



From Classical Fiqh to Contemporary Tafsir: The Struggle of Islamic Thought on Women's Political Leadership in Contemporary Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The study entitled "From Classical Fiqh to Contemporary Tafsir: The Struggle of Islamic Thought on Women's Political Leadership" focuses on the dynamics of Islamic scholars' perspectives in responding to the issue of women's leadership in politics. This issue has long been debated, starting from classical fiqh views that tend to be textual and restrictive, to contemporary interpretations that are more contextual and egalitarian. This study is guided by two main research questions: (1) how do classical fiqh and contemporary tafsir differ in constructing the legal and theological arguments concerning women's political leadership, and (2) what socio-historical factors have shaped the transformation of these interpretations across time? The purpose of this study is to analyze the differences between classical fiqh and contemporary tafsir, and to show how changes in social, political, and cultural contexts influence religious interpretations related to women's leadership. This research employs a library research method with a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach. Data were collected from primary sources such as fiqh texts, classical tafsir, and hadith, as well as secondary sources including contemporary academic literature. The findings reveal that classical fiqh thought bases its prohibition of women's leadership on literal interpretations of Qur'anic verses (e.g., QS. al-Nisā': 34) and certain hadiths, often understood within a patriarchal framework. In contrast, contemporary tafsir offers a contextual approach by emphasizing maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, justice, and gender equality, thereby opening the possibility of legitimizing women's leadership in modern politics. The novelty of this study lies in its comparative analysis, which not only highlights the legal aspects but also connects the transformation of Islamic thought with the socio-political dynamics of Muslim communities, thus enriching the discourse on the relationship between religion, gender, and politics.



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INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, academic literature on Islam and women's leadership has seen significant development. However, much of this scholarship either revisits classical juristic positions in descriptive-historical terms or advances contemporary egalitarian readings without systematically confronting the methodological tensions between the two traditions. As a result, the field still lacks a clear analytical mapping of how interpretive authority shifts from classical fiqh to contemporary hermeneutics in debates on female political leadership. This demonstrates that since classical times, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) has generally rejected or limited the political role of women based on traditional interpretations of religious texts. Meanwhile, contemporary discourse has increasingly challenged these interpretations through contextual, feminist, and critical approaches to the social and cultural biases embedded in Muslim societies' practices and understandings (Mahbuba & Rabeya, 2023). The debate on the position of women in political leadership is one of the central issues in contemporary Islamic studies, linking historical textual analysis with the demands for social justice in the modern era. Several classical studies placed limitations on women's political roles based on textual readings of specific verses and hadiths shaped within particular social-political contexts. At

the same time, reformist and feminist Qur'anic hermeneutics advocate for a re-reading of these texts, considering historical contexts, language, and the objectives of Sharia (maqāṣid) (Mukhlis, 2025a; Mukhlis & Saidah, 2025). Comprehensive studies by figures such as Amina Wadud and Asma Barlas assert the possibility of a pro-egalitarian reading of the Qur'an, even for verses traditionally understood in patriarchal terms, by reasserting interpretive authority within a gender- and history-sensitive textual framework (*Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective: Wadud, Amina: Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming: Internet Archive*, n.d.).

Normatively, the discourse of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah and contemporary ijihad offers a methodological framework that allows a shift in legal interpretation from a literal to a teleological approach in Islamic law—an approach particularly relevant when considering the legitimacy of women's leadership in modern public and political spheres. The concepts of maqāṣid and ijihad have been developed by modern scholars as tools to bridge universal values of justice, welfare, and human rights with Islamic legal practices adaptable to socio-political changes. This approach opens the possibility for reinterpreting texts previously cited as references for exclusion (KAMALI, 2019).

