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PINCHING ONE'S OWN SKIN: POBINCI-BINCIKI KULI AS A MAQĀṢID-BASED MODEL OF RELIGIOUS COEXISTENCE

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Abstract

Indonesia's 2025 Religious Harmony Index reached its highest score in eleven years, yet its togetherness dimension remained the weakest, and attacks on minority worship continue. Passive tolerance has not yet produced active religious coexistence. This article examines pobinci-binciki kuli*, a philosophy of the Buton people of Southeast Sulawesi that teaches a person to pinch his own skin before hurting others. It asks how the four values of this philosophy correspond to the objectives of Islamic law and what model of religious coexistence follows. The study uses qualitative library research with a normative and philosophical approach. It reads al-Ghazālī, al-Shāṭibī, five classical exegeses, modern* maqāṣid *theory, and published field and historical studies of Buton through four stages of content analysis and conceptual mapping. Each value maps onto one primary objective.* Pomaa-maasiaka *(mutual affection) protects life.* Poangka-angkataka *(mutual honoring) protects dignity.* Pomae-maeka *(mutual respect) protects religion and freedom of belief.* Popia-piara *(mutual care) protects property and public interest, including houses of worship. These links yield a four-stage model of empathy, recognition, restraint, and shared protection. The theoretical contribution is a motivational dimension for* maqāṣid *theory: the law defines what must be protected, and the pinch test supplies the felt motive to protect it. The model explains the gap between high tolerance and low togetherness and offers indicators for field testing.*

Keywords: *Buton local wisdom; Interreligious relations*; *Maqāṣid al-sharīʿah; Pobinci binciki kuli; Religious coexistence*

Abstrak

Indeks Kerukunan Umat Beragama Indonesia tahun 2025 mencapai skor tertinggi dalam sebelas tahun, tetapi dimensi kebersamaan tetap paling rendah, dan serangan terhadap rumah ibadah kelompok minoritas masih terjadi. Toleransi pasif belum melahirkan koeksistensi beragama yang aktif. Artikel ini mengkaji *pobinci-binciki kuli*, falsafah masyarakat Buton di Sulawesi Tenggara yang mengajarkan seseorang mencubit kulitnya sendiri sebelum menyakiti orang lain. Kajian ini menjawab bagaimana empat nilai falsafah tersebut berkorespondensi dengan tujuan hukum Islam dan model koeksistensi beragama apa yang dapat dibangun darinya. Penelitian ini merupakan studi kepustakaan kualitatif dengan pendekatan normatif-filosofis. Kajian ini membaca karya al-Ghazālī, al-Shāṭibī, lima kitab tafsir klasik, teori *maqāṣid* modern, serta studi lapangan dan sejarah tentang Buton melalui empat tahap analisis isi dan pemetaan konseptual. Setiap nilai berkorespondensi dengan satu tujuan utama. *Pomaa-maasiaka* (saling menyayangi) menjaga jiwa. *Poangka-angkataka* (saling menghargai) menjaga kehormatan. *Pomae-maeka* (saling menghormati) menjaga agama dan kebebasan berkeyakinan. *Popia-piara* (saling memelihara) menjaga harta dan kepentingan umum, termasuk rumah ibadah. Korespondensi ini melahirkan model empat tahap: empati, pengakuan, pengendalian diri, dan perlindungan bersama. Kontribusi teoretisnya adalah dimensi motivasional bagi teori *maqāṣid*: hukum menetapkan apa yang wajib dilindungi, dan uji cubit memberi motif batin untuk melindunginya. Model ini menjelaskan kesenjangan antara toleransi yang tinggi dan kebersamaan yang rendah serta menawarkan indikator untuk diuji di lapangan.

Kata kunci: Koeksistensi beragama; Maqāṣid al-sharīʿah; Pobinci-binciki kuli; Kearifan lokal Buton; Relasi antaragama

Introduction

Indonesia ranks religious harmony among its national priorities. The state recognizes six religions and many local belief systems. The Ministry of Religious Affairs treats this diversity as a given fact that requires constant care, not a problem to remove (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019). Official data show progress. The 2025 Religious Harmony Index (*Indeks Kerukunan Umat Beragama*,

IKUB) reached 77.89, the highest score in eleven years, up from 67.46 in 2020 (Kementerian Agama RI, 2025; Azahra, 2026).

