

BREAKING THE BOUNDARIES OF PATRIARCHY: ELABORATION OF THE PILLARS OF MODERN ISLAMIC THOUGHT ON WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

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Abstract

Women's leadership in the context of modern Islamic thought is a topic that is gaining increasing attention. In many societies, the traditional paradigm of women's role in leadership is still dominant. Therefore, there is an urgent need to reconstruct and elaborate the pillars of Islamic thought in order to better support women's participation in leadership. This study aims to investigate women's leadership roles and detail steps to reconstruct and elaborate the pillars of modern Islamic thought to facilitate women's participation in leadership. A special goal is to identify barriers faced by women in achieving leadership positions and explore strategies that can be used to overcome these barriers. A qualitative approach was used in this study. An in-depth literature analysis was conducted to evaluate traditional Islamic thought and find a basis for the reconstruction of that thought. In addition, in-depth interviews with Islamic thought figures and women leaders were conducted to gain practical perspectives and experience in facing leadership challenges. The results suggest that through the reconstruction of modern Islamic thought, it is possible to create an environment that supports and encourages women to take leadership roles. Strategies

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involving women's education, advocacy, and capacity building have proven effective in overcoming these barriers. Therefore, this research contributes to our understanding of how the reconstruction of Islamic thought can support women's active participation in leadership.

Keywords: Woman's Leadership, Reconstruction, Islamic Thought

Abstrak

Kepemimpinan perempuan dalam konteks pemikiran Islam modern merupakan topik yang semakin banyak mendapat perhatian. Di banyak masyarakat, paradigma tradisional tentang peran perempuan dalam kepemimpinan masih dominan. Oleh karena itu, ada kebutuhan mendesak untuk merekonstruksi dan menguraikan pilar-pilar pemikiran Islam guna mendukung partisipasi perempuan dalam kepemimpinan dengan lebih baik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki peran kepemimpinan perempuan dan merinci langkah-langkah untuk merekonstruksi dan menguraikan pilar-pilar pemikiran Islam modern guna memfasilitasi partisipasi perempuan dalam kepemimpinan. Sasaran khususnya adalah untuk mengidentifikasi hambatan yang dihadapi perempuan dalam mencapai posisi kepemimpinan dan mengeksplorasi strategi yang dapat digunakan untuk mengatasi hambatan tersebut. Pendekatan kualitatif digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Analisis literatur mendalam dilakukan untuk mengevaluasi pemikiran Islam tradisional dan menemukan dasar untuk merekonstruksi pemikiran tersebut. Selain itu, wawancara mendalam dengan tokoh-tokoh pemikiran Islam dan pemimpin perempuan dilakukan untuk mendapatkan perspektif dan pengalaman praktis dalam menghadapi tantangan kepemimpinan. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa melalui rekonstruksi pemikiran Islam modern, adalah mungkin untuk menciptakan lingkungan yang mendukung dan mendorong perempuan untuk mengambil peran kepemimpinan. Strategi yang melibatkan pendidikan, advokasi, dan pengembangan kapasitas perempuan telah terbukti efektif dalam mengatasi hambatan-hambatan ini. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi bagi pemahaman kita tentang bagaimana rekonstruksi pemikiran Islam dapat mendukung partisipasi aktif perempuan dalam kepemimpinan.

Kata Kunci: Kepemimpinan Perempuan, Rekonstruksi, Pemikiran Islam

Introduction

Islam teaches that men and women have an equal position before Allah. Both have the same rights and responsibilities, and there is no discrimination based on gender. However, in practice, there are a number of verses in the Qur'an and hadith that give the impression of subordination to women. This creates complexity in the interpretation of Islamic teachings related to gender equality. The challenge faced by Muslims is how they understand the implications of the Qur'an's statements when they are revealed. For this reason, it is important to examine the historical and social context in which the revelation was received. Realizing that the verses on equality and subordination can relate to the situation in the past, is the first step to overcoming the ambiguity and building a more holistic understanding of the position of women in Islam. To deal with this complexity, a deep and contextual approach to the teachings of Islam is needed. A mature understanding can help Muslims answer questions around the role of women in society and how to integrate Islamic values with the demands of the times. Along with social and ideological developments, careful interpretation of Islamic teachings can help create space for gender equality without setting aside fundamental religious values.¹

In the early 20th century, Qasim Amin², one of Egypt's reformers, once put forward controversial ideas about women's liberation through his books *Tahrīr al-Mar'ah* (Women's Independence) and *al-Mar'at al-Jadīdah* (Modern Women).

