



# Women and politics from the Perspectives of the Qur'an: A thematic tafsir study

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## ABSTRACT

Islam is a religion which, in general understanding, is a universal religion. Islam is a teaching with broad dimensions, not just in one aspect, but covering several general aspects. Including the political aspect is an important part of Islam. In QS. Al-Taubah verse 7 contains a discussion of history and how, during the time of Rasulullah SAW, he solved a problem using politics. So that Islamic politics can regulate a good state and society. Apart from that, there is a discussion regarding the aspects of a leader who has good principles as a leader in the world of politics, contained in QS. Ali Imran verse 159, so that it can be a role model and guide in determining all decisions in politics. The position of women in the public sphere is also important in the world of politics, how a woman can become a leader but still maintain her dignity and position as a woman.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In global discussions on governance and social justice, the discourse on political systems rooted in religious values has gained increasing significance. Across many parts of the world, particularly in Muslim-majority countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Indonesia, debates continue to emerge over the relevance of implementing Islamic political systems in modern nation-states (Yilmaz & Shukri, 2024). On one hand, these systems are believed to offer a just and dignified social order grounded in transcendental values. On the other hand, the application of Islamic law in politics often raises concerns regarding its compatibility with democratic principles, human rights, and especially gender equality (Ahmad, Zamri, et al., 2024). While Western nations largely uphold secularism and liberal democracy as the foundation of governance, Islamic political thought presents an integrative approach that seeks to connect spirituality with public regulation, and religion with statecraft (Fuadi, 2024).

In line with these developments, many contemporary Muslim thinkers have attempted to reconstruct the concept of an Islamic state to meet modern demands and challenges. Prominent scholars such as Rashid al-Ghannouchi, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, and Tariq Ramadan advocate for a contextual reinterpretation of Islamic principles in politics and governance, arguing that the essence of Islamic law (*Shari'a*) is not rigid legalism but the promotion of justice, social welfare, and the ethical integrity of the political process (Al-Suwaidi, 2022). They emphasize that Islam, as a normative system, is concerned not only with ritual observance but with structural issues such as good governance, human dignity, and social equality, including the active role of women in society.

Nevertheless, despite the progressive potential of Islamic political thought, many Muslim-majority states have struggled to translate these ideals into practice. In several cases, the formal adoption of Islamic law has not led to inclusive or equitable governance. In fact, it has sometimes reinforced conservative interpretations that limit women's participation in political, legal, and economic spheres (Celis & Childs, 2018). In certain countries, women

are still prohibited from holding high-ranking governmental positions or from participating fully in public life. Conversely, countries like Tunisia and Indonesia have made some strides toward gender-inclusive politics, though these remain limited in scope and impact (Geha & Karam, 2021).

This discrepancy points to a significant gap between normative Islamic ideals and their actual implementation. The principles of Islamic politics such as *shura* (consultation), *'adl* (justice), *amanah* (integrity), and *maslahah* (public interest) are theoretically capable of fostering a just and equitable society. However, the persistent marginalization of women in many Islamic political contexts undermines the very ethical foundations these principles aim to uphold (Koburtay et al., 2023). Women, who constitute half of society and play critical roles in its development, remain underrepresented and often excluded from key decision-making processes. This not only reflects a structural imbalance but also raises questions about the inclusivity and ethical integrity of Islamic political systems in practice.

The issue is further compounded by dominant interpretations of Islamic texts that are heavily influenced by patriarchal culture and traditional male authority. These interpretations, while historically shaped and contextually bound, continue to exert significant influence over how political roles are assigned and legitimized (Lazarus et al., n.d.). As a result, access to power and participation in governance often remains a male privilege, institutionalized within both religious and political structures. In this context, revisiting Islamic texts with a progressive and contextual lens becomes essential not only to align with contemporary realities but also to recover the inclusive ethical spirit of Islam itself (Brooks & Ezzani, 2022).

More broadly, the ideal of an Islamic state must be understood within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, or the higher objectives of Islamic law, which include the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. Viewed through this lens, empowering women and ensuring their participation in public life is not only compatible with Islam it is essential to fulfilling its objectives (Koburtay et al., 2023). A political system that claims to be Islamic but fails to address structural gender inequality is arguably falling short of its own ethical mandate. In this light, rethinking Islamic political values from a gender-inclusive perspective is not a departure from tradition, but rather a return to its core moral vision.

Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, offers a unique case for examining the intersection of Islamic politics and gender justice. Since the fall of the New Order regime in 1998, Indonesia has witnessed increased democratization, including formal efforts to enhance women's political participation (Bayo, 2021). Legal reforms, such as the introduction of a 30% quota for women candidates in political parties, reflect a growing awareness of gender imbalance in governance. Yet these initiatives often remain superficial, lacking meaningful enforcement and structural support (Shoukat & Awan, 2025). As a result, women's representation in politics, while improved on paper, continues to fall short of both democratic ideals and Islamic ethical principles.

The persistence of gender inequality in Muslim societies, including those that formally adopt elements of Islamic governance, signals an urgent need to bridge the gap between Islamic political theory and lived realities (Fuadi, 2024). Many existing studies on Islamic politics focus on state structures, jurisprudence, and theological legitimacy, but pay insufficient attention to the gender dynamics embedded within these systems. This research identifies that as a major gap in the current body of knowledge. The role of women in Islamic politics, both historically and in contemporary practice, remains underexplored, particularly in relation to how Islamic values can be reinterpreted to promote gender equity in political institutions.

This article seeks to address that gap by exploring the normative framework of Islamic political thought in relation to women's representation and participation in governance. Drawing from the foundational principles of Islamic ethics and jurisprudence, the study aims to identify how the core values of Islamic politics can be rearticulated to support a more inclusive and just political system (Faizi & Ali, 2024). Specifically, it will examine the concepts of leadership, justice, consultation, and public responsibility through a gender-conscious lens. The research also aims to challenge essentialist readings of Islamic texts that restrict political authority to men, and instead highlight the flexibility and adaptability of Islamic teachings when approached through critical and contextual methodologies.

To achieve this, the study employs a qualitative approach through library research. This method involves a comprehensive review of primary sources such as the Qur'an, hadith, classical fiqh texts, and authoritative commentaries, alongside contemporary academic writings by Muslim scholars and gender theorists. The analysis draws on both traditional and modern perspectives, aiming to synthesize a balanced understanding of Islamic political ethics that is both faithful to its sources and responsive to contemporary realities. Key themes include the

ethical purpose of governance in Islam, the prophetic model of leadership, the historical participation of women in Islamic societies, and the potential for reform in religious interpretations (Liu et al., 2005).

Through this methodological framework, the study aspires to contribute theoretically and practically to the discourse on Islamic political thought and gender justice. Theoretically, it offers an alternative reading of Islamic political principles that centers gender inclusivity as an essential dimension of justice. Practically, it provides insights that could inform policy-making, educational reform, and community leadership development within Muslim societies. By foregrounding the ethical and moral dimensions of Islamic governance, the research challenges reductionist or authoritarian uses of *shari'a* and emphasizes its potential as a source of empowerment, not exclusion.

## 2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### • Qur'anic Political Verses

#### a. Q.S. At-Tawbah: 7

كَيْفَ يَكُونُ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ عَهْدٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعِنْدَ رَسُولِهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۖ فَمَا اسْتَقْتُمُوا  
لَكُمْ فَاسْتَقِيمُوا لَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ

*"How can there be a treaty with the polytheists on the part of Allah and His Messenger except with those you made a treaty with at the Sacred Mosque? As long as they are true to you, be true to them. Verily, Allah loves those who are mindful of Him."* (Q.S. At-Tawbah: 7)

This verse stands as a cornerstone in understanding the ethical dimensions of political interaction within the Islamic tradition. Rather than reducing politics to mere strategy or power, the Qur'an frames political conduct in terms of divine morality, trustworthiness, and accountability (Islam et al., 2024). At the heart of this verse is the principle of honoring treaties, which in the context of early Islam, both spiritual and political significance. The Qur'an sharply distinguishes between those who respect their commitments and those who betray them, affirming that integrity and loyalty are not only social virtues but also divine obligations.

