THE PHENOMENON OF GHOSTING IN THE FAMILY AND THE CONCEPT OF MAFQUD IN ISLAMIC LAW

M. Faiz Nashrullah¹, Muhammad Nuruddien²
¹Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati
Bandung Indonesia
fnashrullah@gmail.com
²Universitas Al-Azhar
Tanta Mesir
nuruddien2@gmail.com

Abstract: In recent years, a new phenomenon has emerged in society that is interesting to study, namely Ghosting. This phenomenon means the sudden disappearance of someone who is in a relationship with someone else without any previous reason or explanation. This practice is considered normal by society because it is generally carried out by young couples whose bond is limited to mutual liking and love. However, problems will arise if ghosting is carried out by couples who are already bound by a marriage contract, because it will have a more complex impact on the family. Islamic law has made provisions regarding missing persons in the concept of mafqud, although it cannot be completely equated with the phenomenon of ghosting. The type of research in this article is normative research combined with a conceptual and comparative approach. The results of this research reveal that Ghosting in the family has several similarities with couples who are mafqud or declared missing in discussions of Islamic marriage law, namely that they are both considered missing and have left the family. However, the motives and intentions of ghosting perpetrators are different from those of people who are considered mafqud in Islamic law, so the legal implications that arise between ghosting perpetrators and people who are mafqud cannot simply be equated, a more in-depth analysis is needed in studying about ghosting and mafqud.

Keywords: Comparasion; Ghosting; Mafqud;

Introduction

The practice of ghosting couples went viral among social media in late 2021 to early 2022. This phenomenon is increasingly discussed when one of the sons of the President of the Republic of Indonesia practices ghosting on his partner. The incident had made headlines in various national media, both print and digital. As reported in
cnnindonesia.com and news.detik.com which reported that the phenomenon of ghosting is indeed being discussed a lot among young people, especially those who are in a special relationship with the opposite sex.

The term ghosting refers to nahasa, an English ghost which means ghost. But ghosting in this case is not interpreted as a ghost, but refers to one of the traits or characteristics possessed by ghosts, namely disappearing. According to psychologists from Gunadarma University, Meity Arianty, STP., M. Psi. ghosting is a condition where one partner deliberately disappears without giving clear news. This phenomenon has actually happened a lot before but has become increasingly viral since the number of online dating applications and social media. Although it often occurs in romantic relationships or romance, ghosting can also target friendships, work relationships, and other community relationships.¹

Islam regulates the relationship between husband and wife in Sura an-Nisa verse 19 which states that the husband should treat his wife ma'ruj, and vice versa. The meaning of the word ma'ruj here is to treat the wife kindly and reasonably. In a hadith narrated by Imam Tirmidhi, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said that you are the best to his wife. Some of the above verses and hadith quotes show that Islam is very concerned about the good relationship between husband and wife in marriage.²

The Marriage Law No.1 of 1974 and the Compilation of Islamic Law regulate the relationship of husband and wife in marriage through the exposure of the rights and obligations of husband and wife in marriage. The duties of the husband towards the wife include dowry and bread, both dzohir and mental bread. While the wife's most important obligation is to be filial to the husband born and inward, as long as it does not conflict with religious and legal provisions. The size of the income and dowry that

---

² H.R. At-Tirmidzi, No 3895 and Ibnu dan Majah, No. 1977,
must be given by the husband to the wife, as well as the form of filial piety of the wife to the husband are adjusted to the 'urf or culture of reasonable community customs.³

Government Regulation No. 9 of 1975 concerning the Implementation of the Marriage Law states in Article 19 paragraph 2 that if one spouse, either husband or wife intentionally disappears without giving news for two years, then the party left behind can use this reason as the basis for an application for separation or divorce in court. Furthermore, when viewed from the point of view of Law No. 23 of 2004 concerning the Elimination of Domestic Violence, the disappearance of a spouse without news that causes the abandonment of family members is included in one of the categories of domestic violence, namely neglect.

