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**Indonesian Women's Leadership  
(Quranic *Maudhu'i* Interpretation of Indonesian Ministry of  
Religious Affairs)**

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**Abstract**

*This article answers how the Maudhu'i Landscape of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia views women's leadership in Indonesia and implementation in the field. This paper aims to reveal women's leadership in Indonesia from the point of view of interpretation and its implementation in the field. This view is backed by the leadership described in the Qur'an, although in an inappropriate field. Therefore, women's leadership became the object of study in this article. In developing countries such as Indonesia, women's leadership is open but limited by the patriarchy embraced by Indonesian society. This research is descriptive research with a central study approach whose data sources are from the Qur'an, hadith*

*books, journals in the same direction as research, and supporting books. Despite the debate about leadership according to social experts and the sciences related to it, the Qur'an has seriously expounded on leadership itself. The discourse of leadership in the Qur'an aims to find solutions and innovations from the verses to be ideas in human relationships. Leadership is the development of human resources, natural resources, and improvements in the government system so that these three associations can change existing leadership patterns. The Maudhu'i interpretation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia has themes that classify women's leadership in the family, women's leadership in worship, women's leadership in society, and women's leadership in the state.*

**Keywords:** *Al-Qur'an; Maudhu'i Interpretation of Qur'an; Woman leadership.*

### **Abstrak**

*Artikel ini menjawab bagaimana Lanskap Maudhu'i Kementerian Agama RI memandang kepemimpinan perempuan di Nusantara serta aplikasi dilapangan. Sehingga Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap kepemimpinan perempuan di Nusantara dari sudut pandang tafsir dan aplikasi dilapangan. Hal ini dilatar belakangi oleh kepemimpinan yang dijelaskan dalam al-qur'an akan tetapi dilapangan tidak sesuai. sehingga kepemimpinan perempuan menjadi objek kajian artikel ini. Di negara berkembang seperti Indonesia kepemimpinan perempuan terbuka akan tetapi dibatasi oleh paham partiarki yang dianut oleh masyarakat Indonesia. Penelitian ini masuk kedalam klaster penelitian kualitatif diskriptif dengan pendekatan kajian pustaka. Terlepas dari perdebatan tentang kepemimpinan menurut pakar sosial, serta ilmu-ilmu yang berkaitan dengannya, sesungguhnya al-Qur'an telah memaparkan tentang kepemimpinan itu sendiri. Diskursus kepemimpinan di dalam al-Qur'an bertujuan untuk menemukan solusi dan inovasi dari ayat-ayat al-Qur'an sehingga menjadi gagasan dalam hubungan antar manusia dengan manusia. Kepemimpinan tersebut adalah pengembangan Sumber Daya Manusia, sumber daya alam dan perbaikan dalam sistem pemerintahan, sehingga dari tiga solusi ini mampu merubah pola kepemimpinan yang ada. Seperti yang ada dalam Lanskap Maudhu'i Kementerian Agama RI yang mengklasifikasikannya dalam Kepemimpinan Perempuan dalam Keluarga, Kepemimpinan Perempuan dalam*

*Ibadah, Kepemimpinan Perempuan dalam Masyarakat, dan Kepemimpinan Perempuan dalam Negara.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Al-Qur'an; Kepemimpinan perempuan; Tafsir Maudhu'i.*

## A. Introduction

Interpretations are currently undergoing tremendous advancement, from the existence of classical interpretations to contemporary attempts to convey timeless messages from the Qur'an.<sup>1</sup> However, the message is delivered differently, and the community's pattern of understanding is also distinct, even interpreting the Qur'an at will. The interpretation regulation has helped to solve every difficulty in the religious community, giving rise to a plethora of works of interpretation in diverse styles and approaches. For example, in a religious society, the interpretation of women's leadership remains contentious because of the culture associated with community life.<sup>2</sup>

The difficulty mentioned above has different thematic interpretations produced by current commentators as a remedy in studying and interpreting the Qur'an. Some researchers have associated thematic interpretation as the most appropriate way to meet the demands of today's people because thematic interpretation is thought to be the most effective in interpreting people's concerns directly on the subject and within specified bounds. The *mufassir* explains the message and content of the Qur'an with specific meanings and connected difficulties in thematic interpretation by specifying each verse following the theme presented, such as the interpretation of women's leadership.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmad Baidowi, dkk., *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Di Nusantara*, ((Bantul: Lembaga Ladang Kata, 2020). p. 61

<sup>2</sup> Huzaemah Tahido Yanggo, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan Dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam," *MISYKAT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Quran, Hadist, Syari'ah Dan Tarbiyah* 1, no. 1 (2016): 1, <https://doi.org/10.33511/misykat.v1n1.1>.

