



MIZAN: JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC LAW

P-ISSN: 2598-974X. E-ISSN: 2598-6252

Vol. 13 No. 2 (2025), pp. 211-224

<https://ejournal.uika-bogor.ac.id/index.php/MIZAN/index>

A Comparative Analysis of Gender Concepts: Thought of Nasaruddin Umar and Henri Shalahuddin¹

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<https://doi.org/10.32832/mizan.v13i2.21808>

Abstract:

This study examines a conceptual comparison between the idea of *Gender Equality*, as formulated by Nasaruddin Umar, and *Gender Harmony*, as articulated by Henri Shalahuddin, within contemporary Indonesian Islamic thought. Both scholars share the same moral vision—to uphold justice and combat gender-based discrimination—yet differ fundamentally in their epistemological and methodological approaches to Islamic teachings. This research uses a qualitative, descriptive, and critical-comparative approach to analyze the primary works of both figures through textual and conceptual study. Nasaruddin Umar represents a reformist-egalitarian paradigm that employs *Tawhīd* and *Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* as corrective principles against patriarchal interpretations, emphasizing *Qirā'ah Mubādalah* to highlight moral and spiritual equality between men and women. Conversely, Henri Shalahuddin stands on a textual-normative foundation that regards revelation (*Naṣṣ*) and biological nature (*fiṭrah*) as absolute boundaries, rejecting the notion of absolute equality while proposing *Gender Harmony* and *Mithāqan Ghalīẓa* as the basis for a balanced and just distribution of roles. The findings reveal that both thinkers represent complementary paradigms: Umar focuses on contextual transformation and social justice, while Shalahuddin emphasizes moral stability and natural balance. This dialectic illustrates the dynamic efforts of Indonesian Islamic thought to reconcile modernity and orthodoxy in addressing gender issues.

Keywords: Gender Equality; Gender Harmony; Nasaruddin Umar; Henri Shalahuddin; Islamic Gender Thought.

¹ Manuscript received date: Oct 20, 2025, revised: Oct 22, 2025, approved for publication: Dec 31, 2025.

A. INTRODUCTION

Gender issues and the relationship between men and women constitute one of the most crucial and polarizing themes in contemporary Islamic discourse in Indonesia. This debate stems from the tension between the demand for universal social justice and the textual interpretation of religion, which has long been interpreted through patriarchal lenses. This intellectual tension has inspired efforts to reconstruct Islamic thought—from a patriarchal to an egalitarian paradigm—requiring reinterpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith in light of universal principles of justice and humanity. (Azizah, 2022; Zaeni, 2022) In this context, gender bias is not viewed as an intrinsic aspect of Islam itself, but rather as a social and historical construct influencing religious interpretation. (Awwaliyah, 2020).

Within this debate, two major intellectual streams have emerged and stand in paradigmatic opposition. The first, a reformist-egalitarian stream, emphasizes contextual approaches to religious texts, grounding its hermeneutics in the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (the higher objectives of Islamic law). The second, a normative-conservative stream, argues that attempts to equalize the roles of men and women absolutely risk distorting both divine order (*kodrat*) and Islamic legal boundaries. (Habib, 2024; Nugraha et al., 2023). These two currents differ not only in their hermeneutical methods but also in their epistemological sources and moral orientations.

In this context, two prominent figures represent these opposing paradigms: Nasaruddin Umar and Henri Shalahuddin. Nasaruddin Umar, through his seminal work *Argumen Kesetaraan Gender dalam Al-Qur'an* (*The Qur'anic Argument for Gender Equality*), asserts that *tawhīd* and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* serve as corrective authorities against patriarchal interpretation. He developed the approach of *Qirā'ah Mubādalāh* (reciprocal reading), which rereads Qur'anic verses on gender relations through the lens of mutual respect and ontological equality between men and women. (Muthmainnah, 2006; Rani, 2021).