Harry Kurniawan and Maisuriati also wrote an article with the theme mafqud entitled Basis for Judges' Considerations in the Decision of Mafqud's Husband's Divorce Case, (Analysis of Decision Number 0205/Pdt.G/2016/MS.Ttn), Al-Murshalah Vol. 03 No. 01, June 2017. This study analyzes the judge's decision that determined the husband of mafqud even though it has not been up to two years as mentioned in the compilation of Islamic law article 116 point (b). The condition of being hanged without a clear status even though it was not even two years left by the husband made the judge moved to provide justice for the woman petitioner.⁴ Farahsyinta Gladisia Puspa Fardiana compiled a thesis entitled Husband mafqud in civil regulations in Indonesia and Malaysia. This study compares positive laws in Indonesia and Malaysia related to the status of a mafqud husband or wife. Then the data obtained are analyzed using the theory of legal certainty. The results showed that both in positive law in Indonesia have discussed the husband mafqud but have not provided a clear certainty of time limit as the waiting period for the couple to be left behind.⁵

---

⁵ Farahsyinta Gladisia Puspa Fardiana, "Suami Mafqud Dalam Regulasi Keperdataan Di Indonesia Dan Malaysia (Kajian Perspektif Teori Kepastian Hukum)“ (2021).
From some of the studies above, it can be concluded that no researcher has analyzed the phenomenon of ghosting compared to the concept of mafqud in Islamic law. The first researcher focused more on comparing the waiting period of the husband or wife who was left behind. The second researcher analyzed the number of mafqud cases in the Riau Provincial Religious Court carried out by husbands, showing that the community still needs to be given a lot of education about the importance of responsibility in marriage.

This research is included in the juridical-normative research category. Researchers attempt to describe the phenomenon of ghosting in domestic life and relate it to provisions in Islamic law, especially the study of mafqud. Thus, a literature review (normative) on law (juridical) is the right choice in completing this research. The approach used in this study is two approaches, namely the comparative approach and the conceptual approach. Comparative approach is used to examine similarities and differences related to the object of study of researchers who in this case raise the problem of ghosting in the family and the concept of mafqud. The next approach, the conceptual approach, will examine the concepts that can be found about the theme to be studied by researchers sourced from classical or contemporary Islamic law.

**Ghosting Practices in the Family**

The term ghosting emerged along with the term breadcrumbing as a result of the increasing number of couples who have relationships through online dating applications. Over time, ghosting behavior is not only carried out by couples who are in relationships online, but couples who are in direct relationships can also ghosting

---

7 Fakultas Syari’ah, “Pedoman Penulisan Skripsi” (Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, 2019).
their partners, even couples who are officially married are also often found ghosting their partners.

Ghosting comes from the noun "ghost". According to the Cambridge Dictionary, ghosting means a way of abruptly ending a relationship with someone by stopping all communication with them. Ghosting refers to "unilateral decisions on individuals that encourage the dissolution of relationships, either suddenly or gradually, generally enforced through one or more technological media."⁹

There are several indications that show that one married couple has practiced ghosting for the other couple. First, one party leaves the other. Ghosting perpetrators usually leave their partners without providing clear information or reasons. Including this indication is a couple who originally left the family on good terms for obvious reasons such as making a living overseas but later deliberately betrayed the reasons that had been given to their family.¹⁰

Second, the Partner does not provide clear information. Every family member has the right to have information regarding the condition of other family members. Ghosting perpetrators usually deliberately do not provide information about themselves and deliberately hide their whereabouts to their families. Hidden information can be in the form of conditions of existence to information when the perpetrator will return to the family to account for his actions.¹¹

Third, the perpetrator does not provide clarity on the relationship. The couple who left did not provide clarity and certainty regarding the marital status lived during separation and did not give any indication, whether to continue their status as husband and wife or decide to divorce. This is very detrimental to the party left behind because on the one hand he still has the status of a legal partner of someone, but in essence

---

he lives alone, bears the burden of family responsibilities and is hindered from finding a new partner who can be used as a partner in supporting the family.\textsuperscript{12}

One of the factors that cause ghosting in the household is the disharmony of relationships between spouses, the reason most often found in divorce decrees issued by religious courts. Relationship disharmony can occur for several reasons, such as continuous disagreements and poor communication carried out by each partner. A study says that disharmony due to poor communication occurs more after couples have children.\textsuperscript{13} Couples who have not had children tend not to face problems related to communication but do not rule out the possibility of disharmony due to other factors such as loneliness and dissatisfaction facing trials.

