



**PROMOTING NEW MUSLIM ROMANCE  
IN THE DIGITAL WORLD:  
State Law in Society in Advocating Early Marriage**

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**Abstract:** Religious conservatism among urban Muslim youth in Indonesia has become an important phenomenon in the development of Islam in Indonesia. In the context of marriage law, this phenomenon is marked by the emergence of Muslim romance among urban Muslim youth with the young marriage movement. This paper examines the phenomenon of the Muslim romance movement in the digital space, focusing on content analysis of messages uploaded by the Instagram account @gerakannikahmuda. This paper shows that, unlike the early 2000s young marriage movement campaigns using print media, which tended to ignore marriage administration, the digital space campaigns view marriage procedures and administration as important. The @gerakannikahmuda account uses legal regulations and policies regarding marriage administration procedures as a medium to campaign for the young marriage movement. Drawing on Migdal's state-in-society concept, which emphasizes the state's presence within society, this article argues that the use of marriage administration to campaign for the young marriage movement demonstrates the presence of state law within society, even when society holds ideas that oppose state regulations.

**Keywords:** State in society, Muslim romance, early marriage, administrative law, Early Marriage Movement.

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**Introduction**

ARTICLE 7, paragraph (1) of Law Number 1 of 1974 on Marriage states that the legal age of marriage is 16 years for females and 19 years for males. However, early and underage marriages remain prevalent in Indonesia. Official data from the Central Bureau of

Statistics indicate an increase in the incidence of early marriages from 20% in 2013 to 23% in 2015. This increase remained relatively unchanged until 2018.<sup>1</sup> Regions contributing significantly to the high rates of early marriage include West Sulawesi, Central Kalimantan, Central Sulawesi, South Kalimantan, and Southeast Sulawesi. West Sulawesi even reached 36%.<sup>2</sup> The rate of underage marriages in Indonesia surged sharply following the amendment of the legal marriage age for females from 16 to 19 years under Law Number 16 of 2019. In 2019, the rate of marriages involving minors increased to 30.56%.<sup>3</sup> Various efforts have been undertaken to reduce the number of early marriages by the central government,<sup>4</sup> regional governments at the district/city level,<sup>5</sup> as well as community organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).<sup>6</sup>

While the Indonesian government and some NGOs vigorously campaign against early marriage, certain Indonesian Muslims promote the idea of early marriage to avoid fornication. This movement was marked by the emergence of marriage-related study circles (*halaqah*) and the proliferation of printed books in the early 2000s.<sup>7</sup> In subsequent developments, this movement became

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<sup>1</sup> Badan Pusat Statistik, *Perkawinan Usia Anak Di Indonesia 2013 Dan 2015*, Revisi (Jakarta: Badan Pusat Statistik, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>3</sup> "Perkawinan Usia Dini Masih Tinggi," *Lokadata.id*, last modified March 10, 2022, accessed November 17, 2022, <https://lokadata.id/artikel/perkawinan-usia-dini-masih-tinggi>.

<sup>4</sup> "Press Release Strategi Pencegahan Perkawinan Anak Dirumuskan Siaran Pers Nomor: B- 231/Set/Rokum/Mp 01/11/2018," last modified January 11, 2018, <https://www.kemennppa.go.id/index.php/page/read/29/1964/strategi-pencegahan-perkawinan-anak-dirumuskan>.

<sup>5</sup> Rifka Annisa - Sosialisasi Peraturan Bupati Nomor 36 Tahun 2015 tentang Pencegahan Perkawinan pada Usia Anak," accessed April 17, 2023, <https://www.rifka-annisa.org/id/berita/berita-umum/item/419-sosialisasi-peraturan-bupati-nomor-36-tahun-2015-tentang-pencegahan-perkawinan-pada-usia-anak>.

<sup>6</sup> Misalnya "En - Rumah KitaB," accessed April 17, 2023, <https://rumahkitab.com/en/>.

<sup>7</sup> Nancy J Smith-Hefner, "The New Muslim Romance: Changing Patterns of Courtship and Marriage among Educated Javanese Youth," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 36, no. 3 (October 2005): 441-459.

prominent in the digital world after the 2010s. The Early Marriage Movement (Gerakan Nikah Muda), established in 2015 by La Ode Munafar, is a digital platform that actively promotes the idea of early marriage. Under the pretext of avoiding fornication, this digital platform actively promotes the notion of “the beauty of early marriage” and “courting after marriage is fun,”<sup>8</sup> which Smith-Hefner refers to as the new Muslim romance.<sup>9</sup> These two narratives have become trends among urban, educated Muslim youth and Muslim university students in Indonesia.

Although the majority of the main messages uploaded in the digital realm continue those found during the print book period, the early marriage movement in the digital space also exhibits a new phenomenon: the emergence of state laws governing marriage administration in its campaigns. In the era of print media, the call for early marriage neglected marriage administration. In fact, the promotion of early marriage has led to unregistered marriages among educated Muslim youth.<sup>10</sup> It appears that two decades of the development of religious conservatism in Indonesia, which have resulted in a “conservative turn”,<sup>11</sup> underpin this new Muslim romance movement's campaign strategies.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, as an extension of the real world, the digital realm is more dynamic than print media, enabling rapid adaptation and alignment with societal developments.<sup>13</sup> This article examines how the narrative of “the

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<sup>8</sup> “Gerakan Nikah Muda: Sia-Sia Sekaligus Berbahaya,” accessed April 17, 2023, <https://tirto.id/gerakan-nikah-muda-sia-sia-sekaligus-berbahaya-dhyS>.

<sup>9</sup> Smith-Hefner, “The New Muslim Romance.”

<sup>10</sup> Muamar Akhsin, *Nikah Bawah Tangan Versi Anak Kampus* (Depok: QultumMedia, 2005), accessed August 7, 2023, [https://www.google.co.id/books/edition/Nikah\\_Bawah\\_Tangan\\_versi\\_Anak\\_Kampus/\\_FGcHubrs2wC?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=pacaran+setelah+menikah&pg=PA43&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.co.id/books/edition/Nikah_Bawah_Tangan_versi_Anak_Kampus/_FGcHubrs2wC?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=pacaran+setelah+menikah&pg=PA43&printsec=frontcover).

<sup>11</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam: Explaining the “Conservative Turn”* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2013).

<sup>12</sup> Masdar Hilmy, “The Rise and Fall of ‘Transnational’ Islam in Indonesia: The Future of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI),” in *Rising Islamic Conservatism In Indonesia* (London & New York: Routledge, 2020), 133–45.