Conversely, Henri Shalahuddin promotes the concept of *Gender Harmony* (*Keserasian Gender*), grounded in revelation (*wahyu*) and innate nature (*fiṭrah*) as absolute sources of truth. He rejects the terminology of "gender equality," which he argues originates from Western feminist ideology and obscures divine and legal boundaries. For Shalahuddin, differences in roles between men and women represent divine justice, not inequality to be erased. (Habib, 2024; Nugraha et al., 2023). Harmony, therefore, constitutes a divinely ordained order preserving social balance and domestic stability.

Several prior studies have examined these two scholars, either individually or comparatively. Rani conducted research on Nasaruddin Umar's thought (2021), who analyzed his thematic and semantic exegesis in *Argumen Kesetaraan Gender dalam Al-Qur'an*, revealing its deconstructive stance toward patriarchal readings and its effort to uncover the Qur'an's egalitarian ethos. Sakdiah (2021) Identified that Umar applied the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* perspective to contextualize gender verses, while Qibtiyah (2020) Demonstrated how his hermeneutics influenced contemporary Islamic feminist discourse in Indonesia. Collectively, these studies position Umar as a pioneer of *maqāṣidi-based* equality exegesis, emphasizing substantive justice (Zaeni, 2022).

Meanwhile, studies on Henri Shalahuddin's thought, such as that by Nugraha et al. (2023), explore his notion of gender harmony as a critique of secular feminist paradigms. Their research indicates that Shalahuddin grounds his epistemology of interpretation in revelation and human nature, conceiving justice as balance rather than sameness. Habib (2024) Further argues that Shalahuddin's gender harmony serves to reaffirm the paradigm of *fiqh al-usrah* (Islamic family jurisprudence) in defending domestic harmony against global egalitarian narratives.

Comparative research between Nasaruddin Umar and Henri Shalahuddin remains limited. Azizah (2022) Compared the two scholars' interpretations of hadiths on female testimony, finding that Umar applied a contextual hermeneutic grounded in universal justice, while Shalahuddin used a textual-legal approach. However, this study was thematic and did not address the philosophical foundations underlying their epistemological and methodological divergences. To date, no comprehensive work has examined the epistemological, ontological, methodological, normative, and axiological contrasts between the concepts of *gender equality* and *gender harmony* in Islam.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze and compare Islamic gender concepts in the thought of Nasaruddin Umar and Henri Shalahuddin through the five dimensions of the philosophy of science: epistemological, ontological, methodological, normative, and axiological. It seeks to explain how both scholars conceptualize divine authority, human nature, interpretive methodology, the principle of justice, and the teleological orientation of gender relations in Islam.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the expanding discourse on Islamic gender hermeneutics by revealing the epistemic structures underlying two grand paradigms—*progressive-maqāṣidi* and *normative-fiṭrahi*. In practice, it offers an analytical framework for scholars, religious leaders, and policymakers to better understand the theological roots of the ongoing tension between *gender equality* and *gender harmony* in Indonesia.

The central argument of this research is that the fundamental difference between Nasaruddin Umar and Henri Shalahuddin lies not merely in interpretive outcomes but in epistemological authority over sacred texts. Umar regards *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* as a corrective principle that produces egalitarian and contextual interpretations. In contrast, Shalahuddin affirms the immutability of revelation and human nature (*fiṭrah*) as immutable limits that guide justice through balanced roles. This epistemic divergence underpins the formation of two influential paradigms in contemporary Islamic gender discourse, each shaping theological reasoning and social policy in Indonesia. The novelty of this study lies in its application of the five philosophical dimensions, which have not previously been employed in comparative Islamic gender studies, as well as in its attempt to demonstrate how divergent hermeneutical epistemologies influence interpretations of justice and gender relations in Islam.

B. METHODE

This research applies a qualitative library research design with a descriptive and critical-comparative approach. The research focuses on a philosophical examination of

the epistemological construction of gender in the thought of Nasaruddin Umar and Henri Shalahuddin within Islamic discourse.