The same data also reveal a gap. The index rests on three dimensions. Tolerance scored 88.82 and equality scored 79.35. Togetherness, measured as joint participation across faiths, scored only 65.49 (Azahra, 2026). Indonesians, in other words, accept and respect their neighbors of other faiths. They do much less together with them. This article names the missing element *religious coexistenæ*. The term here means a shared life in which members of different faiths recognize one another, restrain harm toward one another, and protect one another. It differs from *tolerance*, which asks only for non-interference. It also differs from *harmony* (*kerukunan*), the term of state policy and the official index. The article uses *harmony* only when it reports that policy, the index, or the wording of other studies. Saputra found that students in a Banjarmasin *ma'had* see religious moderation as a process and tolerance as its result (Saputra, 2023, p. 142). Religious coexistence, in this sense, is a further result. It adds active protection to tolerance.

Field reports confirm that this gap carries a cost. SETARA Institute recorded 260 incidents and 402 acts that violated freedom of religion or belief in 2024, up from 217 incidents and 329 acts in 2023. Non-state actors committed 243 of the 402 acts (Indoleft, 2025). On 27 July 2025, a group attacked the prayer house of the Indonesian Faithful Christian Church (GKSI) Anugerah in Padang Sarai, West Sumatra, during a children's service. Two children, aged 8 and 11, were injured (Indra, 2025). A high national score does not protect every community. Tolerance that stops at "not interfering" leaves a minority alone when a crowd decides to interfere.

The question then becomes practical. What resources can move a community from tolerance to active protection of the other? The government promotes religious moderation as one answer (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019). Scholars also look to local wisdom, because local norms carry moral authority that state programs often

lack. The Butonese of Southeast Sulawesi hold a philosophy called *pobinci-binciki kuli*, literally "pinching one another's skin." Its core lesson is simple. Before you hurt someone, pinch your own skin. What hurts you will hurt others (Mahrudin, 2014, pp. 338, 343).

Earlier studies of local wisdom and interreligious relations show three tendencies, each with a clear limit. The first tendency studies kinship ethics. In Ambon, *pela gandong* binds villages through genealogical ties and old pacts (Muher, 2018). Jati surveys *pela gandong*, *menyama braya* in Bali, and *nemui nyimah* in Lampung as tools of conflict resolution (Jati, 2013). These ethics create strong bonds. Yet they rest on kinship or on "becoming family," so they bind members of linked groups first. Muher notes that *pela* ties do not automatically include newcomers (Muher, 2018). The second tendency studies Buton itself. Mahrudin proposes *pobinci-binciki kuli* as a resource for preaching and youth character (Mahrudin, 2014). Suhartono and Ermawati read it as a norm of the Sultanate's government (Suhartono & Ermawati, 2022). Umar traces *Sarapataanguna* in traditional houses (Umar, 2017), and Tahara, Munafi, and Malim show that *Sara Pataanguna* supports cohesion between local and migrant groups in Baubau (Tahara, Munafi, & Malim, 2021). Mutawally comes closest to the present topic. Through interviews with religious and cultural leaders, he shows that the philosophy serves as a base for interreligious harmony (Mutawally, 2023). These studies describe the philosophy well. None tests it against a normative Islamic framework. The third tendency links *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* to harmony. Romdhoni reads the work of the Interfaith Harmony Forums (FKUB) through the objectives of Islamic law (Romdhoni, 2024). Nawawi and Juandi argue for an inclusive *maqāṣid* that supports pluralism (Nawawi & Juandi, 2020). Ulumudin, Lubis, and Farid read the practices of *gotong royong* and *musyawarah* in Senduro, East Java, through a *maqāṣid*-oriented exegesis (Ulumudin, Lubis, & Farid, 2024). Their study is the nearest precedent. It treats local practice as a general expression of the objectives of the law. It does not link each local value to a specific

objective, and it does not build a model of change. Articles in this journal have also treated religion as a source of harmony (Izzuddin & Fata, 2020) and examined tolerance in the thought of Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī (Muhammad, 2020).

These bodies of work have not met. Buton studies describe without legal analysis. *Maqāṣid* studies work at the level of institutions and principles. As a result, two questions remain open. Does *pobinci-binciki kuli* stand on firm Islamic legal grounds, or is it only a pre-Islamic custom that Muslims tolerate? And can it offer a model that moves communities from tolerance to coexistence?