<sup>3</sup> Fauzan Azima, "WAJAH ISLAM NUSANTARAPADA TRADISI PETA KAPANCA DALAMPERKAWINAN ADAT BIMA," *Tajdid: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman I*, no. 1 (2017): p. 1–24.

Thematic interpretations that have arisen in Indonesia include not just thematic interpretations of particular works but also thematic interpretations that are the work of many individuals (collectively), such as thematic interpretations collated by the Tashih Mushaf Al-Qur'an Committee.<sup>4</sup> The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, which holds a significant position as a means of establishing knowledge following the Indonesian context, has collected several verses that can be utilized as the basis for the issue of women's leadership. Individuals who act as leaders cannot be isolated from leadership in general. Many people associate an individual's ability to lead with gender disparities between men and women.<sup>5</sup> Women are regarded as weak leaders compared to men, who possess the strength and skill to lead. This perception gave rise to the term gender inequality by putting women in a less favorable position, even though women outnumber males in terms of population.<sup>6</sup>

Some researchers have abandoned the classification of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia's thematic interpretations of women's leadership. The contemporary discussion about women's leadership is centered on various trends. Women's leadership is seen through the eyes of feminist figures, such as the study undertaken by Arsal, Busyro, and Maizul Imran.<sup>7</sup> Amina Wadud's rejection of the traditional interpretation pattern, which is gender biased and discriminates against women's leadership, is discussed in this article. Second, from the perspective of the book of interpretation, women's

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<sup>4</sup> Muchlis M. Hanafi, dkk., *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Tematik Moderasi Islam*, (Jakarta: : Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an Balitbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 2017). p. XXII-XXVII

<sup>5</sup> Sa'diyah El Adawiyah, "Strategi Komunikasi Perempuan Pemimpin," *Perspektif Komunikasi: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi Politik Dan Komunikasi Bisnis* 1, no. 2 (2018): p. 1-6.

<sup>6</sup> Reny Yulianti, "'Women Leadership: Telaah Kapasitas Perempuan Sebagai Pemimpin,'" *Madani: Jurnal Politik Dan Sosial Kemasyarakatan*, Volume 10, no. 2 (2018): p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Arsal, dkk., "'Kepemimpinan Perempuan: Penerapan Metode Tafsir Hermeneutika Feminisme Amina Wadud,'" *Al-Quds: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis*, Volume 4, no. 2, (2020): p. 11-12.

leadership. Sulaiman Ibrahim's research,<sup>8</sup> Waqiatul Masrurah,<sup>9</sup> Anwar Ramadhani.<sup>10</sup> Each commentator provides a distinct viewpoint on women's leadership. In Tafsir Al-Kasyaf, Al-Zamakhshyari's interpretation of women's leadership tends to be normative. Zamakhshyari gives possibilities for women to become leaders. Therefore, there are few opportunities for conflicts to develop.<sup>11</sup> Various trends do not reflect the existence of women's leadership roles, according to the Republic of Indonesia's thematic interpretation, focusing not on gender equality but on leadership that would be led by women, as well as the limitations of women in leadership. This article differs from an earlier study in the context of Indonesian women's leadership, which is still impacted by patriarchal culture. This research will examine women's leadership in the Qur'an using the Ministry of Religious Affairs' thematic interpretation technique.

The classification and boundaries of women in leadership established by the Ministry of Religious Affairs' interpretation reflect the background tendencies and interests of each compiler of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' interpretation book. Concerning the theme of Women's Leadership, the Ministry of Religious Affairs' thematic interpretation divides it into three categories: Women's Leadership in the Family, Women's Leadership in Worship, and Women's Leadership in the State. Women's leadership in the home, women can be leaders in their families, but it is collaborative leadership, particularly leading alongside their spouse so that both complement each other. In terms of women's worship leadership, particularly in prayer, women are not permitted to become priests. In the meantime, societal leadership implies that women can lead in groups,

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<sup>8</sup> Sulaiman Ibrahim, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan Di Ruang Publik Dalam Tafsir Al-Kasyaf," *Al-Ulum* 18, no. 2 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.30603/au.v18i2.536>.

<sup>9</sup> Waqiatul Masrurah, "KEPEMIMPINAN PEREMPUAN DALAM TAFSIR TEMATIK AL-QUR'AN DAN HADITS," *Jurnal Qolamuna*, Volume 2, no. Nomor 2 (2017): p. 255–72.

