

Harmonization of Differences in People's Views of Gender Interaction in Hadith *al-Musafahah*

Raabiul Akbar¹, Fathul Muin Zainuddin²

¹Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Indonesia

²Universitas Islam Makassar, Indonesia

Correspondence: rabiulakbarhurairah@gmail.com

DOI: 10.29240/alquds.v8i3.8944

Submitted: 2023-12-06 | Revised: 2024-09-20 | Accepted: 2024-10-08

Abstract. Differences in the interpretation of Islamic teachings regarding gender interactions often lead to diverse perspectives within society. Some adopt a conservative approach that avoids physical contact and limits social interactions, while others take a more inclusive stance, encouraging respectful interactions between men and women. This study aims to explore these differing perspectives, focusing on the tradition of *al-Muṣāfahah* (handshaking), and seeks a solution for harmonizing these differences in social life. This research employs a qualitative method with content analysis of various secondary sources, such as books, theses, dissertations, and academic journals. The study reveals that conservative views emphasize the importance of maintaining modesty and avoiding potential temptations, while inclusive perspectives focus on the context of interactions and the intentions behind actions. The findings indicate that harmonization between these two views is essential to create a more cohesive society, where gender interactions can align with Islamic values and the demands of modern society. In conclusion, harmonizing these views not only fosters social cohesion but also strengthens ethical values within the community.

Keywords: Gender Interaction, Differences in Views, hadith of *al-Muṣāfahah*

Introduction

Interpretations of Islamic teachings regarding interaction between the sexes can vary significantly between societies and within communities, often influenced by the interaction between religious, cultural, and legal factors. In a more conservative approach, interactions between the two sexes may be strictly regulated, with clear guidelines and boundaries set by religious teachings and sometimes enforced by state laws or societal norms. This conservative interpretation often emphasizes decency, gender roles, and the avoidance of any behaviour that could lead to moral decay or social disorder.¹

On the other hand, a more inclusive or moderate approach might offer a broader interpretation of Islamic teachings, allowing for more significant social interaction between the two sexes while maintaining respect for religious principles. This interpretation emphasizes the importance of intention, mutual respect, and interaction context rather than imposing strict segregation. As discussed in the Indonesian context, the concept of religious moderation hints that moderation is not a religion itself but a way of practising religion so that it is not too harsh and soft

¹ Ahmad Taufiq and Arrum Wijaya, "Ahammiyah Al-Ta'Ta'limi al-Islāmī al-Muta'addil Fi al-Tagallub 'alā A'māl al-Qarni al-Hādī Wa al-'Isyrīn al-Alfī al-Tahrīri 'Alā ta'Širi al-Šaqāfah al-Ajnabiyyah," *International Conference on Cultures & Languages (ICCL)* Vol. And no. I (2022): h. 505–6, <https://ejournal.uinsaid.ac.id/index.php/iccl/article/view/5783>.

regarding believers.² The difference between conservative and inclusive approaches can be enormous, with conservative interpretations often leading to more segregated societies and inclusive interpretations encouraging greater gender integration within Islamic ethical boundaries.

Some people adopt a conservative view of intersex interactions for a variety of reasons, often rooted in cultural, religious, or personal beliefs. In some conservative societies, there is a strong emphasis on maintaining modesty and upholding moral values, which can lead to the avoidance of physical contact or limiting unnecessary social interaction between men and women. Religious teachings play an essential role in shaping this view. For example, in the Islamic tradition, there is a consensus among scholars that it is forbidden to look at something haram (non-mahram) with orgasm because it is believed that Allah is aware of the evils and benefits of charity, as well as the deception of the eyes and what the heart hides.³ This perspective is rooted in the desire to prevent moral decay and protect the integrity of individuals and families.

In addition, concerns about the influence of modern media and communication technologies, such as satellite channels and the Internet, are also increasing. While these technologies have many positive aspects, they are also seen as having a negative impact due to the lack of proper management by families, particularly regarding their effects on marriage and children. This has led to phenomena such as internet addiction and exposure to inappropriate content, which can further encourage conservative views as a protective response.⁴

The decline in modesty in dress and behaviour and the absence of rules for mixing between the sexes, even among relatives at social events, have raised concerns. This is due to the lack of public knowledge on the subject, weak religious observance, and the spread of clothing that is considered immodest, which can lead to profound moral and ethical problems, including incest relationships. Addressing these problems is essential to maintaining a pure, cohesive society free from indecency and preventing the breakdown of family ties.⁵ In summary, conservative views regarding interactions between the two sexes are often driven by a desire to maintain moral and ethical standards influenced by religious teachings, concerns about the impact of modern media, and reactions to society's perceived moral decline.