This article chooses *pobinci-binciki kuli* for three reasons. First, its moral test rests on self-experience, not on kinship or a pact. Every person has skin and feels pain, so the test extends to anyone, including migrants and members of other faiths. This feature answers the limit of the kinship ethics above. Second, the philosophy already sits inside an Islamic legal order. The Buton Sultanate wrote its principles into the *Martabat Tujuh* constitution (Hasaruddin, 2024, pp. 51, 53; Sritimuryati & Iriani, 2021, p. 106). A Muslim reader therefore meets it as part of Islamic political history, not as a foreign custom. Third, Baubau is a plural port city where local Butonese live with migrant groups of several ethnicities and faiths (Tahara et al., 2021). The philosophy has been tested in a mixed setting.

This article asks three questions. First, what do the four core values of *pobinci-binciki kuli* mean, and how do they form one system? Second, how does each value correspond to a specific objective of Islamic law? Third, what model of religious coexistence follows from that correspondence? The article argues that each value maps onto one primary objective: life, dignity, religion, and shared goods. Its theoretical contribution is the integration of a local ethic with *maqāṣid* theory. Classical theory tells a community what the law protects. The pinch test supplies the felt motive to protect it. The result is a four-stage model of empathy, recognition, restraint, and shared protection that targets togetherness, the weakest dimension of the IKUB.

Method

This is a qualitative study that combines library research with a normative and philosophical approach. It does not collect new field data. It reads four kinds of sources. The first kind consists of classical Islamic texts: al-Ghazālī's *al-Mustaṣfā*, al-Shāṭibī's *al-Muwāfaqāt*, and five exegeses of the Qur'an. The author checked each Arabic quotation against digital editions and cites the printed volume and page. The second kind consists of modern works on *maqāṣid* by Ibn Ashur, Kamali, and Auda (Ibn Ashur, 2006; Kamali, 2008; Auda, 2008). The third kind consists of published studies of Buton, including field interviews with religious leaders, cultural figures, and the local FKUB (Mutawally, 2023; Tahara et al., 2021). The fourth kind consists of public data: the 2025 IKUB and the 2024 monitoring report of SETARA Institute (Kementerian Agama RI, 2025; Azahra, 2026; Indoleft, 2025).

The author selected the literature by explicit criteria. Classical works qualified if they founded or systematized *maqāṣid* theory, or if they offered a recognized reading of the verses used. The exegeses represent three approaches: transmitted (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr), rational (al-Rāzī), and legal or *maqāṣid*-oriented (al-Qurṭubī, Ibn ʿĀshūr). Modern works qualified if they marked a stage in the development of the theory: its modern revival (Ibn Ashur), its systematization (Kamali), and its systems reading (Auda). Studies of Buton qualified if they appeared in a peer-reviewed journal, discussed *pobinci-binciki kuli*, *Sara Pataanguna*, or the government of the Sultanate, and reported field or archival data. Comparative studies qualified if they examined local wisdom and interreligious relations in Indonesia through *maqāṣid* or conflict resolution. Statistical data had to come from 2024 or 2025.

The theoretical framework has two layers. The first layer is the classical theory of *maqāṣid*, which defines five necessities that the law protects: religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property (al-Ghazālī, 1993, p. 174; al-Shāṭibī, 1997, vol. 2, p. 20). The second layer is the

modern expansion of this theory, which adds freedom, equality, and human dignity (Ibn Ashur, 2006; Auda, 2008). The classical layer shows that the values of *pobinci-binciki kuli* are not foreign to Islamic law. The modern layer shows how these values can work in a plural society. The analysis followed four operational stages, summarized in Table 1. Each stage produced an output that the next stage used.

Table. 01
Operational Stages of the Analysis

Stage	Operation	Output
1. Identifying units of meaning	Read the Buton studies and extract every statement that defines or illustrates one of the four values; group the statements by value	A profile of each value: meaning, object, and examples
2. Coding to a *maqṣad*	Ask two questions of each value: what object does it protect, and what harm does it prevent? Assign the objective whose definition matches both answers	A provisional code for each value
3. Textual verification	Find a verse that names the same object; check its reading in at least one classical exegesis; keep or reject the code	A verified mapping (Table 2)
4. Synthesis and application	Order the values by logical dependence; derive indicators; read the IKUB dimensions and the Padang case through the model	The four-stage model and its indicators (Table 3)

Source: Author's research design

The coding in stage 2 used two fixed questions: what object does the value protect, and what harm does it prevent? A value

received the objective whose definition matched both answers. Stage 3 then tested the code. The author kept a code only if a verse named the same object and at least one classical exegete read the verse in a compatible way. This rule rejected one earlier placement. Mutual honoring protects a person's name and standing, not descent, so the code "lineage" failed the test.