Historically, this verse was revealed in the aftermath of the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, a non-aggression pact concluded between the Prophet Muhammad and the Quraysh tribe of Mecca during the sixth year of Hijrah. Although seemingly one-sided, the treaty became a turning point for the Muslim community, offering them an opportunity to demonstrate diplomatic maturity and patience. However, when the Quraysh broke the treaty by supporting Banu Bakr in attacking Banu Khuza'ah an ally of the Muslims Rasulullah responded by launching the conquest of Mecca in the eighth year of Hijrah. This event did not merely symbolize military triumph; it demonstrated how Islam responds to treachery not with blind vengeance, but with measured justice and moral clarity (Ibnu Katsir, 2017).

This context reveals that political treaties in Islam are not expedient arrangements to be used and discarded. Rather, they are moral contracts with deep religious undertones. The Qur'anic command *"As long as they are true to you, be true to them"* embodies a relational ethic that transcends tribal affiliations or religious differences. Reciprocity, fairness, and consistency are values that define Muslim conduct even in the realm of political disagreement. Political ethics in the Qur'an are thus not reactive but principle-based; the conduct of the "other" shapes, but does not distort, the ethical behavior expected of a believer (Hartmann-Kotte, 2022).

Furthermore, the concluding phrase *"Indeed, Allah loves those who are mindful of Him (al-muttaqūn)"* ties political behavior directly to piety. In the Qur'anic worldview, political action is never separate from spiritual awareness. This linkage elevates politics into the domain of ibadah (worship), where fulfilling promises and upholding justice become acts of devotion. Political power, then, is not a self-serving domain but a trust (*amanah*) to be exercised under the gaze of divine accountability (Shaukat, 2024).

This verse also holds critical relevance for contemporary Muslim societies grappling with questions of political legitimacy, state power, and interreligious coexistence (Yilmaz & Sokolova-Shipoli, 2024). Many modern Islamic governments claim to uphold shari'a, yet their treatment of political opponents, minorities, or international agreements often contradicts the spirit of justice that the Qur'an demands. In this light, Q.S. At-Tawbah: 7 challenges modern political actors to realign their governance practices with the ethics of treaty, trust, and transparency. A state cannot be considered truly Islamic if it fails to honor commitments or marginalizes groups unjustly (Maboloc, 2025).

Equally important is the potential of this verse to support gender-inclusive politics. If political trustworthiness is based on *taqwa* and adherence to justice, then there is no Qur'anic basis for excluding women from leadership

roles merely on the basis of gender (Sharify-Funk, 2023). The ethical and spiritual standards of leadership are not gender-specific but character-specific. Women in early Islamic history, such as Khadijah, Aisha, and Umm Salama, played substantial roles in public and political affairs, offering a prophetic precedent that many modern societies overlook (Hamid, 2015).

Moreover, the logic of this verse aligns closely with modern notions of the social contract. The Prophet's own actions most notably, the *Constitution of Medina* reflected a model of political inclusivity where Muslims, Jews, and even pagans were considered part of a unified civic community with shared rights and duties (Anello, 2021). The Qur'anic command to honor treaties supports this pluralistic vision, where mutual respect and peaceful coexistence are prerequisites for any legitimate political order (Ghazleh, 2025).

Despite its clarity, this verse has often been misinterpreted especially by extremist groups who isolate the first part of the verse ("How can there be a treaty with the polytheists...") without acknowledging the exceptions and conditions that follow. Such decontextualized readings distort the Qur'an's message and undermine its ethical core. A proper understanding requires engagement with the *asbāb al-nuzūl* (context of revelation), prophetic practice (*sunnah*), and *maqāṣid al-sharī'a* (higher objectives of the law), all of which affirm justice, mercy, and the dignity of all humans (Abou El Fadl, 2014).

#### b. Q.S. Ali 'Imran: 159

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ ۖ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ ۚ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ  
وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ ۚ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

"So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from around you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in matters. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him]." (Q.S. Ali 'Imran: 159)

This verse offers one of the most comprehensive frameworks for ethical and spiritual leadership in Islam. Revealed in the aftermath of the Battle of Uhud, it speaks directly to the Prophet Muhammad's conduct in the face of disappointment and betrayal (Widigdo et al., 2024). The battle itself had turned from near victory to painful defeat due to disobedience within the Muslim ranks. Despite the grave consequences, including the Prophet himself being wounded, this Qur'anic verse does not encourage harsh reprimand or authoritarian measures (Jalal, 2025). Instead, it commands the Prophet to remain gentle, to forgive, to pray for his followers, and to engage them in consultation.