Conversely, an inclusive view of gender interaction in various social contexts, according to Islamic understanding, can be influenced by several factors. First, understanding that Islamic law must be interpreted based on contemporary social contexts and environments can result in a more inclusive view. This approach recognizes that the application of Islamic teachings on gender interaction may vary depending on the circumstances and the need to adapt to modern society while maintaining the religion's core principles.⁶ Second, the thought of contemporary scholars such as Yusuf al-Qardhawi, known for his knowledge in the fields of Islamic jurisprudence and ethics, contributes to a more inclusive perspective. Al-Qardhawi suggests that physical contact

² Taufiq and Wijaya, *Ahammiyah Al-Ta'limi al-Islami al-Muta'addil Fi al-Tagallub 'ala A'mal al-Qarni al-Hadi Wa al-'Isyrin al-Alfi al-Tahriri 'Ala Ta'siri al-Saqafah al-Ajnabiyah*, p. 501.

³ Jamil 'Atallah Muhammad Khalil, "Al-Ḍawābiṭ al-Syar'iyyah Li al-'Ilāqah Bayna al-Mahārim Dirāsah Waṣfiyyah Tahliliyyah" (Palestina, Jami'ah al-Najah al-Wataniyyah, 2021), h. 80-81, <https://repository.najah.edu/items/6a37c570-0acd-4f30-9a1e-82d8139d1172>.

⁴ Khalil, *Al-Ḍawābiṭ Al-Siar'it li al-'Ilāqah bina al-Mahārim Dirāsah Waṣfiyyah dissolution*, h. 77.

⁵ Khalil, *Al-Ḍawābiṭ Al-Siar'it li al-'Ilāqah bina al-Mahārim Dirāsah Waṣfiyyah dissolution*, h. 1.

⁶ D. A. Ramdani and S. Sutisna, "A Comparative Study of Imam Nawawi and Yusuf Al-Qardhawi's Thoughts on Shaking Hands with Non-Mahram in Islam," *Mizan: Journal of Islamic Law* Vol. 2 No. 1 (2018): h. 50, <https://jurnalfai-uikabogor.org/index.php/mizan/article/view/212>.

alone does not necessarily lead to prohibition, either with a mahram (close relative) or a non-mahram individual, and cites an example from the Prophet's life that shows a more inclusive approach to interaction between men and women. Third, some scholars distinguish between the intention behind an action and the action itself. For example, Yusuf al-Qardhawi refers to the practice of the Prophet taking a pledge of allegiance (*baiat*) from women, which involves physical contact, which suggests that context and intention can influence the permissibility of gender interactions.⁷

Fourth, an inclusive view may also stem from the need to effectively navigate the social norms of a particular society, especially in a diverse and pluralistic environment. This perspective recognizes the practical aspects of daily life and the need for men and women to interact in various public and professional settings. Fifth, inclusivity can be encouraged by focusing on Islamic ethical principles, such as justice, respect, and dignity for all individuals, regardless of gender. This ethical approach emphasizes treating everyone equally and fairly in all social interactions.⁸ These factors suggest that different understandings of religious texts can support an inclusive view of gender interaction in Islam, considering context and intent, the influence of contemporary scientific opinion, and applying ethical principles underlying Islamic teachings.

Several studies related to differences of views in the context of the hadith *al-Musāfabah* (shaking hands) have been carried out by several researchers. Among them, a study conducted by Nurul Huda (2015) entitled "Shaking Hands with the Opposite Sex"⁹ concluded the results of the research that, according to a valid hadith, touching hands between men and women without orgasm and without fear of slander (temptation) is not prohibited and was even practised by the Prophet himself. The research approach used is to study the verses of the Quran and Hadith to determine the extent to which conclusions can be drawn regarding the issue of handshakes between men and women. This involves reviewing the relevant texts and assessing the authenticity and strength of the Hadith through a process known as *takbrij*. The aim is to understand the legislative actions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and whether they can be used as a model for contemporary practice. This study uses the method of textual analysis of Qur'anic verses and Hadith to understand the Islamic perspective on handshakes between men and women. The theory used in this study is based on Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and Sharia legal principles, which involves interpreting the Qur'an and Hadith to obtain law in various aspects of life, including social interactions such as shaking hands between men and women. This research is based on the understanding that the actions of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) are legislative (*tasyri'*) and serve as an example for Muslims to imitate, as affirmed in the Qur'an (al-Ahzab: 21).

Still, in the same context, research conducted by Dahliati Simanjuntak (2020) entitled "The Law of Skin Touch (Handshake)"¹⁰ focuses on the perspective of Islamic law regarding handshakes between men and women who are not mahram (relatives who are not mahrams). This research

⁷ Ramdani and Sutisna, A Comparative Study of Imam Nawawi and Yusuf Al-Qardhawi's Thoughts on Shaking Hands with Non-Mahrams in Islam, h. 51.

⁸ Ramdani and Sutisna, A Comparative Study of Imam Nawawi and Yusuf Al-Qardhawi's Thoughts on Shaking Hands with Non-Mahrams in Islam, h. 50.

⁹ Nurul Huda, "shaking hands with the opposite sex," *Substantia: Journal of Ushuluddin Sciences* Vol. 17 No. 1 (2015), <https://jurnal.ar-raniry.ac.id/index.php/substantia/article/view/4104>.