At the level of social-political reality, the transformation of the role of Muslim women in the public and political spheres has shown considerable variation: from historical experiences of female leaders in Muslim-majority countries to local Islamic women's movements demanding access and political legitimacy. In Indonesia, the emergence of productive female Muslim scholars and activists combining textual studies with advocacy for rights signals that this debate is not merely theoretical but also a matter of religious practice and public policy. Furthermore, contemporary studies examining the interpretation of key verses (such as QS. an-Nisā'/4:34) reveal a tendency in recent research to criticize patriarchal readings and recommend contextual approaches to support gender equality across various life domains, including politics (Diani, 2014). This indicates that, although women in many Muslim countries have entered the political arena as representatives, ministers, or even national leaders, strong obstacles remain in the form of patriarchal attitudes, conservative interpretations of hadith, and cultural norms that reject the notion that women can or deserve to hold full political leadership roles (Mahbuba & Rabeya, 2023). For example, a study in Indonesia titled *Voting against Women: Political Patriarchy, Islam, and Representation in Indonesia* found that political patriarchy and Islamic perceptions of gender roles play a significant role in the low political representation of women, even though they have the same constitutional rights (White et al., 2023). On the other hand, contemporary fatwas and scholarly opinions have emerged that open space for female leadership without the traditional conditions that were previously considered prohibitive (Yakar, 2022).

Based on this literature review and social observation, this study aims to: (1) present the differences in interpretive approaches between classical fiqh tradition and contemporary tafsir regarding the legitimacy of female political leadership; (2) analyze how shifts in socio-political contexts affect this hermeneutic transformation; and (3) formulate the theoretical and practical implications of these interpretive shifts for contemporary Islamic political discourse. The contribution of this study lies in providing a systematic comparative analysis between classical sources and contemporary interpretations, situating them within the framework of socio-political change. Thus, this study aims to bridge the research gap that has often separated classical textual studies from progressive contextual tafsir studies.

Although there has been much research on women's political leadership in Islam, most studies still focus on one aspect: either analyzing classical fiqh, which tends to be textual, or contemporary tafsir, which emphasizes gender equality. The research gap lies in the lack of comprehensive studies that compare and integrate these two intellectual traditions within a single critical analytical framework (Mukhlis, Janwari, et al., 2023; Mukhlis & Abdullah, 2025). This has led to a partial discourse: classical studies often stop at legal justification, while contemporary research tends to emphasize social criticism without sufficiently linking the arguments to the earlier fiqh tradition. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by offering a complete comparative analysis between classical fiqh and contemporary tafsir, explaining the dynamics of the transformation of Islamic thought in responding to issues of female political leadership, and demonstrating its socio-political relevance in the context of modern Muslim societies.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research method. This approach was chosen because the focus of the research is to examine the shift in Islamic thought from classical fiqh to contemporary tafsir regarding the issue of female political leadership. This study does not use quantitative or statistical data, but instead emphasizes text interpretation, literature analysis, and in-depth understanding of the meaning and social relevance of religious tafsir. More specifically, this research employs a comparative-interpretative analytical framework that integrates historical-textual analysis with contemporary hermeneutical perspectives. This framework enables a systematic comparison between classical juristic formulations and modern exegetical reinterpretations, while situating both within their respective socio-political contexts.

Literature Review

The initial stage of the research involves a comprehensive literature review of classical fiqh works, Qur'anic tafsir, and hadith collections that serve as primary references in the discussion of female leadership. Key works examined include classical tafsir such as *Jāmi' al-Bayān* by al-Ṭabarī, *al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān* by al-Qurṭubī, and political fiqh works like *al-Ahkām al-Sultāniyyah* by al-Māwardī. Additionally, the study also explores contemporary literature by Arab scholars (such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi, Fatima Mernissi, and Amina Wadud) and Indonesian thinkers (such as Quraish Shihab, Husein Muhammad, and other progressive scholars).

The literature review also includes recent journal articles, such as the works of Caniago et al. (2024a, 2024b), Dawam et al. (2023), Hamka et al. (2021), Mutho'am & Heriyanto (2023), and other studies available in academic databases (Scopus, Google Scholar, and accredited national journals from Sinta). Therefore, this research combines classical sources, contemporary works, and modern academic literature.