The analytical process consists of three practical stages. First, identifying primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include Nasaruddin Umar's *Argumen Kesetaraan Gender Perspektif Al-Qur'an*. (2001) and Henri Shalahuddin's *Ideologi Gender: Antara Kesetaraan dan Keserasian dalam Perspektif Islam* (2022). Secondary data are drawn from relevant academic studies and journal articles discussing Islamic gender interpretation and epistemology.

Second, the textual reading and coding process was conducted to extract key arguments, theological assumptions, and patterns of reasoning in each thinker's work. This process highlights terms, analogies, and interpretative tendencies that reflect their philosophical frameworks.

Third, a comparative analysis was conducted using the five dimensions of the philosophy of science: epistemological, ontological, methodological, normative, and axiological. Each dimension served as an analytical lens to map the fundamental similarities and differences between the two thinkers. The synthesis of these findings constructs a theological-constructivist framework that positions Umar as emphasizing *Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* for social justice. At the same time, Shalahuddin prioritizes *wahyu* and *fiṭrah* as normative limits for gender harmony.

This study applies a philosophical-constructivist framework that integrates five dimensions of the philosophy of science: epistemological, ontological, methodological, normative, and axiological. These dimensions serve as analytical coordinates to examine how each thinker constructs, legitimizes, and applies his concept of justice and gender relations in Islam. Through this lens, Nasaruddin Umar's reformist-egalitarian paradigm is interpreted as a *maqāṣidi* project aimed at social transformation. In contrast, Henri Shalahuddin's conservative-normative paradigm is seen as a *fiṭrah*-based framework that emphasizes divine stability. The dialectical interaction between these dimensions enables a deeper understanding of how Islamic thought negotiates the balance between modernity and orthodoxy in Indonesian gender discourse.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before delving into each scholar's thought, it is essential to contextualize their intellectual positions within the broader landscape of Indonesian Islamic scholarship. Both Nasaruddin Umar and Henri Shalahuddin operate within the shared framework of Islamic orthodoxy but approach the problem of gender through distinct epistemological pathways. Umar, representing the reformist-egalitarian camp, seeks to reinterpret the Qur'an's ethical universality in response to modern social realities. Shalahuddin, on the other hand, defends the classical theological structure of knowledge by reaffirming revelation and nature as immutable sources of authority. Understanding these orientations is key to appreciating the depth of their respective arguments and the philosophical dialogue between them.

1. *The Argument of Gender Equality in the Qur'anic Perspective According to Nasaruddin Umar*

The argument of gender equality in the Qur'anic perspective is an intellectual response to the prevailing religious interpretations that have often misused the Qur'an as a legitimizing tool for the patriarchal interpretive paradigm (Sakdiah, 2021). Gender-biased and misogynistic interpretations have historically constructed women as *the second actors*, both ritually and socially (Sakdiah, 2021). Historically, women have been marginalized despite the Qur'an's egalitarian vision (Janah, 2017).

Nasaruddin Umar, an Indonesian Muslim scholar deeply concerned with gender relations, constructs his critical argument upon a fundamental distinction between *the nature of religion* and *religious understanding*. He asserts that gender injustice does not originate from the essence of religion—which is inherently—but rather from religious interpretations shaped by socio-cultural constructs. (Sakdiah, 2021).

If the root of gender injustice lies in interpretation rather than in the divine text itself, then the issue becomes epistemological. This requires a methodological deconstruction of tafsir traditions historically dominated by men. According to Umar, these classical male exegetes failed to accommodate women's perspectives, resulting in biases evident in Arabic language usage, lexicography, and exegetical methods. (Janah, 2017).