¹⁰ Dahliati Simanjuntak et al., "The Law of Skin Contact (Handshake)," *Jurisprudentia: Journal of Economic Law* Vol. 6 No. 1 (2020), <http://jurnal.iain-padangsidempuan.ac.id/index.php/yurisprudentia/article/view/2539>.

examines the views of the four primary schools of Islam on this issue, referring to the verses of the Quran and Hadith to understand whether such actions are considered permissible or prohibited (haram) in Islamic law. This research applies qualitative methods focusing on deductive and inductive reasoning and dynamic analysis between observed phenomena. This research aims to describe Islamic norms related to handshakes between men and women in the context of certain events, such as marriage, and then analyze Islamic law to clarify its legal status. This research does not explicitly mention a specific theoretical framework used as the basis for research. Instead, it focuses on the descriptive analysis of Islamic legal texts and the opinions of scholars to find out the legal status of handshakes between men and women who are not mahrams in Islam. This study concludes that scholars differ in opinion regarding the permissibility of shaking hands between men and women who are not mahrams. Some scholars, following a strict interpretation of Islamic texts, consider it haram (forbidden) because of the potential for fitnah (temptation) that physical contact may cause. Others, such as Yusuf Qardhawi, allow it under certain conditions, for example, when there is no fear of temptation or when it is part of a customary greeting that does not lead to a prohibited action. This study's findings show that Islamic law's perspective on this issue is not monolithic, and there is room for interpretation based on the context and intention behind the act of shaking hands. The study shows that while some scholars strictly prohibit physical contact between non-mahram men and women, others offer a more divergent view, taking into account the customs and norms of the society in which Muslims live.

In addition, the research of Rahmadanni Pohan et al. (2017) entitled "Program *al-Mushafahah* (shaking hands) as a Character Building Effort in Students of Private Islamic Elementary Schools Pekanbaru"¹¹ discusses the implementation of *the Muṣāfahah* Program (shaking hands) as a means of building student character in one of the Private Ibtidaiyah Madrasah in Pekanbaru. This research uses a qualitative methodology. The approach used in the research is naturalistic, which is characterized by not adhering to the standard research design. This means that the research design can be changed if problems in the field require modification. This research uses several theories related to character education and the development of personal values in students are likely to be used. These theories can include character formation, habituation's role in instilling values, and the impact of social interactions such as mushafahah programs on character development. The findings of this study show that the *mushafahah* program is an effort by schools to foster the development of character values (*Character building*) in students. The program involves more than just handshakes; It also includes smiling, greeting, speaking politely, and showing polite behaviour between the individuals involved. The *mushafahah program* is carried out consciously through the habituation method to grow and strengthen character values such as compassion, care, humility, love of peace, respect and courtesy, honesty, discipline, cooperation, and student responsibility.

Another research conducted by Nurin Fitriana (2018) entitled "The Relevance of Public Knowledge About Ethics, Religion and Shaking Hands with the opposite sex in Islamic Review"¹² discusses the importance of education in shaping human behaviour and the role of Islamic education in Indonesia. This research also explores the relevance of public knowledge about ethics,

¹¹ R. Pohan, L. Fitrianti, and R. H. Siregar, "Mushafahah (Shaking Hands) Program as a Character Building Effort in Students of Pekanbaru Private Islamic Elementary School," *Belajea : Journal of Islamic Education* Vol. 2 No. 1 (2017), <http://journal.iaincurup.ac.id/index.php/belajea/article/view/297>.

¹² Nurin Fitriana, "The Relevance of Public Knowledge about Ethics, Religion and Shaking Hands with the opposite sex in an Islamic Review," *Research Gate* (researchgate.net, 2018), <https://www.researchgate.net/>.

religion, and handshakes with the opposite sex in an Islamic perspective. The study did not explicitly detail the specific methodology used. This study uses a combined approach of ethical, religious, and social analysis in the context of Islamic studies. This research does not explicitly mention the specific theories used but refers to various concepts and themes important in Islamic studies and ethics. This study does not contain specific research findings because it discusses the relevance and impact of various aspects of Islamic education, ethics, and social practices.

Still, in the same context, the research conducted by Acep Dani Ramdani (2022) entitled "The significance of the handshake based on religious and social perspectives (Analytical study of Yusuf al-Qardhawi and Petter L. Berger)"¹³ discusses the importance of handshakes from a religious and social perspective. This study uses a qualitative approach with secondary sources and applies content analysis. The findings of this study show a correlation between Yusuf al-Qardhawi's handshake theory and Peter L. Berger's analysis of social construction. The handshake is considered a symbol of social bonding, but in the context of Islamic fiqh, a provision limits one's abilities with the opposite sex. This research uses Peter L. Berger's theory of social construction, which argues that reality is a social construct developed through intersubjective experience and social interaction between individuals or groups. This theory is important in understanding the social reality of practices such as handshakes, as it emphasizes the central role of culture in shaping thought and behaviour, acknowledging diversity within a single culture, and being consistent with society and time.