<sup>13</sup> Christopher Helland, “Online-Religion/Religion-Online and Virtual Communitas,” *Religion and the internet; Volume 3: Research methods and theories in digital religion studies* (2018): 3.

beauty of early marriage" is developed and promoted on Instagram by the Gerakan Nikah Muda account.

Study on the internet and the marriage issues concentrated on "online religion", the internet as a place for conducting religious activities,<sup>14</sup> which focuses on the pragmatic role of the internet, such as online dating/match-making,<sup>15</sup> discussion forums on marriage for Muslim women,<sup>16</sup> accelerating marriage decisions,<sup>17</sup> marrying at a productive age,<sup>18</sup> strengthening husband-wife intimacy,<sup>19</sup> and family member intimacy.<sup>20</sup> At the discursive and narrative levels, El-Nawawi and Khamis (2009) have discussed the role of the internet in debates on mixed marriages (Sunni-Shi'a

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Katelyn Y. A. McKenna, Amie S. Green, and Marci E. J. Gleason, "Relationship Formation on the Internet: What is the Big Attraction?," *Journal of Social Issues* 58, no. 1 (2002): 9–31, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-4560.00246>; Sonja Luehrmann, "Mediated Marriage: Internet Matchmaking in Provincial Russia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 56, no. 6 (September 1, 2004): 857–75, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966813042000258079>; Padma Rao Sahib, Ruud H. Koning, and Arjen van Witteloostuijn, "Putting Your Best Cyber Identity Forward: An Analysis of 'Success Stories' from a Russian Internet Marriage Agency," *International Sociology* 21, no. 1 (January 1, 2006): 61–82, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580906059291>; Mbaye Lo and Taimoor Aziz, "Muslim Marriage Goes Online: The Use of Internet Matchmaking by American Muslims," *The Journal of Religion and Popular Culture*, *The Journal of Religion and Popular Culture*, 21, no. 3 (2009): 5–5; Michael J. Rosenfeld and Reuben J. Thomas, "Searching for a Mate: The Rise of the Internet as a Social Intermediary," *American Sociological Review* 77, no. 4 (2012): 523–547.

<sup>16</sup> Anna Piel, "Piety as a Concept Underpinning Muslim Women's Online Discussions of Marriage and Professional Career," *Contemporary Islam* 5, no. 3 (October 1, 2011): 249–265.

<sup>17</sup> Michael Rosenfeld, "Marriage, Choice, and Couplehood in the Age of the Internet," *Sociological Science* 77, no. 4, *Sociological Science* (2017): 490–510.

<sup>18</sup> Andriana Bellou, "The Impact of Internet Diffusion on Marriage Rates: Evidence from the Broadband Market," *Journal of Population Economics* 28, no. 2, *Journal of Population Economics* (2015): 265–97.

<sup>19</sup> Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfers, "Marriage and Divorce: Changes and Their Driving Forces," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 21, no. 2 (June 2007): 27–52.

<sup>20</sup> Amanda L. Williams and Michael J. Merten, "iFamily: Internet and Social Media Technology in the Family Context," *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal* 40, no. 2 (2011): 150–170.

marriages, Muslim-non-Muslim marriages) and gender issues,<sup>21</sup> which produce argumentative, rational, and critical reasons,<sup>22</sup> as well as assertive, combative, and defensive arguments among Muslims and non-Muslims.<sup>23</sup>

Unlike the debate on interfaith marriage and family law issues developed by El-Nawawi and Khamis, this article focuses on the narrative level of early marriage campaigns in Indonesia, particularly as conveyed through messages on the Instagram account #gerakannikahmuda. In the context of Islamic marriage issues in the Indonesian digital sphere, existing works have primarily focused on the dependency of religion on mass media,<sup>24</sup> and the subordination of religion by mass media.<sup>25</sup> Meanwhile, the content of messages on social media accounts still requires serious attention.

Using Migdal's concept of state in society, which emphasizes the presence of the state within society, even within a strong civil society,<sup>26</sup> this paper argues that in addition to continuing the messages about new Muslim romance in print media—such as the reasons to avoid fornication and the emphasis on moral and religious preparation, which tend to oppose state law—the messages about new Muslim romance in the digital world use state laws, in the form of marriage administration procedures, as a medium to convey the message of early marriage. This phenomenon not only demonstrates the presence of state law in family law discourse within society but also shows the presence of state law in family law discourse that opposes state law within

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<sup>21</sup> Mohammed El-Nawawy and Sahar Khamis, *Islam Dot Com: Contemporary Islamic Discourses in Cyberspace* (Basingstoke 2012: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2012), 165–169.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 180–182.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 173–178.

<sup>24</sup> Siti Jauriah, Atwar Bajari, and Agus Setiawan, “Studi Etnografi Virtual Pesan Nonverbal Tentang Prinsip Menikah Muda Dalam Instagram @nikahasik Komunikator vol. 9 No. 1(2017): 57-68,” accessed May 3, 2023, <https://journal.umsida.ac.id/index.php/jkm/article/view/2814>.

<sup>25</sup> Izmy Khumairoh, “Ayo Menikah (Muda)!: Mediatisasi Ajaran Islam Di Media Sosial,” *Umbara: Indonesian Journal of Anthropology* 2, no. 1 (2017): 10–23.

<sup>26</sup> Joel S. Migdal, “The State in Society,” in *New Directions in Comparative Politics*, 3rd ed. (Routledge, 2002).

society. Thus, the state is present not only in a civil society that aligns with it, but also in one that opposes it.

This paper analyzes the messages on the Instagram account #gerakannikahmuda, positioning it as a continuation of the development of Muslim romance in Indonesia. The discussion begins with an examination of the development of new Muslim romance in Indonesia, extending into the digital realm. Following this, the discussion proceeds to an analysis of the Instagram account #gerakannikahmuda and its messages as manifestations of the new Muslim romance movement in the digital world. Before the conclusion, the discussion is supplemented with an examination of the presence of state law and societal laws/norms within the messages.

### **The Dynamics of New Muslim Romance: Early Marriage Campaign**

In the landscape of family law discourse in Indonesia, a new Muslim romance campaign advocating for early marriage among urban Muslims began to emerge in the late 1990s. This phenomenon coincided with the rise of transnational conservative Islamic movements among Indonesian students, marked by the *tarbiyah* movement across various campuses.<sup>27</sup> Nancy Hefner refers to this as the phenomenon of new Muslim romance, a romance among the younger generation of urban Muslims characterized by the anti-dating movement before marriage (or dating after marriage).<sup>28</sup> This new Muslim romance differs from the previous romance trends among young Muslims. In earlier times, romance among youth (in Java) was characterized by dating before engagement and, subsequently, marriage. The new romantic lifestyle is marked by the principle of dating after marriage (*ta'aruf*-engagement-marriage-dating).<sup>29</sup>

The rise of new Muslim romance on campuses is inseparable from the development of conservative ideology among students

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<sup>27</sup> Smith-Hefner, "The New Muslim Romance."