<sup>10</sup> Febri Anwar Ramadhani, "Kepemimpinan Wanita (Studi Komparatif Tafsir Al-Azhar Dan Tafsir Al-Misbah)," *Skripsi Fakultas Ushuluddin Dan Studi Agama, UIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2020*, n.d.

<sup>11</sup> Ibrahim, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan Di Ruang Publik Dalam Tafsir Al-Kasyaf."

organizations, or businesses. While the constraint in question is women's state leadership, while there is no prohibition on women leading the country, the Ministry of Religious Affairs emphasizes state leadership over men.

This study employs a literature review technique to the Maudhu'i landscape of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) to analyze conversations about women in Indonesia. Data visualization for data analysis,<sup>12</sup> data reduction<sup>13</sup> and conclusion.<sup>14</sup> This study will be carried out to provide a new understanding of a society that still values a culture that is harmful to women. This strategy can examine the uncertainty in the Qur'an's interpretation of women's positions in Indonesia.

## **B. Writing Thematic Interpretations of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia**

The interpretation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia began with a work entitled *Al-Qur'an and its Tafsir*, which was interpreted based on the *tahlili*. Since 1972, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has compiled this interpretation. Furthermore, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which at that time was in the process of changing its name to the Ministry of Religious Affairs, compiled a collective interpretation using the *maudhu'i* or interpretation, better known as thematic interpretation. The writing of the thematic interpretation of the Qur'an at the Ministry of Religious Affairs cannot be separated from the hustle and bustle of religious life in Indonesia. As stated in Article 29 of the 1945 Constitution, the government has the highest authority in the state and the obligation to give great attention to the creation of harmonious and peaceful conditions of religious life in Indonesia.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Sugioyo, *Metodologi Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif Dan R&D*. (CV Alfabeta, 2016).

<sup>13</sup> Aunu Rofiq Djaelani, "Teknik Pengumpulan Data Dalam Penelitian Kualitatif," *Majalah Ilmiah Pawiyatan* 20, no. 1 (2013): 82–92.

<sup>14</sup> Wahyudin Darmalaksana, "Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Studi Pustaka Dan Studi Lapangan," *Pre-Print Digital Library UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung*, 2020.

<sup>15</sup> Atik Wartini, "'Tafsir Tematik Kemenag: Studi Al-Qur'an Dan Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini'," *Maghza*, Volume 1, no. 2 (2016): p. 2.

One of the government's efforts to create harmonious religious life and to increase understanding and practice of Islam in Indonesia is by realizing a program to fulfill the need for the availability of the Qur'an based on the input and recommendations for the Working Conference (MUKER) of al-Qur'an scholars in Ciloto, on December 14-16, 2006, after previously the government published the Qur'an and its translation and the interpretation.<sup>16</sup> In the first edition in 2007, the themes raised in the thematic interpretation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia are Relations between Religious People, Building a Harmonious Family, Al-Qur'an, and Empowerment of the Poor.<sup>17</sup> Then in 2008, it developed with the theme of economic development of the ummah, the position and role of women, environmental conservation, society and politics, family ethics, and health from the perspective of the Qur'an. In 2010 it again developed the interpretation with the theme of spirituality and morals, inevitability of the last day, education, work and employment, education, character development, and human resource development, as well as justice and human rights law.<sup>18</sup>

In 2014 the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia revised by combining several themes from the 2007 and 2010 editions into nine volumes, namely 1) relations between religious people, the Qur'an, and liberation, 2) the position and role of women, family ethics, society, and politics, 3) building a harmonious family, economic development of the ummah, 4) spirituality and morals, 5) environmental conservation, health in the perspective of the Qur'an, 6) the necessity of the last day, 7) work and employment, 8) law, justice, and human rights, 9) education, character development, and human resource development. The themes chosen in writing the thematic interpretation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia were based on the dynamics of society and the development of science and technology at that time, recognizing

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<sup>16</sup> Muchlis M. Hanafi, dkk., *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Tematik Moderasi Islam*, p. ix

<sup>17</sup> Muchlis M. Hanafi, dkk. P. vxi

<sup>18</sup> "Www.Kemenag.Go.Id Tentang Sinopsis Tafsir Al-Qur'an Tematik, Diakses Pada 3 Juli 2021.," n.d.

the community's need for practical and simple readings of the Qur'an. With the presence of this interpretation, the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs hopes that the Muslim community can improve the quality of understanding, appreciation, and practice of religious teachings in the life of society, nation, and state.