Umar's intellectual project situates itself within the broader reformist movement in contemporary Islamic thought, alongside global Muslim feminist figures such as Fatimah Mernissi, Riffat Hassan, and Amina Wadud. (Janah, 2017). These reformers focus their critique on patriarchal exegesis and agree that, while the Qur'an's worldview ontologically envisions equality between men and women, its historical interpretations have failed to reflect such justice. (Janah, 2017). Thus, Umar's project seeks to restore the Qur'an's universal principles, purifying them from patriarchal social constructs embedded through centuries of male-dominated exegesis.

A crucial step in Umar's work is establishing a clear conceptual framework. During the time of his dissertation, the term *gender* in the Indonesian context was often conflated with *sex*. Umar distinctly differentiates between the two:

1. Sex refers to biological differences between men and women—an immutable natural (biological) aspect (*nature*).
2. Gender, however, refers to the roles and behaviors attributed to men and women from socio-cultural perspectives—a dynamic construct shaped by environment and culture (*nurture*).

Umar aims to clarify the Qur'an's position on whether gender is innate or socially constructed. To enrich this analysis, he engages with external theories of gender to test how Islam conceptualizes the relation between *sex* and *gender*.

1. Psychoanalytic Theory posits a rigid connection between gender and biology, assuming that one's social behavior is determined by sexual development.
2. Structural Functionalism contends that gender roles are shaped by societal

functions and role distribution—such as men in public spheres and women in domestic ones—independent of biological determinism.

Umar concludes that absolute adherence to *nature* legitimizes eternal patriarchy, while rejecting nature entirely ignores biological reality. The Qur'an, therefore, does not endorse either extreme; instead, it draws on elements from both to the extent that they align with Islam's universal ethical principles. (Sakdiah, 2021).

This *synthetic-accommodative approach* is central to Umar's argument. By defining gender as a dynamic construct, Islam allows for the reinterpretation of gender roles in line with evolving contexts—for example, in urban societies where women's public participation challenges traditional role divisions.

Table 1. Basic Concepts of Gender According to Nasaruddin Umar

Concept	Key Definition (Umar)	Ontological Nature	Related Theory	Qur'anic Position (Umar)
Sex (Biological)	Anatomical differences between males and females	Natural (Nature)	Psychoanalysis	Acknowledged as a physical distinction
Gender (Social)	Socio-cultural role differences	Social Construct (Nurture)	Structural Functionalism	The Qur'an accommodates both elements aligned with universal ethics

To uncover the Qur'an's authentic view on gender, Umar employs a systematic methodology centered on *thematic interpretation* (*tafsīr maudhu'ī*) (Sakdiah, 2021). This method analyzes Qur'anic verses related to male–female relations holistically. (Janah, 2017). Unlike atomistic exegesis—which isolates verses to justify patriarchal authority—*tafsīr maudhu'ī* views the Qur'an as a coherent unity.

Umar integrates three complementary approaches. (Janah, 2017):

1. Semantic–Linguistic Approach: Deep lexical analysis to uncover biases embedded in traditional Arabic usage.
2. Normative–Theological Approach: Ensures that interpretation aligns with *tawhīd* and Qur'anic ethics of justice.
3. Socio–Historical Approach: Distinguishes between timeless ideals and context-bound applications through *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasions of revelation).

Through this interdisciplinary combination, Umar constructs a hermeneutic that aims not merely for textual fidelity but for ethical justice (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*).

In conclusion, Umar's Qur'anic argument for gender equality acknowledges distinctions between men and women but insists that such distinctions must not justify hierarchy or subordination. (Sakdiah, 2021). The Qur'an envisions these differences as complementary and functional—what Umar terms *functional distinction for harmony*. This

shifts the paradigm from vertical hierarchy to horizontal partnership, redefining gender relations through ontological equality and ethical balance. Umar's work thus contributes to contemporary Islamic jurisprudence by subordinating social constructs to the Qur'an's universal ethics of justice and equilibrium.