¹ Mohammad Hendra & Nurul Hakim, "Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam," *The Indonesian Journal of Islamic Law and Civil Law* Vol. 4, no. No. 1 (2023).

² Khayr al-Dīn Zirīklī, "Al-A'lam Qamus Tarajim Li Asyhar Al-Rijal Wa Al-Nisa' Min Al-'Arab Wa Al-Musta'ribin Wa Al-Mustasyriqin," in 5 (Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm lil-Malāyīn, 1990), 184. Qāsim ibn Muḥammad ibn Amīn al-Miṣri, kolumnis dan peneliti asal Mesir. He was born in 1279 AH/1863 AD, completed his studies in the field of law in France, then returned to Egypt in 1885 AD to serve in the Egyptian judiciary until his death in 1908 AD/1326 AH.

According to her, hijab or hijab for women is not a must,³ and polygamy must be abolished.⁴ The idea received quite a strong reaction from the scholars at that time. This shows how risky women's discourse is in the modern era. Until now, problems like this often arise, and tug-of-war has occurred in various regions of the Islamic world, including in Indonesia.

Indonesia, as a country with a majority Muslim population, is facing a change in the interpretation of Islamic teachings, including in the discourse on women's leadership. This phenomenon has become a growing concern because it has given birth to intense and controversial discussions. Proponents of women's leadership argue that Islamic teachings encourage gender equality, so there should be no barriers for women to hold leadership roles. They also stated that women have the same potential and qualifications as men in terms of leadership. Meanwhile, those who reject women's leadership argue that Islamic teachings affirm the role of men as the main leaders, while women are considered companions. Another reason they put forward is the potential for slander and moral damage if women occupy leadership positions. The dynamic between modern Islamic thought, which tends to be egalitarian, supports the leadership role of women, and traditional Islam, which is conservative and rejects the idea, has become an interesting phenomenon in the intellectual context of Islam. Along with the development of times and thoughts, the debate about women's leadership in Islam is predicted to continue. The solution to better understand this debate requires a contextual and in-depth interpretation of the teachings of Islam.⁵

Islamic reformers in Indonesia began to pay serious attention to Islamic thought about women. In the face of the

³ Qāsim ibn Mujahid ibn Amīn al-Mi'ri, "Ta'rif Al-Mar'ah" (Cairo, 1347), 54–57.

⁴ Qāsim ibn Mujahid ibn Amīn al-Mi'ri. 128.

⁵ Siti Parhani, "Jejak Pemimpin Perempuan Dalam Islam: Dari Khadijah Sampai Fatima Al-Fihri," *Womenlead.Magdalene.Co*, 2020.

demands of modernity, they seek to reinterpret Islamic teachings related to the role and position of women. One of the figures of Islamic reformers who stood out in his view of women was Husein Muhammad. Known as a staunch defender of women's rights, Husein argues that Islam actually teaches gender equality, providing equal rights and opportunities for women and men.⁶ Quraish Shihab, another Islamic reformer, also contributed his important views on women. In his interpretation, he emphasized that Islam does not view women as weak or inferior creatures, but has a significant role in the public and domestic spheres.⁷ Nasaruddin Umar, as another Islamic reformer, voiced his progressive views on women. She argued that Islamic teachings are in line with gender equality, and therefore, there is no reason to hinder women from leading.⁸

The study of women's leadership has been widely researched by researchers, including Yanggo who discusses gender issues in Islam, including women's leadership. Although it sometimes appears that Islam discriminates against women and favors men, in-depth analysis shows that Islam actually introduced the concept of progressive gender justice in human history. The study in this study is related to the nash about women and criticizes the classical interpretation that is influenced by socio-cultural conditions that prioritize men, especially in the context of women's leadership.⁹ Meanwhile, the prasetian studied the leadership of women in Islamic boarding schools. It was found

⁶ Mochamad Ziaul Haq et al., "Upaya Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Pemikiran K.H. Husein Muhammad," *Equalita: Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Anak* 5, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.24235/equalita.v5i1.12959>.

⁷ M. Quraish Shihab, *Perempuan : Dari Cinta Sampai Seks, Dari Nikah Mut'ah Sampai Nikah Sunnah Dari Bias Lama Sampai Bias Baru* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2005).

⁸ Sakdiah Sakdiah, "Argumen Kesetaraan Jender Persepektif Al-Qur'an Karya PROF. DR. Nasaruddin Umar, MA.," *Takammul : Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Islam Serta Perlindungan Anak* 10, no. 1 (2021).

