

# MUHAMMADIYAH AND URBAN MUSLIM GENDER EQUALITY ISSUES: NEO-TRADITIONALISM IN THE DECISION OF THE MAJELIS TARJIH AND TAJDID MUHAMMADIYAH ON HUSBAND AND WIFE RELATIONSHIP

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Muhammadiyah And Urban Muslim Gender Equality Issues: Neo-Traditionalism in The Decision of The Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid Muhammadiyah on Husband and Wife Relationship Licensed Under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License

## Abstract

The religious authority held by Islamic institutions is often confronted with issues of gender discrimination. In the modern era, Islamic organizations are faced with gender problems related to husband-wife relations in urban muslim communities. The proliferation of gender-biased narratives on social media and the shift in religious authority has challenged the discourse on gender equality in urban muslim communities. Meanwhile, in its development, Islamic organizations have produced progressive fatwas that show the movement for gender justice. This research uses Equilibrium Theory to analyze the periodic decisions of the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid Muhammadiyah regarding the relationship between husband and wife. The results of the decision will be categorized through the typology of Islamic thought according to Ziba Mr-Hossen. This research is literature research that uses primary data in the form of decisions of the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid Muhammadiyah compiled in *Adāb al-Mar'ah fi al-Islām* in 1982 and *Keluarga Sakinah* in 2014. The data was collected using the documentation method and analyzed using the content analysis technique. The results showed that the discourse of gender equality in Muhammadiyah influenced the balance of husband and wife roles in the Sakinah Family decision. The influence of gender equality does not necessarily make the results of the Sakinah Family decision fall into the category of modernism that is very open to Western thought. However, the decision only reaches the typology of neotraditionalism as a reflection of the moderatism of thought. The reason is that the fatwa decision still adopts the thoughts of classical scholars while still carrying the theme of renewal (*tajdid*). Through its *ijtihad*, Muhammadiyah can create an inclusive dialogue space, accommodate various perspectives, and reflect the spirit of justice in the context of the diversity of urban muslim communities. This research is expected to be a symbol of dialogue between the discourse of gender equality and traditional religious authorities so that the dialectic can produce fatwas that are by the times.

**Keywords:** Gender Equality; Muhammadiyah; Neotraditionalism; Urban Muslim.

## A. Introduction

The discourse on gender equality is getting stronger in the digital era, including the feminist movement in various virtual media. Authority over 'the body' and freedom to voice opinions are two of the rights women are fighting for (Rahayu, Kurnia, and Setianto 2021). This is a response to various issues of gender discrimination, such as the subordination of women in the trend of polygamy (Adfira 2022), the marginalization of women in politics by public media (Sugiyanto 2014), stereotypes of widowed women (Rachman, Fadlillah, and Cholifah 2023), and the double burden experienced by career women (Fitriani, Susanti, and Astuti 2020). This paper will be part of a gender justice discourse that focuses on domestic issues, namely the relationship between husband and wife.

Technological developments have led to changes in religious practices in society, especially for urban muslims (Maliki 2024). One form of change is the fragmentation of religious authority (Saputra, Triantoro, and Ardiansyah 2021). For example, in domestic relationships, social media is currently the preference for the concept of relationship goals (Ahmad, Fourqoniah, and Dwivayani 2020). However, the rampant production of patriarchal husband and wife relationship narratives is a challenge to gender equality in social media, one of which is in the polygamy narrative which causes gender-based violence (Adfira 2022). This condition is a challenge for the development of gender-friendly fiqh. The movement was carried out by activists to eliminate discrimination in marriage practices and regulations (Agustina 2021).

In the contemporary era, gender movement efforts that are more adaptive to the times are needed, one of which is through the interpretation of the *ijtihad fiqh* model in the digital space (Nurjanah and Nur 2022). This is because the study of Islamic family law currently prioritizes legal reforms that are in line with the principles of humanity and equality, as a response to the problems of modern society. Patriarchal relations -which are considered religious norms- affect the practice of women's subordination (Nasir 2016). Sex disparity in social constructs leads women to subordinate men, both in private and public contexts (Supriyadi, Julia, and Firdaus 2019). Regarding public leadership, in Ali's view, women can be involved in it, citing the historical side of the Qur'an that supports it (Hasan 2016). However, the large share of women in the domestic sphere is a challenge to the textuality of Islamic law (Duderija 2020).

Not only about leadership, the problem of gender equality in the modern era also concerns the alignment of women's rights to contribute in all fields (Breda et al. 2020). As Mabruroh found, women participate in earning a living, and in some cases, they even replace the husband's role (Mabruroh 2023). This shift in roles should have the consequence of reducing the wife's domestic obligations. The double burden on wives is a reflection of gender discrimination (Raybould and Sear 2021). Regarding that, the construction of 'old-fashioned' family law must also change with the presence of a balanced relationship between husband and wife (Duderija 2020). Moreover, the narrative of marital norms in virtual media shows a gender bias, which places women 'below' men (Handayani 2022).