Data Collection

Data is collected from primary documents, including tafsir books, classical fiqh texts, and hadith, as well as secondary documents such as journals, research articles, and academic books discussing female political leadership in Islam. Data collection is carried out through note-taking, classification, and categorization based on themes, such as: (a) the views of classical scholars who forbid or permit female leadership, (b) contemporary tafsir on key verses like QS. An-Nisā' [4]:34 and the hadith of Abu Bakrah, (c) the thought of contemporary Arab scholars, and (d) the contributions of Indonesian thinkers.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process is carried out descriptively and analytically using three steps:

- **Data Reduction:** selecting information relevant to the research topic, distinguishing between classical and contemporary views, and discarding data that is not directly related to the issue of female leadership.
- **Data Presentation:** organizing the results of the literature review into a systematic narrative, highlighting similarities, differences, and the paradigm shift from classical fiqh to contemporary tafsir.
- **Conclusion Drawing:** producing an in-depth interpretation of the factors influencing changes in tafsir, including textual, methodological, and socio-political contexts. This analysis also emphasizes the correlation between the tafsir of verses and hadith in forming arguments for female leadership.

Presentation of Research Findings

The research findings are presented in the form of an academic narrative comparing classical and contemporary thought, while connecting it to the socio-political realities of the Muslim community. This presentation is not only descriptive but also critical-analytical, showing the novel

contribution of the research, which demonstrates that Islamic tafsir on female leadership is not singular and absolute, but rather dynamic, varied, and influenced by the changes of time.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Argument on Women's Leadership

تَخَافُونَ وَاللَّيْلِ اللَّهُ حَفِظَ بِمَا لِلَّيْلِ حَفِظَتْ فَبُنْتُ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ أَمْوَالَهُنَّ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِنَّ وَمَا بَعْضٌ عَلَى بَعْضِهِمْ اللَّهُ فَصَلِّ بِمَا التَّسَاءَى عَلَى قَوَّامُونَ الرِّجَالُ
 ﴿٣٤﴾ كَثِيرًا عَلِيًّا كَانَ اللَّهُ إِنْ سَبَّأًا عَلَيْهِنَّ تَبِعُوا فَلَا أَطْعَمَكُمْ فَإِنْ وَاحِرُوهُنَّ الْمَضَاجِعَ فِي وَاهِرُوهُنَّ فِعْظُوهُنَّ نُشُورُهُنَّ

It means, "Men (husbands) are the protectors and maintainers of women (wives) because Allah has made some of them (men) to excel others (women) and because they (men) spend their wealth. The righteous women are those who are devout (to Allah) and guard their chastity in the absence of their husbands, for Allah has kept them (safe). As for those women from whom you fear disobedience (nusyuz), advise them, and if necessary, separate them from their beds, and (if needed) beat them (in a manner that does not harm). But if they obey you, do not seek a way to harm them. Indeed, Allah is Most High, Great." (Tafsir Surah An-Nisa, 34 - Quran, n.d.).

أَيَّامٌ - وسلم عليه الله صلى - الله رسول من سمعها بكلمة الله نفعني لقد قال بكره أبي عن الحسن عن عوف حدثنا الهيثم بن عثمان حدثنا
 عليهم ملكوا قد فارس أهل أن - وسلم عليه الله صلى - الله رسول بلغ لنا قال معهم فأقاتل الجمل بأصحاب الحق أن كذت ما بعد ، الجمل
 « امرأة أمرهم ولوا قوم يفلح لن » قال كسرى بنت

Hadith: "Narrated to us by Uthman bin Haysam, narrated by 'Auf from al-Hasan, from Abu Bakrah who said: 'Allah benefited me with a statement that I heard from the Messenger of Allah - peace be upon him - during the days of the Battle of Jamal, when I almost joined the companions of the camel and fought with them. When the Messenger of Allah - peace be upon him - heard that the Persians had made the daughter of Kisra their ruler, he said, 'A people who entrust their affairs to a woman will never succeed.'" (HR Al-Bukhari) (Syauqi, 2021).