⁹ Huzaemah Tahido Yanggo, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan dalam Persepektif Hukum Islam," *MISYKAT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Quran, Hadist, Syari'ah Dan Tarbiyah* 1, no. 1 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.33511/misykat.v1n1.1>.

that the characteristics of women's leadership in pesantren tend to be in accordance with the charismatic and authoritative traditions of pesantren, as well as provide benefits in overcoming stereotypes against women in Islam.¹⁰ Meanwhile, Faizal discussed the public's perception of women's leadership, which is often seen as inappropriate for various reasons such as preceding men and gender issues. Nevertheless, women's leadership is considered an important strategic issue in the family, society, and nation. Faizal suggested reviewing this issue from the perspective of the Qur'an, which shows that Islam does not prohibit women from becoming leaders, in line with the historical facts of human civilization from the past to the present.¹¹ Lilis also discusses the exploration of the stigma that women cannot be leaders in both domestic and public spaces, often referring to the interpretation of Qur'anic verses such as "*ar-rijalu qowamuna 'ala nisa*". The goal is to describe the leadership role of women in the Qur'an, focusing on the concept of caliph by women on earth.¹²

In this paper, the author focuses on the reconstruction and elaboration of views on women's leadership, this paper is also important to see the basis of thinking and methods used in responding to women's leadership issues in Indonesia. To what extent does Islam actually view the existence of women? And how to understand a controversy like this? This study is significant considering that the building of Islamic teachings cannot stand without a solid foundation.

¹⁰ Ahmad Yusuf Prasetiawan and Safitri Lis, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan Dalam Pesantren," *Yinyang: Jurnal Studi Islam Gender Dan Anak* 14, no. 1 (July 2019): 39–69, <https://doi.org/10.24090/yinyang.v14i1.2874>.

¹¹ Lily Faizal, "Perempuan Dalam Politik (Kepemimpinan Perempuan Perspektif Al-Qur'an)," *Jurnal Tapis* 12, no. 1 (2016).

¹² Lilis Fauziah Balgis, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan dalam al-Qur'an Persepektif Adil Gender," *Mumtaz: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an Dan Keislaman* 3, no. 2 (2019).

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach to analyze the dimension of women's leadership and the reconstruction of modern Islamic thought through literature analysis. The methodological steps consist of identifying the main literature related to women's leadership and modern Islamic thought, selecting relevant literature, in-depth analysis of selected literature, case studies in the literature to provide examples of the implementation of reconstruction of Islamic thought, critical analysis of the implications of reconstruction of thought on the understanding and practice of women's leadership, and presentation of findings in narratives that illustrate The development of the concept and contribution of literature to the understanding of women's leadership in the context of the reconstruction of modern Islamic thought. This research method aims to provide a deep conceptual foundation through the synthesis and interpretation of relevant literature.

Women in Theological Discourse; Definition and Sorting of Positions

In this modern era¹³, Ironically, millions of women around the world are still caught up in role confusion and discrimination. They come from various regions with diverse socio-cultural, cultural, economic, and political backgrounds. However, their human rights are still not fulfilled. In various parts of the world, women are still minimal in taking on roles in the public sphere, especially in politics. They are marginalized and subordinated by men, a condition exacerbated by gender-biased social science theories.

Social science concepts, such as anthropology, sociology, and historiography, are built on religious understandings that are fraught with gender bias. This resulted in an epistemology that favored male dominance and placed women in a marginal position. Pythagoras' view that "men are the measure of

¹³ Musdah Mulia dan Anik Farida, *Perempuan Dan Politik* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2005). 50.

everything" is still felt today. This epistemological masculinization gave birth to science, technology, culture, and civilization that discriminated against women. As a result, there is gender injustice and marginalization of women. They do not have the same access and opportunities as men. The development of science, technology, culture, and civilization has become uneven.¹⁴

The structural-functionalist theory advocating the division of labor based on sex remains relevant in contemporary sociological studies. The concept of patriarchy that asserts male dominance and authority continues to receive strong support in anthropology. In the economic domain, men are often positioned as the main agents of production, while women are often considered the entities responsible for reproductive functions. Furthermore, the perception that women are the "second creation" and the "second gender" is still perceived and translated in the theological paradigm. The politics of epistemology that tend to favor the male perspective play a key role as a trendsetter and future policy direction.¹⁵

Women's discourse, including in the gender realm, is often trapped in a narrow circle, fixated on surface symptoms and impacts without diving into the root of the problem. This approach, unfortunately, ignores the complexity and multidimensionality of women's reality, thus failing to offer a comprehensive and sustainable solution. Instead of fixating on the manifestations of gender discrimination and injustice, women's discourse needs to focus on an in-depth analysis of the root of the problem. One of the main drawbacks of women's symptomatic-focused discourse is its inability to identify the actors responsible for oppression and injustice. This causes unclear direction of struggle and the helplessness of women in fighting for their rights. Therefore, it is necessary to transform the women's discourse. This shift in focus from the symptoms to the root of the problem

¹⁴ Nasaruddin Umar, *Teologi Jender: Antara Mitos Dan Teks Kitab Suci* (Jakarta: Pustaka Cicero, 2003). 154.