Sayyid Qutb, in *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*, contextualizes this verse by explaining that after a third of the Muslim army withdrew under the leadership of the hypocrite 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy, and after the archers disobeyed the Prophet's orders to hold their strategic position on the hill, chaos ensued. Despite these failures, the Prophet demonstrated a remarkably merciful attitude, which the Qur'an affirms as a divine trait: his gentleness was "by mercy from Allah" (Trisnani et al., 2025). Qutb emphasizes that it was precisely this mercy, and not force, that kept the early Muslim community united.

The phrase "*if you had been harsh in heart*" underlines that true leadership is not founded upon fear or dominance but upon emotional intelligence, empathy, and patience. This perspective challenges modern political paradigms that normalize coercive or militarized leadership models. In Islamic political thought, leadership is inseparable from character, and the ability to forgive and include others, especially in the wake of failure, is considered a sign of spiritual maturity (Nguyen, 2024).

Perhaps one of the most powerful components of this verse is the divine instruction to consult the community in matters (*wa shāwirhum fī al-amr*). This is especially significant considering that the Prophet, as a recipient of divine revelation, was not in need of others' opinions to make decisions. Yet, Allah commands him to engage his companions in *shūrā* (consultation), thus institutionalizing the principle of participatory governance within the Islamic political framework. The implication is clear: public participation, consensus-building, and deliberation are not only permissible but divinely mandated components of leadership (Hahn, 2022).

Furthermore, the conclusion of the verse shifts the focus from human interaction to divine reliance: "*And when you have decided, rely upon Allah.*" This reminds leaders that after consultation and careful judgment, final decisions must be made with full trust in God. Tying leadership to *tawakkul* (reliance upon Allah) grounds political decisions not in selfish ambition or popular pressure, but in ethical commitment and spiritual accountability.



(Ruhullah & Ushama, 2025). This prevents paralysis in decision-making while ensuring that the leader's authority remains accountable to a higher moral source.

From a modern perspective, this verse offers a powerful critique of both authoritarianism and populism. It neither supports autocratic decision-making nor reduces leadership to pleasing the masses (Hogg, 2021). Instead, it affirms that leadership must be morally anchored, dialogical, and spiritually guided. In this sense, the verse serves as a timeless template for ethical governance, one where forgiveness, inclusion, responsibility, and reliance upon God work together to uphold justice and community integrity.

The verse also opens space for inclusive political participation. The command to engage in *shūrā* is not gender-specific or class-limited. Theoretically, it creates space for women, minorities, and marginalized voices to be heard in public affairs. This aligns with historical instances where women in early Islam, such as Umm Salama and Aisha, were consulted on matters of state, jurisprudence, and military strategy (Samier & ElKaleh, 2021). When applied earnestly, the ethic of consultation can become a mechanism for democratization and justice within Muslim-majority societies.

It is also worth noting that many Muslim societies today struggle to embody the values enshrined in this verse. Political repression, exclusion, and intolerance run counter to the Qur'anic model of prophetic leadership. States that ignore the voice of the people, refuse to forgive dissenters, or centralize power in a cult of personality betray the trust inherent in leadership as a divine *amanah* (trust). Q.S. Ali 'Imran: 159 therefore functions as both a mirror and a compass exposing our contemporary failures while guiding us back to prophetic ethics.

## • Interpretation of Political Verses

### a. Q.S. At-Taubah: 7

The verse in Surah At-Taubah (9:7) presents a nuanced Qur'anic directive regarding treaties with non-Muslim groups specifically polytheists within a historical and political framework. It states:

كَيْفَ يَكُونُ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ عَهْدٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعِنْدَ رَسُولِهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَهِدْتُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۖ فَمَا اسْتَقْتُمُوا  
لَكُمْ فَاسْتَقِيمُوا لَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ

*"How can there be a treaty for the polytheists with Allah and with His Messenger, except for those with whom you made a treaty at al-Masjid al-Haram? So long as they are upright toward you, be upright toward them. Indeed, Allah loves the righteous."* (Q.S. At-Taubah: 7)

This verse addresses the broader legal and political ethics of treaty-making in Islamic governance. Ibn Jarir al-Tabari, as quoted by Sayyid Qutb, interprets this verse as a general statement concerning all polytheists, highlighting that the Prophet Muhammad SAW and the Muslim community are commanded to honor peace treaties so long as the other party remains committed to them. The provision explicitly emphasizes non-violation, particularly prohibiting the support or arming of enemies who wage war against Muslims (Qutb et al., 2001).

