

Rituals as Sites of Normative Production: Rethinking Living Islamic Law through the *Sennu-Sennureng* Tradition in Bugis Weddings

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Abstract: Research on the *mappacci* tradition in Bugis society remains limited, particularly in addressing its philosophical dimensions within Islamic legal thought, leaving an important theoretical gap in explaining how local ritual practices participate in the production of Islamic normativity in lived contexts. Existing studies tend to interpret *mappacci* as a cultural, symbolic, or social phenomenon, while paying insufficient attention to its role within broader debates on living Islamic law and legal pluralism. This study therefore aims to analyze the *sennu-sennureng* element of the *mappacci* ritual through the perspective of Islamic legal philosophy, specifically within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. Employing a qualitative interpretive design, the study combines textual analysis, participant observation, interviews, and contextual interpretation of symbolic practices to explore the relationship between ritual meaning and Islamic legal objectives. The findings demonstrate that *mappacci*, especially through the symbolic interaction of *sennu-sennureng* functions not merely as a customary rite but as a culturally mediated ethical system through which welfare (*maṣlahah*), moral responsibility, family integrity, and social harmony are articulated and sustained. The study argues that local rituals do not simply reflect Islamic norms but actively participate in their negotiation, reproduction, and ethical grounding within plural normative environments. Conceptually, it advances an understanding of Islamic law as a living and socially embedded normative system by integrating insights from symbolic meaning, legal pluralism, and *maqāṣid*-oriented legal philosophy. This contribution extends international discussions on living Islamic law by demonstrating how ritual practices serve as sites of normative production where religious authority, cultural tradition, and ethical reasoning intersect in everyday Muslim life.

Keywords: Living Normative System; *Mappacci* tradition; Philosophy of Islamic Law; *Sennu-Sennureng* tradition.

Introduction

Across Muslim societies, marriage rituals should not be reduced to mere ceremonial markers but understood as socially embedded arenas (Darwis et al., 2026) where Islamic morality and normativity are continuously negotiated through everyday interactions in dialogue with local customs and institutional constraints (Billaud, 2019; Kooria, 2021; Al-Saai, 2025; Al-Sharmani, 2018). Contemporary anthropology and socio-legal scholarship thus reconceptualize rituals as dynamic practices through which actors produce, stabilize, and contest normative orders rather than as static symbolic residues (Aalberts et al., 2020; Ma et al., 2024; Sholeh & Muttaqin, 2024), while also functioning as resources of authority, cohesion, and sites of contestation over hierarchy, legitimacy, and ethical claims (Jubba et al., 2024; Pemunta & Tabenyang, 2017). Within Islamic contexts, ethnographic evidence further shows that embodied religious practices operate as modes of ethical self-cultivation and everyday hermeneutics linking religious authority to locally situated moral life (Farid et al., 2022; Kostadinova, 2024). In this

framework, local marriage rituals offer a strategic empirical lens for examining how Islamic law and moral norms are interpreted, negotiated, and enacted in lived contexts, particularly given that Islamic law itself is increasingly understood not merely as a textual system but as a socially embedded normative practice interacting with custom, communal ethics, and institutional structures in plural legal environments (Maloko et al., 2024; Solihan et al., 2025). This perspective is further reinforced by *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* approaches that foreground ethical objectives such as welfare, dignity, and the preservation of family and social stability thereby positioning local ritual traditions as a critical entry point for understanding Islamic law as a lived, culturally mediated, and ethically oriented normative system.

Previous research on *mappacci* tradition can be broadly categorized into several analytical orientations. A first group of studies examines ritual practices as systems of symbols that encode social meanings and moral values. Such work demonstrates how ritual objects, gestures, and ceremonial sequences function as symbolic representations of purity, honor, and readiness for marriage, reinforcing collective understandings of moral transition (Azis, 2021; Syahrir et al., 2022; Busma & Sartika, 2025; Isumarni et al., 2023; Halim & Mohd Din, 2025). From an analytical standpoint, these findings confirm that ritual operates as a cultural language through which social identities and ethical expectations are communicated and institutionalized. However, scholarship in this tradition often treats symbolic meanings as relatively stable cultural codes, giving limited attention to how meanings are negotiated or transformed in changing social and religious contexts. Another group of research in interdisciplinary approaches indicate that ritual practices can function as informal pedagogical spaces where cultural knowledge, patterns, and values are transmitted across generations (Ahmad et al., 2024; Ghani, 2025; Rosyid, sholihah & Cholil, 2021; Yuniardi et al., 2025). Taken together, these studies highlight that *mappacci* operates as a repository of indigenous knowledge systems; yet they generally interpret this dimension in cultural or educational terms rather than examining its implications for normative or religious reasoning. A further line of inquiry has investigated the social and ethical functions of *mappacci* within Bugis society. These studies consistently show that the ritual contributes to strengthening social cohesion, reinforcing kinship relations, and sustaining *pangadereng* as a moral-ethical framework guiding communal life (Aris & Bukido, 2022; Mustamin & Salik, 2022; Thahir, 2025). These findings indicates that *mappacci* plays a regulatory role in shaping social behavior and collective expectations, functioning as a mechanism of moral socialization and community integration. Nevertheless, while these works acknowledge the ethical dimension of the ritual, they tend to conceptualize ethics primarily in sociocultural terms, leaving underexplored the question of how such ethical practices relate to broader frameworks of Islamic normativity and legal philosophy.