2. *Gender Ideology in Islamic Studies: Clarification and Solutions by Henri Shalahuddin*

Henri Shalahuddin directly engages in academic debates surrounding the spread of gender ideology within prominent Islamic universities, notably UIN Sunan Kalijaga. His critique is not merely theoretical but a response to what he perceives as a *crisis of authority* in Islamic higher education—where secular notions of gender threaten to erode the foundational principles of *ahl al-sunnah wal-jamā'ah* (Ermagusti et al., 2024).

Affiliated with the University of Darussalam (UNIDA) Gontor, Shalahuddin's scholarly background in comparative religion and Islamic studies equips him with a multidisciplinary perspective, encompassing the historical development of feminism, its epistemological roots, and a defense of traditional interpretive methodologies (*ulama mu'tabar*) (Chairil & Shalahuddin, 2021).

His central thesis unfolds in two integral dimensions: ideological clarification and Shariah-based solution.

1. Clarification involves analyzing feminist theories, tracing their dissemination in academic discourse, and critically addressing misconceptions surrounding Islamic law—particularly issues such as polygamy, inheritance, women's testimony, and marital relations.
2. Solution offers an alternative Islamic framework centered on gender harmony (*keserasian*) rather than absolute equality, and revitalizes *Mithāqan Ghalīza* as the sacred covenant of marriage (Shalahuddin et al., 2023).

Epistemologically, Shalahuddin argues that gender ideology rests on a flawed foundation. It elevates subjective, embodied female experiences (*ta'aqqul juz'ī*) as sources of universal truth, thereby undermining the objective, revelatory epistemology (*ta'aqqul kullī*) inherent in Islam. (Chairil & Shalahuddin, 2021). He warns that such relativistic epistemology—if used to reinterpret Shariah—would destabilize its universality.

Methodologically, Shalahuddin stresses the need to return to the interpretive discipline of classical scholars. He criticizes Muslim intellectuals who adopt unverified hermeneutical methods and rely on marginal (*shādh*) opinions to justify feminist claims. This rejection of *ulama mu'tabar* methodology, he argues, results in interpretive chaos and theological instability. (Shalahuddin & Fauzi Bin Hamat, 2015).

Ontologically, Shalahuddin affirms biological *fiṭrah* as an unchangeable divine design that forms the metaphysical basis of social order. While acknowledging social construction, he insists that gender cannot be detached from biological reality. Thus, gender differences are both divinely ordained and socially operationalized, combining *permanence* (biological) with *adaptability* (cultural).

Normatively, Shalahuddin asserts that Islamic law ensures justice through complementarity rather than uniformity. Differences in legal rulings—such as in inheritance or testimony—do not constitute discrimination but reflect proportional justice in accordance with divine wisdom. (Nugraha et al., 2023). The ethical ideal is *harmonious balance* (*tawāzun*) guided by Shariah principles.

Axiologically, Shalahuddin’s vision culminates in the restoration of family and civilization through Mithāqan Ghalīza—a “strong and sacred covenant” that transcends the contractual view of marriage in modern feminist thought. (Shalahuddin et al., 2023). This covenant emphasizes devotion, loyalty, and cohesion as moral pillars, while takāful (mutual support) ensures socioeconomic balance within the Islamic family system. His framework contrasts starkly with Western feminist ideology, as illustrated below:

Table 2. Comparative Framework:

Feminist Ideology vs. Shalahuddin’s Harmony Concept		
Critical Aspect	Feminist Gender Ideology	Shalahuddin’s Harmony Framework
Male–Female Relation	Absolute Equality (50/50)	Harmony and Role Complementarity
Role Determination	Pure Social Construction	Roles Rooted in Divine <i>Fiṭrah</i> and Shariah
Epistemology	Subjective Experience (<i>juz’ī</i>)	Revelatory Knowledge (<i>kullīyyāt</i>)
Discrimination	Structural Patriarchy	Ethical-Moral Problem (Universal Justice)

Ultimately, Shalahuddin redefines gender discourse as a civilizational issue. His solution—grounded in Shariah ethics and social balance—seeks to protect the sanctity of the Muslim family as the cornerstone of an authentic Islamic civilization. The Qur’anic ideal of harmony, not sameness, becomes the epistemic and ethical foundation for achieving justice between men and women within the divine order.