### C. Characteristics of Thematic Interpretation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia

Thematic interpretation is an interpretation method that seeks to explore a certain theme based on the content of the Qur'an verses. This interpretation in Arabic is called the *maudhu'i*. M. Quraish Shihab explained that the *maudhu'i* interpretation method is a way that directs the view on a certain theme, then explores the views of the Qur'an based on that theme by collecting all the verses that talk about related themes. The verses are analyzed by understanding the verse by verse and collecting and linking general and specific verses, which are *muthlaq* with *muqayyad*, and so on. At the same time, this process enriches the description of hadiths related to the theme. Lastly, a conclusion of the final view related to the theme is determined comprehensively.<sup>19</sup>

The embryo of thematic interpretation has existed since the prophet Muhammad [PBUH]. This theory can be proven by the prophet's habit of interpreting one verse with another, such as when the prophet interpreted the meaning of *dzulm* in QS al-An'am verse 82:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ

"Those who believe and do not confuse their faith with injustice (shirk) are the ones who have security, and they are the ones who are guided."

The prophet interprets that the meaning of *dzhulm* referred to in the verse is shirk, by quoting the word of God in QS Luqman: 13:

وَإِذْ قَالَ لِقْمَنُ لِابْنِهِ - وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَبْنِي لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ

"Indeed, shirk is *great dzulm* (persecution)."

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<sup>19</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Kaidah Tafsir*, ((Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2013). p. 385



Al-Farmawi emphasized that many of the previous commentary books used the interpretation method, which was allegedly approaching the Maudhu'i interpretation, only in a simple form and could not be categorized as a stand-alone method. The works including *Majaz al-Qur'an*, the result of Abu 'Ubaidah (d. 209 H), who spoke various *majaz* (figurative) in the Qur'an, then the book *Ahkam al-Qur'an* by Al-Jashshash (w. 370 H) which discusses issues related to the Qur'an. Besides, there is also Ibn Qayyim (d. 751 H) with his book *al-Bayan fi Aqşam al-Qur'an*, which talks explicitly about surah in the Qur'an, and so on. In the 14<sup>th</sup>- century Hijri, the interpretation of maudhu'i emerged as a scientific discipline or a particular method of interpretation precisely when, for the first time, Prof. Dr. Ahmad Sayyid al-Kumy, Head of the Tafsir Department at the Faculty of Usuluddin, Al-Azhar University, Egypt, included it as lecture material.<sup>20</sup>

In Indonesia, the thematic interpretation method was introduced by Prof. Dr. M. Quraish Shihab through his works. At first, he introduced the thematic interpretation method theoretically written "Method of Thematic Interpretation" in his book entitled "Embracing the Qur'an," and practically, he introduced it in the book *Insights of the Qur'an, A Glimpse of Divine Light, Sowing Divine Messages*, and so on.<sup>21</sup> Many Indonesian scholars then followed the thematic interpretation method.

Thematic interpretations that develop in Indonesia are not only individual works. The thematic interpretation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia is a form of thematic interpretation work, which is teamwork as a collective work or can be referred to as part of *ijtihad jama'i* in the field of interpretation.<sup>22</sup> Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an compiled the thematic commentary. The interpretation collects

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<sup>20</sup> Didi Junaedi, "Mengenal Lebih Dekat Metode Tafsir Maudhu'i," *Diya Al-Afkar*, Volume 4, no. 1, (2016): p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> Islah Gusman, "Tafsir Al-Qur'an Di Indonesia: Sejarah Dan Dinamika'," *Jurnal Nun*, Volume 1, no. 1, (2015): p. 16

<sup>22</sup> Arif Kurniawan, "Tinjauan Strategi Wacana Kuasa Pemerintah Dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an Tematik Kementerian Agama RI," *Hermeneutik* 12, no. 1 (2019): 35, <https://doi.org/10.21043/hermeneutik.v13i2.6353>.

verses related to a particular theme or topic and analyzes it in depth so that the Qur'an views regarding the theme can be concluded.<sup>23</sup>

The thematic model used by Tafsir al-Qur'an Thematic is a plural modern thematic form or means an interpretation that focuses on various actual and contemporary themes. The writing characteristics of the interpretive themes of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia begin with the title of the fundamental problem in each theme discussed. Then, it is followed by a discussion of related sub-headings and several themes in the middle or at the end, relating to the context of the topic Indonesian.<sup>24</sup> *The position and role of women* begin with an explanation of the differences between men and women, the profile of women in the Qur'an, then leads to sub-discussions on *the origins of the creation of men's and women's Leadership, Women's Roles in the Sector, Social*, and so on. After that, this theme discusses the contextualization of the discussed verses related to the themes and sub-themes. The Indonesian context is also included in the theme of Women's Empowerment.