Within this broader context, the *mappacci* ritual practiced among the Bugis community of Indonesia represents a particularly compelling case. As a pre-wedding purification ceremony, *mappacci* functions as a public affirmation of moral readiness, familial responsibility, and communal recognition prior to marriage (Marfiani, 2022; Winda, Suyuti & Purwitasari, 2024). One component of this ritual, known as *sennu-sennureng*, plays a significant role in structuring symbolic actions and reinforcing social expectations. Although *mappacci* has been widely documented in cultural and ethnographic studies, its deeper normative and philosophical implications remain insufficiently explored, particularly in relation to how ritual practices illuminate the interaction between custom, ethics, and Islamic legal thought. This study engages with the ongoing debate on whether Islamic legal normativity should be understood primarily as a text-based doctrinal system or as a socially embedded ethical practice shaped through interaction with custom and lived realities (Mubarak et al., 2026; Munirah et al., 2025).

Despite these important contributions, a more fundamental theoretical problem remains unresolved. Existing scholarship has generated valuable insights into the symbolic, cultural, educational, and social functions of *mappacci*, yet it provides only limited explanation of the processes through which Islamic normativity is produced, negotiated, and legitimized within ritual practice. As a result, local rituals are often treated either as cultural expressions that reflect pre-existing Islamic values or as social mechanisms that facilitate community cohesion, rather than as active arenas in which religious norms are interpreted, contested, and reconstituted through everyday practice. This limitation reflects a broader conceptual divide within contemporary Islamic legal studies. On the one hand, Islamic law is frequently

approached as a doctrinal and text-based system whose authority derives primarily from scriptural sources and juristic interpretation. On the other hand, emerging scholarship on living Islamic law and legal pluralism suggests that normativity is also shaped through social interaction, communal practices, and culturally embedded forms of ethical reasoning. However, existing studies have not sufficiently explained how these different sources of authority interact within ritual settings or how local customs become recognized as legitimate expressions of Islamic normativity.

In particular, the component of *sennu-sennureng* has rarely been examined as a distinct analytical unit through which processes of moral reasoning, normative negotiation, and ethical evaluation can be systematically observed. Furthermore, earlier studies seldom situate ritual practices within an integrated theoretical framework that connects symbolic meaning, lived religious practice, plural normative orders, and the teleological orientation of Islamic law. As a result, the literature has yet to fully explain how local ritual traditions function as arenas in which cultural meaning, religious normativity, and social legitimacy are simultaneously produced and negotiated. The central theoretical question, therefore, is not simply whether *mappacci* is compatible with Islamic law, but how ritual practices participate in the production of Islamic normativity itself. The case of *sennu-sennureng* challenges existing theoretical assumptions by demonstrating that local ritual practices do not merely reflect Islamic norms but actively participate in their production, reinterpretation, and ethical grounding.

To address this gap, the present study develops an integrative analytical framework, the SIMPL-M Framework (Symbolic Meaning, Islamic Living Practice, Plural Normative Orders, and *Maqasid* Orientation). The SIMPL-M Framework facilitates a systematic examination of ritual practices across multiple analytical dimensions by synthesizing insights from symbolic anthropology, socio-legal scholarship, and *maqāṣid*-oriented perspectives within Islamic legal studies. The framework functions as an analytical and heuristic tool for investigating the processes through which Islamic normativity is constructed, negotiated, and legitimized within ritual contexts in Muslim societies. In contrast to approaches that regard ritual merely as an object of juridical assessment, the SIMPL-M Framework conceptualizes ritual as a dynamic arena in which symbolic meanings, religious authority, social legitimacy, and ethical aspirations intersect and interact in the continual production of Islamic normativity. From an analytical perspective, the framework elucidates a sequential process whereby symbolic meanings are internalized through lived religious experiences, negotiated within and across multiple normative orders, and subsequently assessed in relation to *maqāṣid*-based ethical objectives. This processual perspective provides a more comprehensive understanding of the ways in which local ritual practices participate in the formation and reproduction of living Islamic normativity. Recent developments in *maqāṣid* scholarship have underscored the role of the objectives of Islamic law as an ethical framework for evaluating social practices, emphasizing principles such as justice, public welfare, and social cohesion as central considerations in the interpretation and application of normative traditions (Dusuki & Bouheraoua, 2011; Kholidah et al., 2025; Mutawalli, 2023). By integrating these complementary perspectives, the SIMPL-M Framework offers a coherent conceptual model for explaining how symbolic practices are transformed into lived legal-moral norms and how such norms may be critically assessed against broader ethical objectives grounded in the *maqāṣid* tradition.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the *sennu-sennureng* tradition within the *mappacci* ritual of Bugis marriage through the integrative conceptual lens of SIMPL-M. The study seeks to answer four main research questions: (1) how are the symbolic meanings and social functions of *sennu-sennureng* understood within the context of the *mappacci* ritual; (2) how do Bugis communities negotiate the relationship between *sennu-sennureng*, Islamic norms, and other normative systems; (3) to what extent can the values embedded in the tradition be interpreted as expressions of the objectives of *maqāṣid al-shari'ah*; and (4) what implications does this practice hold for understanding the philosophy of Islamic law as a living normative system that is socially embedded, culturally mediated, and ethically oriented.

By addressing these questions, this study contributes to the literature in three ways. First, it shifts the analytical focus from viewing *mappacci* solely as a cultural tradition toward understanding it as a site of normative production and ethical reasoning. Second, it introduces the SIMPL-M Framework as a theoretical model that integrates multiple analytical perspectives for examining ritual practices in Muslim

societies. Third, it contributes to broader debates in the philosophy of Islamic law by demonstrating how local ritual traditions can illuminate the dynamic interaction between culture, normativity, and ethical teleology, thereby enriching contemporary understandings of Islamic law as a lived and socially embedded moral system. This study moves beyond the question of compatibility by proposing that ritual practices such as *sennu-sennureng* function as sites of normative production, where Islamic law is not merely applied but continuously reconstituted through symbolic, social, and ethical processes.