The next factor that causes ghosting in the family is economic factors, this can happen because of two things, first because the husband is lazy to make a living, second because the wife is less grateful for what the husband gets. To avoid this problem, each partner must get rid of each other’s egos and prioritize mutual and family interests. Couples who are in charge of earning a living make every effort to get sufficient results, while those who do not earn a living must understand the conditions and not demand too much.\textsuperscript{14}

\textbf{The concept of mafqud in Islamic law}

The word al-mafqud in Arabic literally means 'lost'. It says faqadtu ash-shay’a idzaa adha’tuhu (I lose if I don’t know where something is).\textsuperscript{15} Allah Almighty says in verse 72 of Surah Yusuf which means the following: "The messengers said we lost the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[\textsuperscript{15}] Beni Ahmad Saebani, \textit{Fiqh Mawaris} (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2009).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
king's cup, and whoever can return it will get food (as heavy) as the camel's burden, and I guarantee against it." In the above verse there is lafad nafqidu which means we lost.

Whereas according to the term of the fuqaha, al-mafqud means a person who is missing, cut off from news, and unknown to the jungle, whether he is alive or dead. Mafqud can also be interpreted as him who is missing, his condition is unknown, whether he is alive or dead. In other words, what people mean is that a person who leaves and disappears is uncertain of his fate, his residence and address are unknown, nor is it known whether the person is alive or dead.

In the fiqh mawaris it is stated that a missing person (mafqud) is a person whose life or death is no longer known, or one whose news is cut off, and it is not known where he is now. The fuqaha have enacted several laws pertaining to missing persons, including that his wife cannot be married and his property cannot be inherited, and his property rights must not be violated.

This legal effect for a person who is mafqud is valid until it is fully known whether he is alive or dead, or has passed for a certain time and is generally presumed to have died, and the qadhi (judge) establishes him as a person who is presumed dead. Sometimes it can also be designated as a living person according to the law of origin, until it really appears to be the opposite conjecture (actually dead). This opinion is based on the sayings of sayyidina Ali ibn Abi Talib (r.a.) about women whose husbands are missing and unknown to the jungle. Ali said:

"She is a wife who is being tested, so she should be patient, and it is not lawful to marry until she has convincing news of her husband's death."

Hanafi and Shafi'iyah scholars argue that the time limit is unnecessary. The limit for determining the death of mafqud in the opinion of Hanafiyyah scholars is to be

---

guided by the deaths of his peers in his area. The point is that by no longer living comrades of the age of mafqud in the area, it means that the mafqud concerned is also considered dead. Shafi'iyyah scholars argue that the determination of the time limit is entirely the domain of ijtihad for judges, with reference to the time limit or custom in which it is no longer possible for people to live above that age limit.

The determination that a person has been considered a mafqud is based on the date or time when strong evidence of the death of the mafqud concerned or when the judge decides the death of the mafqud. If the determination is based on ijtihad or supposition,20 There are two opinions of the imam of the madhhab: First, Imam Abu Haneefa and Imam Malik argue that the time of death of the mafqud is considered to be from the date of the disappearance of the mafqud concerned. Since that date he is considered to have mafqud. The consequence is that the heirs of the mafqud who died before that date are not entitled to the inheritance of the mafqud concerned because the inheritance only applies to the heirs who were alive on the date the mafqud began to disappear. In contrast to Imam Shafi'i and Imam Ahmad who argue that the mafqud is considered to have died from the date of his declaration of death, thus the mafqud is entitled to inheritance from his heir who died before the date of death of the mafqud, and the heirs of the mafqud are entitled to inheritance from the mafqud concerned if the heirs were still alive at the time the mafqud was declared dead about the period that can be decided by the judge that the mafqud has died.