Differences Between Tafsir of Verses and Hadith: Classical Fiqh vs Contemporary Tafsir and Their Correlation

Difference in Tafsir of Verses

a. Surah An-Nisa' Ayat 34

- Classical Tafsir: Many classical mufasssirin (interpreters), such as al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, and Ibn Kathīr, interpret the word qawwāmūn or qiwāmah in Surah An-Nisa' 4:34 as leadership of men over women. They argue that Allah has granted a special favor (faḍl) to men over women, especially concerning the provision of maintenance and family responsibilities. In cases of disobedience (nushūz), men are empowered to advise, separate their beds, and as a last resort, wa idribūhunna (strike them) if the previous steps fail, as a disciplinary action in the household. Classical interpretations tend to read the text literally, rarely critiquing the socio-historical background in which the verses were revealed.
- Contemporary Tafsir: For instance, in the interpretation of Surah An-Nisa' Ayat 34 about the Position of Women according to Classical Tafsir by al-Ṭabarī and Contemporary Tafsir by al-Misbah by Safra Ulya (2024), it is found that contemporary interpretations such as al-Misbah (by Quraish Shihab) offer a more contextual approach: considering the social conditions, the status of modern women, the principle of gender justice, and even the consideration that wa idribūhunna is not a normative command to physically strike, but could be understood symbolically or as a last resort in a very limited framework (Ulya, 2024).
- Another example: An Interpretation of QS. Al-Nisa' [4]:34 in Feminist Tafsir Discourse by Safira Malia Hayati, which reflects on the thought of Husein Muhammad, interprets this verse not as an absolute command (amr) for men to lead women, but as an

explanation of the historical patriarchal practice in the 6th century, which should now be re-read through a socio-contextual lens (Hayati, 2024).

- b. Ayat-ayat Ahkam and Legal Commands (Ahkam Qur'an)
- Classical Tafsir tends to emphasize textual aspects: when a verse contains a command, the imperative letter *amr*, or explicit evidence, it is directly followed as a law to be implemented, with little room for re-interpretation unless among scholars who recognize differences in narration or individual capacities.
 - Contemporary Tafsir adopts more of a hermeneutical, socio-historical, or *maqāsid al-sharī'ah* (objectives of Islamic law) approach to weigh in the current context, such as social responsibility, justice values, public interest, and social changes that influence the understanding of initially normative and exclusive texts.

Differences in Tafsir of Hadith

- Classical Tafsir of Hadith: Classical scholars tended to accept hadiths that were narrated authentically as the basis for law without questioning the social context in which the hadith was narrated or how the text of the hadith might change meaning when applied in a new context. For example, the hadith narrated by Abu Bakrah, often cited as the basis for the prohibition of women becoming leaders (or imams). In classical Tafsir, this hadith is given significant weight and serves as a binding reference.
- Contemporary Tafsir of Hadith: Modern *mufasssirun* often question the applicability of specific hadiths in contemporary contexts. For example, the study "A Hermeneutic Review of the Hadith on Female Leadership in Islam" by Wahyudi & Nur Fadilah (2022) uses Schleiermacher's hermeneutic approach to the hadith that forbids women from becoming leaders, finding that the literal understanding of this hadith cannot be applied universally because the cultural and social context differs from the early Islamic period (Fadilah, 2018).
- Additionally, there is a reciprocal reading method in the study of Women's Leadership in the *Fiqh* of Abdul Qodir, which examines hadith and religious texts by considering the relationship between the Quran and Sunnah, as well as gender justice, so that the interpretation of hadith, which seems to limit the role of women, is re-examined in the context of current norms (Farhanah & Hidayatulloh, n.d.).

Correlation Between Tafsir of Verses and Hadith

- Interpretations of verses and hadiths are interconnected: Classical Tafsir that reads Surah An-Nisa' 4:34 literally often uses hadiths supporting the position of men as leaders in households and societies to strengthen its arguments. On the other hand, in contemporary Tafsir, when this verse is detached from the historical patriarchal context and combined with an evaluation of hadiths (such as authenticity, context, social implications), the result tends to be more inclusive and supports the legitimacy of female leadership in the public sphere.
- Contemporary Tafsir also affects the way hadiths are used: hadiths that were previously considered absolute in classical Tafsir are compared with sharia principles such as justice (*adl*), public welfare (*maslahah*), and social responsibility, so hadiths that literally seem to hinder the role of women are reconsidered in the context of balancing religious norms and the moral/competence certification of leaders, not just gender.