The issue of gender injustice is not only limited to the production of narratives, but also the shift in religious authority that occurs in urban muslims. According to Aidulsyah (2023), this is due to the skepticism of mainstream Islamic organizations, which are more politically oriented. This is also a challenge for Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, which have produced many legal fatwas in the field of marriage. The *ijtihad* method of the two organizations has been known to be very progressive in providing space for women, both in the domestic and public spheres (Rahman 2024).

This research will examine the relationship between husband and wife in the fatwa issued by Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid Muhammadiyah. The relationship in question includes two things: (1) roles, and (2) rights and obligations of each other. The form of the two categories is then examined using equilibrium theory. Equilibrium refers to the balance of tasks and functions carried out by men and women. The basic principle is not hierarchy, but a partnership relationship based on cooperation (Hermanto 2017). The equilibrium theory in this study serves to see the balance in the relationship conceptualized by the decision of the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid on husband and wife relations. Hopefully, the partnership that is discussed is truly balanced.

The selection of the decisions of Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid as the object of study is based on the projection of gender equality in Muhammadiyah organizations in the contemporary era. Based on the literature review, several previous studies examine Muhammadiyah's progressivity in the gender justice movement. In Ratnawati's (2020) view, gender equality discourse is not only a topic that Muhammadiyah wants to realize, but also Nahdlatul Ulama. However, Mundzir and Muthmainnah (2022) found a slightly different conclusion. In the fatwa on female circumcision, Muhammadiyah has a partiality towards women's reproductive welfare, namely with a fatwa that does not recommend it, while NU and MUI still recommend it. The gender equality movement has been promoted by Muhammadiyah since the New Order era. In 1972, Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid issued a decision that allowed and even encouraged women to enter politics (Miswanto 2020). The decision was relatively progressive at that time, because the beginning of the New Order was a bleak period in terms of the government's alignment with women (Durham 1996). This article seeks to continue previous research by focusing on husband-wife relations in the decision of the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid in the context of the social reality of urban muslim communities.

Gender equality refers to the provision of equal opportunities regardless of sex. Unlike sex, gender is socially constructed, so it can change with the times (Lips 2020). Fatwa or the like that is associated with gender equality can mean that it must be fair in mapping the relationship between men and women. The Fatwa of the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid in this study will also be examined with Mir-Hosseini's typology of thought. According to him, three categories of Islamic thought correlate with gender, namely traditionalists, neotraditionalists, and modernists (Hayat 2019).

The purpose of this study is to analyze the forms of gender equality in the decision of the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid relating to husband and wife relations in the context of urban muslim society. Muhammadiyah with its interpretation of sharia that avoids taqlid certainly has an interesting interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith, especially about the discourse of gender equality. The long period of the two fatwas has consequences for the differences in the results of the decision, so the question arises of how Muhammadiyah responds to the discourse of gender equality that develops amid the religious dynamics of urban muslim society. The differences will be compared to form a legal perspective that involves social context. This research is important to see the response of Islamic organizations to the discourse on gender equality.

## **B. Methods**

This research is a type of library research that uses a descriptive qualitative method. The focus of this research is to analyze the forms of gender equality in the decision of the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid Muhammadiyah related to husband and wife relations in the context of urban muslim society. The data in this study were collected

using the documentation method. The primary data used are the decisions of the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid that have been recorded, including *Adābu al-Mar'ah fi al-Islām* in 1982 and the set of Tarjih decisions of Muhammadiyah in 2018. Secondary data consisted of books, journal articles, and other written sources related to the research theme. The data analysis uses content analysis techniques with the following procedures: First, parsing the theoretical and methodological concepts of fatwa formulation of the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid Muhammadiyah; Second, tracing the discourse of gender balance in husband and wife relations in the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid Muhammadiyah decision; Third, identifying the typology of Islamic thought in the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid Muhammadiyah decision on husband and wife relations.

### C. Findings and Discussion

#### 1. Findings

##### Fatwa Formulation of the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid of Muhammadiyah

Muhammadiyah, as one of the largest modern muslim organizations in the world, defines itself as an *al-amr ma'rūf wa an-nāhī al-munkar* Islamic movement (Hatmanto and Purwanti 2021). Muhammadiyah's da'wah movement is based on *tajdid* (renewal) of the Quran and as-Sunnah. Throughout the organization's journey, Muhammadiyah has been confronted with several polemics related to political issues, but this has not made the organization lose the direction of its goals which focus on education, health, economy, and various other social activities. Such a humanitarian vision has been well implemented with the establishment of certain institutions that are part of the organization, such as the PKU Muhammadiyah Hospital with its spread throughout Indonesia. Apart from being a practical social servant, Muhammadiyah has also become a theoretical social servant, namely by establishing institutions that function to guide muslim communities in carrying out Islamic law (Wahrudin et al. 2021).

K.H Mas Mansyur, one of the Muhammadiyah leaders, established the Majelis Tarjih in 1927 in Pekalongan. The institution became a discussion forum for Muhammadiyah scholars to answer the problems of the people. The results of the Majelis Tarjih discussions were in the form of fatwas that were circulated massively in the community. The origin of the name 'tarjih' can be illustrated by the selection of two traditions in the same context, but contradictory, so that one of the traditions is chosen that is closest to the meaning of the Qur'an. The establishment of the Majelis Tarjih began when there was a disagreement between several Muhammadiyah scholars on fiqh law on the same issue. Therefore, this institution was established to accommodate various aspirations, and then formulate new fiqh results agreed upon by all groups (Mundzir and Muthmainnah 2022).