Literature Review

The study of the *sennu-sennureng* tradition within the *mappacci* wedding ritual of the Bugis community requires a theoretical framework capable of explaining ritual practices as simultaneously cultural, social, and normative phenomena. Rituals associated with marriage often function not merely as cultural expressions but also as forms of moral pedagogy and social regulation embedded in religious understandings (Fatarib, Hayati & Ferliadi, 2025; Mubarak et al., 2026). In many Muslim societies, customary practices related to marriage are interpreted through religious lenses and negotiated within broader normative systems that combine tradition, Islamic jurisprudence, and social expectations (Jafar et al., 2026; Mariani et al., 2026). Consequently, this study adopts an integrative conceptual framework that combines the theory of symbolic meaning, the concept of living *fiqh*, the perspective of legal pluralism, and the evaluative framework of *maqāsid al-sharī'ah*. The framework integrates these perspectives into a process-oriented analytical model that explains how symbolic meanings are translated into lived religious practices, negotiated within plural normative environments, and assessed in relation to the ethical objectives of Islamic law. Through this integration, ritual is examined as a site of normative production where cultural meanings, religious authority, and social legitimacy are continuously constituted and reconfigured. The framework therefore seeks to explain not only the meanings associated with ritual practices but also the processes through which such practices contribute to the construction, legitimation, and reproduction of Islamic normativity in everyday Muslim life. By synthesizing these perspectives, the study contributes to contemporary discussions in the philosophy of Islamic law by proposing an understanding of law as a lived, socially embedded, and ethically oriented practice rather than a purely textual or doctrinal system.

From the perspective of interpretive anthropology, ritual practices may be understood as systems of symbolic meaning through which communities interpret and organize their social and moral worlds. Symbols function not only as representations but also as mechanisms that shape perception, identity, and collective values (Mas'ad et al., 2014; Muhimah et al., 2024). Geertz (1973) argues that rituals operate as cultural texts that encode shared meanings and sustain moral orders by enabling participants to internalize values embedded in symbolic forms. In the context of *sennu-sennureng* and *mappacci*, symbolic elements such as ritual objects, sequences of actions, and the roles of family members communicate meanings related to purity, honor, and readiness to enter married life. These symbolic structures indicate that the ritual functions as a form of moral communication and socialization, transmitting ethical expectations concerning marriage and family life. However, symbolic anthropology primarily explains how meaning is constructed and transmitted. It does not sufficiently account for how particular meanings become accepted as religiously authoritative or normatively binding. Consequently, symbolic analysis provides an essential starting point, but it requires a complementary perspective capable of explaining the transformation of cultural meanings into lived religious norms.

The concept of living *fiqh* offers such a perspective by emphasizing that Islamic law is not limited to classical legal texts but is continuously shaped through social practice, interpretation, and negotiation. Scholars of Islamic legal history have demonstrated that Islamic law historically developed through dynamic interactions between textual authority, juristic reasoning, and social realities (Hallaq, 2009). This perspective challenges the assumption that law exists solely in codified form, highlighting instead that legal norms often emerge through communal practice and moral consensus. In the case of *sennu-sennureng*, practices that are not explicitly codified in classical jurisprudence may still be perceived as consistent with Islamic values because they are embedded in communal understandings of propriety, morality, and social

harmony. The framework of living *fiqh* therefore enables an analysis of how Bugis communities negotiate the relationship between custom and *shari'ah* and how ritual practices acquire religious legitimacy through lived experience. In this respect, living *fiqh* extends the insights of symbolic anthropology by explaining how symbolic meanings become internalized as normative religious practices. Yet, living *fiqh* tends to focus primarily on the relationship between community practice and Islamic normativity, leaving less attention to the wider field of competing and overlapping sources of authority that shape legal and social behavior.

This broader context can be understood through the theory of legal pluralism, which emphasizes the coexistence of multiple normative orders within a single social field. Griffiths (1986) argues that social life is rarely governed by a single unified legal system; instead, individuals navigate multiple normative frameworks simultaneously, including customary law, religious law, and state law. Subsequent scholarship has reinforced this perspective by demonstrating how legal pluralism operates in many postcolonial and multicultural societies, where local traditions, religious norms, and state regulations interact in complex ways (Merry, 1988). In Bugis society, marriage rituals such as *mappacci* and *sennu-sennureng* occur within this plural normative environment. Their legitimacy is constructed through the interplay of customary authority, religious interpretation, and social recognition. Legal pluralism thus provides a framework for explaining how ritual practices persist and remain authoritative even when they are not formally codified in state law or classical jurisprudence. Whereas living *fiqh* explains how religious legitimacy emerges through communal practice, legal pluralism broadens the analysis by demonstrating that such legitimacy is negotiated within a field of multiple normative authorities. Together, these perspectives reveal that ritual legitimacy is neither exclusively cultural nor exclusively religious but is produced through ongoing interactions among adat, Islamic norms, and broader social institutions. Yet, while symbolic interpretation, living *fiqh*, and legal pluralism together explain how practices emerge and gain legitimacy, they do not fully address the normative question of how such practices should be evaluated from an Islamic ethical perspective.

To address this evaluative dimension, the framework of *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* offers a critical analytical lens. Classical and contemporary scholars have emphasized that the ultimate objective of Islamic law is the realization of human welfare and the preservation of essential values, including religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property (Auda, 2008; Ibn Ashur, 2006). The *maqāṣid* approach emphasizes the ethical purposes and social consequences of legal norms. Contemporary *maqāṣid* scholarship has further expanded this framework to incorporate broader values such as justice, dignity, and social stability (Affan & Awaludin, 2023; Alias et al., 2025; Naimah et al., 2024; Nasiri et al., 2025). Within this perspective, rituals such as *sennu-sennureng* may be interpreted as social mechanisms that reinforce family cohesion, protect honor, and prepare individuals for marital responsibilities that align with the broader ethical aims of Islamic law (Djawas et al., 2023; Fitria et al., 2022; Zumrotun & Muna, 2025).

