

## Reconstruction of Gender-Fair Child Protection from an Islamic Law Perspective

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### Abstract

*Several classical Islamic legal regulations related to child protection still exhibit patriarchal tendencies, which can lead to gender inequality. This is evident in aspects such as the distribution of custody rights (hadhanah), the obligation to provide for children, and the decision-making process that affects children's lives, which are often based on literal interpretations of texts without considering the essence and universal objectives of sharia (maqashid al-syari'ah). Therefore, this research aims to reconstruct the concept of gender just child protection within the framework of Islamic law. Methodologically, this research is a library research study with a qualitative approach oriented towards philosophical- normative analysis. Primary data sources include authoritative texts of the Qur'an and Hadith, as well as classical and contemporary works of Islamic jurisprudence, while secondary sources are obtained from academic literature related to gender studies, Islamic family law, and maqashid al-syari'ah. The data analysis technique was carried out through two main stages: thematic content analysis to identify prevailing legal discourse patterns, followed by critical-reflective analysis using the maqashidiyah approach to evaluate and reconstruct these concepts. The research findings reveal that several conventional fiqh constructions regarding child protection tend to ignore the principle of substantive justice, particularly in the establishment of rigid gender roles. As an alternative, this study reconstructs the concept of gender-just child protection through a reinterpretation of the hadhanah institution as a collective responsibility (takaful) based on the principle of the benefit of the child (maslahat al-thifl).*

**Keywords:** Reconstruction, Gender Justice, Child Protection, Islamic Law.

### Abstract

Beberapa aturan hukum Islam klasik terkait perlindungan anak masih menunjukkan kecenderungan patriarki, yang dapat menyebabkan ketidakadilan gender. Hal ini terlihat dalam aspek-aspek seperti pembagian hak asuh (hadhanah), kewajiban nafkah, dan proses pengambilan keputusan yang memengaruhi kehidupan anak, yang sering kali didasarkan pada penafsiran teks secara harfiah tanpa memperhatikan esensi dan tujuan universal syariat (maqashid al-syari'ah). Dengan demikian, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk merekonstruksi konsep perlindungan anak yang adil dalam kerangka hukum Islam. Penelitian ini merupakan studi kepustakaan (library research) dengan pendekatan kualitatif yang berorientasi pada analisis filosofisnormatif. Sumber data primer penelitian meliputi teks otoritatif Al-Qur'an dan Hadis, serta karya fikih klasik dan kontemporer, sementara sumber sekunder diperoleh dari literatur akademik terkait studi gender, hukum keluarga Islam, dan maqashid al-syari'ah. Teknik analisis data dilakukan melalui dua tahap utama, yaitu analisis isi tematik (thematic content analysis) untuk mengidentifikasi pola-pola diskursus hukum yang berlaku, dilanjutkan dengan analisis kritis-reflektif dengan pendekatan maqashidiyyah untuk mengevaluasi dan merekonstruksi konsep-konsep tersebut. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa beberapa konstruksi fikih konvensional mengenai perlindungan anak cenderung

mengabaikan prinsip keadilan substantif, khususnya dalam penetapan peran gender yang kaku. Sebagai alternatif, penelitian ini merekonstruksi konsep perlindungan anak berkeadilan gender melalui penafsiran ulang institusi *hadhanah* sebagai tanggung jawab kolektif (*takaful*) yang didasarkan pada prinsip kemaslahatan anak (*maslahat al-thifl*).

**Kata Kunci:** Rekonstruksi, Keadilan Gender, Perlindungan Anak, Hukum Islam

## INTRODUCTION

Children are the next generation of the nation who have a strategic role in determining the future of a country. Philosophically, the position of children is not only seen as part of the younger generation, but also as potential human resources and successors to the ideals of the nation's struggle. Because of the special characteristics and traits inherent in children, they need special coaching and protection. Juridically, child protection in Indonesia has gained strong legitimacy through Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection, which was later updated with Law Number 35 of 2014. In the regulation, child protection is defined as all activities to guarantee and protect children and their rights, so that they can live, grow, develop, and participate optimally in accordance with the dignity and dignity of humanity, as well as protected from violence and discrimination (Fahlevi 2015).