Thus, in interpreting certain themes, the Mushaf Qur'an ratification committee uses a deductive-inductive approach widely used by scholars writing thematic commentaries. Within the inductive approach, commentators respond to various community problems based on the *texts* of the Qur'an towards the actual reality (*minal qur'an ilal-waqi'*). Through an inductive approach, commentators limit themselves to the things explained by the Qur'an, including those related to the choice of themes, limited to using the vocabulary or terms used by the Qur'an. Meanwhile, with a deductive approach, the background of interpretation arises from various problems or realities that occur in society. A solution is sought from the *texts* of the Qur'an (*minal-wāqi' ilal-Qur'ān*). As a result, with these two approaches, if vocabulary or terms are found related to the theme of the discussion, then the term is used, but if it is not found, then the

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<sup>23</sup> Muchlis M. Hanafi, dkk., *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Tematik Moderasi Islam*,. p. XXII-XXVII

<sup>24</sup> Atik Wartini, "Tafsir Tematik Kemenag: Studi Al-Qur'an Dan Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini'." p. 9

problem is studied based on the guidelines contained in the Qur'an.<sup>25</sup>

#### **D. Thematic Interpretation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs: Contemporary Women's Leadership**

There has been a lot of discussion about women's leadership. Many people also question whether it is permissible for women to become leaders because many link the individual's ability to lead from biological or gender aspects between men and women. Women are considered weak in leading compared to men, who have the strength and ability to lead. This belief then gave birth to the term gender inequality by placing women in an unfavorable condition, even though women are human resources whose numbers are far greater in the world than men.<sup>26</sup>

The discussion of male and female leaders is a gender area. The concept attached to men or women is a social and cultural construction. For example, women are brainwashed as human beings who are gentle, beautiful, motherly, and full of emotion. At the same time, men are considered strong creatures, able to think rationally, manly, and mighty. Some traits change places between men and women depending on the dimensions of space and time.<sup>27</sup> The stigma that women are weak and men are strong creatures gave birth to a growing idea that men are usually the leaders. Meanwhile, women should stay at home, taking care of household needs. However, over time, gender equality in Indonesia has been growing day by day. It is proven that many great women can become leaders as presidents, company directors, organizational leaders, and so on.

Talking about women's leadership is often associated with the story of Queen Bilqis from the land of Saba'. The story is enshrined in QS an-Naml verses 23-24. The story shows that women can also be leaders of a nation. Even in that verse, it is explained about Queen Bilqis's expertise in leading her people,

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<sup>25</sup> Muchlis M. Hanafi, dkk., *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Tematik Moderasi Islam*,. p. XXIX

<sup>26</sup> Reny Yulianti, "Women Leadership: Telaah Kapasitas Perempuan Sebagai Pemimpin", p. 22

<sup>27</sup> Muchlis M. Hanafi, dkk., *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Tematik Moderasi Islam*,. p. 2

but she and her people do not believe in Allah SWT, but they are sun worshipers.<sup>28</sup> The discussion on women's leadership in the thematic interpretation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia becomes interesting because the interpretation team first classifies women's leadership in; women's leadership in the family, women's leadership in worship, women's leadership in society, women's leadership in the state.

#### **E. Thematic Interpretation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs: Women's Leadership**

Family is the smallest collectivity in the structure of society. The family generally consists of a husband (father), a wife (mother), and children. Each member plays a role in efforts to create a family full of peace. Commitment in the family begins with a marriage contract or a very strong agreement (*mitsaqan galidzan*) between a man and a woman who is not a *mahram*. The husband and wife are then referred to as husband and wife. When they have children, the role of husband and wife increases to become a father and mother. Thus, a group of individuals is known as a family.<sup>29</sup>

This idea is in line with the hadith of the Prophet SAW, which means:

*Remember that each of you is a leader, and you will be held accountable for your leadership. An Amir (head of state) is a leader and will be held accountable for his leadership. A husband is a family leader; he will be held accountable for his leadership. A wife is the leader of her household and children and will be held accountable for her leadership. A slave is the leader of his master's property and will be held accountable for his leadership. So, remember that each of you is a leader, and you will be held accountable for what you lead. (Muslim narration from Ibn 'Umar).*