The development of the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid cannot be separated from the development of modern Islamic legal thought (Fanani et al. 2021). In Anwar's (2018) view, the spirit of thought of the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid brings religious understanding with the release of special affiliation to certain madhhabs, based on considerations of renewal insight, openness, and tolerance. That is why Muhammadiyah does not do *taqlid* (relying on one school of thought) rigidly in considering a law. Muhammadiyah tends to quote the Qur'an and Hadith directly with a more open interpretation. Hadiths that are used as a legal basis are only *ṣaḥīḥ* traditions. Hadiths that are *ḍa'if* are not used as references, even if only for *faḍāilu al-a'māl* (Mundzir and Muthmainnah 2022).

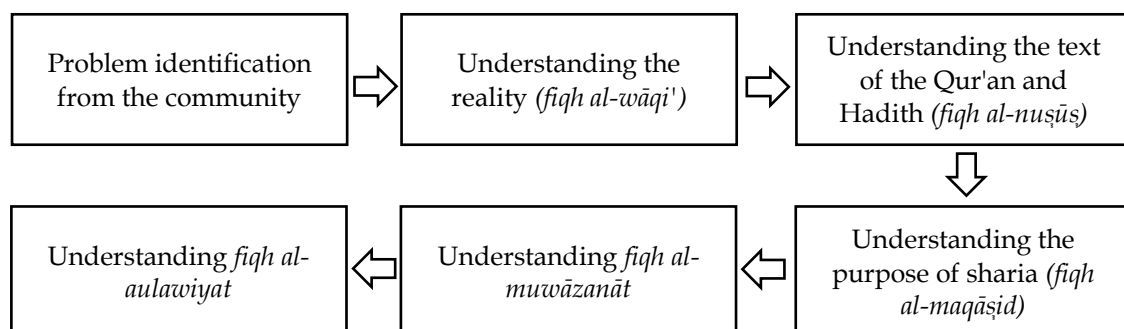
In its *ijtihād* method, the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid uses three methods, namely *bayānī ijtihād*, *qiyāsī ijtihād*, and *istiṣlāḥī ijtihād*. First, *bayānī ijtihād* is a method of

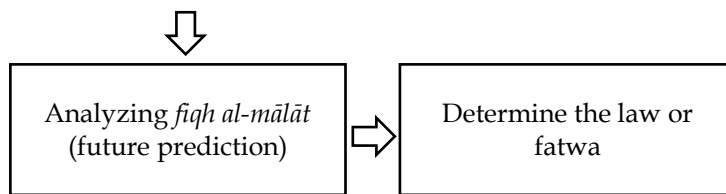
legal discovery that relies on the linguistic side of the Quran. This allows a verse to be interpreted as general (*'ām*) or *mubayyin* (special), *majāz* (connotation), *musytarāk*, *qaṭ'ī*, *zannī*, and can be interpreted as an order (*wājib*, *sunnah*, *mubāh*, *makrūh*, and *ḥarām*). Second, *qiyāsī* *ijtihād* refers to the discovery of law by utilizing the use of *'illah* (legal reasoning) from cases that already exist in the *nas*, then utilizing the legal reasoning to answer new problems. Third, *istiṣlāhī* *ijtihād* is a type of *ijtihād* by relies on forms of benefit found from the Qur'an and hadith (Kholidah, Yuslem, and Qorib 2021).

In addition to the above methods, the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid also consider women's rights. Women's rights were initially the focus of Aisyiyah's movement as a part of Muhammadiyah. However, over time, other Muhammadiyah members became involved in fighting for women's issues in the process of formulating fatwas of the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid. One of the products that specifically addresses women's interests is found in *Adābu al-Mar'ah fi al-Islām* and *Keluarga Sakinah*. Women's interests are also strengthened by the reinforcement of the idea of monogamy as the main principle of marriage. In addition, the principles of equality and non-violent marriage are also found in Muhammadiyah fatwas (Muthmainnah 2019). Therefore, feminism and gender issues, although not directly mentioned, are taken into consideration by the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid in the formulation of fatwas.

The products of Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid are divided into three categories, namely Tarjih Decisions, Tarjih Fatwas, and Tarjih Discourses (Ilham 2023). The difference between the three lies in the inauguration process. The Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid's decision is an institutional fatwa that involves the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership. Its fatwa must be confirmed and validated by Muhammadiyah administrators from 34 provinces in Indonesia. In contrast to that, the fatwa of the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid does not need to be confirmed, so its scope is smaller. Fatwas of Majelis Tarjih are answers to public questions uploaded on the website of Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid, published in *Suara Muhammadiyah* magazine, and printed in *Fatwa Tarjih* books. If both types are institutional fatwas, Tarjih's discourse is only individual. That is, it is only an individual answer from a member of Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid to a legal issue, so it can only be used as religious knowledge (Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid Muhammadiyah 2004).