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

since the 1980s.<sup>30</sup> Based on the spirit of puritanism, returning to the Qur'an and Sunnah, this ideology anchors all religious practices to these primary sources of Islamic teachings. From a normative doctrinal perspective, secluding oneself in a private place between a man and a woman who are not *mahram* (not blood-related), and commonly done by young people who are dating, is considered *khalwat*. *Khalwat* is prohibited as it can lead to adultery. This belief in dating as a form of *khalwat* has led to a movement of marrying without prior dating among young Muslims. Religious study groups (Islam), or *halaqah*, which are frequently held in campus mosques, have become a place to find an Islamic spouse, with their leaders (*murabbi/ustadz*) acting as intermediaries/matchmakers.<sup>31</sup> Matchmaking through *murabbi* intermediaries became the embryo for the emergence of Sharia matchmaking agencies, which serve as a medium for young Muslims to find partners.

In the context of finding an Islamic spouse, the emergence of conservative Muslim student organizations in the late 1990s further reinforced the tendency towards new Muslim romance.<sup>32</sup> Nancy-Hefner noted that, aside from being a platform for political cadre formation among students, the emergence of the conservative Muslim student organization *Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia* (KAMMI/Indonesian Muslim Student Action Union) at the beginning of the reform era (founded in March 1998) has functioned as a matchmaking bureau for its members.<sup>33</sup> Like a matchmaking bureau, this organization has played a role in connecting members seeking spouses by submitting biodata to the administrators. These administrators, usually *murabbi*, then find a prospective spouse deemed suitable for the member seeking a partner. Since the matchmaking bureau promoted is sharia-compliant, the organization also provides

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<sup>30</sup> Noorhaidi, "Laskar Jihad: Islam, Militancy, and the Quest for Identity in Post-New Order Indonesia" (PhD Dissertation, Utrecht University, 2005).

<sup>31</sup> Habib Nanang Setya Budi, "Proses Perjudohan Kalangan Aktivis Halaqah Tarbiyah Di Kecamatan Piyungan Kabupaten Bantul Propinsi DIY" (UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2008).

<sup>32</sup> Budi, "Proses Perjudohan."

<sup>33</sup> Smith-Hefner, "The New Muslim Romance."

chaperones if both parties wish to meet, thus preventing *khalwat*.<sup>34</sup> Subsequently, this matchmaking bureau model has become a model for Sharia matchmaking bureaus among urban Muslims, both in the real world and in the digital realm.

In addition to the emergence of Sharia matchmaking bureaus among the educated, urban young Muslim generation, the dissemination of ideas about new Muslim romance is also noteworthy. Halaqah or religious study circles, which are frequently conducted by Muslim youth on campuses, have become important venues for spreading the narrative of new Muslim romance regarding early marriage.<sup>35</sup> Among the pioneers of this early marriage movement, Fauzil Adhim and Cahjadi Takariawan are two notable figures who actively campaigned for early marriage in the early 2000s. Various events, including halaqahs and seminars featuring testimonies from successful practitioners of early marriage, were frequently held.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to dissemination through direct communication in the form of halaqah and seminars, the spread of ideas about new Muslim romance was also propagated through print media. In terms of timing, dissemination through print media coincided with direct meetings. In the early 2000s, popular books on new Muslim romance began to emerge, such as *Saatnya untuk Menikah/Time to Get Married* (Adhim, 2000); *Indahnya Pernikahan Dini/The Beauty of Early Marriage* (Adhim, GIP:2002); *Adakah Pacaran yang Islami?/Is There Islamic Dating?; Pernikahan Dini: Dilema Generasi Ekstravaganza/Early Marriage: Dilemma of the Extravagant Generation* (Abu Al-Ghifari, Mujahid Press, 2002); *Kenapa Harus Pacaran?/Why Date?* (Robi'ah al-Adawiyah: Dar Mizan Remaja 2004); *Nikmatnya Pacaran Setelah Pernikahan/ The Joy of Dating After Marriage* (Salim A. Fillah, 2005). These books contain calls to expedite marriage.

One of the key messages of the call to expedite marriage or to marry at a young age in the phenomenon of new Muslim romance is to avoid *khalwat*, which can lead to zina (adultery) that often

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<sup>34</sup> Smith-Hefner, "The New Muslim Romance."

<sup>35</sup> Budi, "Proses Perjudohan."

<sup>36</sup> Akhsin, *Nikah Bawah Tangan*, 42.



occurs during dating. Mohammad Fauzil Adhim, through his *Indahnya Pernikahan Dini/The Beauty of Early Marriage*, emphasizes early marriage as the best way to avoid fornication (*zina*).<sup>37</sup> Marriage is considered the only way for the younger generation to avoid the sin of *zina* (falling into the calamity of *zina*). He encourages young Muslims to expedite marriage without needing to wait until they are financially stable, which is typically required in marriage. Although Adhim refers to it as early marriage, he considers the ideal age for marriage to be at least 20 years. This indicates that, under state law, what he characterizes as early marriage falls above the legal minimum age for marriage, including the post-amendment minimum age for women in 2019, which was raised from 16 to 19 years.<sup>38</sup> Specifically for students, Adhim asserts that early marriage will not affect their academic success or life on campus.<sup>39</sup> Some members of society, particularly students, responded to the call for early marriage by hastening their marriages. Some of them married while still studying, even if it meant an unregistered or secret marriage (*nikah sirri*).<sup>40</sup>

The phenomenon of unregistered marriages among students indicates that, to some extent, the call to expedite marriage not only raises the issue of underage marriage but also the problem of marriage administration. Some students engage in unregistered marriages, often referred to as *nikah sirri*, with the intention of avoiding *zina* that could occur during dating.<sup>41</sup> Some students explicitly stated that their unregistered marriages were influenced by the campaign for the beauty of early marriage promoted by Fauzil Adhim.<sup>42</sup> For students who engage in unregistered

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<sup>37</sup> Mohammad Fauzil Adhim and Dadi M. Hasan Basri, *Indahnya Pernikahan Dini* (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2002).

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 4, 123. Adhim refers to the minimum ideal marriage age of 20 years, indicating that Adhim's early marriage movement does not contradict state law; rather, it operates within the state's legal regime. This phenomenon also distinguishes it from digital "young marriage" movements that explicitly promote marriage at an age one year below the legally prescribed minimum age under state law.

<sup>39</sup> Adhim and Basri, *Indahnya*.

<sup>40</sup> Akhsin, *Nikah Bawah Tangan*, 40–45.