According to several narrations, including those cited by Qutb and classical exegetes, the Prophet delegated Ali ibn Abi Talib to publicly declare the cancellation of treaties only in cases where treachery had occurred. The Prophet's message through Ali was clear: those who had maintained their agreements would continue to enjoy their protection and terms until the expiration of the treaty period. The cancellation of any agreement was not arbitrary but strictly based on breaches of terms by the other party (Qutb et al., 2001).

The *Tafsir al-Jalalain* adds a historical layer to this interpretation. It notes that the phrase "*Masjid al-Haram*" refers to the time of the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, a pivotal moment in early Islamic diplomacy. The polytheists mentioned in this verse were the Quraysh, known for their idol-worship and deep-rooted antagonism toward Islam. The Muslims had initially entered into a peace agreement with the Quraysh under immense political pressure. The treaty symbolized a ceasefire and a recognition of the Muslims as a political force in Arabia (Mesbahi, 2024).

The political implications of this verse are profound. It affirms the sanctity of treaties even with ideological adversaries, provided that mutual respect and non-aggression are maintained. It discourages betrayal or preemptive aggression by Muslims and underscores that political trust must be upheld until it is broken by the other party (P Junejo, 2024). From a jurisprudential point of view, this verse lays the foundation for the Islamic principle of *wafā' bil-'uhūd* the obligation to honor covenants.

Moreover, this verse subtly affirms the legitimacy of non-Muslim entities as actors with whom Muslims can enter into binding political and legal agreements. In the context of the Prophet's time, this was revolutionary. It

recognized the agency of the non-Muslim other not as a perpetual enemy but as a possible partner in peace, under clearly defined terms (Saleh et al., 2023).

The wisdom behind this ruling also lies in the broader Islamic vision of political order and social stability. Political treaties were not seen merely as strategic moves but as moral and spiritual commitments (Houssaini, 2024). When Allah commands Muslims to remain upright (*fa-staqīmū lahum*), it implies that righteousness is not confined to ritual piety but must reflect in political conduct. Treaties, therefore, are not just tools of diplomacy they are instruments of ethical responsibility.

Furthermore, the Qur'an's firm directive not to annul a treaty unless the opposing party violates it serves as a preventative mechanism against opportunistic politics and betrayal (Ahmad, bin Asmad, et al., 2024). It restrains Muslims from abandoning agreements based on changing political interests or military advantage. Instead, justice and integrity are emphasized as prerequisites for governance.

In contemporary Islamic political thought, this verse becomes especially relevant in contexts of international diplomacy, minority rights, and interfaith coexistence (Gilani & Waheed, 2025). It can be read as an early articulation of the Islamic conception of international relations, in which peace, not war, is the default posture until or unless clear hostility or treachery emerges from the other party. Muslim political entities are therefore not only permitted but required to respect treaties and maintain peace wherever possible (Bukhari et al., 2024).

Importantly, the Prophet Muhammad's conduct during and after the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah exemplifies these values. Even when Muslims were in a position of strength, he upheld the treaty until its violation by the Quraysh forced a response. His patience, discipline, and commitment to peaceful resolution highlight the strategic and ethical depth of this verse (Thalib, 2023).

In sum, Q.S. At-Taubah: 7 integrates legal obligation, political realism, and moral integrity into a singular vision of Islamic political ethics. It articulates a principle that transcends time: that peace must be preserved through justice, and agreements honored through sincerity. For modern political actors in Muslim-majority societies, this verse serves as a reminder that Islamic governance is as much about ethical consistency as it is about strength or sovereignty.