The mechanism of fatwa-making in Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid begins with a fatwa request letter (*ri'atu al-fatwa*) to the editor of *Suara Muhammadiyah* magazine. The fatwa request is then forwarded to the Fatwa Division of the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid. Subsequently, the division appointed one of the assembly officials to make an initial draft of a fatwa to answer the questions raised. Then the draft is discussed and after reaching an agreement, the draft is corrected and sent to the editor of *Suara Muhammadiyah* to be published through the magazine. Sometimes, if it is very necessary, the fatwa draft is sent directly to the questioner or the person concerned (Ediz and Bus 2020). In general, the *ijtihād* procedure in Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid can be divided into nine stages in the following scheme:





The Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid of Muhammadiyah from the beginning have determined not to be bound to one of the existing madhhabs, although all madhhabs are still taken into consideration in the *istinbāt* process. This stance is manifested in the fact that almost all decisions produced by Tarjih which are compiled in the Tarjih Decision Set (HPT) always include the source of retrieval from the Qur'an and Sunnah. This is in contrast to *Bahtsul Masail Nahdlatul Ulama*, which has also been the opposite from the beginning, namely adhering to one or more of the four madhhabs. Almost all of the Lajnah's decisions also refer to the fatwas of the madzhab imams.

As a logical consequence of the attitude of the madhab, for Tarjih 'the door' to *ijtihād* is still wide open. Anyone at any time can become a mujtahid as long as they fulfill the requirements. For the Lajnah *Bahtsul Masail*, 'the door' to *ijtihād* is almost closed (not to say completely closed). All that can be done now is *istinbāt* with all its various derivations. This is because it is difficult to find people with the qualifications of the previous mujtahidīn (Jamal and Aziz 2013).

### Gender Relations of Urban Muslim Communities

The basic principle of Islam does not differentiate between people based on their gender preferences. The problem is that the Quran was revealed in a patriarchal society. With this reality, the interpretation of religious texts is also immersed in the culture of the society that discriminates against women (Mir-Hosseini 2009). The interpretation of religious texts, which is mostly done by men, adds to the problem. The male-dominated chain of scholarly transmission interprets texts favorably to men (Hasan et al. 2022). In short, the concept of patriarchy reflected in religious texts involves several aspects, so it takes great strength to be able to re-understand religious interpretation in the context of gender equality (Ma'mun and Maliki 2023).

Responding to the issue of gender equality, the muslim world is currently divided into two groups. The first group understands the relationship between men and women in a hierarchical realm. Men are considered superior to women based on *qawwām* (leader, protector) in Q.S an-Nisā: 34. This position is considered natural and unchangeable. Denial of this subordination would mean opposing the destiny and provisions of Allah Swt that have been determined through his revelation (Ulfah 2012). The second group tends to disagree with the first group. Men and women are equal in their status as caliphs of Allah Swt on earth. Both have the same potential in the development of intellectual, mental, physical, and spiritual abilities. Interestingly, both groups refer to the same sources, namely the Qur'an and hadith (Muhammad 2019).

There is a misunderstanding of the concept of gender in society. Gender is only associated with favoritism towards women based on incomplete information disseminated without scientific studies. Gender refers to the social construction built by society without distinguishing between certain sexes. Sex is the biological element that is specifically owned by men or women (Lips 2020). Women can biologically give birth and experience menstruation, while men have a penis to support reproduction. In general, gender is understood as roles, attitudes, and behaviors that are dynamic and involve the social conditions of society. It is different from sex which cannot change

(Cholil and Sudirman 2019). Such differences are not fully understood, so the differentiation of gender roles and functions in society continues. The digital era accelerates the partial understanding of the concept of gender. As a result, roles in society that should not be differentiated are then only intended for certain genders (Nurbayanti 2015). Hence the term gender equality, which involves campaigning for equality between women and men in social construction. In leadership, for example, historical tradition says leadership is only for men, but the concept of gender equality refutes this. Leadership should be based on individual abilities -thus falling into the gender category- not based on a particular sex, as men and women can have the same competencies (Diehl and Dzubinski 2016).

The fact of unequal gender relations in urban muslim communities can also be found in narratives on social media. For example, in the phenomenon of online ta'aruf, with the mode of revitalizing Islamic teachings that are all pure and coated with the doctrine of hijrah, this practice is commodified by the perpetrators because some enthusiasts and markets want it (Rahman and Zulhaqqi 2020). Narratives by conservative groups around family law such as instructions for choosing a mate, marriage advice, fulfillment of rights and obligations in the household, and other topics around relationships in domestic life are also scattered on Instagram. In this case, the account manager puts forward misogynistic hadiths as the basis of his argument. Ironically, this phenomenon has received a positive response from some urban muslim communities, which can be seen from a large number of followers on gender-biased accounts. The large number of followers that are actualized in online premarital classes gives the account managers power over opinion-mongering and the spread of gender-biased ideology (Handayani 2022).