The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA) reported that throughout 2024 showed that there were 28,831 cases of violence against children, the majority of victims were girls Based on data from the Online Information System for the Protection of Women and Children (SIMFONIPPA) (Susanto 2024). Meanwhile, boys are also not completely free from gender constructions such as the expression that men should not cry and must be strong (Febriyanti and Rahmatunnisa 2022). This fact indicates that the current child protection system does not fully reflect gender justice, as it fails to address the root causes of inequality and the specific vulnerabilities experienced by children based on their gender.

In the teachings of Islam, great attention is paid to human life, even from the time of the fetus in the womb. Islam has regulated the existence of rights that must be fulfilled by their parents. In this context, as is the general principle that every right is always accompanied by an obligation, the existence of the child's rights is also paired with an obligation. The rights of the child are the obligations of the parents, and on the contrary, the obligations of the children are the rights of the parents. In Islamic law, a more appropriate term to describe the concept of child protection is *al-wilayah*. This term is used because the scope of child protection in Islam is comprehensive, covering all aspects related to children, both physical, mental, and spiritual, as well as protecting both the child's personal self and his property (Sholihah 2018).

On the one hand, experts who support the integration of gender justice, such as Prof. Dr. Musdah Mulia, M.A., argue that Islamic universal values (such as justice, equality, and welfare) are in line with the principles of gender justice. On the other hand, more conservative experts such as Prof. Dr. Muhammad Talib are of the view that the division of roles in fiqh is a final and protective sharia decree. According to this group, efforts to include the concept of gender justice are considered as an intervention of Western values that has the potential to erode the authenticity of Islamic law. The argument in this study is built by identifying gaps from previous research.

Some studies, such as "the implementation of the principle of the best interests of children in hadanah (custody) decisions in religious courts" (Muhammady 2025), confirm that the practice of hadanah decisions in religious courts is still influenced by traditional gender constructions so that it has not fully prioritized the best interests of children, although fiqh and maqāṣid al-sharī'ah provide a normative basis for reform. In line with that, a normative-comparative study that incorporates the classical concepts of children's fiqh (right to maintenance, maintenance, education, safety) (Nurjanah 2025), highlights that the principle of child protection in Islamic law is often hampered by less gender-sensitive textual interpretations and proposes a maqāṣid al-sharī'ah approach that is integrated with the national child protection system. This research aims to analyze the concept of child protection in the perspective of Islamic law as well as identify gender constructions that influence its application in legal practice. In addition, this research aims to reconstruct gender-equitable child protection based on the principle of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, so as to be able to place the best interests of children as the main priority and encourage the realization of a child protection system that is fair, non-discriminatory, and relevant to the contemporary legal and social context.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of library research. The approach applied is normative and philosophical to comprehensively analyze the legal construction of child protection through the lens of gender justice in the perspective of Islamic law. The normative approach is focused on the study of laws and regulations on child protection and the principles of fiqh that govern the relationship between parents and children. Meanwhile, a philosophical approach is used to explore the substantive values of gender justice (al-'is al-jinsiyyah) in Islamic authoritative texts and their relevance to the concept of equitable child protection. while the research data source consists of primary and secondary data sources. Primary data sources include Islamic law sources that include the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical and contemporary fiqh works. The secondary data sources are obtained from academic literature in the form of books, journals,

scientific articles, and related institutional reports that discuss child protection, gender justice in Islam, maqashid alshari'ah, and criticism of Islamic family law. The data collection technique is carried out through documentation studies by collecting, categorizing, and analyzing written materials that are relevant to the focus of the research.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Basic Principles of Child Protection in Islam**

Islam places children as a mandate that must be protected and maintained for all their interests, both physical, mental, intellectual, rights, as well as their dignity and self-esteem (Zaki 2017). Protection for children is a legal obligation that is inherent not only to parents, but also to relatives, as well as the surrounding community. The protection efforts provided to children aim to ensure and protect children and their rights so that they can live, develop, grow, and socialize properly in their environment (Harahap, Riska Harnysah 2022).