<sup>41</sup> Akhsin, *Nikah Bawah Tangan*, 42–44.

<sup>42</sup> Akhsin, *Nikah Bawah Tangan*.

marriages, this practice is seen as a practical and cost-effective solution, as it does not require administrative fees or wedding celebrations. They only need to cover the cost of the *mahr* (dowry), which is usually not financially burdensome, to avoid *zina* during the dating period.<sup>43</sup>

As the campaign for new Muslim romance evolved, it also permeated the digital world. The narrative of new Muslim romance in the digital realm began to resonate and proliferate in the second decade of the millennium.<sup>44</sup> The campaign for early marriage became prominent in Indonesia's digital space. This digital campaign coincided with the emergence of the "Hijrah Movement," a conservative Islamic movement among urban millennial Muslims that heavily utilizes digital spaces to express religious thoughts and attitudes. *Gerakan Pemuda Hijrah* (Youth Hijra Movement), founded in February 2015 by Hanan Attaki and based at Al-Latifi Mosque in Bandung, marked a significant milestone in the rise of the hijrah youth generation in the virtual world.<sup>45</sup> This movement extensively uses social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram as essential channels for its da'wah (propagation) activities. Subsequently, numerous social media accounts with the mission of promoting hijrah (migration) emerged, such as Cinta Hijrah (@cintahijrah), Berani Berhijrah (@beraniberhijrah), Hijrah Indonesia (@hijrahindonesia), Hijrah Fest (@hijrahfest), Hijrah Santun (@hijrahsantun), Hijrahkan (@hijrahkan), @cintasunnah, @semangatsubuh, @kartundakwah, @mahasiswamuslim, @kajiansunnah, among others. Accounts like Indonesia Tanpa Pacaran (@indonesiatanpapacaran) and Gerakan Nikah Muda (@gerakannikahmuda) also emerged.

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<sup>43</sup> Akhsin, *Nikah Bawah Tangan*.

<sup>44</sup> Trie Yunita Sari, "Hijrah and Islamic Movement in Cyberspace: A Social Movement Study of Anti-Dating Movement #Indonesiatanpapacaran" (Tesis Master, Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2019), [http://etd.repository.ugm.ac.id/home/detail\\_pencarian/173185](http://etd.repository.ugm.ac.id/home/detail_pencarian/173185).

<sup>45</sup> Agnia Addini, "Fenomena Gerakan Hijrah di Kalangan Pemuda Muslim Sebagai Mode Sosial," *Journal of Islamic Civilization* 1, no. 2 (October 2019): 2, <https://doi.org/10.33086/jic.v1i2.1313>.

In the context of marriage law discourse and practice in Indonesia, the phenomenon of the hijrah movement among the young Muslim generation continues to promote the discourse and practice of new Muslim romance in the form of calls for early marriage. This is a family law discourse and practice advocated by conservative Muslims in the previous period. In terms of name, the Instagram account @gerakannikahmuda explicitly uses the phrase "call for early marriage" as the main theme of new Muslim romance. The following section will discuss the @gerakannikahmuda account as a platform for campaigning new Muslim romance in the digital space.

### **@Gerakannikahmuda: Campaigning New Muslim Romance in the Digital Space**

The @gerakannikahmuda (henceforward Genida) account was created in 2015 by La Ode Munafar. This account is a continuation of the @Indonesiatanpacaran (ITP) account, also created by La Ode Munafar in the same year.<sup>46</sup> While ITP promotes the slogan of raising awareness among the youth about the detrimental culture of dating, Genida provides a solution to avoid dating through the campaign for early marriage, adopting the motto "courting after marriage is fun," a slogan also echoed by conservative young Muslims in the previous period.<sup>47</sup> Although the account is named Gerakan Nikah Muda (Movement for Early Marriage), its content is not limited to messages encouraging immediate marriage; it also includes other moral and religious messages commonly found in hijrah youth accounts. These messages include calls for religious rituals, filial piety, and other religious teachings. Occasionally, there are also commercial advertisements promoting products and services.

The messages uploaded to the @gerakannikahmuda account come in various formats, including short texts with abstract

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<sup>46</sup> for Indonesia Tanpa Pacaran, see Sari, "Hijrah and Islamic Movement in Cyberspace"; Trie Yunita Sari, Fatimah Husein, and Ratna Noviani, "Hijrah and Islamic Movement in Social Media: A Social Movement Study of Anti-Dating Movement #IndonesiaTanpaPacaran," *DINIKA: Academic Journal of Islamic Studies* 5, no. 1 (July 2020): 1–26, <https://doi.org/10.22515/dinika.v5i1.1673>.

<sup>47</sup> Smith-Hefner, "The New Muslim Romance."

backgrounds, nature images (sky and mountains), and photos of plants, people, and buildings. There are also short texts with plain backgrounds (either black, white, or other colors). The messages delivered in these short texts can be translations of Quranic verses or hadiths, mottos (slogans/quotes), wise sayings, or even advertisements for events organized by the early marriage movement community.

Religious texts, such as verses and hadiths on marriage, especially those that encourage marriage and outline its preparations, frequently adorn the Instagram wall of the Genida account. Quotes from various figures also adorn the Genida Instagram account. Quotes from lectures by Salim A. Fillah, Abdus Shomad (UAS), and Khalid Basalamah are prominently featured. There are also quotes from other notable figures such as BJ Habibie, Jefri al-Bukhari (UJE), and Zainuddin MZ. Graphic backgrounds, including photos of people, flora, fauna, or natural landscapes, usually accompany these text messages. The sky, with clouds or at sunrise or sunset, often serves as the background for these text messages.

In addition to short text messages, there are also short videos, either produced by the Genida team or forwarded from other sources. Video messages can appear as audio accompanied by text narration or as videos of people giving lectures. Several popular online preachers, such as Abdus Somad (UAS), Khalid Basalamah, Hanan Attaki, Handy Bonny, Adi Hidayat, and Syafiq Reza Basalamah, frequently feature on the Instagram account @Gerakan Nikah Muda. Yusuf Mansur also appears on the @gerakannikahmuda account, although not as frequently as the previously mentioned names. Regarding the origin/source of the uploaded messages, they are not always the original work of the @gerakannikahmuda account. A significant portion of the content on its wall is forwarded from other accounts. The @IndonesiaTanpaPacaran (ITP) account is the most frequently forwarded by the @Genida account. Additionally, many accounts popular among hijrah youth, such as @Nikahasyik, @remaja\_hijrah\_fisabilillah, @nasehatpernikahan, and @nikahbutuhilmu, serve as sources for quotes used by the Gerakan Nikah Muda account.