¹⁵ Nasaruddin Umar. 154.

requires a critical approach that not only describes the reality of women, but also analyzes the underlying power relations. Thus, women's discourse can be an effective tool to fight for social change and create a just and equal society for all.¹⁶

Theologically, there are four factors that have the potential to be the basis for stereotypes against women. *First*, women are seen as being created to fulfill Adam's desires and desires in heaven, placing them only as a complement to men's desires.¹⁷ *Second*, the place of the first human creation in heaven, located in the supernatural realm, has given rise to myths that often harass women.¹⁸ *Third*, the female origin of Adam's ribs confirms his position as subordinate to men.¹⁹ *Fourth*, in the cosmic drama of Adam's fall from heaven to earth, the role of women in temptation is considered to be the cause, and this story creates the concept of inherited sin that is often blamed on women. These

¹⁶ Angger Wiji Rahayu, "Perempuan Dan Belenggu Peran Kultural," 2015.

¹⁷ Yayasan Lembaga SABDA, "Al-Kitab," n.d. It is explained in the Book of Genesis/2: 18 which reads: "The Lord God said: It is not good for a man to be alone and therefore Eva (Eve) was created as a suitable servant for Adam (a suitable helper for him). However, in the Qur'an, the purpose of the creation of men is no different from the purpose of the creation of women, namely as a caliph (QS. al-An'ām/6: 165), as a servant (QS. al-Dzāriyāt/51: 56), and as a life partner (QS. al-Dzāriyāt/51: 49). Therefore, it is clear that the purpose of the creation of women cannot be equated with their role as a complement to the desires and wishes of men, as is generally understood in pre-Islamic society.

¹⁸ This is due to the interpretation of the word "الجنة". Heaven as the place of creation of Adam and Eve gave birth to the physical-biological mythologization of humans. As if humans are physical-biological creatures but come from a completely non-physical-biological nature. The transformation from a non-physical-biological nature to a physical-biological nature through a mechanism that is difficult for human logic to digest, while information on verses and hadiths about this cosmic drama is very little.

¹⁹ Aminah Wadud Muhsin, *Qur'an and Woman* (Kuala Lumpur: Fajar Bakti, 1992). According to Aminah Wadud Muhsin, God has given equality between men and women since the beginning of human creation, that is, both were created from the same elements. Furthermore, both have equal rights as caliphs on earth and have the same opportunity to achieve good fortune in heaven.

four theological issues have nourished misogynistic views that are detrimental to the image of women.²⁰

The Qur'an notes that the word "al-Nisā" refers to women is mentioned 57 times, the same number as words such as "rajul" or "rijāl", which refer to men, and "al-untsā", which refers to the female gender paired with "al-dzakar", which is mentioned ten times. An analysis of this number of mentions shows that Islam treats these two genders with balance and fairness, although they have clear differences. This ²¹ equality (*musāwāh*) is mentioned repeatedly side by side and in pairs in the Qur'an. Even in a number of hadiths, the Prophet Muhammad Saw actually glorifies and respects women more than men.²²

Nasaruddin Umar, a prominent Muslim scholar, has delved into the holy verses of the Qur'an with a knife of in-depth analysis, uncovering strong evidence that affirms the principle of gender equality in Islam. His comprehensive study identifies five fundamental variables that solidify his argument, as shown in the following table:²³

No	Surah	Translate	Substansi
1.	Q.S al- Ḥujurāt/49:13	يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ	Men and women alike

²⁰ Nasaruddin Umar, *Teologi Jender: Antara Mitos Dan Teks Kitab Suci*.161-164.

Nasaruddin Umar stated that in the tradition of society, one of the perceptions that is difficult to change is the view that women are temptresses. This view is difficult to change because it has been explicitly recorded in the Book of Genesis 3:12: "The man said: The woman whom You placed with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." In contrast, the Qur'an presents a more positive view of humans. The Qur'an emphasizes that Allah honors all descendants of Adam without distinguishing based on gender or skin color (QS. al-Isrā'/17:70, QS. al-Ḥujurāt/49:13).

²¹ M. Fuad Abd Baqi, "Al-Mu'jam Al Mufahras Li Alfadz Al-Qur'an," *Al-Mu'jam Al Mufahras Li Alfaz Al-Qur'an* (Kairo: Darul Hadis, 1992).