Hanafi scholars argue that the mafqud is considered dead if people of the same age as him in his area have all died, so that no one is still alive, that is, when the age of mafqud is about 90 years. Maliki scholars argue that the deadline is 70 years, on the basis of the hadith of the Messenger which states that the age of my people ranges from 60 to 70 years. However, the most valid opinion in this case is not based on a specific number of times but on evidence, i.e. if there has been evidence for the judge

of the death of the mafqud concerned, then on the basis of that evidence the judge determines the death of the mafqud concerned and that after a period in which it is customary that a person can no longer live beyond that age.

Hanabilah scholars argue that if the mafqud is lost in an atmosphere where it is possible that it has perished, such as a fierce battle in which both sides face each other in an attack, or the sinking of the means of transport used, where there is difficulty in detecting between survivors and non-survivors. Then in this case it is waited until the deadline of four years. But if he is lost in an atmosphere where the possibility of death is small, such as going to trade, traveling, or studying, then in this case there are two opinions: first, It is waited until the person concerned is 90 years old because usually above this age there is already a slim chance for a person to survive. Second, it is left to the judge’s discretion in his court hearing that legally results in one of two decisions, each of which has consequences in the inheritance system.21

In Islamic marriage law in Indonesia, there is no specific discussion about a mafqud husband or wife. But if one of the husbands or wives neglects their obligations, whether intentional or not, then each aggrieved party can file a separation lawsuit with the religious court. Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage and the Compilation of Islamic Law does not clearly stipulate what a wife must do with her husband. However, Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage and the Compilation of Islamic Law clearly stipulates the basis or reason for divorce. Article 38 and Article 39 paragraphs (1) and (2) of Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage, Article 38 which states that: “Marriage may be broken due to: a) death, b) divorce and c) upon court decision.” While Article 39 states that: (1) Divorce can only be carried out before a court session after the court concerned has tried and failed to reconcile both parties. (2) To divorce there must be sufficient reason, that between the husband and wife will not be able to live in harmony as husband and wife.

---

In the Compilation of Islamic Law in Article 114 which reads: "The breakup of marriage caused by divorce can occur due to thalaq or based on a divorce suit." Conducting a divorce as well as must be accompanied by reasons acceptable to the recipient or court agencies, especially the Religious Courts, which has been stipulated in the Compilation of Islamic Law in Article 116. The two-year period used as the minimum limit for filing a divorce lawsuit is the result of the judge's ijtihad which is based on the opinions of madhab scholars and positive law which is then linked to the reality in the field. The existence of a faster verdict will provide a nuance of legal certainty for the wife left behind.

The legal basis for divorce due to mafqud husband as explained as follows: Article 19 (b) One party leaves the other party for 2 (two) consecutive years without the permission of the other party and without a valid reason or because of other things beyond his ability. In the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI) it is also stated as follows: Article 116 letter (b) One party leaves the other party for 2 (two) consecutive years without the permission of the other party and without a valid reason or because of other things beyond his ability. Article 133 explains that a divorce lawsuit for the reasons mentioned in article 116 point b, can be filed after 2 years from the time the defendant leaves home. A lawsuit can be accepted if the defendant states or submits an attitude that he no longer wants to return to the joint residence. In Article 34 of the Law. No. 1 of 1974 also states If the husband or wife neglects their obligations, either party may file a lawsuit with the court.

**Similarities and differences between Ghosting and Mafqud**

In the previous discussion, it has been explained that ghosting has three main characteristics, namely one party leaves the other party, the partner does not provide clear information, and the perpetrator does not provide clarity regarding the relationship status. Although there are many other indications carried out by ghosting perpetrators such as blocking all kinds of access to themselves and changing their
identity and status illegally, the three characteristics above are enough to represent other indications.