3. Critical Comparative Analysis: Convergences and Divergences

Although Nasaruddin Umar and Henri Shalahuddin represent two seemingly opposing paradigms, both share a universal foundation that anchors their thought in Islamic ethical values.

1. Equality and Harmony: Both scholars ultimately aim to achieve harmonious, balanced, and virtuous relations between men and women within both family and societal structures. Their visions converge on the pursuit of justice and moral integrity as essential principles of Islamic civilization.
2. Rejection of Discrimination: Both reject the oppression and subordination of women. However, they conceptualize *discrimination* differently. Nasaruddin Umar locates discrimination in patriarchal social constructs, while Henri Shalahuddin defines it as any form of restriction that lacks legitimate grounding

in religion, culture, or collective moral conviction. Despite their differences, both affirm that Islam rejects all norms that degrade human dignity.

The main divergence between Umar and Shalahuddin lies in the epistemic authority each employs to justify justice and regulate gender relations. The comparative framework between Nasaruddin Umar and Henri Shalahuddin can be further elaborated through five interrelated dimensions of the philosophy of science: epistemological, ontological, methodological, normative, and axiological. Each dimension reveals how both thinkers shape the moral architecture of Islamic gender discourse.

Epistemologically, Umar's reformist approach redefines revelation as an open text that invites ethical reasoning (*ijtihād akhlāqī*) in line with *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. For him, divine revelation does not oppose contextual interpretation but requires it to maintain justice as a living principle. This dynamic epistemology positions reason and revelation in a dialogical harmony, in which the Qur'an's message is continuously actualized through socio-ethical reflection. Shalahuddin, by contrast, views revelation as a closed epistemic system in which divine truth is absolute and exhaustive. Knowledge arises not from reinterpretation but from *tafaquh*—deep understanding within the limits set by the *naṣṣ* (text). His epistemology protects theological stability, ensuring that ethical reasoning never overrides divine legislation. Hence, Umar represents epistemic flexibility, while Shalahuddin embodies epistemic guardianship.

Ontologically, both thinkers depart from distinct views of human nature (*fitrah al-insān*). Umar emphasizes ontological equality: all humans share the same spiritual essence as servants of God (*'abdun*), thus rejecting hierarchical constructions of gender. Shalahuddin acknowledges equality in dignity but insists on ontological differentiation—gender is part of the divine order, in which biological and social distinctions express complementary functions. While Umar's ontology leads to reconstructive humanism, Shalahuddin's supports divinely structured essentialism.

Methodologically, Umar's *tafsīr maudhu'ī* and socio-historical approaches enable dynamic reinterpretation across changing contexts. His hermeneutic of reciprocity (*Qirā'ah Mubādalāh*) turns *tafsir* into a moral practice aimed at uncovering egalitarian meanings. Shalahuddin, however, upholds *tafsir bi al-ma'tsūr* and the methodological discipline of the *ulama mu'tabar*, ensuring interpretive continuity with tradition. For him, innovation (*tajdīd*) without anchoring in the classical framework risks epistemic chaos. The methodological contrast thus symbolizes two poles of Islamic hermeneutics—reformist creativity versus traditional stability.

Normatively, both scholars converge on the idea of justice but diverge on its nature. Umar understands justice as *al-'adl al-kawnī*—a dynamic principle responsive to social conditions. Justice, therefore, may require reinterpretation of legal rulings when they produce inequality contrary to *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. Shalahuddin defines justice as *tawāzun*—the equilibrium of rights and duties established by God. Any attempt to equalize what revelation differentiates becomes deviation, not reform. Here, Umar's vision of justice is emancipatory, while Shalahuddin's is preservative.