²² Said Aqil Siroj, *Tasawuf Sebagai Kritik Sosial; Mengedepankan Islam Sebagai Inspirasi Bukan Aspirasi* (Jakarta: SAS Foundation, 2006). 242.

²³ Nasaruddin Umar, *Argumen Kesetaraan Jender: Perspektif Al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1999). 248-269.

		إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ	as a servant
	Q.S al-Nahl/16: 97	مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيَاتًا طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ	
2.	Q.S al- Baqarah/2:30	وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يَفْسُدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ	Men and women as caliphs in earth
	Q.S al- An‘ām/6:165	وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ الْأَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ	
3.	Q.S al- A‘rāf/7:172	وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ شَهِدْنَا أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ	Men and women receive primordial agreements
4.	Q.S al- Baqarah/2:35	وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ	Adam and Eve were involved in a active in cosmic dramas
	Q.S al- Baqarah/2:187	أَجَلٌ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفْتُ إِلَىٰ نَسَائِكُمْ هُنَّ لِيَابِسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِيَابِسٌ لَهُنَّ عَلِيمٌ اللَّهُ أَنْتُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنْكُمْ فَالآنَ بَاشِرُوهُمْ وَأَبِغُوا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمْ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ	

		<p>مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ثُمَّ أَتَمُوا الصَّيَامَ إِلَى اللَّيْلِ وَلَا تَبَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرُبُوهَا كَذَلِكَ بَيَّنَّ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ</p>	
	Q.S al-A'rāf/7: 20	<p>فَوَسَّوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوَاتِمِهِمَا وَقَالَ مَا نَهَاكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا عَنْ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِنَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَكَيْنِ أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْحَالِدِينَ</p>	
	Q.S al-A'rāf/7: 22	<p>فَدَّاهُمَا بِعُرُورٍ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوَاتِمُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا بِخَصْفَانٍ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا عَنْ تِلْكَ الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقُلُّ لَكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ</p>	
	Q.S al-A'rāf/7: 23	<p>قَالَا رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِنْ لَمْ تَعْفُرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ</p>	
5.	Q.S Ālī 'Imrān/3:195	<p>فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَامِلٍ مِنْكُم مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَى بَعْضُكُم مِّنْ بَعْضٍ فَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَأُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأُوذُوا فِي سَبِيلِي وَقَاتَلُوا وَقُتِلُوا لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ نَوَافًا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الثَّوَابِ</p>	Male and female Potential for achievement
	Q.S al-Nisā'/4: 124	<p>وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا</p>	
	Q.S al-	<p>مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَى</p>	

	<p>Nahl/16:97</p>	<p>وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلْيُحْيِيهِ حَيَاةَ طَيِّبَةٍ وَلْيَنْجِرِيهِمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ</p>	
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Although some verses of the Qur'an contain messages of justice and gender equality, the reality in the interpretation process, the flexibility of the verses and the diversity of perspectives of the mufasssirs trigger the emergence of different, even contrasting interpretations.²⁴ This is exacerbated by the strong influence of patrilineal culture in Muslim societies, which indirectly encourages the interpretation of gender bias and marginalizes women. Furthermore, the existence of the Prophet's hadiths that are considered misogynistic, although their validity and interpretation are still debated, reinforce certain mufasssir beliefs to maintain interpretations that are in line with the misogynistic view, thus producing interpretations of the Qur'an that discriminate against women.²⁵

This verse and similar verses in the Qur'an are clear evidence of the holy book's attempt to remove all views that

²⁴ Ahmad nabil Amir, "Isu Sosio-Historis Dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Karim," *Al Muhafidz: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 2, no. 1 (February 2022): 244–64, <https://doi.org/10.57163/almuhafidz.v2i1.27>.

²⁵ In substance, there is no Hadith that is misogynistic; there are only interpretations of the Hadith that appear misogynistic. These interpretations are greatly influenced by the intellectual level, educational background, and socio-cultural context that influences them, so that various interpretations emerge. For example, in the Hadith of Abī Bakrah narrated by al-Bukhārī, Aḥmad, al-Nasā'ī, and al-Tirmidhī:

«قَالَ: «لَنْ يُفْلِحَ قَوْمٌ وَلَوْ أَمَرَهُمْ امْرَأَةٌ»