Child protection is part of the main purpose of the sharia (maqāṣid al-syarī'ah), which places children as a mandate that must be maintained for their dignity and future. Children are seen as a mandate (amānah) that must be maintained for their survival, honor, and future. This principle originates from Islamic teachings which place human beings, including children, as glorified beings (karāmah al-insān). The concept of karāmah al-insān shows that every human being, including children, has an intrinsic value that must be protected by law. Therefore, all forms of legal policies and practices concerning children must be oriented towards their protection and benefit (Auda 2008).

From the perspective of Islamic law, the protection of children is included in the main purpose of the shari'ah (maqāṣid al shari'ah), especially in preserving life (hifz al-nafs) and protecting offspring (hifz al-nasl). These two things emphasize the importance of treating children as a trust that must be maintained, both in terms of physical, mental, moral, and social. The scholars emphasized that without protection for children, family stability cannot be realized and the common good cannot be achieved. Islam pays great attention to the welfare of children from before they are born. This can be seen from the encouragement to choose a good partner, the importance of the right to maintenance, and attention to character education from an early age. Islamic law experts state that the responsibility of parents in educating and protecting children is a sharia obligation that affects the social conditions of society as a whole (Nurdin 2022). The principle of hifz al-'aql affirms the right of children to education. Education is understood as the main means of maintaining children's intellect and morals. Discrimination in education based on gender or economics is a form of violation of the goals of sharia (Fauzi 2021).

The principle of affection (al-rahmah) in the protection of children is the essence, namely as the basis and motivation to fulfill basic rights and protect children. This fulfillment is manifested in caring, raising, educating, fostering, and protecting children so that they can develop optimally, both physically, mentally, and socially, so as to create children who are qualified, have good morals, and are prosperous both externally and internally (Hamnash 2014). Islam firmly rejects all forms of violence in children's education methods. Violence can potentially threaten children's safety, as well as damage their mental and emotional development (Zaki 2017). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) exemplified a gentle attitude towards children, even criticizing the harsh and rude attitude in educating because it was not in line with the value of compassion (Nash 2002). The Prophet's hadith provides a vivid illustration of how the Prophet treated children with love, gentleness, and respect. The Prophet not only forbade acts of violence, but also instilled the principle that children are individuals who deserve respect. This attitude then became the basis for formulating the concept of child protection based on Islamic law (Nurdin 2022).

In the social aspect, Islamic law offers protection that focuses not only on the family, but also on the wider community. The community is required to avoid all forms of violence and neglect of children, and actively create a safe atmosphere. The principle of solidarity and social responsibility (al-mas'uliyah al-ijtima'iyah) also affirms the shared obligation in ensuring the safety of children (Kamali 2016).

### **Forms of Gender Bias in Child Protection Aspects**

Islam places children as a trust of Allah that must be protected regardless of gender. The Qur'an affirms that men and women are equally glorified as creatures created by Allah (Qur'an. al-Isrā': 70). However, in social practice, the protection of children is often influenced by patriarchal cultural constructions that give birth to gender bias. This bias is contrary to the principles of justice (al-'adl) and benefit (maṣlaḥah) which are the foundation of Islamic law (Tarjih and Tajdid Council of Muhammadiyah Central Government 2024).