The research conducted by Dani Ahmad Ramdani and Sutisna (2018) entitled "A Comparative Study of the Thoughts of Imam Nawawi and Yusuf al-Qardhawi on Shaking Hands with Non-Mahrams in Islam"¹⁴ discusses the issue of shaking hands with non-mahrams in Islamic society, focusing on the differences in views of Imam Nawawi and Yusuf al-Qardhawi. Although Imam Nawawi considered it forbidden, Yusuf al-Qardhawi allowed it under certain conditions. The approach used is a comparative analysis approach to test different viewpoints of Imam Nawawi and Yusuf al-Qardhawi's thoughts. The methodology also includes using "Saddu Al-Zari'ah", a preventive measure in Islamic jurisprudence to avoid actions that could lead to prohibited activities, which are part of Yusuf al-Qardhawi's *ijtihad* (independent reasoning). This study does not explicitly mention the specific theories used. This study concludes that most Salaf and Khalaf scholars of the Shafi'i madhab, including Imam Nawawi, prohibit shaking hands with non-mahrams under any conditions. On the other hand, the majority of today's scholars, represented by Yusuf al-Qardhawi, allow shaking hands with non-mahrams as long as there is no element of orgasm.

Furthermore, the research conducted by Eko Zulfikar (2018) entitled "Halal Bihalal Tradition in the Perspective of the Qur'an and Hadith"¹⁵ discusses the Halal Bihalal tradition from the perspective of the Quran and Hadith. Zulfikar's research does not explicitly mention the issue

¹³ A. D. Ramdani et al., "The Significance of the Handshake Based on Religious and Social Perspectives (Analytical Study of Yusuf al-Qardhawi and Petter L. Berger)," *Contemplation: Journal of Ushuluddin Sciences* Vol. 10 No. 1 (2022), <https://ejournal.uinsatu.ac.id/index.php/kon/article/view/7251>.

¹⁴ Ramdani and Sutisna, "A Comparative Study of Imam Nawawi and Yusuf Al-Qardhawi's Thought on Shaking Hands with Non-Mahram in Islam."

¹⁵ Eko Zulfikar, "The Halal Bihalal Tradition in the Perspective of the Qur'an and Hadith," *Journal of Qur'an Studies* Vol. 14 No. 2 (2018), <http://journal.unj.ac.id/unj/index.php/jsq/article/view/7122>.

of shaking hands or hands with the opposite sex. Still, it touches on several things related to *al-Musāfahah* (shaking hands) that can be used as a reference in this study. Zulfikar's research revealed that shaking hands is not directly referred to as *halal* (permissible) or *haram* (forbidden) in the primary Islamic texts, such as the Qur'an and Hadith. Still, the practice of culturally shaking hands as a form of greeting and expressing good intentions is widespread in many Muslim communities. In the Halal Bihalal tradition context, shaking hands is an expression of apology and harmony recommended in Islam. The Halal Bihalal tradition is a cultural practice that involves forgiving each other and is seen as a way to strengthen the brotherhood (*ukhuwah*) bond between Muslims. The methodology used in this study involves an interdisciplinary approach that includes textual analysis of Islamic scriptures, cultural studies, and linguistic analysis. This study does not explicitly mention the use of a specific theory. However, this approach combines various analytical perspectives that can be inferred from the context, including textual analysis, linguistic analysis, cultural studies, and social communication theories that show that Halal Bihalal functions as a means of productive communication, improves social relationships, and creates pluralistic attitudes towards other religions.

Finally, Hanan Muhammad and Zafr Abd al-Razzaq's (2023) research entitled "Bai'at al-Nisā' Ahdāfuhā wa Ṭabī'atuhā fī 'Ahdī al-Nubuwwah"¹⁶ examines the similarities and differences in the pledge of allegiance between women and men, as well as the method used by the Prophet as a substitute for shaking hands with women when saying the vow. This research draws on historical sources and Islamic texts to comprehensively understand. The methodology used in this study is qualitative research. The study does not explicitly mention any specific theories used. This research focuses on a historical review of the sources and importance of women's loyalty (*bay'ah*) in Islamic history, as well as women's role, beliefs, and social contributions in Islam. The conclusion of this study is related to the pledge of allegiance between women and men, as well as the method used by the Prophet as a substitute for shaking hands with women when pledging, namely that there are similarities and differences between the pledge of allegiance (*bay'ah*) of women and men. The similarities include the oath based on Islam, listening and obedience, support and protection as in the second pledge of 'Aqabah, being in the path of Allah with all one's might, and the ultimate goal of listening to and obeying Allah and His Messenger. As for the difference, the way the Prophet pledges to women differs from that of men. Although the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) accepted promises from men with handshakes and greetings, he did not shake hands with women. Instead, he used several alternative methods, such as speaking, taking a vow over clothing, delegating someone to take a vow on his behalf, asking and testing, and asking the Prophet and the women to dip their hands in a water bowl. These methods are used to maintain decency and respect the limits set by Islamic teachings.