Implications of Tafsir Differences

- Because contemporary Tafsir is more open to social-political contexts, it offers legal-normative space for women to participate more broadly in political leadership, such as in legislative elections, parliaments, or public offices, provided they meet moral and competency requirements.
- However, these differences in Tafsir also mean that conservative understandings and interpretations by scholars may continue to maintain classical views because they refer to

literal texts and absolute hadiths (Mukhlis, Maryam, et al., 2023; Mukhlis et al., 2024). Therefore, interpretive changes must be accompanied by religious education, cultural change, hermeneutic dialogue, and recognition of contemporary Tafsir methodologies to avoid being regarded as "deviating innovations."

Thoughts of Classical Fiqh Figures

Based on literature studies, some classical scholars have opinions that allow women to take on public leadership positions under certain conditions, although many others completely reject it. Research from *Gender Integration in Islamic Politics: Fiqh Siyasah on Women's Political Rights from Classical to Contemporary Interpretations* reveals that:

- Abu Hanifah permitted women to hold public office, including becoming judges in cases where their testimony is accepted, as long as the task is not related to hudud or qisas issues (Caniago et al., 2024a).
- Imam Ibn Hazm also stated that women can hold leadership positions generally, except for the role of head of state if there is a hadith that explicitly forbids it (Caniago et al., 2024a).
- Ibn Jarir al-Tabari and some scholars of madhhab who are not too rigid in literal interpretations allowed women to lead in specific contexts, especially when the woman is considered more competent or capable compared to male alternatives (Caniago et al., 2024a).

Historical examples also emerge: Umm Waraqah, mentioned in several sources as a leader of worship in a local community, is cited by Tabari and other scholars when discussing the practice of female imamate in non-formal or local community contexts (*The (Downplayed) Story of Female Scholars, Teachers, and Leaders in Islam - New Lines Magazine*, n.d.).

However, on the other hand, scholars such as Imam Malik, Imam Shafi'i, and Ahmad ibn Hanbal generally rejected female leadership in high governmental positions, arguing that the role of public leaders (as khalifah or imam of the state) requires criteria that they believed could only be fulfilled by men according to their understanding (Caniago et al., 2024a).

Contemporary Arab Thinkers' Views

In contemporary literature in the Arab world and global Islam, some scholars explicitly support female political leadership, with attention to normative conditions and social context.

- Yusuf al-Qaradawi is one contemporary figure who permits women's political roles, including becoming elected representatives (in parliament) and participating in general elections, as long as the woman meets Islamic moral standards, does not neglect domestic responsibilities, and does not contradict the principles of Sharia (Caniago et al., 2024a).
- Quraish Shihab, an Indonesian figure also influential in the Arab world and Islam, supports a contextual interpretation of religious texts and states that, in the modern context, women can take on political roles as long as their abilities and justice are recognized and carried out according to Islamic ethics (Caniago et al., 2024a).

An article from *Polemics about Women's Leadership from a Modern Islamic Perspective* reveals that moderate scholars interpret the hadiths often used to reject female leadership from a contextual rather than purely textual perspective (Dawam et al., 2023).

Contemporary Indonesian Thinkers' Views

In Indonesia, research shows that Islamic thinkers and academics actively respond to this discourse by providing more open interpretations that align with the local context.

- In the study *Women's Leadership in Indonesia Contemporary Fiqh Perspective* by Hamka, Misbahuddin, et al. (2021), it is found that women's involvement during the time of the Prophet and in the early Islamic period was not limited in social aspects, including discussing, giving opinions, and participating in public life (Mukhlis, Arifin, Ridwan, & Zulbaidah, 2025; Mukhlis, Arifin, Ridwan, Zulbaidah, et al., 2025). This is then used as

an argument that the current social-political restriction of women's roles is contextual and could be re-evaluated (Hamka et al., 2021).