In Fakhir's (2008) view, gender differences will not cause negative effects if they are fully understood. However, so far, gender discrimination is still evident in society with forms of marginalization, subordination, stereotyping, violence, and a double burden on women. Marginalization refers to the sidelining of one gender's role in various sectors a condition often experienced by women. Women are also often placed in unequal positions with men, thus falling into the category of subordination. Stereotypes that women should be gentle, beautiful, and others are issues that do not escape gender discrimination. Physical and mental violence is also still often experienced by women, as well as multiple roles, especially in the domestic sphere (Fakhir 2008).

Related to the double burden, the root of the problem is the balance of relations that cannot be created due to functional structural forms. As a result, women whose structure is below men often have to serve their husbands, as well as work outside the home if the income provided by the husband is not enough for the family's needs (Fakhir 2008). Therefore, an equilibrium theory emerged that determines the balance of relations between men and women. This theory was introduced by Edward Osborne Wilson (2000) to provide a solution to the negative impact of functional structural theory. The relationship between men and women in equilibrium theory is complementary by focusing on cooperation and complementing each other.

## 2. Discussion

### **Gender Balance Discourse in Husband and Wife Relationship in Urban Muslim Society: An Analysis of the Decision of the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid Muhammadiyah**

Along with the development of the times towards a more modern direction, efforts to realize equality in relations between men and women are increasingly

gaining widespread attention in society. The gender justice discourse that is the focus of this research lies in the domestic sphere, namely the relationship between husband and wife. In the domestic sphere, the division of duties and obligations often places women in a position below men (Sakaruddin 2019). For example, a man's obligation as head of the family and breadwinner makes him arbitrary to his wife who is only tasked with being a housewife (Astina 2019). In addition, the patriarchal concept of male leadership in a family also makes women unable to express their opinions freely (Wahid and Lancia 2018).

However, there has been a social shift in society to create fair and balanced social roles and functions between women and men (Najih 2017). For example, in the domestic sphere, *childfree*, which is currently discussed in digital media, is packaged in gender-oriented studies that respect women's reproductive rights (Ma'mun, Usmani, and Maliki 2023). In addition, the reconstruction of gender roles also occurs in the phenomenon of career women who are considered to provide opportunities for women to develop themselves (Susanti 2019). From this situation, the pattern of husband-wife relations built in urban muslim communities is an equal relationship (Maliki and Sari 2023).

Muhammadiyah as an Islamic organization that has the spirit of renewal has two Tarjih decisions related to the relationship between husband and wife, namely fatwas compiled in the book *Adābu al-Mar'ah fi al-Islām* in 1982 and the Tarjih Decisions Set in 2018. The book *Adābu al-Mar'ah fi al-Islām* consists of nine fatwas, all of which are related to women, while the Tarjih decision Set contains a variety of issues. The relationship between family elements is contained in the chapter 'Guidance Towards a Sakinah Family' which contains five discussions. The decision was the result of the 28th Tarjih National Conference held in Palembang in 2014.

As in classical fiqh ideas, Muhammadiyah in its initial fatwa compilation (*Adābu al-Mar'ah fi al-Islām*) places the man as the leader of the family who is responsible for maintenance. Not only that, men also must have family peace and harmony, so that they can love each other. Education is the next responsibility, meaning that the husband must fulfill the educational and knowledge needs of the family. The wife is positioned as a housewife who is obliged to submit and obey her husband. Wives must also provide pleasant services to their husbands, which can be in the form of gentle behavior, language, and sweet-faced. In addition, wives should dress up and decorate so that their husbands are always happy (Majelis Tarjih Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah 1982).

When referring to the forms of gender discrimination proposed by Mansour Fakhri (2008), the fatwa is closely related to subordination, in other words, the wife is hierarchically subordinated to the husband. Subordination is a serious challenge in Islamic law reform. In Siraj's (2010) research, some muslim families living in Scotland still apply a patriarchal family structure by placing men as the head of the family, so that all decisions in the family are only the authority of men. Siraj's finding (2010) also confirms that the muslim community still adheres to patriarchal principles, despite living in social conditions that oppose it. One of the underlying aspects of this is the conservative interpretation of the muslim community towards the primary source of religion by citing Q.S An-Nisā: 34 (Nuroniya 2023).

The above fatwa also does not escape the stereotyping of women, that women should be meek and attractive. This makes women sexual objects that are worthy of being enjoyed by their husbands. The issue of gender discrimination includes the image of women seen in biological terms. Iye (2020) revealed such discrimination in an advertisement for a soap brand in Indonesia. This depiction is the result of a social



reflection of society. Society views it as something normal, because in a patriarchal culture, women are naturally destined to attract men (Buckley 1986). However, such thinking cannot be justified in terms of gender equality. This is because such conditions cannot create the expected balance of relationships.

The equilibrium theory of relations was coined by Edward Osborne Wilson (2000). Its theory emphasizes a balanced relationship between men and women, removing the differentiation in functional structural theory. Co-operation regardless of gender is essential for nation-building. With equilibrium theory, it is expected that religious laws or fatwas can be in line with the common interest that emphasizes individual abilities, not sex. The fatwa on husband-wife relations above is not balanced. With his central position, the husband can regulate all the wife's interests on the grounds of maintaining the family's honor. The wife's role is also not considered, because her task is only to serve the husband's interests, with the reason for the livelihood provided. This disparity makes the relationship above not 'friendly' to gender equality.