#### **1. Subordination to Girls**

In many societies, girls are placed in a lower position than boys. They are more often limited in education, social participation, and decision-making. In fact, Islam abolishes the tradition of ignorance that degrades girls, as affirmed in the Qur'an. at-Takwīr: 8–9 on the prohibition of burying baby girls. This subordination is contrary to maqāṣid al-shari'ah, especially the protection of the soul (ḥifẓ al-nafs) and reason (ḥifẓ al-'aql), because it limits the development of the girl (Hermanto 2021)

#### **2. Gender Stereotypes in Child Protection**

Stereotypes such as "boys must be strong" and "girls must be obedient" often affect the way victims of violence are treated. In many cases, boys who are victims of sexual violence are not trusted, while girls who report are blamed. In Islam, every form of tyranny is strictly prohibited, regardless of the sex of the victim (QS. an-Nisā': 135). Therefore, stereotypes that hinder justice are a form of violation of the principle of al-musāwāh (equality before the law) (Compiler 2021).

### 3. Marginalization of Girls' Rights

Gender bias is also seen in the marginalization of girls from access to education, health, and legal protection. In fact, the Prophet PBUH emphasized the importance of educating girls and promised great rewards for parents who take care of and educate them well (HR. Muslim). Ignoring the rights of girls is violating the principle of protection of offspring (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*) in *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* (Institute for Judicial Research and Society (IJRS) 2024).

### 4. Gender-Based Violence Against Children

Violence against children often occurs because of their gender. Girls are more vulnerable to sexual violence, while boys are often victims of physical violence. In Islamic law, all forms of violence that violate the honor (*'ird*) and soul (*nafs*) of children are haram and must be prevented. The state and society are obliged to enforce *ta'zīr* sanctions against perpetrators in order to protect children's rights (BaKTI Foundation 2024).

### 5. Double Burden on Girls

Girls are often burdened with unbalanced domestic responsibilities and upbringing. This causes them to lose the right to learn and play. Islam views childhood as a phase that must be protected and met fairly. Disproportionately burdening children is contrary to the principles of mercy and justice in the family (Ministry of National Development Planning/Bappenas 2024).

### 6. Gender Bias in Social and Legal Systems

In many cases, reports of violence against girls are considered a family disgrace, while boys who are victims are considered embarrassing. This attitude is contrary to the principles of Islam which commands *amar ma'ruf* and *nahi munkar*, as well as the obligation to uphold justice indiscriminately. Child protection must be based on truth and justice, not on social stigma (Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection 2024).

Based on the explanation above, in the perspective of Islamic law with gender justice, child protection must be reconstructed by placing children as legal subjects who have full rights, both men and women. The principles of *al-'adl*, *al-raḥmah*, and *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* demand a child protection system that is free from gender bias and truly guarantees the safety, dignity, and future of every child.

## **Reconstruction of Gender Justice Child Protection Based on Sharia Maqasid**

Maqasid sharia is an important concept in Islamic legal thought that focuses on the main goals of the rule of law, namely realizing benefits and preventing harm (Betawi 2018). Thus, the maqasid approach is contextual and adaptive, especially in facing the challenges of the times such as the problem of gender equality. Justice (*al-'adl*) is the main foundation of the Sharia maqasid

(Hidayat 2024). In this context, equal rights between men and women are an important part of the goal of justice in Islam. Any form of gender discrimination that is not in accordance with maqasid is actually contrary to the principles of justice in sharia. Therefore, maqasid sharia can be used as an ethical and methodological way to improve or reinterpret laws that are no longer relevant in today's social situation. (Ramadhania 2025). Thus, maqāṣid shari'ah not only serves as a normative legitimacy, but also as a corrective instrument for assessing and reconstructing the products of fiqh law born from patriarchal social contexts.

In Islam, the protection of the rights of children, both men and women, is built on a solid foundation in religious teachings. The Prophet PBUH emphasized the importance of providing protection and affection to children, regardless of their gender. In addition, Islamic teachings also prohibit actions that can harm children, such as dangerous forced labor or child marriage at a very young age. This is a tangible action to protect children's rights, especially with regard to gender equality (Karimullah 2023).