#### b. Q.S. Ali 'Imran: 159

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ ۖ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ ۚ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ ۚ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

"So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him]." (Q.S. Ali 'Imran: 159)

This verse was revealed in the aftermath of the Battle of Uhud, a moment when the Muslim army faced a devastating loss due to internal disobedience and misjudgment. The verse serves multiple purposes: first, to console the Prophet Muhammad SAW, and second, to remind the Muslim community of the profound moral and political qualities that their Prophet embodied gentleness, forgiveness, humility, and inclusive leadership. According to , the Prophet's moral character is depicted as a divine blessing, not only for his personal piety but also for his leadership style, which was patient, forgiving, and grounded in consultation with others (Ghani & Ayaz, 2024).

The command "*wa shāwirhum fī al-amr*" (and consult them in matters) is especially significant in the context of political thought in Islam. This phrase represents the foundation of *shūrā* (consultation), a key principle in Islamic governance. Al-Maraghi, in his tafsir, emphasizes that this directive instructs the Prophet to adopt deliberation even in matters such as military strategies during times of war like at Uhud (Marwat, 1990). He was to remain calm and thoughtful during consultations, to listen carefully to each opinion, and to choose the most beneficial course for the well-being of the Muslim community.

The phrase is also indicative of a larger theological and anthropological assumption in Islam: that human beings are created as *khalīfah* (vicegerents) on earth, entrusted with the responsibility to cultivate, govern, and care for the world (Hassan, 2021). This includes not only environmental stewardship but also the practice of power, governance, and leadership. Humans, in this light, are both agents and beneficiaries of political decisions. Thus, leadership in Islam is not a privilege of power but a burden of responsibility entrusted to those capable of upholding justice and communal welfare (Ali et al., 2024).

This Qur'anic instruction to consult others before making major decisions reveals the Prophet's political behavior as grounded in humility and collective reasoning, even though he was the recipient of divine revelation. That consultation was still required of him is proof that Islamic leadership must not be isolated or autocratic. Instead, decision-making is to be a communal process, where the leader facilitates dialogue, evaluates opinions, and ultimately trusts in God after careful judgment. This model integrates reason, ethics, and spiritual trust (*tawakkul*) into a coherent framework for just governance (Huda et al., 2019).

Sayyid Qutb also interprets this verse as a crucial turning point for understanding leadership ethics in Islam. During the crisis of Uhud, when some companions faltered and disobeyed orders, the Prophet could have chosen punishment or rebuke. Instead, he was commanded by God to forgive them, pray for their forgiveness, and include them again in consultation. This speaks volumes about the Islamic principle of restoration rather than exclusion, and of leading with compassion rather than domination (Qutb et al., 2001).

Modern political theorists within the Islamic tradition often point to this verse as one of the strongest proofs for participatory governance (Kay, 2024). Although Islamic political history has seen various forms of rule from consultative to monarchic this verse remains a moral compass for what Islamic political ethics ought to be (Aziz, 2023). *Shūrā* is not just a formal mechanism but a moral duty, signaling the leader's willingness to share authority and to acknowledge the wisdom present within the community.

Moreover, the ending of the verse *"When you have decided, then put your trust in Allah"* provides a balance between human reasoning and divine reliance. After sincere consultation and thoughtful reflection, the leader must act decisively and place full trust in Allah. This prevents indecisiveness and suggests that once a decision is made for the benefit of the community, it should not be second-guessed out of fear (Swoboda, 2018). In this way, Islam envisions leadership that is thoughtful but bold, humble but resolute, consultative yet authoritative.

In contemporary discourse, this verse could be seen as a critique of authoritarian leadership styles that claim religious legitimacy while suppressing dissent and ignoring public opinion (Yilmaz & Morieson, 2025). It challenges Muslim leaders to adopt transparent, dialogical, and inclusive approaches. The legitimacy of leadership in Islam, according to this verse, lies not in coercion but in the trust of the people, built through shared decision-making and moral example (Setiawan, 2024).

#### • Women and public space (politics)

Women and men have the same rights in the world of politics, the same in terms of voting or being elected. The Al-Quran gives equal rights to take roles in political spaces for both men and women, be it legislative, executive, judicial, this is included in the generality of the verses of the Al-Quran as follows:

وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُونَ فِيهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

*"And whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while he is a believer, they will enter Paradise, they will be given sustenance therein without reckoning."* (QS Al-Mukmin: 40).

فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَامِلٍ مِّنْكُمْ مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ بَعْضُكُمْ مِّن بَعْضٍ

*"So their Lord granted their request (by saying): 'Indeed, I do not waste the deeds of those who do good deeds among you, whether men or women, (because) some of you are descendants of others.'" (QS Ali Imran: 195).*

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً

*"Whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, is a believer, then surely We will give him a good life."* (QS An-Nahl: 97)

So women's participation in the state system is very open, while not forgetting their role as women, whether it is taking care of the house, children, husband and so on. Women also gain legitimacy from the hadith of the Prophet which is the second source of Islamic law. Among them are history from (Ahmad, Abu Daud, Tirmidzi)

إِنَّ النِّسَاءَ شَقَائِقُ الرِّجَالِ (رَوَاهُ أَحْمَدُ وَأَبُو دَاوُدَ وَالتِّرْمِذِيُّ)

*"Indeed, a woman is like a man's sibling."* (HR. Ahmad, Abu Dawud dan Tirmidzi).

Although basically *asbabul wurud* of this hadith is the equality of the obligation of bathing *jinabat* between women and men. Indirectly, this hadith shows that women and men have the same legal rights except for specific

matters. This is reinforced by the explanation of Imam Al-Hafiz Ibnu Hajar Al-A'sqalani in his book *Fathul Bari Syarhu Shahihil Bukhari*, as follows:

والنساء شقائق الرجال في الأحكام إلا ما خص

*"And women are like men's siblings in various laws except in matters that specifically apply to them"*

(Shihab, 2011) said that the verse that is often used to prevent women from participating in enlivening the world of politics is the verse An-Nisa verse 34, which reads *Arrijalu qawammuna 'alan nisa'* What is meant by this verse is husbands, not men in general, seen in the continuation of the sentence that follows, "Husbands spend part of their wealth on their wives," especially as the verses that follow discuss domestic life. So it cannot be an argument for limiting women's movement.

Likewise with verse 33 of Al-Ahzab which orders women to remain silent at home with the sentence *Waqarna fi buyutikum* unless there is an urgent need that requires him to leave. There are still disputes regarding the interpretation of this verse between scholars, including Imam al-Qurtubi (d. 671), even though the verse is addressed to the Prophet's wife, women other than the Prophet's wives are also covered by this command. This is different from Tahir Ibn 'Assyria. This command is an obligation for the Prophet's wives but is only perfect for women other than them (Shihab, 2002).

As for the hadith of the Prophet as his response to the news brought by Abdullah bin Hadhafah about the adoption of the daughter of Kisra Persia as the successor king of his father.

لن يفلح قوم لو أمرهم امرأة (رواه البخاري)

*"There will be no success for a nation that entrusts its affairs to women."*

A Persian princess named Buran had just lost a father and the king of Persia, while the great war between Persia and the Romans was in front of our eyes, even the Romans had already taken control of several regions, in addition to that Buran did not have the ability to lead a Kingdom as big as Persia and at that time there was no princess who inherited the throne of the Kingdom, moreover Society did not see women as equal to men, women only work at home, so there is no Society's trust in Buran, that is why the Messenger of God said "There will be no success in a nation that leaves its affairs to women" because he knows the trust and ability among those who determine the progress of a nation in the future. This hadith is specific to Kisrah Princess and not general; therefore it cannot be an argument to prohibit women from becoming leaders (Alfiyah et al., 2024).

There is no basis that can prevent women from participating in politics, but they can argue with verse 71 of Surah at-Taubah to support their participation in the political field.

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, some of them help others. They enjoin (do) good and forbid (do) evil, establish prayer, pay zakat, and obey God and His Messenger. They will be given mercy by God. Indeed, God is Mighty and Wise."*

Say *Auliya'* here includes cooperation between women and men, whether in managing the state or otherwise. Meanwhile, wise orders include all aspects of goodness, including giving criticism/advice to the authorities. Be glad, O women, for the growing support from contemporary Islamic scholars who have opened the door for women to participate more fully in public life, including the political and governmental spheres (Rashid & Asif, 2025). In the midst of long-standing debates and classical interpretations regarding women's leadership roles, prominent religious authorities today have issued fatwas that affirm women's rights to hold positions of power and responsibility while still engaging with traditional frameworks of Islamic law and ethics.