### *Marry Soon: Key Messages in @Gerakannikahmuda*

"If you feel ready to marry, then marry soon." This is one of the messages posted on the Gerakan Nikah Muda (Young Marriage Movement) account. Although not all messages on the Gerakan Nikah Muda Instagram account advocate for early marriage, similar messages are widespread on its wall. Messages related to young marriage, whether containing the phrase "young marriage" or "marry soon," are varied. They range from calls to marry soon, preparations for marriage (at a young age), young marriage as a solution to avoid zina (fornication), young marriage as a noble deed, young marriage not hindering a career, young marriage making the devil cry, to young marriage being more enjoyable, and so forth.

Regarding the age of marriage, La Ode Munafar, the founder of the young marriage movement, stated in several interviews that the important condition for marriage in Islam is *balig* or reaching puberty,<sup>48</sup> which is the first time a boy ejaculates or a girl menstruates. In Shafi'i jurisprudence, the age of puberty is between 9 and 15 years.<sup>49</sup> When referring to the minimum age of marriage determined by the state law, the minimum age for marriage is 19 years for both males and females, the age of puberty according to Munafar is far below the marriage age in the marriage law. The age difference between puberty in Shafi'i jurisprudence and statutory provisions is between four and ten years. This age difference between jurisprudence and law has sparked criticism from the public, as it potentially justifies underage marriage, although Munafar denies that it is a movement supporting child marriage.<sup>50</sup> Criticism can be found in articles published in several online media. Tirto.id published an article titled "*Gerakan Nikah Muda: Sia-sia Sekaligus Berbahaya*" (The Young Marriage Movement: Futile and Dangerous).<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Fahri Salam, "Indonesia Tanpa Pacaran: Antara Biro Jodoh & Ruang Baru Persekusi," *tirto.id*, May 28, 2018, <https://tirto.id/indonesia-tanpa-pacaran-antara-biro-jodoh-ruang-baru-persekusi-ck3b>.

<sup>49</sup> Salim Ibn Sumair Al-Hadrami, *Safinat Al-Najah* (Beirut Lebanon: Dar al-Minhaj, 2009), 17.

<sup>50</sup> Salam, "Indonesia Tanpa Pacaran."

<sup>51</sup> "Gerakan Nikah Muda: Sia-Sia Sekaligus Berbahaya."

Mubadalahnews.com published an article titled "*Memboikot Gerakan Nikah Muda*" (Boycotting the Young Marriage Movement).<sup>52</sup> Meanwhile, Kumparan.com published a news article titled "*Tren Nikah Muda dan Upaya Menyetop Perkawinan Anak*" (The Trend of Young Marriage and Efforts to Stop Child Marriage).<sup>53</sup> These writings reflect the criticism of the young marriage movement that Munafar campaigned against.

One interesting aspect to examine is that, although the age of puberty (*baligh*) according to Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) can be as early as 9 years old, the Instagram account of the youth marriage movement appears to set the age of 15 years (the age of complete puberty) as the minimum age for marriage. This is evidenced by a post on the youth marriage movement's account dated August 3, 2019. The post outlines marriageable-age options, with the youngest at 15 years old, referring to individuals born in 2004.<sup>54</sup> Compared to the minimum marriageable age stipulated by the marriage law, this age is one year below the marriage age for females and four years below for males,<sup>55</sup> prior to the revision of the marriage age in Law No. 16 of 2019 (enacted on October 14, 2019, and promulgated on October 15, 2019). The age of 15 aligns with the age of complete puberty for both males and females in the Shafi'i *fiqh* tradition,<sup>56</sup> the most prevalent school of thought in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia.

Shortly after the law on the revised marriage age was enacted, a post dated November 4, 2019, indicated a different youth marriage age choice on the youth marriage movement's account, namely 18 years.<sup>57</sup> Normatively, doctrinally, if in the Shafi'i school

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<sup>52</sup> "Memboikot Gerakan Nikah Muda," September 28, 2018, [https://mubaadalahnews.com/kolom/detail\\_publik/2018-09-28/222](https://mubaadalahnews.com/kolom/detail_publik/2018-09-28/222).

<sup>53</sup> "Tren Nikah Muda Dan Upaya Menyetop Perkawinan Anak | Kumparan.Com," accessed May 3, 2023, <https://kumparan.com/kumparannews/tren-nikah-muda-dan-upaya-menyetop-perkawinan-anak>.

<sup>54</sup> The age range of 15 to 29 years is designated as the eligible age for marriage.

<sup>55</sup> Pasal 7 ayat (1) Undang-Undang Perkawinan, 1 (1974).

<sup>56</sup> Ibn Sumair Al-Hadrami, *Safinat*, 17.

<sup>57</sup> [instagram.com/p/B4bdZGbDAK1/?hl=en](https://instagram.com/p/B4bdZGbDAK1/?hl=en)

the age of complete puberty is 15 years for both males and females, the age of 18 is the age of complete puberty for males in the Hanafi school, and 17 years for females. Furthermore, the age of 18 is 1 year below the minimum marriageable age under the current marriage law. However, there is no clear indication of the reason for this change, either in the post itself or in other posts around the same date. Nevertheless, the age of 18 is significant because Article 50, paragraph (1) of Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage states that this is the age of guardianship for children; children under 18 years who have never been married and are not under the authority of their parents must be under the authority of a guardian. This implies that the marriage law regards 18 years as the minimum age of independence. Additionally, the age of 18 marks the beginning of legal adulthood in terms of employment, as stipulated in Article 1, paragraph 26 of Law No. 13 of 2003 on Manpower.<sup>58</sup> However, once again, there is no evidence to suggest that the age of 18 posted on the youth marriage movement's account was influenced by state regulations.

How is the Message of Early Marriage Promoted? Messages encouraging early marriage on the @gerakannikahmuda account appear in several variations, such as "immediately" (*segerakan* or *segeralah*), "quickly" (*cepat*), or "early marriage" (*nikah muda*). The word "immediately" is prevalent in instructional sentences. Here are some examples: "*Jika sudah merasa siap menikah, maka segeralah menikah*" (If you feel ready to marry, then get married immediately) (9/20/2019); "*Segera halalkan*" (Get married immediately) (9/25/2019); "*Segeralah menikah....*" (Get married immediately....); "*jika seseorang telah menikah, maka ia telah menyempurnakan separuh agamanya*" (if someone is married, then they have perfected half of their religion) (8/6/2019), 3,233 likes; "*Menikah ibarat puasa, kalo sudah saatnya harus disegerakan*" (Marriage is like fasting, if the time has come it must be done immediately) (7/20/2019), 2,697 likes; "*Ngejar karir itu harus, tapi urusan nikah juga harus segera diurus*" (Chasing a career is a must,

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<sup>58</sup> Undang-Undang Ketenagakerjaan, 13 (2003) Article 1 number 26: Anak adalah setiap orang yang berumur dibawah 18 (delapan belas) tahun. .

but marriage matters must also be handled immediately) (8/5/2019), 4,227 likes.