The hadith confirms that women can be leaders in their families, not solely as a single leadership, but collectively, leading together with their husbands to complement each other. Allah describes the husband-and-wife relationship as complementary

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<sup>28</sup> Muchlis M. Hanafi, dkk. p. 70

<sup>29</sup> Muchlis M. Hanafi, dkk. p. 187

garments. Through collective leadership, husband and wife work together and take care of each other, accompanied by a complex and complementary division of tasks based on a sense of love and affection. It is hoped that an ideal family will be built to give birth to a prosperous family and live happily in this world and the hereafter.<sup>30</sup>

Leadership in the family is a very interesting study, especially for feminists. This study continues to develop along with the public's concern about the assumption that men are superior (superior) to women in all aspects.<sup>31</sup> Suppose you look at the previous discussion in the thematic interpretation. The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia responds to this issue as collective leadership or the cohesiveness between husband and wife in the household. In interpreting the verse related to leadership in the family, it seems that KH Husein Muhammad (a feminist figure) is in line with the interpretation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, namely in leadership in the family, prioritizing the principle of deliberation between husband and wife. According to Husein Muhammad, even if women are more dominant in leading the household, it is legal. -It's okay, but with a note that the woman (wife) has more intellectual abilities than her husband.<sup>32</sup>

## F. Women's Leadership in Worship

Regarding women's leadership in worship, the interpretation of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs includes QS Ali Imran verses 35-36:

إِذْ قَالَتِ امْرَأَتُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي نَدَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ  
الْعَلِيمُ (35) فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَضَعْتُهَا أُنْثَىٰ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعْتَ وَلَيْسَ الذَّكَرُ  
كَالْأُنثَىٰ وَإِنِّي سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَإِنِّي أُعِيذُهَا بِكَ وَذَرَيْتَهَا مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

Behold! a woman of Imran said: "O my Lord! I do dedicate unto thee what is in my womb for Thy special service so accept this of

<sup>30</sup> Muchlis M. Hanafi, dkk. p. 55-57

<sup>31</sup> Muhammad Nidom Hamami Abicandra, "Pendekatan Psikologi Dalam Kajian Islam," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kajian Aswaja* 7, no. 1 (2022): p. 21–30, <https://doi.org/10.56013/jpka.v7i1.1061>.

<sup>32</sup> Hendro Sucipto, "*Kepemimpinan Dalam Keluarga (Studi Komparasi Penafsiran Yunahar Ilyas Dan Husein Muhammad)*", (Yogyakarta,: Fakultas Ushuluddin, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, 2009).

me for Thou hearest and knowest all things. When she was delivered she said: "O my Lord! behold! I am delivered of a female child!" And Allah knew best what she brought forth, "and nowise is the male like the female. I have named her Mary and I commend her and her offspring to Thy protection from the Evil One the Rejected."

This verse tells about the desire of Imran's wife, who vowed to Allah that when the baby she was carrying was born and was a boy, she vowed for the child to be the imam and administrator of the mosque and be kept away from all forms of worldly behavior. But in reality, the child she was carrying was born a girl. With this verse, Allah confirms that Allah already knows the baby in the mother's womb; men and women are not the same. From this verse, it can be concluded that the differences between men and women are certain in terms of worshiping the *mahdzah* of mosque *ta'mir* activities. However, this difference does not indicate discrimination but shows the image of each according to their nature, even in their physical condition. In prayer, men and women both have differences. For example, related to genitalia and dress code. Suppose a woman has an awrah limit by covering all her limbs, except for the face and the palms of the hand, while a man has an awrah limitation only between the navel to the knee.<sup>33</sup>

Likewise, when performing congregational prayers, the Messenger of Allah (SAW) has arranged *rows* (rows in prayer). Men occupy *rows* in prayer, while the children are in the middle, and the *rows* are women. In addition to regulating the *shaf* (line of prayer), the Prophet also gave an example that men who deserve to be priests in prayer are men because men are made as priests to be followed. However, if the congregation in prayer consists of only women, there is not a single male, then of course the priest may be a woman, and if the congregation is male and female, then the male must become the *imam*.<sup>34</sup>

The interpretation of women's leadership in worship, especially in prayer, was also rejected by four madhhab imams.