Speaking of gender equality, the New Order era was still filled with efforts to discriminate against women. Beginning with the dissolution of Gerwani, which coincided with the crackdown on the PKI, the government labeled women activists as someone who abandoned their feminine nature. As Wieringa (2010) said, the government associated the political activities of Gerwani women with forms of moral decay. It continued to 'tame' with the discourse of portraying women as housewives who were dependent on their husbands. Suryakusuma (1996) calls this movement *ibuism*. The idea of *ibuism* can be seen in the formation of an organization for the wives of government employees. In addition, Marriage Law No. 1/1974 did not escape the reflection of women's discrimination. Robinson (1984) argues that the domestication of women in the act is nothing but a reflection of the New Order government's tactics to perpetuate patriarchal practices. Therefore, the Muhammadiyah fatwa reflected the socio-political conditions at that time.

The changing social situation characterized by discussions on women's rights led Muhammadiyah to participate in the discourse on gender equality. In 1998, Muhammadiyah made a breakthrough by creating the Women and Family Division. The division changed its name in 2005 to the Social, Cultural, Legal, and Family Division. In 2010, to advance and develop the study, the forum was finally named Community and Family Studies (Rasyid, Hutagalung, and Simbolon 2021). Muhammadiyah's focus on gender equality issues seemed to give 'fresh air' to the Muhammadiyah women's organization (Aisyiyah), which long before that had been fighting for women's rights both in the organization and society (Syamsiyatun 2016).

The periodization of gender discourse involvement in Muhammadiyah is explained in detail by Dzuhayatin (2015). According to her, the discourse on gender within Muhammadiyah began in 1927, when the Majelis Tarjih was formed in Cirebon. Concrete forms of gender discourse can be found in the official decisions of the congress, institutional products, and internal mechanisms in the organization. In the next period, from 1930 to 1940, gender issues were in a phase of stagnation, there were only organizational provisions that recognized men and women as members of the association. The promotion of women's issues began again in 1960. From its peak, in 1999 until now, the organization has responded well to women's issues, giving birth to progressive gender equality results that are to the needs of the times (Dzuhayatin 2015).

Muhammadiyah's participation in the discussion of gender equality resulted in fatwas that were discussed related to the roles of women in social aspects and worship.

The Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid Muhammadiyah once discussed women's leadership in the book 'Tanya Jawab Agama Volume IV'. As a result, the Tarjih decision allows women to become leaders in society. Muhammadiyah has also conducted studies related to female prayer imams. Different from the decision on women's leadership, the Tarjih decision prefers not to allow it, citing the uncertainty of the hadith used as an argument (Wahid 2012). Nonetheless, Muhammadiyah seems to pay special attention to gender equality based on progressive interpretations of the Qur'an and hadith (Dewi 2008).

The journey of Muhammadiyah's gender discourse can be seen in the 28th Tarjih decision in 2014. One of the discussions that attracted attention was the concept of the Sakinah Family. In the introduction, there is a sub-chapter entitled 'Equality of Women and Men'. The first sentence in the sub-chapter reads:

"Islam teaches its followers that women and men are equal in the sight of Allah Swt. The relationship between men and women is equal, there is no superiority and subordination, each has potential, functions and roles, and has the possibility of self-development" (Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah 2018).

The decision highlighted the problematic nature of gender equality: supremacy and subordination. According to Fakhri (2008), forms of gender discrimination seen in society include subordination, marginalization, stereotyping, double burden, and violence. The subordination of women's position in the family has been an issue of family law reform. However, the Tarjih decision, based on Q.S al-Baqarah: 30 and at-Taubah: 71, dares to conclude that men and women as khalifah of Allah have the same opportunity to prosper the earth according to their competence.

This step does not interpret Q.S an-Nisā: 34 to be liberal. Ar-Rijāl is still interpreted as a man who is obliged to lead his family. However, one of the husband's obligations is to be a partner for his wife to strengthen the noble character of the family. The principles of partnership are not found in Adābu al-Mar'ah fi al-Islām. It gives a symbol of the influence of gender discourse on the decision of the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid. Partnership in the Tarjih decision concept prioritizes discussion and cooperation. The demand for cooperation is seen when the decision quotes Q.S al-Baqarah: 228, "They (women) have rights equal to their duties in a proper manner".

About this verse, Wahbah az-Zuhaili (2009) in Tafsir Al-Munir emphasizes the rights and obligations of husbands and wives, especially in the context of divorce. He also explains in detail the rights of women, including the right to maintenance, fair treatment, and the waiting period ('iddah) after divorce. Tafsir Al-Munir also explores the metaphorical meaning and moral implications of this verse, highlighting the importance of maintaining balance and justice in the marriage relationship. Tafsir Al-Munir's analysis of the verse provides a deep understanding of the principles to be adhered to in divorce situations, as well as how important it is to resolve marital conflicts wisely and fairly (Zuhaili 2009).