Based on the previous literature review above, this study will fill one of the gaps that have not been filled in the literature, namely efforts to achieve harmonization or harmony between different views of society regarding gender interaction in the context of the hadith *al-Musāfahah* (shaking hands). This refers to efforts to unite or embrace differences of views in society. People often have diverse views on various aspects of life, including gender interaction. Harmonization reflects an effort to create harmony or agreement amid these differences. This research method

¹⁶ Hanan Muhammad and Zafr Abd al-Razzaq, "Bai'at al-Nisā' Ahdāfuhā Wa Ṭabī'atuhā fī 'Ahdī al-Nubuwwah," *Scholarly Journals of Mosul University* Vol. 3 No.10 (2023), https://www.mosuljournals.com/article_179878.html.

uses a qualitative approach by utilizing secondary sources such as books, theses or dissertations, and scientific journals relevant to the research topic. Furthermore, content analysis is used as a tool to review the data that has been collected to allow the preparation of conclusions that can be produced from this research.

Discussion

These hadiths about *al-Musāfahah* (shaking hands) give rise to various views of society in gender interaction. The first group can be considered conservative, and the second group is more inclusive when looking at this issue. How do we embrace the differences of views that develop in the social interaction of the community? The Islamic view of gender interaction is generally based on politeness, respect, and clear boundaries between men and women who do not have kinship (*mahram*). These principles are derived from the Qur'an and Hadith, the primary sources of Islamic law and guidelines. For example, the Qur'an encourages every individual to do good because the good will return to him, and if he does wrong, it will return to him (Qur'an 17:7).

إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا

If you do good, you have done good for yourself. If you do evil, it comes back to you.

The above verse shows that good and bad behaviour directly impacts oneself. The principle of politeness in Islam encourages individuals to interact with politeness and kindness, remembering that good deeds not only bring goodness to others but also bring goodness and blessings to oneself. Therefore, in gender interactions, politeness teaches us to be polite and respectful towards the opposite sex, creating healthy relationships and mutual respect.

Conservative Interpretation of Islamic Teachings: The Context of Hadith Al-Mushafahah (Shaking Hands)

In conservative Islamic societies, the hadith *al-Mušāfahah*, which discusses the issue of handshakes between men and women, is often interpreted in line with the traditional understanding that prohibits physical contact between men and women who do not have a close relationship (non-mahram). This interpretation is based on the principle of avoiding all actions that have the potential to cause temptation or the generation of lust, which is considered more impactful than just visual contact. Imam al-Nawawi stated:

النووي: وقد قال أصحابنا كل من حرم النظر إليه حرم مسه، بل المس أشد، فإنه يحل النظر إلى أجنبية قال الإمام أن يتزوجها، ولا يجوز مسها إذا أراد

*Touching someone forbidden from being seen is even more forbidden because touching has a more substantial effect.*¹⁷

Imam al-Nawawi, in his statement, wanted to emphasize that in Islamic ethical norms, the act of touching someone who should not be seen is more emphasized and considered more forbidden than just looking. This is due to the belief that touching has a more substantial emotional and physical impact than simply looking. In this context, Imam al-Nawawi refers to the principles of Islamic law that emphasize the importance of maintaining boundaries between men and women, especially those who do not have kinship (*mahram*). As a physical act, touching is thought to have

¹⁷ Muhammad Ahmad Musa, *Risalatun Fi Ahkam Al-Mušāfahah* 1st ed. (Market al-Imam Malik al-Elektroni, 2020), 12, <https://www.noor-book.com>.

the potential to evoke emotions and a stronger connection than just looking. Therefore, to maintain purity and honour between individuals and prevent the occurrence of unwanted temptations or tendencies, Islam places particular emphasis on the prohibition of touching people who should not be seen. As a result, in conservative Islamic societies, men and women who adhere to this interpretation usually avoid shaking hands with members of the opposite sex who are not members of their immediate family. Instead, they may verbally greet or place their hands on their hearts as a sign of respect and recognition when meeting the opposite sex.

In conservative Islamic societies, conservative views of the Hadith of *al-Musāfahah* significantly influence daily behaviour in the context of gender interaction. Conservative interpretations generally prohibit physical contact between a male and a non-mahram woman based on the principle that such contact can cause temptation and arousal, which is considered more impactful than mere visual contact. This opinion is supported by Imam al-Nawawi's statement that touching a person who is forbidden to see is even more forbidden because touching has a more substantial influence.¹⁸ So, in daily life, conservative Muslims will avoid shaking hands with the opposite sex who does not have a close relationship with them. This affects social, professional, and religious interactions, where instead of making physical contact, individuals can use verbal greetings or non-contact gestures, such as placing hands over their hearts/chests, to show respect and recognition when meeting the opposite sex. This practice is intended to maintain decency and prevent any form of inappropriate interaction or possible slander (temptation).