This design has a clear consequence for validity. The study claims conceptual validity, not empirical validity. It shows that the values and the objectives of the law fit together in a coherent and textually grounded way. Three steps support that claim: triangulation across several Buton studies and several exegetes, transparent coding rules, and explicit attention to counter-readings, such as classical limits on non-Muslim worship and the hierarchy of the Sultanate. The design cannot show how far Butonese people practice the philosophy today or whether the four stages occur in the predicted order. Mutawally's interviews give the model a partial empirical anchor, but they remain secondary data (Mutawally, 2023). The model should therefore be read as a set of testable propositions. Table 3 turns those propositions into indicators for field research.

Result and Discussion

Pobinci-Binciki Kuli: Meaning, History, and Four Values

The phrase *pobinci-binciki kuli* comes from the Wolio language of Buton. *Kuli* means skin, and the reduplicated verb *pobinci-binciki* expresses reciprocal pinching. Mahrudin renders the phrase as "mutual pinching of the skin" (Mahrudin, 2014, p. 338). The image carries a precise moral test. When a person pinches his own skin, he feels the pain. He then knows that others will feel the same pain if he hurts them (Mahrudin, 2014, p. 343). The philosophy thus starts from self-experience and moves outward to the other.

The philosophy belongs to the moral and legal order of the Buton Sultanate. Islam reached Buton through the preaching of Syekh Abdul Wahid. The ruler La Kilaponto embraced Islam, and Buton became a sultanate in 1542 (Mahrudin, 2014, pp. 342–343). In 1610,

Sultan Dayanu Ikhsanuddin, known as La Elangi, enacted the written constitution called *Martabat Tujuh* (Sritimuryati & Iriani, 2021, pp. 102, 106; Hasaruddin, 2024, pp. 48, 51). Sritimuryati and Iriani report that the constitution grew out of agreement among the officials and divided power among the sultan, the council of *siolimbona*, and the officials called *kinepulu* (Sritimuryati & Iriani, 2021, pp. 106–107). Hasaruddin describes *Martabat Tujuh* as "the source of all sources of law" and states that the principle of government used the concept of *binci-binciki kuli*, which he glosses as mutual consideration (*tenggang rasa*) (Hasaruddin, 2024, pp. 51, 53). Suhartono and Ermawati likewise treat *binci-binciki kuli* as a norm of government (Suhartono & Ermawati, 2022), and Mutawally links it to the same constitution (Mutawally, 2023, p. 280). The sources differ on the regnal number of La Elangi, and Sritimuryati and Iriani do not name the philosophy itself. The evidence for its place in government therefore rests mainly on three studies. Taken together, they show that the philosophy had two lives. It was a personal ethic and a public rule.

Mutawally records four values that make up the philosophy (Mutawally, 2023, p. 281). *Pomae-maeka* means mutual fear. The "fear" here does not mean terror. It means a respect that keeps a person from violating the rights of others. *Pomaa-maasiaka* means mutual affection. It asks people to love one another regardless of religion. *Popia-piara* means mutual care and protection. People look after one another and defend one another. *Poangka-angkataka* means mutual honoring. People raise each other's standing and do not humiliate one another.

These four values form one ethical system, not a loose list. Three features make them a system. First, they share one source. Each value applies the pinch test to a different area of life: the body, the name, the faith, and the goods of the other. Second, they share one logic. All four terms carry the reciprocal form that the sources render as "mutual." No value binds only the stronger party or only the weaker one. Third, each value performs a distinct function. Respect

sets the boundary of action. Honoring sets the status of the other. Affection fills the relationship with feeling. Protection gives it strength in practice. Remove one function and the others weaken. Affection without honoring turns into pity. Honoring without protection stays on the level of words. The Butonese sources link the four values to the wider ethic of *Sara Pataanguna*, which still shapes relations between local and migrant groups in Baubau (Tahara et al., 2021) and even the design of traditional houses (Umar, 2017).

The pre-Islamic roots of the philosophy raise a fair question. Is it an Islamic value at all? The core intuition, "do not do to others what hurts you," predates Islam in Buton. Islam did not erase it. The sultans adopted it and wrote it into an Islamic constitution (Hasaruddin, 2024, p. 53; Mahrudin, 2014, pp. 342–343). Islamic legal theory has a category for such cases. Custom (*ʿurf*) that does not contradict revelation can serve the law. The stronger test, however, is not origin but substance. The next sections ask whether each value matches what the law itself seeks to protect.

Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah: From Protection to Coexistence

The theory of *maqāṣid* starts from one claim. The law exists for the benefit of human beings. Al-Shāṭibī states it directly:

وَضْعَ الشَّرَائِعِ إِنَّمَا هُوَ لِمَصَالِحِ الْعِبَادِ فِي الْعَاجِلِ وَالْآجِلِ مَعًا

"The laws were established only for the benefit of human beings, in this life and the next together" (al-Shāṭibī, 1997, vol. 2, p. 9).

Al-Ghazālī had already defined that benefit as the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property (al-Ghazālī, 1993, p. 174). Al-Shāṭibī repeated the list:

وَمَجْمُوعُ الضَّرُورِيَّاتِ خَمْسَةٌ، وَهِيَ: حِفْظُ الدِّينِ، وَالنَّفْسِ، وَالنَّسْلِ، وَالْمَالِ، وَالْعَقْلِ

"The necessities are five in total: the protection of religion, life, lineage, property, and intellect" (al-Shāṭibī, 1997, vol. 2, p. 20).

The four theorists used in this article contribute different things. Al-Ghazālī supplies the categories. He fixed the five necessities and made the protection of the law's objectives the test of a valid

public interest (al-Ghazālī, 1993, p. 174). Al-Shāṭibī supplies the levels. He ranked interests as necessities (*ḍarūriyyāt*), needs (*ḥājiyyāt*), and refinements (*taḥsīniyyāt*), and he turned the objectives into a method for reading the whole law (al-Shāṭibī, 1997; Kamali, 2008). Ibn Ashur supplies the social scope. He moved the objectives from the individual to the order of society and added freedom (*ḥurriyya*) and equality (*musāwāt*) (Ibn Ashur, 2006). Auda supplies the language of rights. He reads the objectives as an open system and shifts their language from protection to development. In his reading, the protection of religion includes freedom of belief, and the protection of honor (*ḥifẓ al-ʿirḍ*), which al-Qarāfī added to the list, becomes the protection of human dignity (Auda, 2008). The mapping below uses all four. Al-Ghazālī's categories name the objectives. Al-Shāṭibī's levels rank them. Ibn Ashur's and Auda's expansions extend them to the neighbor of another faith.

This expansion matters for minority rights. The classical scholars wrote mainly about the Muslim community and its internal order. The modern expansion changes the bearer of the protected good. If the law protects life, faith, dignity, and property as human goods, then every human being holds them, whatever his religion. Nawawi and Juandi draw this line in Indonesia. They contrast an "exclusive" *maqāṣid* that serves only one community with an "inclusive" one that protects pluralism, equality, and peace (Nawawi & Juandi, 2020). In the inclusive reading, the protection of a non-Muslim neighbor is not a concession. It is an objective of the law itself. Romdhoni reaches a parallel conclusion about the FKUB (Romdhoni, 2024). The theory, however, still lacks a method. It tells a community what to protect. It does not tell people how to feel the duty to protect. Here *pobinci-binciki kuli* offers something the theory lacks.

Mapping the Four Values onto the Maqāṣid

This section links each value to one primary objective of the law. It applies the two coding questions from the Method: the object

protected and the harm prevented. Each link rests on a Qur'anic verse and a classical exegesis.

Pomaa-maasiaka and the protection of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*). Mutual affection protects the person and prevents bodily harm. The Qur'an states:

مَن قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا

"Whoever kills a soul, not in retaliation for a soul or for corruption in the land, it is as if he had killed all of humanity. And whoever saves one, it is as if he had saved all of humanity" (Q 5:32).

The verse speaks of "a soul" (*nafs*) without naming a religion. Ibn Kathīr explains why one murder equals the murder of all people:

لِأَنَّهُ لَا فَرْقَ عِنْدَهُ بَيْنَ نَفْسٍ وَنَفْسٍ

"Because, to him, there is no difference between one soul and another" (Ibn Kathīr, 1999, vol. 3, p. 92).

The pinch logic follows the same line. The pain in my skin is the same as the pain in my neighbor's skin, whatever his religion. *Pomaa-maasiaka* turns the abstract equality of souls into a felt fact.