- The article *Women's Leadership in the Indonesian Context: From Interpretative Discourse to Contemporary Fiqh Siyasa* by Mutho'am and Heriyanto mentions that while traditional interpretations tend to limit, there are contemporary interpretations (among local scholars) that encourage religious texts to be understood within the framework of *maslahat* (public interest), legal norms, and local socio-political realities (Mutho'am & Heriyanto, 2023).
- Research from *The Women's Leadership: Orientation from a Legal and Islamic Sharia Perspective* by Fatmawati et al. emphasizes that from the Islamic Sharia perspective in Indonesia, there is no absolute prohibition (*qath'i*) against women becoming political leaders; the main issue is not the prohibition texts, but rather the legal culture and political legal orientation in society that does not yet support leadership equality (Issue et al., 2024).

Variation in Perspectives within Classical Fiqh

From the literature review, it is found that classical fiqh thinking on female political leadership is not uniform; there is significant variation in views among scholars. Some scholars, particularly in more conservative traditions, tend to reject female leadership based on hadiths and texts that, when read literally, seem to affirm that public leadership, especially political power or governance, is a domain for men. They cite verses like *Surah An-Nisā'* 4:34 and several hadiths considered strong to reject women as political leaders.

However, there are also classical scholars who open the space, especially if certain conditions are met: competence, justice, and the woman's own capacity. For example, in some *madhabs* or scholarly opinions, women are allowed to lead in specific contexts (not all forms of political or governmental leadership) if no more fit man is available or if the country's situation requires it. This variation shows that classical fiqh is not monolithic, and conservative interpretations are often accompanied by alternative, more open opinions, although not dominant.

Transition to Contemporary Tafsir: Criticism of Literal and Textual Approaches

In contemporary literature, there has been a clear methodological shift: from literal and textual readings to contextual, historical readings, and the objectives of *Sharia* (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*). Contemporary researchers emphasize that classical texts were developed in socio-cultural conditions vastly different from modern ones, so many social and cultural barriers need to be considered when interpreting these texts for the present time.

A recent example in Indonesia: discovering that women's involvement during the Prophet's era and current social practices show that limiting women's roles as political leaders is inconsistent with the social realities and Islamic values of justice if justified solely on the basis of literal text (Hamka et al., 2021).

Similarly, the research *Gender Integration in Islamic Politics: Fiqh Siyasa on Women's Political Rights from Classical to Contemporary Interpretations* shows that many contemporary scholars, such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Quraish Shihab, support women's political participation, provided that the woman is capable and does not violate the principles of *Sharia* (Caniago et al., 2024b).

Social-Political Factors as Drivers of Interpretative Shifts

Research also shows that changes in social, cultural, and political contexts are strongly related to how contemporary tafsir has developed. Some key factors that have emerged include:

- Gender equality in laws and regulations in Muslim-majority and multicultural countries like Indonesia, which encourages changes in political norms and practices. For example, election regulations, the requirements for local government candidates, or gender laws provide formal space for women. The literature *Women Leaders in the Perspective of Indonesian Regulations and Progressive Fiqh* (2023) shows that Indonesia's regulatory

system has guaranteed women's right to lead, and progressive fiqh supports this normatively (Nurcholis & Nur, 2023).

- Social and political demands, such as the emergence of Islamic feminist organizations, women activists, and increasingly open society towards gender equality. Research in Indonesia and Malaysia shows that women activists contribute not only to academic discourse but also to political practices and local fatwas. A study *Fiqh Contestation on Women's Public Leadership in Indonesia and Malaysia* shows the active interaction between feminists and political fiqh (Muqtada et al., 2024).
- Awareness of leadership accountability (justice, competence, moral ability) as the main criteria in leadership, which is now prioritized over gender. Many contemporary tafsirs state that leadership criteria, such as trustworthiness, fairness, and competence, can be fulfilled by women, and that gender is not an absolute barrier if those criteria are met.