The message advocating for hastening marriage using the word "quickly" can be found in several expressions such as "*Pinginnya sih nikah secepatnya....*" (I want to get married as soon as possible...) (7/29/2019), which garnered 5,647 likes; "*Kita doakan semoga pasangan artis yang muslim/muslimah cepet nikah*" (Let's pray that Muslim/Muslima celebrity couples get married quickly) (9/26/2019). There are also messages incorporating the term "early marriage," such as "*Nikah muda jangan digoda, nikah tua jangan dihina*" (Do not tempt those who marry young, do not insult those who marry later) (10/10/2019); "*Mau nikah muda atau mau nikah saat sudah tua, gak masalah.*" *Asal gak pacaran dan berzina*" (Whether you marry young or old, it doesn't matter, as long as you do not date and sin) (9/24/2019); "*Ashamed of early marriage but not ashamed of sinning?*" (video) (9/3/2019), which received 10,204 views; "*Nikah Muda Malu, Berzina nggak Malu*" (Ashamed of early marriage but not ashamed of sinning) (8/17/2019), which received 59,700 views; "*Ngapain nikah muda? Nanti kamu nyesel lho!*" (Why marry young? You'll regret it later!) (8/9/2019), with 2,294 likes; "*Menikah diusia muda, tidak mengurangi keproduktifitasmu, juga tidak akan menghalangi baktimu kepada orang tua*" (Marrying at a young age does not reduce your productivity, nor does it hinder your devotion to your parents) (8/9/2019), with 1,742 likes; "*Nikah muda, kenapa tidak?*" (Why not marry young?) (7/24/2019), with 1,448 likes. Additional messages promoting hastening marriage also appear, such as "*Menikah tidak perlu menunggu sarjana*" (You do not need to wait until you graduate to marry) (10/7/2019); "*Menikahlah sebelum mapan*" (Marry before you are established) (9/22/2019); "*Kalau mau nunggu mapan, sampai kapan?*" (How long will you wait to be established?) (9/19/2019); "*Jatuh Cinta? Menikahlah*" (In love? Get married) (9/26/2019); "*Nikah Sana*" (Just get married) (9/11/2019).

The discourse on early marriage as a means of avoiding *zina*, promoted by the ITP and Genida accounts, does not consistently elicit aligned responses from their followers; rather, it generates varied, sometimes dissonant reactions. A range of critical views on early-age marriage can be observed in the comment sections, such



as: "*kalo belum bisa nafkahi anak orang ya jangan*", ("if you are not yet able to provide for someone's daughter, then do not marry"),<sup>59</sup> "*Nikah itu bukan ngejar status tp kematangan dan kemapanaan dlm berumah tangga dipikirkan kedepannya*," ("marriage is not about pursuing status but about maturity and preparedness for married life in the future"),<sup>60</sup> and "*emang sekarang ad cewek yg mau diajak nikah yg ga liat si laki punya duit?*" ("is there any woman today who would agree to marry a man without considering his financial capacity?")<sup>61</sup>

Interviews with several followers of these accounts further indicate that the idea of marrying quickly to avoid *zina* is not universally endorsed. NF, who has followed both accounts for only a few months, stated that marriage requires preparation and should not be based solely on avoiding *zina*; it necessitates mental and economic readiness. According to him, marriage is not merely about preventing *zina* but involves many aspects that must be prepared in advance.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, NU, who has been following both accounts since 2023, emphasized that what should be promoted is readiness for marriage rather than early marriage itself. According to NU, marital readiness should not be measured solely by age, but also by knowledge and financial preparedness.<sup>63</sup> A similar perspective was expressed by AK, a follower since 2018, who argued that avoiding *zina* cannot be achieved solely through early marriage.<sup>64</sup> They agree that economic, mental, biological, and parenting preparedness are all crucial prerequisites for entering into marriage.

In conclusion, the discourse promoting early marriage as a means of avoiding *zina*, as advanced by the ITP and Genida accounts, does not receive uniform support from their followers. Responses in the comment sections and interview data reveal significant skepticism toward early-age marriage, with many emphasizing that marriage requires more than the intention to

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<sup>59</sup><https://www.instagram.com/p/BLDTM-xjVWT/>

<sup>60</sup>[https://www.instagram.com/p/BKsx\\_NADLRO/](https://www.instagram.com/p/BKsx_NADLRO/)

<sup>61</sup><https://www.instagram.com/p/Bcv1YHag1ZI/>

<sup>62</sup>Interview with NF, 16 December 2025.

<sup>63</sup>Interview with NU, 16 December 2025

<sup>64</sup>Interview with AK, 16 December 2025

avoid *zina*. Followers commonly stress the importance of economic stability, mental and emotional maturity, biological readiness, and parenting preparedness. They argue that marital readiness should not be determined solely by age, and that avoiding *zina* cannot be achieved simply through marrying at a young age.

### **Marriage Administrative Law in the Early Marriage Campaign**

The digital campaign against early marriage is a continuation of the real-world campaign, primarily through print media, which began to flourish in the early 2000s. This phenomenon is marked by the emergence of popular books promoting the early marriage movement. Compared to the real-world campaign in the previous period, what is interesting about the digital early marriage campaign is the presence/emergence of state law on marriage administration. Marriage administration has become one of the media to convey the message of early marriage in the early marriage movement's digital campaign. This is different from the era of printed books. The early marriage campaign in print media did not provide space for state law in promoting this new Muslim romance. The existing books only focused on urging early marriage as a way to avoid adultery.<sup>65</sup> Because of the focus on encouraging early marriage, this new Muslim romance movement is even seen as a form of resistance against the law and has the potential to lead to child marriage. Therefore, it is not surprising that many writings have emerged to respond negatively to this new Muslim romance movement.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Lihat misalnya Adhim and Basri, *Indahnya*; Mohammad Fauzil Adhim and Muhammad Nadzif Masykur, *Di Ambang Pernikahan* (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2002); Aisha Chuang, *Pacaran Islami? Siapa Takut* (QultumMedia, n.d.); Devalucia Dwi Anggraeny, *Pernikahan Generasi Millennial*; *Seni Pacaran Setelah Menikah* (Elex Media Komputindo, 2017).