One of the most respected scholars, Dr. Muhammad Sayid Tantawi, a former Grand Mufti of Egypt and once the Grand Shaykh of Al-Azhar, made a clear statement as quoted in *Ad-Din wal Hayah* magazine that women may hold nearly any public office. According to him, a woman can serve as a head of state, judge, ambassador, minister, or as part of the legislative, executive, or judicial branches of government. The only exception, he argued, is the position of Grand Shaykh of Al-Azhar, since this role includes the duty of leading congregational prayers and



functioning as the Waliyatul 'Uzhma the spiritual authority over all Muslims worldwide, a position traditionally held by men due to its religious implications (Shehata, 2023).

Likewise, Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, a leading voice in modern Islamic thought, affirmed that women have full political rights, including the right to vote and be elected to office. He emphasized that women may work and hold public positions so long as they observe certain ethical guidelines based on Islamic law. These include avoiding *khalwah* (being alone with non-mahram men), fulfilling their primary responsibilities as mothers and wives, and dressing in accordance with Islamic values. Qaradawi's view supports women's active participation in society while calling for a balance between domestic duties and public engagement, not as a limitation but as an ethical framework for harmony between roles (Baroudi, 2023).

Sheikh Ali Jum'ah, another prominent Egyptian scholar and former Grand Mufti, also supported women's participation in governance. He permitted women to serve as members of parliament, ministers, judges, and other high-ranking positions. However, like Tantawi, he held that the position of Waliyatul 'Uzhma should remain in male hands, as it is traditionally tied to leading the global Muslim community in religious and legal affairs (Purwanto et al., 2023).

These fatwas illustrate a significant shift in the discourse on women and leadership in the Muslim world. While some symbolic religious roles remain reserved for men due to traditional jurisprudential views, the broader consensus among these contemporary scholars shows increasing recognition of women's capabilities and rights to contribute to society at all levels. Their fatwas do not merely grant permission but affirm women's intellectual, moral, and leadership potential (Masithoh & Kholifah, 2025).

The evolving interpretations of Sharia in these contexts demonstrate that Islamic thought is neither rigid nor frozen in time. It is responsive, dynamic, and capable of addressing the realities of modern society without compromising core ethical and spiritual values (LC, 2025). These scholarly opinions act as a source of hope and empowerment for Muslim women across the world, validating their aspirations while remaining rooted in the principles of their faith.

In light of this, it becomes a collective responsibility of scholars, governments, and communities to ensure that these progressive interpretations are not limited to academic discourse or legal theory. They must translate into concrete social structures, policies, and cultural norms that enable women to thrive as full, respected participants in public life. Islamic values of justice, dignity, and consultation (*shūrā*) should not exclude women but rather call for their inclusion. In this way, Islam remains a living tradition just, inclusive, and relevant for all (Ayubi, 2020).

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

Thus, there remains no valid theological basis for excluding women from strategic leadership roles in public life from the standpoint of Islam. When examined through the lens of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and with a contextual and principled approach to interpretation, Islamic teachings reveal a deep flexibility and openness toward women's active participation in political, social, and institutional domains. The fatwas of leading contemporary scholars such as Sayyid Tantawi, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, and Ali Jum'ah offer a strong and credible foundation, asserting that female leadership is not antithetical to Islamic principles so long as it adheres to ethical and spiritual guidelines derived from the Sharī'ah. The Qur'anic figure of Queen Balqis serves as a normative and historical precedent that highlights the legitimacy and effectiveness of female leadership. Her reign, marked by wisdom, consultation, and submission to divine truth, underscores that leadership in Islam is not determined by gender but by one's moral integrity, competence, justice, and dedication to the common good. Therefore, denying women access to leadership positions is not only a departure from the core spirit of Islam, which upholds justice and human dignity, but also a forfeiture of the enormous potential residing within half of the ummah. An Islam grounded in *'adl* (justice) and *maṣlaḥah* (public welfare) calls for the equal recognition of all individuals men and women alike as contributors to a just, inclusive, and civilized society.

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