There is a difference of opinion among scholars regarding the interpretation of the Hadith related to *al-mushafahah* (shaking hands) with women. Some scholars believe that the Prophet Muhammad (saw) did not shake hands with women based on a specific history. For example, a narration states that the Prophet verbally pledged allegiance to women and emphasized that he did not shake hands with women. This is supported by the story of Umaina bint Ruqayyah, who narrates that when women came to pledge allegiance to the Prophet, she declared, "I did not shake hands with women," which shows that the same statement she made to a hundred women was the same, equivalent to what she would say to a woman.¹⁹ On the other hand, some scholars argue that shaking hands with women is permissible under certain conditions, such as the absence of orgasm and a sense of security from temptation. They gave an example of a hadith about the baiat of women to the Prophet, which they interpreted to show that baiat is carried out by shaking hands. One example is the narration of um Atiyya, which describes the Prophet reaching out from outside the house while the women reach out from inside. Some scholars interpret this as a sign that *baiat* occurs by shaking hands.²⁰

Differences in the interpretation of *al-mushafahah* hadiths can lead to social dynamics and potential conflicts in several ways: First, in a society where shaking hands is a common form of greeting, Muslims who adhere to a stricter interpretation may find themselves in awkward situations, and potentially offend others by refusing to shake hands with women. This can lead to misunderstandings and may be considered disrespectful or discriminatory, even if the goal is to follow religious guidelines. Second, within the Muslim community itself, there may be a variety of practices based on different scientific opinions. This can lead to divisions or judgments among

¹⁸ Musa, *Risālatun Fi Abkām Al-Mušāfahah*, h. 12,13.

¹⁹ Abd al-Nasir IBN Khadr Milad, *Al-Mušārahah Fi Abkām al-Mušāfahah* (Keru: Maktaba Malik al-Fahad al-Vithania, 2008), h. 46.

²⁰ Milad, *Al-Mušārahah Fi Abkām al-Mušāfahah*, h. 33.

Muslims, where some people may find others too strict or too lenient in practising religious teachings. These differences can affect community cohesion and create intra-community tensions. Third, the interpretation of *al-mushafahah* hadiths also has implications for gender relations in the Muslim community. If shaking hands with women is considered unallowed, this may contribute to a broader gender separation in social and professional settings. This can affect women's participation in public life and their interactions with men, potentially causing gender inequality and limiting opportunities for women.

Fourth, in countries with significant Muslim populations, such interpretations of Hadith can influence legal and institutional policies. For example, schools, workplaces, and government agencies may need to direct these interpretations of religion to create policies that respect religious beliefs while ensuring inclusivity and non-discrimination. Fifth, to interreligious and intercultural dialogue: different views on shaking hands with women can also impact interreligious and intercultural relations. Non-Muslims may need education and awareness to understand the religious underpinnings of these practices, and without this understanding, there is a risk of reinforcing stereotypes or encouraging exclusion.

In summary, the diversity of opinions regarding *al-mushafahah* hadiths can give rise to complex interactions between social dynamics and potential conflicts, affecting everything from personal interactions to broader societal norms and policies. Individuals and societies must navigate these differences with sensitivity and a commitment to mutual respect and understanding.

An Inclusive View of Gender Interaction: The Context of the Hadith al-Musāfahah (Shaking Hands)

In an Islamic society with an inclusive view of gender interaction, the Hadith of *al-mushafahah* (shaking hands) can be interpreted by paying attention to a more flexible approach to physical greetings between men and women. This interpretation will consider the context, intentions, and cultural norms surrounding shaking hands.

It is important to note that the authenticity of the Hadith in question has not diminished because it is not included in some of *the most famous* (most famous) collections of hadiths. Scholars such as Al-Hayṣamī, Al-Munziri, and Al-Albānī consider the chain of narration to be solid or *jayyid* (sound). The term "touching" mentioned in the Hadith is not necessarily interpreted as touching the skin alone without orgasm, like an ordinary handshake, but according to its meaning. In the Qur'an and the Sunnah, "touching" can be a metaphor for sexual intercourse, as interpreted by Ibn Abbās concerning certain verses²¹. Thus, the prohibition can be less explicit regarding handshakes that are non-sexual in nature and done with respect.²²

Imam Al-Nawawi explained that the Hadith on zina includes various forms of forbidden interaction, but, understandably, not all physical contact is the same. The Prophet Muhammad never physically touched a woman's hand when saying the oath of allegiance, which shows that there is a respectful distance in the interaction.²³ Discussion of mixing between men and women does not necessarily mean permitting to do what is forbidden, and it should be noted that the

²¹ For example, in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Nisa' verse 43.

²² Milad, *Al-Mušārahah Fi Ahkām al-Mušāfahah*, h. 43.