Poangka-angkataka and the protection of dignity (*ḥifẓ al-ʿirḍ*). Mutual honoring protects a person's name, standing, and self-respect. It prevents insult, mockery, and contempt. Both answers point to honor (*ʿirḍ*), not to lineage (*nasl*). Lineage concerns descent and family. Honor concerns dignity. Al-Qarāfī listed honor as a separate necessity, and Auda reads it as human dignity (Auda, 2008). The Qur'an grounds this value in the shared origin of all people:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَى وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ

"O humankind, We created you from a male and a female and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may know one another. The most honored of you before God is the most pious of you" (Q 49:13).

Al-Rāzī reads the verse as a denial of every worldly ground for pride:

فَالنَّاسُ فِيمَا لَيْسَ مِنَ الدِّينِ وَالتَّقْوَى مُتَسَاوُونَ مُتَقَارِبُونَ

"In what is not religion and piety, people are equal and close to one another" (al-Rāzī, 1999, vol. 28, p. 112).

Piety is known only to God. Human beings therefore have no basis for humiliating one another. The protection of intellect (***ḥifẓ al-ʿaql***) enters only as a derivative link. The verse ends with *li-taʿārafū*, "so that you may know one another." Contempt closes the mind to the other, while honor keeps it open to dialogue. Intellect benefits from honor. It is not the object that honor protects.

Pomae-maeka and the protection of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*). Mutual "fear" protects the right of others to believe and prevents coercion and unjust treatment. The Qur'an sets the principle: "There is no compulsion in religion" (Q 2:256). In a modern reading, the protection of religion includes the freedom of each person to hold and practice a faith (Auda, 2008; Ibn Ashur, 2006). Respect, however, must also hold under tension:

وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَآنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَى أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا اعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَى

"Do not let hatred of a people lead you to be unjust. Be just; that is nearer to piety" (Q 5:8).

Pomae-maeka names the inner restraint this verse requires. A person who "fears" to violate others does not wait for the law to stop him. He stops himself.

Popia-piara and the protection of shared goods (*ḥifẓ al-māl* and *al-maṣlaḥa al-ʿāmma*). Mutual care protects the things people hold and share: homes, land, and places of worship. It prevents destruction and seizure. These objects are property, and places of worship are also collective goods that serve a whole community. The value therefore belongs to the protection of property and of public interest. The Qur'an names houses of worship directly:

وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَهُدِّمَتْ صَوَامِعُ وَبِيَعٌ وَصَلَوَاتٌ وَمَسَاجِدُ يُذْكَرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا

"Had God not repelled some people by means of others, monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, in which God's name is much remembered, would have been destroyed" (Q 22:40).

Classical exegetes drew a legal rule from this verse. Al-Qurṭubī quotes Ibn Khuwayz Mindād:

تَضَمَّنَتْ هَذِهِ الْآيَةُ الْمَنْعَ مِنْ هَدْمِ كَنَائِسِ أَهْلِ الذِّمَّةِ وَبِيَعِهِمْ وَبُيُوتِ نِيرَانِهِمْ

"This verse entails the prohibition of demolishing the churches, synagogues, and fire temples of the protected non-Muslims" (al-Qurṭubī, 1964, vol. 12, p. 70).

Ibn ʿĀshūr quotes the same rule and explains its reason. These places carry a religious benefit, the remembrance of God's name (Ibn Ashur, 1984, vol. 17, p. 279). The same sources, however, also limit the rule. Al-Qurṭubī reports that the protected communities could not build new places of worship or enlarge old ones (al-Qurṭubī, 1964, vol. 12, p. 70). Ibn ʿĀshūr adds that fire temples fall outside the verse and owe their protection to the *dhimma* contract (Ibn Ashur, 1984, vol. 17, p. 279). These limits belong to a political order based on that contract. The following step is the author's own argument. In a modern nation-state, equal citizenship has replaced the *dhimma* contract as the legal basis of protection. The object of the rule stays the same, but its basis widens. The classical prohibition of destroying places of worship therefore holds, and the classical limits lose the contract that supported them. A second verse defines the active duty toward peaceful neighbors:

لَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

"God does not forbid you from being kind and just to those who have not fought you over religion or driven you from your homes. God loves the just" (Q 60:8).

Al-Ṭabarī reviews several views on whom the verse addresses and prefers the widest one:

عُنِيَ بِذَلِكَ: لَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ جَمِيعِ أَصْنَافِ الْمِلَلِ وَالْأَدْيَانِ، أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتَصِلُوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ

"It means: God does not forbid you, regarding those of all kinds of creeds and religions who have not fought you over religion, from being kind to them, keeping ties with them, and dealing justly with them" (al-Ṭabarī, 2001, vol. 22, p. 574).