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<sup>33</sup> Muchlis M. Hanafi, dkk., *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Tematik Moderasi Islam*, p. 64

<sup>34</sup> Muchlis M. Hanafi, dkk. p. 65-66

The four madhhab priests expressly reject the priesthood of women over men. Imam Malik and Abu Hanifah rejected female imams over men because *Imamat* is an honorable and holy position that is only the authority of men. However, Imam Shafi'i and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal allowed women to become imams to be limited to fellow women.<sup>35</sup> However, for contemporary feminists such as Amina Wadud, such interpretation is considered less relevant if contextualized in this modern era, so it is necessary to reread it according to the modern context.<sup>36</sup>

### G. Women's Leadership in Society

Talking about women's leadership in society, the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs's Tafsir provides a verse that is stated in QS al-Taubah: 71:

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ  
الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

“The believers men and women are protectors one of another: they enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers practice regular charity and obey Allah and His apostle. On them will Allah pour His mercy: for Allah is Exalted in power Wise”.

The verse discusses the relationship between men and women in social tasks (*amar makruf nahi munkar*). The relationship that should be built between men and women is an attitude of working hand in hand, complementing and *ta'awun* (helping) each other, and synergizing with one another. Synergize and *ta'awun* in building a prosperous society based on the values of Islamic teachings in all aspects of life, socio-economic life, education, culture, and so on. Therefore, it is permissible for women to become leaders in social activities useful for community development.

<sup>35</sup> Elya Munfarida, “Kepemimpinan Perempuan Dalam Ibadah: Tafsir Transformatif Atas Diskursus Imam Perempuan Bagi Kaum Laki-Laki Dalam Shalat,” *Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Anak*, Volume 3, no. 2, (2008): p. 10.

<sup>36</sup> M. Ulil Abshor, “Pendekatan Kontekstualis Dalam Penafsiran Al-Qur’an (The Study Of Abdullah Saeed’s Qur’anic Interpretation),” *Keislaman, Jurnal Kontekstualis, Pendekatan Penafsiran, Dalam* Volume 13, no. 2 (2018): p. 238-259.

In educational institutions, women are allowed or even good if they become leaders. For example, a woman becomes the rector or head of the faculty (Dean) at a university or other educational institution. Because his gentle leadership will show his authority, it is hoped that it will produce calmer students. Similarly, women are permitted to lead health institutions like hospitals, health centers, and clinics and lead in community empowerment. It needs to be a shared concern it is permissible for women to lead a group or community organization with a note that they should not neglect their more important task, namely as housewives in the context of giving birth and building *dzurriyyah tayyibah* (a superior and good generation).<sup>37</sup>

Women and men have the same potential as social and cultural individuals. Based on the existing research results, there are no significant differences regarding the potential basic abilities of the two types of men and women. It's just because everyone has a different leadership style, both male and female. The leadership style can also be adapted to the context in which he leads. The pattern of leadership in business organizations is different from the pattern of the leadership of political parties. It must also be different from the pattern of the leadership of social organizations.<sup>38</sup>

The phenomenon of leadership style in Indonesia is still an interesting topic and greatly influences political and state life. In the business sector, leadership style affects the organization's success in achieving its mission, vision, and goals. Therefore, the challenge in developing an organizational strategy mainly lies with the organization on the one hand and depends on the leadership.<sup>39</sup> Achieving the vision and mission of a group or organization requires cohesiveness between leaders and members. Thus, in the context of women's leadership in society, it needs to

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<sup>37</sup> Muchlis M. Hanafi, dkk., *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Tematik Moderasi Islam*, p. 69-70

<sup>38</sup> Khairin Nizomi, "Gaya Kepemimpinan Perempuan Dalam Budaya Organisasi (Studi Kasus Kepala Perpustakaan Smp Muhammadiyah 1 Depok Yogyakarta)," *JIPi: Jurnal Ilmu Perpustakaan Dan Informasi*, Volume 4, no. 2 (n.d.): p. 3.

<sup>39</sup> Reny Yulianti, "Women Leadership: Telaah Kapasitas Perempuan Sebagai Pemimpin'," p. 3



be accompanied by the development of the quality of women, which can be done by making various efforts such as using their rights to study, go to school, and not forgetting to upgrade themselves.

## H. Women's Leadership in Indonesia

Allah SWT has said in QS an-Naml: 23-24

إِنِّي وَجَدْتُ امْرَأَةً تَمْلِكُهُمْ وَأُوتِيَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَهَا عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ (23) وَجَدْتُهَا وَقَوْمَهَا يَسْجُدُونَ لِلشَّمْسِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَزَيْنَ لَهُمْ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَلُهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ فَهُمْ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ

"I found (there) a woman ruling over them and provided with every requisite; and she has a magnificent throne. "I found her and her people worshipping the sun besides Allah: Satan has made their deeds seem pleasing in their eyes and has kept them away from the Path so they receive no guidance".

