. The Prophet ﷺ cautioned against giving in a way that obligates a return, as it dilutes the reward of charity in the sight of Allah.

Nevertheless, the *meja waris* tradition also contains elements that align with Islamic values, particularly the emphasis on mutual aid and community solidarity. The Qur’an

²⁶ Djamal, “The Role of Customary Law in the Formation of Islamic Law.”

encourages believers to help one another in righteousness and piety (*ta'awun 'ala al-birr wa al-taqwa*), and the tradition's original intention reflects this principle. The challenge lies in preserving these values while mitigating the pressures of obligatory reciprocity. By restoring the voluntary essence of giving, the community can retain the benefits of the tradition without compromising its religious integrity.

A sociological solution to this tension involves fostering a cultural shift in norms surrounding *meja waris*. Community leaders, religious scholars, and local government can collaborate to promote the idea that contributions should be made in accordance with one's ability, without strict equivalence. Public awareness campaigns and religious sermons (*khutbah*) could emphasize the virtue of sincere giving and the prohibition of compulsion. Such interventions would help reframe the practice as a charitable act rather than an economic obligation.

From an Islamic legal reform perspective, the tradition could be maintained by formalizing its voluntary nature through community agreements (*ta'addud jama'i*). This would involve explicitly stating that all contributions are given without expectation of return and that any reciprocation is a matter of personal choice. Such an approach would preserve the social capital inherent in *meja waris* while removing the problematic aspects of coercion. This aligns with the Sharia principle of removing harm (*raf' al-darar*) while promoting communal welfare (*maslahah*)²⁷.

In conclusion, the *meja waris* tradition of Teluk Dawan embodies both the strengths and vulnerabilities of community-based solidarity systems. Sociologically, it serves as a robust mechanism for redistributing financial burdens and reinforcing social bonds. From the perspective of Islamic law, however, its evolution into a quasi-obligatory system raises concerns about the erosion of sincerity in giving. Addressing these concerns requires a nuanced approach that honors local cultural heritage while realigning the practice with the ethical and legal principles of Islam. Only through such a balanced reform can the tradition continue to serve as a source of unity rather than a cause of silent resentment.

D. Conclusion

The *meja waris* tradition in Teluk Dawan reflects a complex interplay between social solidarity and moral obligation, functioning as both a support system and a source of subtle coercion. From a sociological perspective, it strengthens community bonds and redistributes financial burdens, yet it risks transforming voluntary generosity into an obligatory form of

²⁷ Al-Farsi, "Exploring Sharia Law in Islamic Jurisprudence."

social debt. From the standpoint of Islamic law, while its original form as a *hibah* aligns with Sharia values of mutual aid, the embedded expectation of equal reciprocity challenges the sincerity and voluntariness that define lawful giving. Balancing these perspectives requires preserving the custom's communal benefits while reforming its practice to ensure contributions remain free from coercion, thus harmonizing local *adat* with the ethical and legal principles of Islam.

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