The duty in this verse is active: kindness (*birr*), keeping ties (*ṣila*), and justice (*qisṭ*). *Popia-piara* gives this duty a local form. Neighbors guard one another's homes, help at one another's events, and defend one another's places of worship. Table 2 summarizes the mapping.

Table. 02
The Four Values of Pobinci-Binciki Kuli and Their Maqāṣid Anchors

Value (meaning)	Primary *maqṣad* (derivative link)	Object protected; harm prevented	Qur'anic and exegetical basis	Stage in the model
Pomaa-maasiaka (mutual affection)	*Ḥifẓ al-nafs* (life)	The person; bodily harm	Q 5:32; Ibn Kathīr: no difference between one soul and another	1. Empathy (with the pinch test)
Poangka-angkataka (mutual honoring)	*Ḥifẓ al-ʿirḍ* (dignity); derivative: *ḥifẓ al-ʿaql*	Name and standing; insult and contempt	Q 49:13; al-Rāzī: people are equal in all but piety	2. Recognition

Value (meaning)	Primary *maqṣad* (derivative link)	Object protected; harm prevented	Qur'anic and exegetical basis	Stage in the model
Pomae-maeka (mutual respect)	*Ḥifẓ al-dīn* (religion and freedom of belief)	The right to believe; coercion and injustice	Q 2:256; Q 5:8	3. Restraint
Popia-piara (mutual care and protection)	*Ḥifẓ al-māl* and *al-maṣlaḥa al-ʿāmma* (property and public interest)	Homes, land, houses of worship; destruction and seizure	Q 22:40 (al-Qurṭubī; Ibn ʿĀshūr); Q 60:8 (al-Ṭabarī)	4. Shared protection

Source: Author's analysis of Mutawally (2023, p. 281) and the classical sources cited above

The mapping shows two things. First, every value has a clear anchor in the objectives of the law. The philosophy is not a pre-Islamic remainder that Islam merely tolerates. Second, the values cover all three of al-Shāṭibī's levels. *Pomaa-maasiaka*, *pomae-maeka*, and *popia-piara* protect necessities: life, religion, and property. *Popia-piara* also serves the level of needs, because mutual help makes social life workable. *Poangka-angkataka* works at the level of refinement in daily courtesy, while its core, freedom from humiliation, touches the necessity of honor. *Pobinci-binciki kuli* is therefore a complete ethic, not a partial one.

The Pobinci Model: From Tolerance to Coexistence

The four values can be arranged as four stages, one value per stage. Each stage rests on the one before it. The order runs from feeling to action and from negative duties to a positive one.

The first stage is empathy. It joins the pinch test with *pomaa-maasiaka*. A person tests an action on his own skin before he directs

it at others, and the shared pain turns into affection. This stage converts the abstract equality of souls in Q 5:32 into personal experience. It supplies what the classical theory lacks: an inner motive to protect.

The second stage is recognition, carried by *poangka-angkataka*. Once a person feels the other's pain as real, he must accept the other as an equal in dignity. Q 49:13 removes every worldly ground for contempt. Without this stage, affection turns into pity for a lesser person.

The third stage is restraint, carried by *pomae-maeka*. Recognition alone does not prevent harm under pressure. Restraint is the discipline that holds even when anger rises, as Q 5:8 requires. It protects the other's freedom of faith.

The fourth stage is shared protection, carried by *popia-piara*. Here the community moves from "I will not harm you" to "I will defend you." Al-Ṭabarī's reading of Q 60:8 gives this stage its legal ground. Q 22:40 gives it a concrete object: the houses of worship of every community.

The logic of the sequence is cumulative. Stages two and three set negative duties: do not humiliate and do not violate. Stage four sets a positive duty: protect. A positive duty asks more of a person than a negative one, so it depends on the earlier stages. A person who does not see his neighbor as an equal will not risk anything to defend him.

The national data fit this sequence, although only approximately. Three IKUB dimensions correspond to three stages. Tolerance matches restraint. Equality matches recognition. Togetherness matches shared protection. The scores fall in the order the model predicts: 88.82, then 79.35, then 65.49 (Azahra, 2026). The further a stage moves from avoiding harm toward joint action, the lower the score. The SETARA data add a second point. Non-state actors committed 243 of the 402 violations in 2024 (Indoleft, 2025). These acts show failures of restraint inside communities, not only

failures of state policy. Two cautions apply. The IKUB was not designed to measure this model, and national averages hide regional variation. The fit is therefore a pattern worth testing, not proof. The index also has no measure of empathy, the first stage. That absence is itself a finding. National policy measures behavior and attitudes but not the motive that drives them.