Axiologically, both share a teleological concern with moral civilization. Umar's value orientation aims for social transformation: an ummah liberated from patriarchal domination and oriented toward ethical universalism. Shalahuddin's axiology, conversely, centers on the preservation of family harmony as the nucleus of civilization. His emphasis on *Mīthāqan Ghalīza* transforms marriage from a social contract into a spiritual covenant, ensuring continuity of divine order. The two axiologies thus form complementary trajectories—transformative ethics and preservative ethics—both vital for sustaining Islamic moral civilization. In sum, Umar and Shalahuddin embody complementary poles of Islamic reason—*maqāṣidi* renewal and *fiṭrati* conservation—whose balance sustains the dynamic of Indonesian Islamic thought.

Table 3. Comparative Analysis of Nasaruddin Umar and Henri Shalahuddin

Philosophical Dimension	Nasaruddin Umar (Gender Equality)	Henri Shalahuddin (Gender Harmony)
Epistemological	Grounds his epistemology in <i>Tawhīd</i> and <i>Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah</i> as corrective principles against patriarchal bias in Qur'anic interpretation. Religious knowledge is viewed as dynamic and open to contextual reinterpretation, provided it aligns with divine justice and ethical universality.	Bases his epistemology on <i>wahyu</i> (divine revelation) and <i>fiṭrah</i> (innate human nature) as absolute and final sources of truth. Religious knowledge is considered fixed and immutable, since divine revelation contains the complete and perfect guidance that cannot be relativized by social context.
Ontological	Views human beings as ontologically equal before God (<i>'abdun</i>), possessing the same moral and spiritual worth regardless of gender. Gender roles are socially constructed and must be reinterpreted in light of universal Islamic ethics.	Considers human beings as ontologically differentiated by divine design. Men and women are assigned distinct biological and social roles that complement one another, forming part of the natural ontological order established by God.
Methodological	Employs thematic (<i>tafsir maudhu'i</i>) and socio-historical methods to interpret texts contextually. His interpretive method allows dynamic re-reading of Qur'anic verses on gender through the lens of <i>Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah</i> and changing social realities.	Applies a normative-textual methodology rooted in classical authority (<i>tafsir bi al-ma'tsur</i> and <i>fiqh</i>). His method prioritizes the preservation of literal meaning and cautions against modern reinterpretations that may distort the authenticity of divine law.
Normative	Advocates contextual justice: equality does not mean identical sameness but equitable access to rights and responsibilities according to moral and spiritual capacity. Islamic law may be reinterpreted when existing interpretations produce social injustice.	Emphasizes proportional justice: differences between men and women are expressions of divine wisdom. Justice lies in assigning roles and rights according to divine order, not in equalizing every aspect of human life.

Philosophical Dimension	Nasaruddin Umar (Gender Equality)	Henri Shalahuddin (Gender Harmony)
Axiological	Aims for social transformation and liberation from patriarchal structures. The ethical goal of his thought is to create an Islamic society that is spiritually and socially, where women actively contribute to transformation and leadership.	Seeks moral stability and familial harmony. The ultimate value of his thought is the preservation of social balance and moral order in line with divine norms, ensuring the protection of <i>fiṭrah</i> and the sanctity of family life.

These five dimensions reveal two contrasting yet complementary epistemological orientations. Nasaruddin Umar represents a reformist-transformative paradigm that emphasizes contextual interpretation and social justice, while Henri Shalahuddin embodies a conservative-normative paradigm that safeguards the divine and natural order. Together, their dialectic reflects the dynamic tension within Indonesian Islamic thought between the demands of modernity and the preservation of orthodoxy in addressing gender issues.