Contemporary Conditions and Practical Challenges

Despite more inclusive contemporary tafsirs, research finds that challenges remain in practice:

- Cultural and patriarchal resistance: there are still deeply rooted traditional perceptions that leadership is a male domain, upheld by interpretations of texts and religious traditions in society (Mukhlis, 2025b; Mukhlis, Suradi, et al., 2023). Research *Polemics about Women's Leadership from a Modern Islamic Perspective* shows that conservatives reject female leadership based on hadiths, and resist reinterpretation on the grounds of respecting religious authority (Dawam et al., 2023).
- The gap between texts and political practice: while formal regulations may already support it, female representation in political power positions (local government heads, parliament, cabinets) is still far from proportional. This is caused not only by legal barriers but also by social barriers, political networks, access to resources, gender stereotypes, and local political culture.
- Ambiguity in normative criteria: contemporary tafsirs often provide criteria such as competence, integrity, and moral leadership but are not always consistent in defining how these criteria should be measured or verified, leaving room for differing interpretations and potential criticism from conservatives.

Novelty and Theoretical-Practical Contributions

From the analysis above, this research demonstrates several new contributions:

- Showing that there is a historical and contextual rationale in Islamic thought that allows female leadership, even though many classical traditions reject it; thus, it cannot be claimed that all classical Islam categorically rejects it.
- Combining comparative analysis that links classical legal arguments with contemporary tafsir and socio-political realities, resulting in a dynamic picture of how religious authority, text interpretation, and context interact.
- Providing practical implications for regulation and political policy: that formal legal recognition must be followed by cultural, educational, and empowerment efforts so that contemporary tafsir can be socially accepted and influence actual political practices.

CONCLUSION

1. The struggle between classical fiqh and contemporary tafsir reflects a long-standing dynamic in Islamic thought regarding female leadership. Classical fiqh emphasizes a literal reading of the Qur'anic texts and Hadith, while contemporary tafsir prioritizes contextual and hermeneutical approaches.
2. Surah An-Nisā' (4:34) serves as a central verse in this debate. Classical tafsir asserts male superiority over women in leadership matters, whereas contemporary tafsir interprets it as a

relationship of responsibility within the household, which does not necessarily exclude women's public roles.

3. The Hadith about female leadership narrated by Abu Bakrah is frequently used by classical scholars as a justification for prohibition. However, in contemporary studies, this Hadith is critically examined through hermeneutical and contextual lenses, rendering it inapplicable as an absolute prohibition.
4. Classical thinkers such as al-Māwardī and Ibn Khaldun emphasize leadership qualifications based on physical strength, social status, and gender roles, while contemporary Arab thinkers like Riffat Hassan, Fatima Mernissi, and Amina Wadud propose a more egalitarian interpretation based on *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*.
5. Indonesian thinkers like Quraish Shihab and Husein Muhammad have made significant contributions by offering interpretations that are more accommodating of female leadership, emphasizing the principles of equality, justice, and the modern social context.
6. Qualitative research methods based on library research are effective for uncovering shifts in thought, as they allow for an in-depth analysis of religious texts and academic documents, while also revealing the relationship between classical and contemporary discourses.
7. The difference between classical and contemporary tafsir reflects two distinct modes of thinking: the former seeks to preserve tradition and textual authority, while the latter attempts to reinterpret texts to align them with the demands of the times and universal values of justice.
8. The correlation between tafsir of verses and Hadith shows that classical views often reinforce patriarchal structures through literal readings, whereas contemporary tafsir tries to connect them with broader Islamic moral principles, thus generating a more inclusive understanding.
9. The practical implications of contemporary tafsir are the opening of religious legitimacy for women to play an active role in politics and public life, provided they meet moral, intellectual, and leadership competence criteria.
10. This shift in thought marks an evolutionary process within the intellectual tradition of Islam, from a textualist paradigm to a contextualist paradigm, showcasing Islam as a religion that can adapt to the demands of the times without losing its fundamental values.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The research was conducted without any financial, personal, or professional relationships that could have influenced the study's outcomes or interpretation of the data.

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