This evaluative framework is essential because it enables local traditions to be analyzed not merely as cultural artifacts but as potential expressions of Islamic moral reasoning in specific socio-cultural contexts. More importantly, *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* provides the normative bridge that connects the preceding perspectives. While symbolic anthropology explains meaning, living *fiqh* explains religious embodiment, and legal pluralism explains normative negotiation, *maqāṣid* offers criteria for assessing whether the resulting practices contribute to the ethical objectives of Islamic law. It therefore moves the analysis beyond questions of legitimacy toward questions of moral value and social benefit.

The integration of these four perspectives produces a conceptual framework that views the tradition of *sennu-sennureng* as a multilayered phenomenon operating simultaneously at symbolic, social, normative, and ethical levels. First, the ritual functions as a symbolic system through which communities construct meanings about purity, honor, and social responsibility. Second, it represents a form of living *fiqh* in which Islamic norms are embodied and negotiated in everyday practice. Third, it exists within a plural normative environment shaped by the interaction of adat, religious interpretation, and state regulation. Finally, it may be evaluated through the ethical horizon of *maqāṣid al-shari'ah*, which provides criteria for assessing its moral and social significance. These dimensions are not independent stages but interconnected analytical layers. Symbolic meanings provide the cultural foundation of the ritual; through lived practice, these meanings become embodied as religious norms; through interaction with multiple

normative orders, they acquire social legitimacy; and through *maqāṣid*-based evaluation, their ethical significance can be critically assessed. This sequential and relational framework enables a more comprehensive understanding of how local rituals contribute to the ongoing production of Islamic normativity. By articulating this integrative framework, the study contributes to contemporary scholarship on Islamic law and society by proposing that the relationship between religion, culture, and law should be understood as dynamic, negotiated, and ethically oriented rather than static and textually confined.

Method

This study is grounded in an interpretivist research paradigm, which assumes that social reality is constructed through meanings, cultural practices, and shared interpretations rather than existing as an objective and measurable entity (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This paradigm is appropriate for examining how the symbolic meanings and social functions of *sennu-sennureng* are understood within the *mappacci* ritual and how Bugis communities negotiate relationships between customary traditions, Islamic norms, and other normative systems. A qualitative case study design was employed to investigate *sennu-sennureng* as a bounded cultural phenomenon situated within a specific Bugis community. Case study research is particularly suitable when the aim is to develop an in-depth understanding of a social practice in its natural context and to examine interactions among cultural meanings, normative systems, and ethical interpretations (Yin, 2018). This design also supports analysis of the extent to which values embedded in the ritual may be interpreted through the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and their implications for understanding Islamic law as a living normative system. There were eleven participants selected through purposive sampling, consisting of traditional leaders, religious scholars, community elders, and married couples with direct experience of the ritual. In line with the qualitative research paradigm, the researcher acted as the primary instrument throughout the study, being directly involved in data collection and interpretation through in-depth interaction, observation, and reflexive analysis of the participants' experiences and meaning. The research was conducted in a Bugis community where *mappacci* remains actively practiced. Ethical considerations included informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for local cultural norms (Israel & Hay, 2006). Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Observation focused on ritual practices, symbolic elements, and social interactions, while interviews explored participants' interpretations of religious legitimacy and normative negotiation. Documentary materials, including religious texts and local cultural sources, supported the analysis of ethical values and *maqāṣid*-oriented interpretations. Data analysis followed thematic analysis procedures as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2021). After familiarization and coding, themes were mapped onto four analytical lenses: symbolic meaning (Geertz, 1973), living *fiqh* (Hallaq, 2009), legal pluralism (Griffiths, 1986), and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (Auda, 2008), enabling an integrated interpretation of cultural meanings, normative negotiations, and ethical implications.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of observational, interview, and documentary data indicates that the tradition of *sennu-sennureng* within the Bugis *mappacci* ritual operates simultaneously as a symbolic, normative, social, and ethical phenomenon. These dimensions are understood as mutually constitutive elements within a continuous process through which cultural meanings are embodied in religious practice, negotiated across diverse normative frameworks, and assessed in relation to broader ethical principles. Such a process underpins the analytical logic of the SIMPL-M Framework, which views ritual as a dynamic arena where symbolic interpretation, religious authority, social legitimacy, and ethical deliberation interact in the ongoing formation of living Islamic normativity.

Symbolic meanings and The Moral Construction of Marriage

The findings reveal that *sennu-sennureng* constitutes the central symbolic logic underlying the Bugis *mappacci* ritual. The ritual serves as a medium through which collective hopes, moral expectations, and social responsibilities are communicated to the prospective bride and groom instead of functioning merely

as a ceremonial tradition preceding marriage. Participants consistently described *sennu-sennureng* as an expression of aspirations concerning the establishment of a harmonious family life. As AR explained, “*mappacci in Bugis marriage ceremonies is inseparable from sennu-sennureng because both are intended to actualize hopes concerning the marital process and post-marital life, ultimately aiming to create a harmonious family characterized by love and compassion*” (Personal Communication, November 15, 2025). This finding indicates that the ritual operates as a symbolic mechanism through which ideals of marriage are transmitted from the wider community to the couple entering married life.

The symbolic dimension of *sennu-sennureng* is closely connected to the social values embedded in Bugis communal life. Informants emphasized that marriage is not understood solely as a relationship between two individuals but also as an event that reinforces kinship networks and collective solidarity. ZA explained that the Bugis community highly values togetherness and associates communal participation in *mappacci* with the pursuit of *barakka*, understood as tranquility, prosperity, and social harmony (Personal Communication, December 04, 2025). Likewise, SH described *tudang penni*, the gathering space where *mappacci* is conducted, as an important moment for reaffirming social bonds after community members have been occupied with everyday activities (Personal Communication, December 04, 2025). Observational data further confirmed that the ritual attracts family members and guests from diverse social backgrounds, demonstrating a shared commitment to the social significance of marriage.