"A people will not be happy who appoint a woman as their leader". Lihat Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Bukhārī al-Ju'fīy, "Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī," in 6 (Damaskus: Dār Ṭūq al-Najāh, 1422), 8.; Abū 'Abd Allāh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥanbal ibn Ḥilāl ibn Asad al-Shībānīy, "Musnad Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal" (Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1421), 43.; Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān Aḥmad ibn Shu'ayb ibn 'Alī al-Kharāsānīy al-Nasā'ī, "Sunan Al-Nasā'ī," in 8 (Ḥalab: Maktabah al-Maṭbū'āt al-Islāmiyah, 1406), 227.; Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā ibn Sawrah ibn Mūsā ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk al-Tirmidzī, "Sunan Al-Tirmidzī," in 4 (Mesir: Shirkah Maktabah Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1395), 527.

discriminate against women and put them in an unequal position with men, especially in terms of equal rights and dignity as human beings. The Qur'an expressly places women in their proper position, restores their dignity, and corrects any misunderstandings that degrade the position and dignity of women, as well as the deserving of human beings as a whole.²⁶

Although there were periods in Islamic history in which Muslim women were active in politics and government, such as Shajaratuddur and Zubaidah the wife of Caliph Hārūn al-Rasyīd, this phenomenon was rare in later times. However, M. Quraish Shihab in his book "Grounding the Qur'an" shows that women's involvement in politics is not new. For example, Um Hanī' received approval from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) when providing security guarantees to polytheists (political aspects). In fact, 'Ā'ishah r.a., the wife of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), led the war directly against 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, the Caliph at the time, in the camel war (656 AD) over the issue of succession after the killing of the Caliph 'Ottoman ibn 'Affān. The involvement of 'Ā'ishah r.a. in this war, together with the companions of the Prophet and his leadership, shows that he and his followers adhered to the understanding of the ability of women's involvement in practical politics.²⁷

In the context of Islam, women have a respected and important position. This thought was conveyed by Maḥmūd Shaltūt in his work quoted by M. Quraish Shihab, where he stated that the equality of human rights between men and women was almost completely upheld. Allah SWT gives women the same abilities and potentials as men. These two genders are given adequate capacity and potential to carry out responsibilities and carry out various activities, both general and special.²⁸

²⁶ Akrimi Matswah, "Reinterpretasi Ayat-Ayat Tentang Relasi Gender Dalam Keluarga," *Subuf* 7, no. 2 (2014).

²⁷ M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan al-Qur'an* (Bandung: Penerbit Mizan, 1995), h. 274.

²⁸ M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan al-Qur'an*, h. 269-270.

Islam puts women in an honorable position and is on an equal footing with men. This is contrary to the accusations of some orientalist who portray Islam as a religion that subordinates women in social structures. The presence of Islam actually erases various discriminations in gender relations. Although Islam has paved the way for awareness of women's rights, the realities in various Muslim-majority countries today point to contradictions. Restrictions on women's rights in various sectors of life are rampant, even under the pretext of applying Islamic teachings. Women are discriminated against in leadership, strategic positions, and access to socio-political rights. This phenomenon is clearly a deviation from the teachings of Islam.

Women Leaders; Results of Reinterpretation of Civilization

Women's leadership as the head of state (President) is an issue of *ijtihad* that has long been studied by experts (scholars, scholars, politicians, and practitioners). Although it has been studied for a long time, this topic is still relevant to be discussed, criticized, and find solutions regarding the law on whether or not women can be the supreme leader of a nation. In expressing their thoughts on women, Islamic modernists initiated ideas related to the status and role of women based on the Qur'an and hadith by applying principles that were in some ways different from the traditional Islamic thought that has been known.²⁹

Indonesian modernist Muslims in understanding Islam do not only seek the purity of Islam by returning to Islam as a legacy of the past, but more than that they intend to describe its future direction through the reinterpretation of Islamic teachings in the context of the reality of modernity. They are pioneers who seek to accept change and try to combine Islamic heritage with modern change. Figures such as Harun Nasution and Munawir Syadzali who emphasized that Islam is a rational religion, or for Nurcholis Madjid that modernity is *sunnatullah*. So that there is an

²⁹ Faisar Ananda Afra, *Wanita Dalam Konsep Islam Modernis* (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 2004), h. 137

increasingly strong belief that Muslims actually have religious teachings that are able to lead them to adapt to modern science and technology. Those modernists emphasized that the stagnation and backwardness of Muslims is caused by nothing but taklid to past opinions, Islam should be interpreted according to the current paradigm.³⁰

The difference of opinion regarding women's leadership as heads of state (Presidents) is rooted in different systematic thinking methodologies (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). This is due to variations in the understanding and interpretation of the Qur'anic texts and the Sunnah of the Prophet, as well as the assessment of the existence of *ijma'* ulama as a source and legal postulate or as a method of legal *istinbat*. Consequently, different legal conclusions were produced. Therefore, women's leadership problems can be categorized as a dynamic and ever-growing *ijtihadiyah* realm. It is natural that scientists have diverse views in responding to these problems. The majority of scholars who prohibit female leadership base their arguments on certain verses of the Qur'an, such as:

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ

“Men are leaders for women”. (Q.S al-Nisā'/4:34)

They argue that the verse explicitly prohibits women from holding leadership positions. If understood textually, the verse can support the argument against women's leadership. This can be clarified when looking at *the asbab al-nuzūl* verse.

Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Aḥmad al-Wāḥidī (d. 468 AH) interpreted the verse by referring to the story of Sa'd ibn Rābi', an Ansar leader from Medina. The story goes that his wife, Ḥabībah bint Zayd ibn Abī Hurayrah, performed *nusyūz* by rejecting Sa'd's desire for intercourse. In response, Sa'd slapped his wife. Ḥabībah then complained about this incident to the Prophet Muhammad

³⁰ Alie Yafie “Pemikiran Hukum Islam” dalam *Islam Indonesia Menatap Masa Depan* (Jakarta: P3M, 1989), h. 45

(SAW). However, before the punishment could be carried out, the Prophet summoned the couple and announced the verse that had just been revealed through the angel Gabriel, "al-Rijāl qawwāmūna ‘alā al-nisā'" (Men are the rulers over women). With the announcement of this verse, the Prophet annulled the *qiṣāṣ* sentence against Sa‘d.³¹

Hussein Muhammad, in his work "Fiqh Perempuan: Kyai's Reflections on Religious and Gender Discourse," emphasized the importance of understanding the Qur'an verse of Surah An-Nisa verse 34 in its sociological and historical context. According to him, the subordination of women depicted in the verse is a reflection of the reality of the patriarchal society during the period of the passage of the verse. In other words, this verse is not intended as a universal and eternal rule, but rather as a guide to apply benefits in specific situations and conditions of the time.³²

From this contextual understanding, Hussein Muhammad argues that the use of the verse to prohibit women's leadership outside the domestic sphere is weak and unfounded. He also emphasized that this verse is not an order (*amr*), but a statement of news (*khobar*). Therefore, the assumption that this verse explicitly prohibits female leadership is erroneous and has no strong textual basis.³³

Islamic history records various examples of legitimate and recognized women's leadership, transcending domestic boundaries and reaching the public sphere. The figure of 'Ā'ishah r.a., one of the wives of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, is clear evidence of women's leadership in a strategic context. He led the army in the Battle of Jamal, along with the other companions of the Prophet, demonstrating his courage, wisdom, and ability to lead the strategy

³¹ Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Aḥmad al-Wāḥidī, "Asbāb Al-Nuzūl" (Mu'assasah 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān, 1987), 182–183.

³² Hussein Muhammad, *Fiqh Perempuan: Refleksi Kyai Atas Wacana Agama Dan Gender* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2011). 147.

³³ Said Aqil Siroj, *Tasawuf Sebagai Kritik Sosial; Mengedepankan Islam Sebagai Inspirasi Bukan Aspirasi*.249.

of war. Long before 'Ā'ishah r.a. entered the world of practical politics, the Qur'an has legitimized women's leadership through the story of Queen Bilqīs, the ruler of the country of Saba' (now including the territory of Yemen) who lived at the same time as the Prophet Sulaiman (a.s.).

Women's leadership in emergency conditions (dharurat) and for the benefit of the nation and state also gained legitimacy. Scholars such as Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabārī and some scholars of the Mālikī madhhab, as revealed by Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, acknowledged the validity of women's leadership in critical situations.³⁴ History also records the existence of Ratu Syajaratuddur, a ruler of the daughter of the Mamalik Dynasty in Egypt, and a number of court princesses who became kings or sultans in Aceh. Their existence is clear proof that women's leadership is not a strange thing in Islamic history.³⁵

In addition to the verses of the Qur'an, some of the arguments against women's leadership are derived from the hadith ṣaḥīḥ narrated by al-Bukhārī, Aḥmad, al-Nasa'ī, and al-Tirmidzī from Abī Bakrah. The hadith reads:

قَالَ: لَنْ يَفْلِحَ قَوْمٌ وَلَوْ أَمَرَهُمْ امْرَأَةٌ

"It will not be happy for a people to appoint as their leader a woman."