<sup>66</sup> "Gerakan Nikah Muda: Sia-Sia Sekaligus Berbahaya"; Bintang Pradewo, "KPAI Laporkan Aisha Wedding Karena Kampanyekan Nikah Muda - Jawa Pos," KPAI Laporkan Aisha Wedding Karena Kampanyekan Nikah Muda - Jawa Pos, February 11, 2021, <https://www.jawapos.com/kasuistika/01311679/kpai-laporkan-aisha-wedding-karena-kampanyekan-nikah-muda>; "Memboikot"; "Pernikahan Dini, Negara Harus Selamatkan Generasi," Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia (KPAI), September 20, 2018,

Moreover, the early marriage campaign with the framing of avoiding adultery promoted through print media has implications for the practice of unregistered or *sirri* marriages.<sup>67</sup> The narrative built in the early marriage campaign states that the effective way to avoid adultery, which usually happens during dating, is to avoid dating by getting married. Marriage becomes a solution to avoid adultery. Some members of the community consider marriage to be costly and burdensome for them. One way they avoid adultery is by performing unregistered marriages, especially among university students.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, as previously explained, besides risking the emergence of child marriage, the early marriage campaign also risks leading to the practice of unregistered or *sirri* marriages in society.

In addition to the messages to avoid adultery and the pragmatic interests of those engaging in unregistered marriages (*nikah sirri*), the lack of attention to marriage administration in early marriage campaigns in print media is an important reason for the emergence of unregistered marriages among university students. The narrative developed in the early marriage campaigns through print media and the real world only emphasizes the importance of marriage validity according to religious law: "What matters is that it is valid according to religion, so it avoids sin."

Although there are indications that the early marriage movement campaigns in the real world are one of the causes of unregistered marriages among young people, what is interesting about the early marriage movement campaigns in the digital world is that these campaigns utilize marriage administration rules as one of the media to convey the message to hasten marriage. Various messages about hastening marriage/early marriage are accompanied by the presence of marriage administration laws in the digital space, though not always directly. State laws on marriage administration/registration in the

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<https://www.kpai.go.id/utama/pernikahan-dini-negara-harus-selamatkan-generasi>.

<sup>67</sup> Akhsin, *Nikah Bawah Tangan*, 42–44.

<sup>68</sup> Akhsin, *Nikah Bawah Tangan*.

Instagram account of the early marriage movement appear in the form of images (photos and sketches) with various variations. In addition to photos, marriage administration also appears in narrative form.

State law appears in the early marriage movement campaigns in the form of photos and images of marriage certificates, photos of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), and photos about marriage administrative requirements. Most marriage certificate photos show a pair of newlyweds posing, sitting, or standing, with the marriage certificate open or closed. There are also pairs of newlyweds who cover their faces with the marriage certificate for the husband and wife. Some of these photos are accompanied by short messages (brief messages) at the bottom that contain an invitation to hasten the marriage. The marriage certificate also appears in images (photos) of the marriage certificate alone, either the husband's or the wife's certificate. These marriage certificate photos are used as backgrounds for short, sentence-based marriage invitation messages. A post (caption) uploaded on February 25 and reposted on March 3, 2019, uses a marriage certificate photo as the background for a brief text: "For those who want one, please contact the nearest KUA. It cannot be bought individually; it must be a pair."

Typically, captions in the form of photos, such as those mentioned above, are accompanied by narratives from the account owner (*admin*) that include invitations to marry without neglecting marriage administration. Then, in the comments section, the admin of the early marriage movement provides brief narratives about marriage, such as wedding preparations, the idea that marriage is better than dating, or prayers for those getting married.

In addition to marriage certificates, images of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) also appear to support the narrative of encouraging early marriage. Compared with images of marriage certificates, photos of KUA appear less frequently. The KUA images come in the form of KUA nameplate signs and short narratives. The KUA nameplate sign serves as the background for a pair of marriage certificates for husband and wife, while short narratives about KUA accompany the captions of the marriage

certificate images or photos. The uploaded narratives include statements that KUA is the place for marriage administration, exemplified by a message stating that KUA is the place to obtain a marriage certificate: "for those who want one, please contact the nearest KUA."

The presence of state law regarding marriage registration is more evident in early marriage movement campaigns, as seen in a caption on the account outlining the administrative requirements for marriage.<sup>69</sup> These administrative requirements appear in two forms: as explanatory narratives (text) in admin comments and as the main Instagram status posts. The first type clarifies the brief narratives in the main message. Given its explanatory function, the narrative is quite detailed about the administrative requirements for getting married. This can be seen in a post uploaded on January 27, 2019,<sup>70</sup> which features a lengthy narrative in the comments section made by the admin. This comment narrative provides a comprehensive description of the marriage administrative procedures and requirements, including not only general requirements like passport photos and identification cards (KTP), and forms model N1, N2, and N4, but also specific requirements for widows or widowers intending to marry, or even permission for polygamy from the wife and approval from superiors for members of the military/police.

Requirements range from passport photos and identification copies to specific requirements if certain marriage conditions are not met, such as marriage dispensation for couples intending to marry underage, the wife's and Religious Court's (PA) permission for those intending to practice polygamy, or the Religious Court's permission for female partners without a guardian's consent.<sup>71</sup> Messages about marriage administrative requirements as the main status appear in the form of brief narratives about general administrative requirements for registering a marriage. The emergence of procedural and administrative regulations of

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<sup>69</sup> "Cara Mengajukan Pernikahan," Instagram, January 27, 2019, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BtH2gf2juiR/>.: <https://z-p42.www.instagram.com/p/BsZ2FY6j06i/>

<sup>70</sup> Instagram, "Gerakan Nikah Muda on Instagram."

<sup>71</sup> <https://z-p42.www.instagram.com/p/BsZ2FY6j06i/>

marriage in conveying messages about young marriage on the Genida account shows that Genida utilizes state law to spread the idea of early marriage, which tends to oppose state regulations. In other words, the Genida account uses state rules to counteract state rules.

The positive reception of marriage administration and registration among followers reflects a broader legal and normative awareness regarding the protective function of state-recognized marriage. Unlike the contested discourse on early marriage to avoid *zina*, marriage registration is widely understood as a crucial legal mechanism that anchors religious marriage within the framework of state law. Followers emphasize that administrative recognition is not merely a bureaucratic requirement but a substantive safeguard that ensures enforceable rights and obligations within marriage. From their perspective, marriage registration functions as a form of legal security, particularly for women and children, by providing access to legal remedies in cases of divorce, neglect, or inheritance disputes.<sup>72</sup> It is also seen as a preventive tool against irresponsible marital practices, such as unregistered polygamy, serial marriages, and the manipulation of marital status, which disproportionately disadvantage women. By formalizing marital relationships, administrative documentation enhances accountability and limits husbands' discretionary power.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, some followers associate marriage administration with maintaining family stability and harmony. Legal clarity regarding marital status is perceived to reduce uncertainty and conflict within households, thereby contributing to more balanced power relations between spouses.<sup>74</sup> In this sense, support for marriage registration illustrates an alignment between religious values and state law, where administrative compliance is interpreted not as state intrusion but as a means of realizing ethical and social ideals of justice, protection, and responsibility within the family.