The emotional dimension of the ritual further reinforces its symbolic significance. According to ZA, the *mappacci* ritual embodies three interconnected emotional states: *asaukkininnawangeng* (relief experienced by parents who witness their child entering marriage), *asukkurukeng* (gratitude felt by the bride and groom for finding a life partner), and *acaddio-riongeng* (the collective joy experienced by extended family members who participate in the celebration) (Personal Communication, December 04, 2025). These emotional experiences indicate that *sennu-sennureng* extends beyond symbolic objects to encompass collective feelings that strengthen social cohesion and affirm shared moral commitments concerning family life.

The symbolic orientation of the ritual becomes particularly visible through the meanings attached to ritual objects. Among the most significant is *pacci*, whose linguistic association with *pacing* (purity) reflects the expectation that marriage should begin with physical and spiritual cleanliness. RS explained that “*the purpose of using pacci leaves is that the marriage process faced by the bride and groom must be based on pure intentions*” (Personal Communication, December 04, 2025). Similarly, SZ stated that open palms receiving *pacci* symbolize “*a readiness of the soul to accept the responsibility of complementing one another*” (Personal Communication, November 17, 2025). This symbolic interpretation was also confirmed by ritual participants themselves. As one newlywed husband recalled, “*there is an indescribable emotional atmosphere during the mappacci procession, where the elder members of each family apply pacci to the open palms, symbolically representing a distribution of responsibilities*” (IS, Newlywed Husband, Personal Communication, November 08, 2025). These findings suggest that *pacci* functions not merely as a ritual object but as a symbolic medium through which responsibility, sincerity, and commitment to family life are publicly communicated and internalized.

Beyond personal purification, *pacci* also embodies a broader cosmological vision concerning harmony between humans, society, and nature. ZA explained that the use of natural materials in the ritual reflects the Bugis understanding that balance within the natural world provides a model for harmonious family relationships. Just as fire, water, wind, and earth possess different characteristics yet coexist in equilibrium, marriage unites two individuals with distinct personalities who are expected to cultivate mutual understanding and affection (Personal Communication, December 04, 2025). This interpretation demonstrates that *sennu-sennureng* incorporates not only moral values but also cosmological assumptions concerning balance, interdependence, and social harmony.

The symbolic construction of marriage is further reinforced through the arrangement of the ritual space itself. The *lamming*, where the bride and groom are seated during the ceremony, symbolizes collective hopes for a prosperous and harmonious future. According to AR, the carefully decorated *lamming* represents *sennu-sennureng* by symbolizing a future household surrounded by goodness and

protected from hardship (Personal Communication, November 15, 2025). In this sense, the ritual space becomes a symbolic representation of the ideal family life envisioned by the community.

Other ritual objects communicate complementary ethical messages. The pillow positioned beneath the ritual objects symbolizes humility, empathy, and mutual respect. SZ explained that placing the pillow at the lowest level serves as a reminder that marriage requires individuals to overcome egoistic tendencies and develop understanding toward one another (Personal Communication, November 17, 2025). Similarly, MJ argued that the softness of the pillow symbolizes hopes that family life will be characterized by gentleness, patience, and emotional balance, thereby enabling the realization of *baitiy jannatiy*, an ideal family founded upon affection and harmony (Personal Communication, December 17, 2025).

The symbolic meanings of social order and balance are also expressed through *lipa' sabbe*, a woven Bugis cloth used during the ritual. AR explained that the arrangement of *lipa' sabbe* in specific numerical sequences symbolizes hopes for continuous prosperity and well-being throughout married life (Personal Communication, November 15, 2025). Furthermore, RS emphasized that the woven patterns symbolize human relationships that must be maintained carefully and strengthened continuously, noting that “*each intertwined thread represents human relationships that must be carefully maintained and mutually strengthened*” (Personal Communication, December 04, 2025). The symbolism of *lipa' sabbe* therefore teaches that successful family life depends not upon uniformity but upon the ability to maintain balance and order amid difference. RS stated that

“The motifs and woven *lipa' sabbe* of the Bugis community are arranged in an orderly and harmonious manner. This pattern is interpreted as a symbol of harmony, order, and balance in life, which is hoped to be realized in the household of the prospective couple. Each intertwined thread represents human relationships that must be carefully maintained and mutually strengthened.” (RS, Bugis Bridal Makeup in Bone Regency, Personal Communication, December 04, 2025)

Furthermore, candles and incense complete this symbolic system by representing moral guidance and beneficial social presence. The light of the candle symbolizes commitment to truth and righteous conduct, whereas the fragrance of incense symbolizes the aspiration that the newly established family will bring positive influence on its surrounding community. Together, these symbolic elements communicate a coherent moral vision concerning purity, responsibility, reciprocity, emotional maturity, and social harmony.

Viewed collectively, the findings demonstrate that *sennu-sennureng* functions as a symbolic system through which the Bugis community communicates and reproduces moral understandings of marriage and family life. This finding resonates with Geertz's (1973) conception of ritual as a cultural text through which communities construct and sustain shared systems of meaning. The symbolic objects employed in *mappacci* do not merely represent cultural beliefs; rather, they actively shape participants' understandings of responsibility, kinship, and social obligation. Through repeated performance, these symbolic forms become mechanisms of moral socialization that transmit ethical values across generations.

However, the findings also suggest that symbolic meanings alone cannot fully explain the continuing authority of *sennu-sennureng* within a predominantly Muslim society. While symbolic anthropology explains how meanings are constructed and communicated, it does not adequately explain why those meanings are accepted as religiously legitimate and normatively binding. The persistence of the ritual appears to depend not only on its symbolic significance but also on the extent to which its moral messages are interpreted as compatible with Islamic teachings. Consequently, understanding how symbolic meanings become recognized as religious norms requires a further analytical perspective, namely the concept of living *fiqh*, which explains how cultural practices are transformed into lived expressions of Islamic normativity.