However, it is important to understand the historical context of this hadith so that its interpretation does not become biased and misleading. Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī in his magnum opus, *Fath al-Bārī*, explains that this hadith has its roots in the story of 'Abd Allāh ibn Ḥudzaifah, a courier of the Prophet Muhammad SAW who was sent to deliver a letter of invitation to convert to Islam to Kīsrā Anusyirwan, the ruler of the Persian Empire who

³⁴ Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Ḥajar Abū al-Faḍl al-'Asqalānī, "Fath Al-Bārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī" (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1379), 55–56.

³⁵ Said Aqil Siroj, *Tasawuf Sebagai Kritik Sosial; Mengedepankan Islam Sebagai Inspirasi Bukan Aspirasi*.

was a Magi. The story continues with Kisrā's cynical response that he tore up the letter of the Prophet SAW. From the report, the Prophet Muhammad SAW had a premonition that the Persian Empire would be divided, reflecting Kisrā's treatment of the letter. This premonition was evident when the Persian Empire collapsed under the leadership of Kisrā's daughter Buran.³⁶ This context is the background for the emergence of hadith about women's leadership. The statement of the Prophet Muhammad SAW in this context is argumentative, referring to the specific case of Buran's leadership which was considered weak in management and resulted in the fall of the empire.

From the context of the above hadith, it can be seen that the hadith has a casuistic and conditional character. The subject of the Prophet's conversation did not include all women, but only focused on Princess Anusyrwan whose leadership credibility was doubtful. This happened especially in the midst of a high-risk political context of conflict in the Middle East at that time, where competition between tribes and kingdoms often occurred. This hadith is also not a prohibition (nahy), but rather the transmission of information (khabariyah). In addition, the legal implications implied in the hadith do not have a definite or precise interpretation.³⁷

Fatima Mernissi, a Moroccan feminist, made a deep criticism of the interpretation of the Prophet's hadith which she said had suffered many deviations and manipulations. According to Mernissi, in the context of the hadith, Abī Bakrah is in a complex dilemma. On the one hand, he was required to support 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib as the legitimate caliph, while on the other hand, his city of residence, Bashrah, was used as a defensive and gathering base by the followers of 'Ā'ishah, who was one of the leaders who also had an influence in his political choices. In

³⁶ Ahmad ibn 'Alī ibn Ḥajar Abū al-Faḍl al-'Asqalānī, "Fath Al-Bārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī."

³⁷ Said Aqil Siroj, *Tasawuf Sebagai Kritik Sosial; Mengedepankan Islam Sebagai Inspirasi Bukan Aspirasi*.

addition, Mernissi identified that Abī Bakrah, according to the results of his research, had some personal weaknesses.³⁸

The issue of women's leadership, such as being a public leader like the President, has become an important debate in the contemporary era. Scholars of the past have produced fatwas that women should not be public leaders, based on the interpretation of Q.S. al-Nisā':34 and the hadith of Abī Bakrah which is considered saheeh, which was influenced by the social context of the time, including al-'urf/al-'local customs.

The Qur'anic verses on leadership are seen as conditional and reflect the reality of Arab society at the time they were revealed. Therefore, these verses are not absolute and do not bind Muslims in all times and places. The approach developed by modern Islamic groups affirms that in issues such as leadership that is not part of the basic law (*usul*) and is more transactional (*mu'amalah*), Islam does not impose rigid rules, but can adapt to the development of the times and changes in the environment.

Conclusion

Modern Islamic views of women show theological and social equality between women and men, reflecting inclusive and egalitarian values in Islam. This thinking encourages the provision of equal opportunities for women in political rights and leadership, as well as responding to the challenges of the times by reconstructing Islamic values in Indonesia. However, controversy and criticism from a traditional Islamic perspective show resistance to change and the adoption of new ideas. Opportunities are open to broaden the understanding of women's rights in Islam through a contextual and inclusive approach, as well as to strengthen the integration of Islamic values with contemporary social and political life. The main threat lies in the tension between traditional and modern interpretations of Islam that can trigger internal conflicts, as well as resistance from conservative groups to

³⁸ Fatima Mernissi, in Charles Kurzman (ed), *Wacana Islam Liberal: Pemikiran Islam Kontemporer Tentang Isu-Isu Global* (Jakarta: Paramadina, n.d.).

changes and reinterpretations of traditional norms. In this context, modern Islamic thought on women offers the potential to broaden the scope of equality and inclusion in Islam, despite being faced with significant challenges that require judicious handling.

Further research is needed to investigate the concrete impact of the implementation of modern Islamic thought on women in culturally and socially diverse societies. In addition, in-depth studies can also examine effective communication strategies to overcome resistance to change from conservatives, as well as the implications of the conflict between traditional and modern interpretations of Islam in today's social and political context.

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