Meanwhile, in the decision of the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid, the interpretation of the verse is linked to the Prophet Muhammad's hadith which states, 'A woman is responsible for the household (her husband).' Women's responsibility to take care of domestic needs can also be the duty of men. Husband and wife in Q.S al-Baqarah: 187 are described as complementary clothes, so cooperation in all matters is needed, including in domestic activities. Women cannot be referred to as the organizer of domestic duties. The decision only says that the wife is obliged to manage and maintain the maintenance given by the husband (Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah 2018). The husband's maintenance obligation is a reason to

balance the reproductive function of the wife who experiences menstruation, pregnancy, and breastfeeding (Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah 2018).

Regarding maintenance in this modern era, the decision of the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid in the book *Keluarga Sakinah* provides flexible provisions. Sharia-based families are not only intended for families where men are the main breadwinners. Women can contribute to earning a living for the family. It all depends on the condition and agreement of the couple. However, at the normative level, the man is still obliged to earn a living, unless conditions do not allow it. When that happens, earning a living becomes the responsibility of the wife. This form of relationship reflects the balance of relations in equilibrium theory. Men and women have equal opportunities to contribute, and have equal consequences for their contributions.

### **Typology of Islamic Thought in Tarjih Decision on Husband and Wife Relationship**

The patriarchal culture that causes the formation of discriminatory relations is a major highlight in the reconstruction of Islamic law, not least in the view of Ziba Mr-Hosseini. Mr-Hosseini (1999) argues that gender equality in the family sphere does not contradict Islamic law. Subordination in the household, according to him, is due to the interpretation of Islamic primary sources that tend to be patriarchal. The substance of the Qur'an contradicts this. One of the legal bases for this equality is Q.S Al-Baqarah verse 228 which reads: 'They (women) have rights in proportion to their obligations in a proper manner.' Therefore, he divides the typology of Islamic thought related to gender into three categories, namely traditionalists, neo traditionalists, and modernists. This typological division refers to the gender sensitivity of each group (Mir-Hosseini 1999).

The traditionalist group argues that gender discussions enshrined in sharia are eternal provisions, so they cannot be changed. Gender inequality reflected in the interpretations of past scholars is considered human nature, due to the textuality of interpretations that still support patriarchal culture (Mir-Hosseini 1999). Slightly different from traditionalists, neo-traditionalists are more sensitive to the issue of gender equality. However, this sensitivity does not change the gender-biased fiqh provisions. They try to view fiqh as a balance, but still maintain the concept of classical fiqh to avoid confrontation with traditional authorities (Mir-Hosseini 1999). The modernist group is more open to the understanding of democracy and pluralism. With this understanding, they are at odds with the traditionalists (Mir-Hosseini 1999).

Mir-Hosseini (1999) gives the example of Ayatollah al-'Ozma Seyyed Yusef Madani-Tabrizi as a traditionalist. For example, in the case of divorce, Mir-Hosseini highlights that this Ayatollah does not object to the view that men have the absolute right to break up marriages whenever. If the traditionalist opinion allows polygamy regardless of the wife's permission, the neo traditionalist group also allows it but emphasizes the wife's right to give permission. It is also not as progressive as the modernist group that (attempts to) abolish the permissibility of polygamy based on the reinterpretation of *naş*. Modernists view the status, roles rights, and obligations of men and women as equal. In addition, polygamy tends to be prohibited or made difficult based on the reinterpretation of *naş* (Mir-Hosseini 1999).

Based on the object of research, the roles of men and women in all Tarjih decisions are still hierarchical: men as family leaders and women as objects of leadership. This construction tends to be the same as the opinions of previous scholars. Al-Mahally (1990) for example, said that men become leaders of women because of the reason, knowledge, and power given by Allah SWT. In addition, men's leadership is

due to the sustenance they provide. In the context of the 19th century, Wahbah az-Zuhailily (2009) still uses more or less the same perspective. Both of them still consider leadership as a natural right because of the superiority of men over women in all fields.

However, the Tarjih decision has a different perspective on leadership. Male leadership is not caused by physical advantages, but is caused by the provision of nafaqah. The nafaqah is a counterbalance to the obligations of the wife's natural role of menstruation, breastfeeding, and pregnancy (Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah 2018). In terms of the form of leadership, the Tarjih decision quotes Muhammad Abduh who requires male leadership to be based on the principles of harmony, justice, and non-violence. Along with that, men must have the following functions: himayah (defense), ri'āyah (protection), wilayah (guardianship), and kifayah (sufficiency). The diction of al-Qiwamah in Q.S an-Nisa: 34 cannot be interpreted as domination or the like, but must be interpreted as a responsibility imposed on the husband. If the husband is unable to fulfill the needs of maintenance due to unavoidable circumstances, then the obligation of maintenance shifts to the wife (Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah 2018).