Negotiating Adat, Shari'ah, and Multiple Normative Orders

The findings indicate that the continued practice of *sennu-sennureng* is closely related to the way the Bugis community understands the relationship between adat and Islam. Participants consistently emphasized that customary traditions are not perceived as separate from religious values but rather as cultural expressions through which Islamic moral teachings are communicated and practiced. As AR

explained, the Bugis community is widely recognized for its commitment to religious values while simultaneously preserving local wisdom inherited across generations (Personal Communication, November 15, 2025). Similarly, JM argued that Bugis rituals embody universal values such as humanity, justice, solidarity, compassion, and mutual care, which constitute important expressions of local religiosity. According to him, ritual practices function as a means through which communities communicate with realities that transcend ordinary human experience and connect everyday life with broader spiritual values (Personal Communication, December 02, 2025).

This understanding was also evident in the views of religious authorities. AHM emphasized that customary rituals remain acceptable as long as they do not contradict the fundamental principles of Islamic belief. In his view, adat functions as a vehicle through which Islamic values are communicated within local cultural contexts, allowing traditions to remain relevant while maintaining their religious orientation (Personal Communication, October 27, 2025). Likewise, ZA explained that the values embedded in *mappacci* are generally understood by the community as consistent with Islamic teachings, particularly those concerning purity, moral preparation, and family responsibility (Personal Communication, December 04, 2025). These findings suggest that community members do not evaluate *sennu-sennureng* solely according to its cultural origins but primarily according to its perceived compatibility with Islamic ethical principles.

The process through which adat and Islamic teachings are reconciled becomes particularly visible in the role of religious leaders during the ritual. Informants repeatedly emphasized that the presence of religious figures serves not merely ceremonial purposes but also provides interpretive guidance concerning the meaning of ritual practices. As ZA explained, “the presence of religious figures involved in the *mappacci* marriage ritual serves as a guide for the parties involved to ensure that the various stages of *mappacci* are carried out with the principle of making it a medium to communicate with the Almighty to convey unspoken prayers, which in the Bugis community is known as *sennu-sennureng*” (Personal Communication, December 04, 2025). Through this interpretive role, religious authorities contribute to the process by which symbolic cultural practices are understood as compatible with Islamic norms and become incorporated into lived religious experience.

The findings further reveal that local understandings of normativity are often expressed through concepts that resemble Islamic legal categories. HR explained that *sennu-sennureng* is associated with actions undertaken to achieve desirable outcomes, whereas *panmali* refers to actions that should be avoided because they may lead to undesirable consequences. According to him, this distinction parallels the hierarchical structure of Islamic normative categories, ranging from obligatory and recommended actions to permissible, discouraged, and prohibited acts (Personal Communication, November 08, 2025). Although these categories emerge from different cultural and historical contexts, their coexistence demonstrates how local moral reasoning and Islamic normative frameworks are continuously brought into dialogue within everyday social life.

These findings indicate that the legitimacy of *sennu-sennureng* is not derived from a single source of authority. Rather, legitimacy emerges through ongoing interactions among customary traditions, religious teachings, community expectations, and the interpretive authority of religious leaders. The ritual continues to be practiced not because it is formally codified within state law or classical jurisprudence, but because it is collectively recognized as culturally meaningful and religiously acceptable. In this regard, authority is socially produced through consensus rather than imposed through a single institutional framework.

This pattern reflects what legal pluralism scholars describe as the coexistence of multiple normative orders within a single social field. As Griffiths (1986) argues, social life is rarely governed by one unified legal system; instead, individuals navigate various normative frameworks simultaneously. The findings demonstrate that Bugis Muslims engage in precisely this process. Rather than perceiving adat and *shari'ah* as competing sources of authority, they actively negotiate and reconcile both within the context of ritual practice. Religious leaders evaluate ritual elements according to Islamic principles, customary authorities preserve cultural continuity, and community members collectively determine whether particular practices remain socially meaningful and morally acceptable.

Viewed through this perspective, legal pluralism extends the analysis developed in the previous section. While symbolic anthropology explains how ritual meanings are constructed and communicated, and living *fiqh* explains how those meanings become embodied as lived religious norms, legal pluralism explains how such norms acquire broader social legitimacy through negotiation among multiple sources of authority. The legitimacy of *sennu-sennureng* therefore emerges not solely from its symbolic significance nor exclusively from religious doctrine, but from the continuous interaction among adat, Islamic teachings, religious authority, and community consensus.

However, the existence of social legitimacy does not automatically determine whether a ritual practice should be normatively endorsed from an Islamic perspective. The findings demonstrate how *sennu-sennureng* becomes culturally meaningful and religiously acceptable, yet a further question remains concerning its ethical significance. Assessing whether the values embedded within the ritual contribute to the broader objectives of Islamic law requires an additional evaluative framework. This evaluative dimension is provided by *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, which offers criteria for examining the moral and social implications of ritual practices beyond questions of legitimacy alone.