The Padang case shows how the stages fail in sequence (Indra, 2025). Empathy failed first: the attackers did not test the pain of their act on themselves, although the victims were children. Recognition failed next: the attackers treated the congregation's right to pray as illegitimate. Restraint failed when anger turned into broken windows and injured children. Shared protection failed last: no neighbors stood between the crowd and the prayer house. The case also shows where intervention is cheapest. A failure at the fourth stage is visible and urgent. Its causes, however, lie at the first and second stages, which education and preaching can reach long before a crisis.

Table 3 turns the model into indicators. Each indicator can be measured with existing data or a short survey. Together they allow a district or a forum to see at which stage a community stands.

Table. 03
Indicators for Testing the Pobinci Model

Stage (value)	Indicator	Data source
1. Empathy (*pomaa-maasiaka*)	Share of respondents who judge an attack on another faith's house of worship as wrong as an attack on their own	Attitude survey of students or residents
2. Recognition (*poangka-angkataka*)	IKUB equality score; frequency of degrading speech about other faiths in local sermons and social media	IKUB; content monitoring

Stage (value)	Indicator	Data source
3. Restraint (*pomae-maeka*)	IKUB tolerance score; violations of religious freedom by non-state actors in the district	IKUB; SETARA Institute annual report
4. Shared protection (*popia-piara*)	IKUB togetherness score; number of joint interfaith activities; joint guards at houses of worship during festivals; FKUB early-warning actions	IKUB; FKUB and district records

Source: Author's elaboration of the model

The Buton evidence suggests that such routines are possible. Mutawally's informants, who include the chair of the local FKUB, describe *pobinci-binciki kuli* as a living base for relations across religions in Buton and Baubau (Mutawally, 2023, pp. 281–284). The Haul tradition in Lampung offers a parallel in which a religious commemoration builds cohesion and supports public safety (Hidayat, Salim, & Setiawan, 2025). In both cases, a local practice carries a public good that state programs struggle to produce alone.

Theoretical Implications

The model has three theoretical implications. First, it adds a motivational dimension to *maqāṣid* theory. Classical and modern theorists define what the law protects. They say less about why a person would act to protect it. The pinch test fills that gap without changing the objectives themselves. Second, it shows that local wisdom can serve as a partner of exegesis in *uṣūl al-dīn*, not only as an object of anthropology. The local ethic sheds light on verses about life, dignity, and justice. The verses, in turn, purify the ethic of hierarchy and exclusivism. Recent work in this journal calls for readings that join the text to social reality (Firdaus & Nurhayati, 2025), and the model offers one concrete method. Third, it redefines coexistence as a sequence with a positive duty at its end. This step

separates the model from three nearby approaches. Romdhoni works at the level of institutions (Romdhoni, 2024). Nawawi and Juandi work at the level of principles (Nawawi & Juandi, 2020). Ulumudin, Lubis, and Farid read local practice as a general expression of the objectives (Ulumudin et al., 2024). The *pobinci* model works at the level of the person and the neighborhood and links each value to one objective.

Conclusion

This article examined the Butonese philosophy of *pobinci-binciki kuli* through the objectives of Islamic law. It answered three questions. First, the four values form one ethical system with a single source in the pinch test, a shared reciprocal logic, and four distinct functions. The philosophy also held a place in the government of the Buton Sultanate through the *Martabat Tujuh* constitution. Second, each value matches one primary objective of the law. Mutual affection (*pomaa-maasiaka*) protects life. Mutual honoring (*poangka-angkataka*) protects dignity, with intellect as a derivative link, not lineage. Mutual respect (*pomae-maeka*) protects religion and freedom of belief. Mutual care (*popia-piara*) protects property and public interest, including the houses of worship of every community. Third, these links yield a four-stage model of empathy, recognition, restraint, and shared protection.

The main theoretical contribution is a bridge between local wisdom and Islamic law. The law supplies the normative ground: what must be protected and why. The local ethic supplies the felt motive: the reason a person acts to protect it. Neither works as well alone. For interreligious coexistence, the model explains why Indonesia scores high on tolerance but low on togetherness. Communities have learned to avoid harm. They have not yet learned to defend one another. The model locates that missing step and gives it moral and legal weight. Field research in Buton, Baubau, and Wakatobi should now test the indicators in Table 3 and compare the pinch test with similar ethics in other regions.

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