The use of Mohammad Abduh's thought as the basis for interpretation marks a symbol of modernism in Muhammadiyah's thought. Mohammad Abduh is a figure who pioneered Islamic reform in all fields, including education, politics, and society. His thought has become a topic of discussion among scholars, because it contains progressivity by carrying out the concept of renewal (Haddad Berlin). One of Abduh's interesting thoughts is his interpretation of polygamy, using tafsir bi ar-ra'yi, the permissibility of polygamy is very limited in his view (Abdurrahman 2017). By quoting Abduh's opinion, Muhammadiyah seems to position itself as an 'agent' of Islamic reform without reducing the essence of religion.

The position of Tarjih's decision is more towards the thinking of the non-traditionalist group, which does not entirely adopt Western gender thinking. By quoting Abduh's opinion, it can mean that Tarjih's decision recognizes the existence of classical fiqh, but remains in the corridor of tajdid (renewal). The form of renewal can be found in the concept of nafaqah. The obligation of nafaqah is given by the husband as a result of the wife's role in pregnancy and breastfeeding. This idea is different from classical fiqh which emphasises the wife's biological service as a consequence of nafaqah, so that when the wife does not serve the husband's biological needs without any obstacles, the husband's right to nafaqah can be lost (Qal'aji and Qanibi 1985). In this context, classical fiqh belongs to the traditionalist group.

The conservative-minded traditionalists, in Hayat's view (2022), the wife as a second creature who occupies a structurally inferior position to the husband. Wives have various obligations to please their husbands, including sexual desires. The marginalization of the wife's role is also evident in cases of polygamy, with no obligation for the husband to seek the wife's permission. Wives are not allowed to sue their husbands for divorce just because they are polygamous unless there is injustice in it. These forms of relations are not found in the Tarjih decision, so it can be said that the Tarjih decision breaks away from the 'shackles' of classical fiqh which tend to discriminate against women.

The forms of gender discrimination that are not found in the *Keluarga Sakinah* book are the influence of the gender equality discourse promoted by the Muhammadiyah women's organization (Aisyiyah). Aisyiyah always gives input on fatwas discussed and produced by the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid. Interestingly, Majelis Tarjih responded positively to the input, although sometimes there were heated debates in the formulation of the law. Especially regarding women's rights,

controversy over the discourse offered always colors the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid's proceedings, because not all members are in line with modern gender equality, and it can even be said that they are still bound by the patriarchal conception of classical texts. Nevertheless, the latest fatwa of Majelis Tarjih, which has become a national decision on husband and wife relations, seems to respond well to the discourse of gender equality (Muthmainnah 2019).

The discourse of gender equality as a response to the phenomenon of urban muslim families promoted by Muhammadiyah does not let go of the traditionality of classical fiqh. Where in this case the man remains the head of the family, so it is not included in the typology of modernist thought. The form of modernism in this context can be known based on the idea of family leadership that is not the right of men, as formulated by Sahiron (2017) through the *magna cum maghza* theory. By using text analysis that is correlated with socio-historical, the interpretation considers that family leadership cannot be based on sex. Personal ability should be prioritized in choosing a leader. Sahiron's thinking is based on the patriarchal cultural context that gave 'spirit' to the revelation of Q.S an-Nisā: 34. Therefore, when the patriarchal culture has disappeared, women can become family leaders as long as they fulfill the specified criteria (Sahiron 2017). Such considerations are not used by the Tarjih decision to frame family leadership. This is because the Tarjih decision does not consider cultural change as a reason for the validity of the interpretation of Islamic law as a whole.

#### **D. Conclusion**

The concept of husband and wife relations in *Adāb al-Mar'ah fi al-Islām* does not reflect a balance of roles. This is due to the social conditions of the New Order that were 'not friendly' to the discourse of gender equality, such as the idea of *ibuism*. The discussion of gender equality, that emerged since the fall of the New Order regime, made Muhammadiyah involved in the realisation of the discourse. The Sakinah Family decision in 2014 proved Muhammadiyah's commitment to realizing balanced gender relations in the family sphere. Interestingly, the product of the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid Muhammadiyah that is open to gender equality, namely the 2014 Sakinah Family decision, does not abandon the traditionalist identity of classical scholars. However, Muhammadiyah does not necessarily follow the pattern of gender discrimination, so the decision is between the ideas of classical scholars and Islamic reform. This makes that decision include in the typology of neotraditionalism that reaches out to the discourse of gender equality, without eliminating the ideas of previous scholars, regarding the family structure of men as the highest authority. This balance marks a step forward in religious interpretation that is responsive to the times, while still recognizing and respecting the values that already exist in religious traditions. As a result, Muhammadiyah can create an inclusive dialogue space, accommodate various perspectives in formulating views related to husband and wife relations, and reflect the spirit of inclusiveness and justice in the context of the diversity of urban muslim society.

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pioneered the integration-interconnection paradigm in the preparation of this research article.

#### F. Author Contributions Statement

The research was conducted in Indonesia by a collaborative team of three. Moh. Bachrul Falah contributed to the research idea and wrote the background and research methods. Riyanta collected the data and wrote some literature reviews. Ibnu Akbar Maliki, at the end of the research, analyzed the data and drew appropriate conclusions. All authors worked together in developing the reference management research instruments and analytical tools.

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