Evaluating *Sennu-Sennureng* through *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*

The findings indicate that community members frequently interpret the symbolic messages embedded within *sennu-sennureng* in ethical rather than merely ceremonial terms. Informants consistently emphasized that the ritual serves as a medium for transmitting values necessary for building a harmonious family life. According to AHM, the symbolic messages communicated through the *mappacci* ritual closely correspond to the objectives of marriage as envisioned within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (Personal Communication, October 27, 2025). From this perspective, the ritual is not simply a cultural inheritance but a vehicle through which ethical values associated with marriage are communicated and internalized. This ethical orientation is reflected in local understandings of the relationship between *sharī'ah*, Islamic law, and *fiqh*. As AHM explained, "When Islamic *sharī'ah* emphasizes the importance of building a *sakinah, mawaddah, wa rahmah* family relationship through marriage, Islamic law serves as a procedural framework that regulates how the marriage is conducted. In a more specific context, Islamic *fiqh* emerges as an implementative framework that governs how marriage messages are conveyed to the bride and groom, emphasizing the importance of transforming various ethical values, one of which is delivered through *sennu-sennureng* in the *mappacci* ritual." (Personal Communication, October 27, 2025)

This interpretation suggests that participants understand *sennu-sennureng* not merely as a symbolic ritual but as a mechanism for transmitting ethical values that support the broader objectives of marriage in Islam. The ritual functions as a medium through which moral teachings are translated into culturally meaningful forms that can be understood and practiced within everyday social life.

The ethical significance of the ritual becomes particularly visible in the values repeatedly highlighted by participants. RS explained that the implementation of *mappacci* serves to communicate messages concerning the ethical responsibilities that the bride and groom will encounter in family life (Personal Communication, December 04, 2025). Similarly, AR emphasized that the ritual transmits values such as purity, openness to responsibility, solidarity, mutual assistance, and social cooperation, reflected in Bugis principles such as *mali siparappe*, *rebba sipatokkong*, and *malilu sipakainge* (Personal Communication, November 15, 2025). These findings indicate that the ritual promotes a moral vision of marriage grounded in reciprocity, responsibility, and collective care rather than individual interests alone.

The ethical messages conveyed through *sennu-sennureng* closely correspond with *maqāṣid*-oriented concerns regarding the preservation and strengthening of family life. Through symbolic instruction and communal participation, the ritual encourages prospective spouses to recognize their obligations toward one another, toward their extended families, and toward the wider social community. In doing so, it contributes to social cohesion and reinforces moral commitments necessary for sustaining stable family relationships.

The findings further suggest that contemporary developments in *maqāṣid* scholarship provide a useful framework for interpreting the broader ethical implications of the ritual. Observational data indicate that the ethical concerns communicated through *mappacci* extend beyond the classical objectives of

preserving religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. Participants frequently emphasized the importance of protecting vulnerable family members, particularly women and children, from neglect, injustice, and violence. In this regard, the ritual reinforces moral commitments that resonate with contemporary *maqāṣid* discussions concerning human dignity, gender justice, and social welfare. The findings therefore support the argument that *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* remains a dynamic ethical framework capable of responding to changing social realities while preserving its normative orientation toward human well-being.

This interpretation is consistent with participants' understanding of the relationship between local tradition and Islamic ethics. Informants repeatedly stressed that customary practices should be maintained only insofar as they remain compatible with the ethical principles underlying Islamic teachings. As AHM argued, the value of customs does not lie merely in their historical continuity but in their capacity to support the realization of welfare and moral goodness within society (Personal Communication, October 27, 2025). Similarly, participants viewed the continued preservation of *sennu-sennureng* as justified because its symbolic messages reinforce ethical values that strengthen family relationships and social harmony.

Viewed through the perspective of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, the significance of *sennu-sennureng* therefore extends beyond questions of cultural preservation or social legitimacy. While the previous sections demonstrated how symbolic meanings become embodied as lived religious practices and subsequently acquire legitimacy through negotiations among multiple normative orders, the *maqāṣid* perspective provides criteria for evaluating the ethical consequences of those practices. The findings suggest that values such as responsibility, mutual respect, family cohesion, social solidarity, and collective welfare embedded within the ritual contribute to the broader objectives of Islamic law. In this sense, *sennu-sennureng* may be understood not merely as a traditional custom but as a culturally specific expression of Islamic moral reasoning.

Consequently, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* functions as the evaluative layer within the analytical framework developed in this study. Symbolic meanings explain how moral messages are communicated, living fiqh explains how those messages become embodied within religious practice, and legal pluralism explains how they acquire social legitimacy. *Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, in turn, provides a framework for assessing whether these socially legitimate practices contribute to the ethical objectives of Islamic law. This evaluative dimension is essential because it moves the analysis beyond questions of meaning and legitimacy toward questions of moral value and social benefit. Such findings ultimately point toward a broader understanding of Islamic law as a living normative system that continuously emerges through the interaction of culture, religion, society, and ethical reasoning.

***Sennu-Sennureng* and the Production of Living Islamic Normativity**

The findings suggest that the significance of *sennu-sennureng* extends beyond its role as a wedding ritual and may be better understood as a process through which Islamic normativity is continuously produced, transmitted, and reproduced within everyday social life. Across the interviews, participants consistently described the ritual not merely as a cultural inheritance but as a medium for communicating moral values, shaping social expectations, and reinforcing religious commitments associated with marriage and family life.

As discussed in the previous sections, participants understood *sennu-sennureng* as a symbolic expression of collective hopes concerning purity, responsibility, mutual respect, and harmonious family relationships. AR explained that *mappacci* and *sennu-sennureng* are inseparable because both seek to actualize aspirations concerning married life and the establishment of a family characterized by affection and compassion (Personal Communication, November 15, 2025). Likewise, RS emphasized that the use of *pacci* symbolizes the importance of entering marriage with pure intentions (Personal Communication, December 04, 2025), while SZ interpreted the ritual as a preparation for accepting the responsibilities inherent in marital life (Personal Communication, November 17, 2025). These findings demonstrate that the ritual initially operates as a symbolic system through which moral understandings of marriage are communicated and internalized.