This verse tells the narrative of a woman who controls a country known as Ratu Bilqis, and her people are known as Saba'. This verse is about historical occurrences, and we can learn from it that the historical account cannot be regarded as the sole legal basis. In the same passage, Queen Bilqis is described as having amazing power, but she and her people do not believe in Allah, despite being sun worshippers. This passage appears to reflect the failure of a female king (Queen Bilqis) to create faith and monotheism values, and it will, of course, impact development in other social domains. Rasulullah SAW even stated in a hadith editorial:

لَنْ يُفْلِحَ الْقَوْمُ وَلَوْ أَمَرَهُمْ امْرَأَةٌ (رواه الترمذي والنسائي عن أبي بكر)

"There will never be lucky (successful) a people (nation), who surrenders all its affairs (led) by women." (History of at-Tirmidhi and an-Nasa'i from Abu Bakrah)

Although the hadith raises pros and cons, the team for the thematic interpretation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia believes that, when viewed from the very large duties and responsibilities, then the task of the head of state or regional head should not be given to women. Judging from the hadith, a head of state or regional head must understand the problems faced by the community and nation. Done at night. Rasulullah SAW could never sleep well before ensuring that his

people could sleep well. It carried over to his death when he was very worried about the condition of his people. A very extraordinary example; remember the fate of his people until their lives are separated from the body. Therefore, the Messenger of Allah reminded us that a good and just leader would be one of the seven groups who will receive the salvation and protection of Allah on the day of resurrection. On the other hand, cruel and untrustworthy leaders are one of the three groups categorized as chronic religious diseases, which will only bring harm and misery to religion and society.<sup>40</sup>

From the explanation above, the team drafting the thematic interpretation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia considers that a nation or state will be more beneficial if the head of state/regional head is a man who is fair, honest, firm, sided with the interests of the community, visionary, has a broad knowledge, and have excellent physical health. So that the duties and obligations carried out as a leader can be realized properly and maximally. However, the drafting team did not argue against forbidding women to become leaders in the country.

Most scholars certainly have different opinions in responding to the issue of women's leadership, especially leadership in the state. Some scholars consider that the leadership of a country is only limited to men without women because men are considered to have advantages in regulating and being firm with the people. Meanwhile, women tend to be gentle.<sup>41</sup> The difference of opinion is nothing but born from differences in the reading of a text meaning both the Qur'an and Hadith. Some scholars who refuse women to be leaders have a hujjah in QS al-Nisa verse 34. According to them, men's role is to protect and lead women because men are the most suitable creatures to carry out this task because they are considered to have a perfect and strong form.

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<sup>40</sup> Muchlis M. Hanafi, dkk. p. 70-71

<sup>41</sup> Marzaniatun, "*Konsep Pemimpin Perempuan Dalam Tafsir Al-Misbah*", (Medan,: Tesis Jurusan Tafsir Hadis, Pascasarjana Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, 2016). p. 13

In the Indonesian context, women's leadership is not prohibited. It is evident that there are many women who occupy government seats, such as Ms. Khofifah Indar Parawansa who currently serves as Governor of East Java, then Ms. Tri Rismaharini who serves as Minister of Social Affairs, even Indonesia once had a female president named Ms. Megawati Soekarnoputri. However, many people are still trapped in traditional thinking that forces women to become domestic workers and rejects women's leadership.

## I. Conclusion

Thematic interpretation of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia is present as a form of a work of thematic interpretation compiled by a team as a collective work. This thematic commentary work compiled by Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an collects verses related to a particular theme or topic, and analyzes it in depth so that it can be concluded that the views of the Qur'an related to the theme. The themes discussed in the thematic interpretation of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia include *Islamic Moderation, Social Responsibility, Young Generation, People's Economic Development, Environmental Conservation*, to the theme of *Women's Leadership*.

Regarding the theme of Women's Leadership, the Ministry of Religious Affairs' thematic interpretation provides a classification into Women's Leadership in the Family, Women's Leadership in Worship, and Women's Leadership in the State. As for the leadership of women in worship, especially in prayer, women are not allowed to become priests. Meanwhile, societal leadership means that women may lead in groups, organizations, or businesses if they can lead a field they lead. In the thematic interpretation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, there are no arguments relating to the prohibition of women leading a country. Still, it emphasizes that the country will be better if men lead it. This belief is a reference to a country that incidentally is Muslim. Like Indonesia, although it does not fully adhere to that way, it more or less adheres to the Qur'an and al-hadith.

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