The philosophical implications of this comparative analysis extend beyond gender discourse itself. Umar’s *maqāṣidi* framework demonstrates how Islamic epistemology can evolve while remaining rooted in revelation, showing that reinterpretation is not necessarily liberalization but a moral necessity to preserve justice. In contrast, Shalahuddin’s *fiṭrati* epistemology shows how stability and divine order function as epistemic safeguards against excessive relativism. These positions represent two movements within Islamic intellectual history—*tajdīd* (renewal) and *ḥifẓ al-qiyām* (preservation of values)—that sustain the dialectic between progress and permanence in Islamic thought.

From an ontological standpoint, both paradigms offer a humanistic reading of Islam that recognizes gender as part of the divine design of creation. While Umar’s humanism is reformist and transformative, Shalahuddin’s is essentialist and preservative. However, both affirm the Qur’an’s core vision of moral equilibrium. This convergence suggests that a genuine Islamic gender philosophy must transcend the binary of “modernist versus traditionalist” and move toward integrative pluralism—a hermeneutic that values both context and transcendence.

Thus, the significance of this comparison lies in showing that the future of Islamic gender discourse does not depend on choosing between equality and harmony, but on reconciling ethical transformation with divine constancy as two inseparable dimensions of Islamic civilization.

D. CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that the fundamental difference between Nasaruddin Umar’s concept of Gender Equality and Henri Shalahuddin’s concept of Gender

Harmony lies in their epistemological and methodological conflicts in interpreting Islamic teachings. Both thinkers share a commitment to justice and the rejection of discrimination, yet they differ in their approaches to achieving and interpreting it.

Nasaruddin Umar represents a reformist-egalitarian paradigm, grounding his interpretation in the principles of Tawhīd and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah as corrective tools against patriarchal readings of scripture. Through the use of thematic (mawḍū'ī) and socio-historical interpretation, he argues that gender inequality originates from social constructs, not from Islamic doctrine itself. From this framework arises his idea of Qirā'ah Mubādalāh, a reciprocal reading that places men and women on a moral and spiritual plane as equals before God.

Conversely, Henri Shalahuddin stands on a conservative-normative paradigm, positioning revelation (naṣṣ) and biological nature (fiṭrah) as absolute boundaries. He rejects the notion of absolute equality and advocates for Gender Harmony—a form of justice grounded in proportionality according to divine law and human nature. Through the concept of Mithāqan Ghalīẓa, he emphasizes the balance of roles within the family and society as the foundation of Islamic civilization.

The main finding of this study is that these two figures are not entirely contradictory but rather complementary poles within contemporary Islamic gender discourse. Umar emphasizes social transformation and interpretive renewal, while Shalahuddin stresses the stability of values and the preservation of human nature. Their dialectic illustrates the dynamic evolution of Indonesian Islamic thought as it navigates between modernization and orthodoxy.

This study offers three key recommendations for further research. First, an empirical investigation should be conducted to assess how the concepts of Gender Equality and Gender Harmony are implemented in public policy and Islamic educational institutions, particularly in shaping family and social relations. Second, a comparative study of Nasaruddin Umar's Qirā'ah Mubādalāh and Henri Shalahuddin's Mithāqan Ghalīẓa should be undertaken to examine their implications as ideal models of marital relations in modern Islamic family law. Third, future research should include other contemporary Muslim scholars who propose integrative syntheses of egalitarian and fiṭrah-based approaches to build a more holistic, contextually grounded map of Islamic gender thought in Indonesia.

This study thus envisions a more integrative understanding of Islamic gender relations—balancing universal justice with *fiṭrah* and *sharī'ah* principles toward a balanced and civilized society.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the discourse on Islamic gender hermeneutics by constructing a dual epistemological model that bridges the maqāṣidi reformist and fiṭrati normativist perspectives. Practically, these findings invite the integration of both paradigms in Islamic education, family law, and policy formulation—where gender equality is pursued within the ethical boundaries of divine harmony. Future research may empirically explore how these concepts are implemented in Islamic institutions and community movements in Indonesia.

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