²³ Milad, *Al-Mušārahah Fi Ahkām al-Mušāfahah*, h. 45.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) never shook hands with women. However, tradition does not have the authority to change established religious rules, except when the religious rules are based on such traditions, and changes in traditions may affect the law concerned.²⁴ It is argued that to maintain a more inclusive interpretation; words must be understood according to their apparent meaning unless there is evidence to the contrary. The Hadith of Anas bin Malik, where the Prophet Muhammad visited Umm Haram bint Milhan and allowed her to comb his hair while he rested his head on her lap, is mentioned as proof of the permissibility of interaction with non-mahram women in a respectful and non-sexual way.²⁵

In an Islamic society that adheres to an inclusive view of gender interaction, interpretation efforts to understand the Hadith of *al-mushafahah* (shaking hands) can focus on the broader principles of respect, politeness, and social harmony as emphasized in Islamic teachings. This interpretation will consider the context in which the Hadith is narrated and the intention behind shaking hands. Islamic scholars advocating a more inclusive interpretation may argue that the primary concern in gender interaction is maintaining the dignity and respect of all individuals involved. They may cite the Quran's emphasis on equality between men and women regarding spiritual obligations and rewards, suggesting that social interaction should reflect this spiritual equality.²⁶ Furthermore, they refer to the importance of family units and social bonds in Islam, built on love, compassion, and mutual respect.²⁷ From this point of view, the handshake between a man and a woman can be seen as an act of mutual respect and strengthening social bonds, provided that it is done with the right intentions and within the limits of politeness and courtesy.

An inclusive interpretation will also consider the Qur'anic guidelines on modesty and purity reflected in the Qur'an surah al-Nur: 30-31:

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ (٣٠) وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا ۗ وَلَا يَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنَاتِ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنَاتِ أَخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوْ التَّبَاعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولَى الْأَرْبَابَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوْ الْوَالِدِ الَّذِيْنَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَىٰ عَوْرَتِ النِّسَاءِ ۗ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ ۗ وَتَوْبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ (٣١)

Say to the believing man, "Let them hold back their gaze and guard their genitals; indeed, Allah knows of what they are doing" (30). Say to the believing woman, "Let them hold back their gaze and their genitals, and let them not reveal their ornaments except what is visible from them. And let them cover their breasts, and do not show their ornaments except to their husbands, or their fathers, or their husbands' fathers, or their sons, or their husbands' sons, or their brothers, or their brother's sons, or their sister's sons, or the Muslim women, or the enslaved people they own, or the male servants who have no desire (for women) or children who do not understand women's aura. And let them not beat their feet so that the jewels they hide may be known. And repent to Allah, you who believe, that you may be lucky. (31). QS al-Nur: 30-31

The above verse ensures that any physical interaction, including shaking hands, does not conflict with the principles of decency and purity. Handshakes are permissible if done in a manner that does not cause discomfort or violate Islamic norms of decency. In addition, scholars can also take advantage of Islam's recognition of women's personality and rights in all aspects of life. Al-Qaradawi stated that there is no *heavenly* religion or *ardhiyah*, nor is there any ideal or realistic philosophy which is comparable to Islam in terms of respecting, treating, and protecting women.

²⁴ Milad, *Al-Muṣārahah Fī Ahkām al-Muṣāfahah*, h. 40.

²⁵ Milad, *Al-Muṣārahah Fī Ahkām al-Muṣāfahah*, h. 37.

²⁶ Amud Abd al-Karim Sa'dawi, *Qaḍāyā Al-Mar'ah Fī Fiqh al-Qarḍāwī* (Kairo: Qatr al-Nida, 2006), p. 69.

²⁷ Sa'dawi, *Qaḍāyā Al-Mar'ah Fī Fiqh al-Qarḍāwī*, h. 94.

Islam is recognized for giving respect to women, giving them fair treatment, and maintaining the protection of their rights as human beings. In addition, Islam respects women, gives fair treatment to them, and maintains protection for them in their roles as daughters, wives, mothers, and members of society.²⁸ This recognition can be extended to social interactions, where women can shake hands if they deem it appropriate and aligned with their personal and religious beliefs. In practice, an inclusive interpretation of *al-mushafahah* hadith means that shaking hands between men and women is acceptable in an Islamic society that promotes these inclusive values, as long as the interaction is respectful, consensual, and does not contradict Islamic principles of decency and purity.

An inclusive view in the understanding of Islam seeks to balance adhering to religious values and creating an inclusive social environment by interpreting religious texts context-sensitively and emphasizing Islamic ethical principles. This approach recognizes the importance of maintaining the core values of Islam while also considering the practicalities of contemporary social life and the diversity of the Muslim community. Scholars who support an inclusive view are often involved in contextual interpretations of religious texts and argue that the application of Islamic teachings on gender interaction may vary depending on the circumstances and the need to adapt to modern society while maintaining the core principles of religion. This view is supported by the idea that Islam is a whole religion, regulating all aspects of life, from the smallest to the largest, and can guide its people towards a better life.