The sharia maqasid not only presents a comprehensive ethical and legal framework, but also serves as a means of critical analysis to evaluate whether a legal regulation truly reflects Islamic fundamental values such as justice, compassion, and benevolence. In this case, maqasid has a role to assess the relevance and social consequences of fiqh laws on children's lives (Ramadhania 2025)

Furthermore, maqashid sharia pays attention to the importance of maintaining the five main aspects of human life, namely religion, soul, intellect, descent, and property. Thus, we can understand that maqashid sharia is one of the important bases in discussions about the protection of children's rights, such as the right to life, the right to inheritance, the right to inheritance, and the right to education that must be fulfilled in childcare. In fulfilling the rights of children according to Islam, there is no difference based on gender or order of birth, whether firstborn, middle, or youngest. However, in practice, there are often gender injustices in the protection of children's rights, where there are different treatment between boys and girls in different aspects of life, including education, inheritance, and custody. (Megasari 2024).

In some Muslim communities, social roles often give priority to boys because of cultural norms that emphasize men's economic function as breadwinners. However, maqāṣid al-syarī'ah emphasizes the importance of *ḥifẓ al-'aql* (preservation of reason) as a legal goal, which should be achieved through equal access to education for all children without discrimination on the basis of sex. The maqāṣid approach highlights that restricting education for girls is detrimental not only to individuals but also to society, as it hinders the intellectual potential and social contribution of half the population. Research on gender in Islamic family law shows that the renewal of Islamic legal

thinking needs to place access to education for girls on an equal footing with boys as a form of *maslahah* in the current context (Umami and Puspita 2023).

The distribution of inheritance according to Islamic law shows a difference between men and women, where men get twice as much allotment while women only get one allotment (2:1). This is due to the fact that when a man marries, the inheritance obtained from his parents will be used to pay dowry and support the living needs of his wife and children. Meanwhile, when a woman gets married, the inheritance she receives is not used because she gets alimony and dowry from her husband (Kurniawan and Basri 2020). The Qur'an states that men and women have an equal right to receive property from their parents or relatives, according to the rules of division that have been established (QS al-Nisa [4]: 7). In other words, Islam recognizes that women have an equal legal position with men and are entitled to inheritance. This principle reflects Islam's commitment to creating a fair and balanced inheritance system. This indicates that everyone, both men and women, is entitled to inheritance according to the proportion of responsibilities and burdens they bring (Sholihah, Widiawati, and Awang Damit 2024).

*Maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* places the goals of sharia (protection of religion, soul, intellect, descent, and property) as a benchmark when assessing child custody decisions. From this perspective, the determination of custody is not enough to follow the tradition of *fiqh* alone; Judges and policymakers must prioritize the best interests and protection for children without gender discrimination, for example, assessing parenting capacity, psychological safety, and access to meet children's basic needs (food, education, health). By referring to *maqāṣid*, several Indonesian studies recommend the reconstruction of family law norms in order to facilitate a shared parenting model or decisions based on the best interests of the child, so as to achieve gender justice in the practice of determining *hadhanah* (Mhd. Abror, Akbarizan 2025).

## CONCLUSION

Child protection in the perspective of Islamic law is rooted in the main purpose of sharia (*maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*), specifically the protection of soul, intellect, and offspring. Islam places children as a trust that must be protected fairly without distinction of sex, by upholding the values of justice (*al-'adl*), compassion (*al-rahmah*), and welfare. However, in social and legal practice, child protection is still influenced by patriarchal gender constructions that give birth to various forms of bias and inequality, so that they do not fully prioritize the best interests of children. Therefore, the reconstruction of child protection with gender justice based on *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* is very important. The *maqāṣid* approach serves as a normative and corrective instrument to assess and improve discriminatory child protection practices, including in parenting and custody



determination. By making the welfare and best interests of children the top priority, this reconstruction is expected to be able to realize a child protection system that is fair, non-discriminatory, and relevant to the contemporary legal and social context.

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