However, the findings also indicate that these symbolic meanings do not remain at the level of cultural representation. Participants repeatedly associated the values communicated through *sennu-sennureng* with Islamic teachings concerning marriage, family responsibility, and moral conduct. AHM argued that the ritual serves as a medium through which ethical messages derived from Islamic teachings are conveyed to the bride and groom, thereby connecting cultural practices with broader religious objectives (Personal Communication, October 27, 2025). Similarly, ZA explained that the ritual should be understood as a means of communicating prayers, hopes, and moral aspirations directed toward God while simultaneously guiding human conduct (Personal Communication, December 04, 2025). These findings suggest that symbolic meanings become embodied as lived religious practices and are experienced by community members as expressions of Islamic values. In this respect, the ritual illustrates the process through which cultural symbols are transformed into forms of living *fiqh*.

The findings further reveal that the authority of *sennu-sennureng* is not derived solely from its symbolic or religious significance. Its continued acceptance depends upon ongoing negotiations among customary traditions, religious interpretations, communal expectations, and the authority of religious and cultural leaders. Informants consistently emphasized that the ritual remains legitimate because it does not contradict Islamic teachings while simultaneously preserving Bugis cultural identity. The active involvement of religious leaders in interpreting ritual practices, together with the continued participation of customary authorities and family elders, demonstrates that legitimacy emerges through social negotiation rather than through a single institutional source of authority. As HR observed, local concepts such as *sennu-sennureng* and *pammali* continue to function as moral reference points because they are understood in ways that resonate with Islamic normative categories (Personal Communication, November 08, 2025). The findings therefore illustrate how Islamic normativity is negotiated within a plural normative environment where adat, religious teachings, and social expectations coexist and mutually influence one another.

Beyond questions of legitimacy, participants also evaluated the ritual according to its ethical consequences for individuals, families, and communities. Informants repeatedly emphasized that the purpose of *sennu-sennureng* is not merely to preserve tradition but to cultivate moral dispositions necessary for sustaining harmonious family relationships. According to AR, the ritual communicates values of solidarity, mutual assistance, and collective responsibility embodied in Bugis principles such as *mali siparappe*, *rebba sipatokkong*, and *malilu sipakainge* (Personal Communication, November 15, 2025). Similarly, AHM argued that the ritual contributes to the realization of the broader objectives of marriage emphasized in Islam, including the establishment of a *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, *wa rahmah* family (Personal Communication, October 27, 2025). These findings indicate that the ethical significance of the ritual extends beyond cultural continuity and may be understood in relation to *maqāṣid*-oriented concerns regarding family welfare, social harmony, and human well-being.

Viewed collectively, the findings reveal a processual relationship among symbolic meaning, lived religious practice, normative negotiation, and ethical evaluation. The ritual begins as a symbolic system that communicates cultural understandings of purity, responsibility, and harmonious family life. These symbolic meanings are subsequently embodied as lived religious practices through which community members express and experience Islamic values in everyday life. Their legitimacy is then negotiated through interactions among customary traditions, religious interpretations, and social expectations. Finally, their moral significance is evaluated according to broader ethical concerns associated with family stability, social welfare, and communal harmony.

This process corresponds to the analytical logic of the SIMPL-M Framework developed in this study. Symbolic anthropology explains how meanings are constructed and communicated through ritual symbols. The concept of living *fiqh* explains how those meanings become embodied within everyday religious practice. Legal pluralism explains how such practices acquire legitimacy through interactions among multiple normative orders. *Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, in turn, provides an ethical framework through which the consequences and moral significance of those practices may be evaluated. Rather than functioning as separate explanatory models, these perspectives illuminate different stages of a single process through which Islamic normativity is continuously produced and reproduced within social life.

The case of *sennu-sennureng* therefore demonstrates that Islamic normativity is neither exclusively textual nor entirely cultural. Instead, it emerges through ongoing interactions among symbolic traditions, communal experiences, religious interpretations, and ethical reasoning. Islamic law, from this perspective, should not be understood solely as a body of formal legal doctrines but also as a living normative system that continuously engages with local cultural practices while remaining oriented toward broader ethical objectives. The relationship between religion, culture, and law is therefore best understood as dynamic, negotiated, and ethically grounded rather than static or confined exclusively to textual authority.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the tradition of *sennu-sennureng* within the Bugis *mappacci* wedding ritual functions not merely as a cultural practice but as a dynamic process through which Islamic normativity is produced and reproduced in everyday social life. Through the SIMPL-M Framework, the findings reveal that ritual symbols such as *pacci*, *lamming*, *lipa' sabbe*, candles, and incense communicate moral values related to purity, responsibility, reciprocity, family honor, and social harmony. These symbolic meanings are subsequently interpreted as compatible with Islamic teachings and embodied in daily religious practices, transforming the ritual into a form of living *fiqh*. The study further shows that the legitimacy of *sennu-sennureng* is continuously negotiated among adat, Islamic teachings, religious authorities, and communal expectations, creating a plural normative space in which cultural and religious values mutually reinforce one another. As a result, Islamic normativity emerges not only from formal legal texts but also from lived experiences, social interactions, and collective cultural practices.

From the perspective of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, *sennu-sennureng* embodies ethical objectives closely related to family stability, human dignity, social solidarity, mutual responsibility, and communal welfare, thereby functioning as a culturally grounded expression of Islamic moral reasoning. The study's primary theoretical contribution lies in the development of the SIMPL-M Framework, which integrates symbolic anthropology, living *fiqh*, legal pluralism, and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* into a unified analytical model explaining how symbolic meanings become lived religious practices, are negotiated within multiple normative orders, and ultimately evaluated through ethical considerations. These findings contribute to Islamic legal studies, anthropology of religion, and socio-legal scholarship by demonstrating that local rituals serve as important sites for the construction of living Islamic normativity. Nevertheless, the study is limited by its focus on a specific Bugis socio-cultural setting and a particular group of ritual participants; therefore, future research should explore comparative contexts, intergenerational perspectives, and mixed method approaches to further examine how local traditions shape Islamic normativity across diverse Muslim societies.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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