From some of the characteristics above, it can be seen that the perpetrators of ghosting have some similarities with couples who mafqud or are declared missing in the discussion of Islamic marriage law, which are both considered to have left the family. But ghosting perpetrators tend to do this intentionally and feel that what is done is normal. Ghosting perpetrators feel that what is done is appropriate and appropriate behavior for certain reasons. Often the perpetrator of ghosting does not cover his existence from the family, but he still ignores what has become his responsibility. This is certainly different from the mafqud couple because it is not known their existence and status at all.

Although it has some differences, there are also many similarities between the practice of ghosting and the concept of mafqud in Islam. The discussion of classical Islamic law related to the concept of mafqud is generally associated with the theme of inheritance law because the person who mafqud will be considered dead so that the property left behind can be immediately distributed to his heirs. Similarities can also be seen in the condition of the family left behind, both ghosting victims and mafqud victims are both abandoned by the perpetrator in an abandoned state and there is no clarity on their marital status.

Similarly, the fate of children left behind by their parents either because of ghosting or mafqud, both cause children to become unclear status. If a child is officially declared dead by his parents then he has the status of an orphan which in Islamic tradition is highly recommended to be helped in life. While children who are victims of ghosting or victims of mafqud in theory cannot be considered orphans because their

---

23 Harry Kurniawan dan Maisuriati, Dasar Pertimbangan Hakim Dalam Putusan Perkara Cerai Gugat Suami Mafqud, 9
parental status still exists, but in practice there are no parents to protect and support their daily lives so it is not clear to whom they should depend on their needs.

From the point of view of the legal consequences caused, there is a difference between ghosting and mafqud. Because in essence the person who ghosting his status is still alive while mafqud is declared dead by the court. The family left behind by the mafqud can receive an inheritance based on the judge's ruling and the wife left behind can remarry the new spouse. Unlike the legal consequences of ghosting where there is no decision on the death of the perpetrator, but the current situation forces the theory of mafqud to be applied in terms of divorce even though it does not consider the person who mafqud died. Considering a couple who is ghosting as a mafqud person can provide clarity of status to the couple whose fate is hanged.

Table 1: Similarities and Differences of Ghosting and mafqud

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Ghosting</th>
<th>Mafqud</th>
<th>Indication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Spouses disappear and leave the family</td>
<td>Spouses disappear and leave the family</td>
<td>same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Motive or intention</td>
<td>Intentional and planned</td>
<td>Involuntary and unplanned</td>
<td>different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Perpetrator conditions</td>
<td>Sometimes it is still known but difficult to find and difficult to communicate</td>
<td>Unknown and unable to communicate</td>
<td>different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Condition of the victim</td>
<td>Abandoned and depending on status</td>
<td>Abandoned and depending on status</td>
<td>same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Legal consequences</td>
<td>Can only be used as a reason for divorce</td>
<td>Can be used as a reason for divorce and inheritance</td>
<td>different</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

25 Ali al-Shobuny, Pembagian Waris Menurut Islam, 178
Ghosting means ending a relationship with someone suddenly by stopping all communication with the party concerned. Ghosting is practically a unilateral decision on the individual that encourages the dissolution of a relationship, either suddenly or gradually, generally enforced through one or more technological media. Although it has some differences, there are many similarities between the practice of ghosting and the concept of mafqud in Islam. Ghosting perpetrators have some similarities with couples who are mafqud or declared missing in the discussion of Islamic marriage law, which are both considered to have left the family. However, ghosting perpetrators tend to do this intentionally and feel that what is done is natural, while mafqud occurs because there are no intentional factors, such as natural factors. The condition of the perpetrator of ghosting can still be known or traced although it tends to avoid being found, while people who mafqud are considered missing and cannot be traced their whereabouts.

References
Ali al-Shobuny. Pembagian Waris Menurut Islam, 177
———. Pembagian Waris Menurut Islam, n.d.
H.R. At-Tirmidzi, and Ibnu Majah. No. 3895, 1977


———. “Psychological Correlates of Ghosting and Breadcrumbing Experiences: A
Preliminary Study among Adults.” *Experiences*, n.d., 2.


———. *Psychological Correlates of Ghosting andBreadcrumbing Experiences: A Preliminary Study among Adults*, n.d.