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<sup>72</sup>Interview with NF, 16 December 2025

<sup>73</sup>Interview with NU, 16 December 2025

<sup>74</sup>Interview with AK, 16 December 2025

### **@gerakannikahmuda on Early Marriage Campaign: State in Society in the Opposition to State Law**

The campaign for early marriage through print media that focuses solely on the essential and legal conditions of marriage according to Islamic jurisprudence has, to some extent, led to the practice of unregistered marriages among young Muslims.<sup>75</sup> This contrasts with the digital campaign promoting early marriage on the movement's Instagram account. The explanation of the digital campaign in the previous section highlights the role of state law, through marriage procedures and administration, in the narrative of early marriage being promoted.

In the context of the discussion on the state's involvement in society, the early marriage campaign promoted by the Instagram account of the early marriage movement demonstrates the significant role and function of state law in this campaign. This movement leverages state policies and legal regulations on marriage procedures, administration, and costs to convey its ideas about early marriage. By posting messages about these procedures and administrative rules, the campaign promotes early marriage. These messages, which utilize policies and legal regulations governing marriage administrative procedures, are presented in various forms, including images, photos, short quotes, and detailed descriptions of marriage procedures and administrative requirements.

The use of state policies and legal regulations in the early marriage campaign highlights a strategic approach to align the movement's goals with existing legal frameworks. This alignment not only legitimizes the campaign but also provides a structured pathway for young couples considering early marriage. For instance, by posting detailed descriptions of the required documents and administrative steps needed for marriage registration, the campaign educates its audience about the legal processes involved, ensuring that the state recognizes marriages. This approach contrasts sharply with earlier print media campaigns that often ignored legal requirements, leading to a rise in unregistered and informal marriages.

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<sup>75</sup> Akhsin, *Nikah Bawah Tangan*, 40–45.

Moreover, the visual representation of legal and administrative aspects, such as images of marriage certificates and photos of couples at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), adds a tangible element to the campaign. These visuals serve to normalize the concept of early marriage within the framework of state law, making it more accessible and acceptable to the audience. By showcasing real-life examples and providing visual guides, the campaign effectively bridges the gap between the abstract legal requirements and the practical steps needed to fulfil them.

In addition to visual content, the campaign's use of short quotes and detailed descriptions further reinforces its message. Short quotes can be quickly absorbed and shared, making them ideal for social media platforms like Instagram. These quotes often encapsulate key aspects of the legal and administrative processes, making them easy to understand and remember. On the other hand, detailed descriptions provide in-depth information for those seeking a comprehensive understanding of the marriage procedures. This dual approach ensures that the campaign reaches a broad audience, catering to both those who prefer quick, digestible content and those who need detailed guidance.

Ultimately, the integration of state law into the early marriage campaign reflects a broader trend of utilizing legal frameworks to shape societal norms and behaviours. By aligning its message with state policies and regulations, the campaign not only promotes early marriage but also encourages adherence to legal standards. This approach underscores the complex interplay between state law and social movements, demonstrating how legal frameworks can be leveraged to achieve social goals while ensuring compliance with state regulations.

The use of narratives about government policies and regulations concerning marriage procedures and administration to campaign for the idea of early marriage, which tends to contravene state law, is intriguing and warrants further study. Law No. 16 of 2019 sets the minimum marriage age at 19 years. However, the early marriage movement's Instagram account sets the minimum marriage age at puberty according to Islamic jurisprudence. According to the Malikite and Hanafite schools of thought, puberty is reached at 18 years old, while the Shafi'ite



school sets it at 15 years old. This means the marriage age promoted by the early marriage movement is 1 year below the legal minimum.

Moreover, promoting a marriage age below the legal limit can justify underage marriages, thus opposing state law on marriage age. Studies by Akhsin have shown that early marriage campaigns during the print media era not only led to unregistered marriages but also influenced underage marriage practices in society.<sup>76</sup> The Genida account uses marriage procedures and administration to campaign for early marriage, highlighting the role of the state in society.

In the context of state-society relations, the presence of the state within society, even among oppositional groups reluctant to fully acknowledge it, is possible if the state holds a strong position. With its monopoly on power, the state can influence society through its regulations.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that the digital early marriage campaign by the Genida Instagram account, during a period of declining religious conservatism and increasing state consolidation, employs strategies different from those of earlier conservative movements in Indonesia's early millennial period.

State marriage laws have also influenced the ideas promoted by the Genida account regarding the minimum marriage age. Before the revision, setting the minimum age at 16 for women and 19 for men, the account only mentioned puberty as the minimum marriage age, which is 15 years according to the Shafi'i school. After the law was revised to set the minimum age at 19 for both men and women, the account's posts changed. A post on November 4, 2019, set the minimum marriage age at 18. This indicates that the revised marriage age law influenced the minimum age promoted by the Genida account, although it consistently remains one year below the legal minimum age.

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<sup>76</sup> Akhsin, *Nikah Bawah Tangan*, 40–45.

<sup>77</sup> Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton University Press, 1988).

## Conclusion

The campaign against early marriage promoted by the Instagram account @Gerakannikahmuda is a continuation of the "Indonesia Without Dating" movement spearheaded by @IndonesiaTanpaPacaran (ITP). Both were created by La Ode Munafar, a former activist of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI). The early marriage movement, with the motto "courting after marriage is fun," continues a similar movement previously carried out through print media, as evidenced by the publication of the book *Indahnya Pernikahan Dini/The beauty of Early Marriage* by Fauzil Adhim. Unlike the early marriage movement in print media, which tended to support unregistered marriages, the early marriage movement in digital spaces, as promoted by Genida, actually utilizes state marriage administration policies and laws to convey its message about marrying young. Moreover, the change in legislation regarding the minimum age for marriage from 16 years for females and 19 years for males to 19 years for both has influenced the dynamics of the ideas promoted by the Genida account. This account more clearly states that 18 years is the minimum age for marriage, whereas previously it only referred to the age of puberty.

The phenomenon of the emergence of marriage administration laws and policies regarding marriage procedures, as well as changes in the minimum age for marriage within the campaign by the Genida, indicates the role of state law in society—"state marriage law in society." In the context of the early marriage campaign by the Genida account, the presence of state law in society is evident not only in communities that are in synergy and aligned with the state's direction but also within groups that tend to oppose the state. In the broader context of state-society relations, such a phenomenon can occur when the state has a strong, established role, enabling it to co-opt civil society groups.

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