Contemporary scholars such as Yusuf al-Qardhawi contribute to a more inclusive perspective by distinguishing between the intention behind an action and the action itself. Al-Qardhawi refers to examples from the life of the Prophet that show a more inclusive approach to interaction between men and women, showing that context and intention can influence the permissibility of gender interaction.²⁹

The Concept of Conflict Harmonization in Gender Interaction in the Hadith of al-Musāfahah (Shaking Hands)

Harmonization in the context of efforts to achieve harmony refers to the process of aligning different perspectives, practices, and policies to create a more cohesive and cooperative environment. This can include reconciling opposing viewpoints, standardizing approaches to conflict resolution, and finding common ground among different groups. Harmonization reduces friction and builds a foundation for lasting peace and mutual understanding.

Conflict theory views conflict as a dissociative social relationship and views society as having two faces: conflict and consensus. Disputes and conflicts in the social system and its various elements can lead to disintegration and change.³⁰ Social relationship theory is a framework that analyzes the essence of social interactions and relationships within a society. In this analysis, there is a difference between associative and dissociative relationships. Associative relations refer to relationships that strengthen group unity and are considered positive, such as cooperation,

²⁸ Sa'dawi, *Qadāyā Al-Mar'ah Fi Fiqhi al-Qardāwī*, h. 68.

²⁹ Ramdani and Sutisna, "A Comparative Study of Imam Nawawi and Yusuf Al-Qardhawi's Thoughts on Shaking Hands with Non-Mahram in Islam," p. 50.

³⁰ A. Ayutriana et al., "Harmonization & Conflict," *QISTINA: Indonesian Multidisciplinary Journal*, 2023, h. 150, <http://rayyanjurnal.com/index.php/qistina/article/view/576>.

accommodation, assimilation, and acculturation. In addition, dissociative relations are characterized by instability in group unity and are harmful, including competition, controversy, and disputes.³¹ In the context of this study, the link between conflict theory and social relationship theory emerged when investigating society's views on gender interaction in the Hadith *of al-Musāfahah*. A conservative and inclusive view of gender interaction can be interpreted as a representation of conflict and consensus in society. For example, an inclusive view reflects an associative relationship that strengthens group unity, while a conservative view can be seen as a negative dissociative relationship.

The concept of conflict harmonization in the context of gender interaction in Islam reflects a moderate approach by seeking a balance between traditional norms and contemporary societal values. This approach recognizes the existence of a wide range of interpretations and practices regarding gender interaction, including shaking hands between men and women. It aims to find a middle ground that respects Islamic principles and the evolving dynamics of social behaviour.

In Islamic jurisprudence, there is a recognition that different contexts and circumstances may require re-evaluating specific social practices to maintain harmony and respect between individuals. This can be seen in discussions among previous legal experts, where there is an understanding that decisions can vary based on time, place, and customs as long as they do not conflict with the basic principles of faith.³² By applying the principle of conflict harmonization, the moderate approach does not rigidly adhere to a single interpretation. Instead, it considers the fundamental objectives of Islamic law (*maqasid al-shariah*), such as preserving dignity, improving social cohesion and welfare, and preventing harm. This approach allows for a different understanding of gender interactions that can accommodate cultural norms and individual comfort levels while upholding Islamic values of decency and respect.³³

In practice, this means that in societies where shaking hands between men and women is a standard and respectful greeting, and if it can be done with the right intention and without prejudice to the principle of politeness in Islam, it can be considered permissible. This moderate attitude promotes social harmony by allowing Muslims to interact with others in a way that respects the teachings of Islam and is sensitive to the norms of the broader society in which they live. The historical and cultural context influences the concept of conflict harmonization in interpreting the Hadith al-Musāfahah, which refers to shaking hands. Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) has a tradition of considering customs (*'urf*) and the context of society when issuing legal opinions (fatwa). This is because the application of Islamic law is intended to be flexible and responsive to the needs and circumstances of different societies.

Conclusion

In understanding the different views of society on gender interaction, primarily related to the Hadith *of al-Musāfahah* (shaking hands), it is crucial to find a harmonious approach to embrace diversity of perspectives. This concept or approach of harmonization has implications for the understanding of hadith *al-Musāfahah* among the public. First, it has implications for the flexibility of jurisprudence. This concept encourages a flexible approach to Islamic jurisprudence, which can accommodate different interpretations and practices regarding gender interactions, such as

³¹ Ayutriana et al., *Harmonization & Conflict*, h. 150.

³² Sa'dawi, *Qaḍāyā Al-Mar'ah Fī Fiqhī al-Qarḍāwī*, h. 175.

³³ Sa'dawi, *Qaḍāyā Al-Mar'ah Fī Fiqhī al-Qarḍāwī*, h. 94.

handshakes. This flexibility can help society cope with the complexities of modern social norms while still adhering to Islamic principles. Second, it has implications for cultural relevance. Conflict harmonization recognizes the importance of cultural norms (*'urf*) and their influence on interpreting Islamic teachings. This relevance allows the practice of handshaking between genders to be acceptable in some cultures. In this regard, in others, it may not be recommended, as it reflects the Muslim community's diversity and the implications for increasing social cohesion. By seeking a middle ground between traditional and contemporary understandings, the concept aims to encourage social harmony and mutual respect. This can lead to more inclusive and peaceful societal dynamics, where different views are recognized and respected.

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