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**Interpretation of Gender Bias in QS. Al-Taubah/9  
verse 71: Critical Review of *Tafsir Al-Qur'an  
Tematik* The Ministry of Religion Affairs  
Republic of Indonesia**

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**Abstract**

*This paper aims to critically explore interpretation result of QS. Al-Taubah/9:71 in Tafsir Qur'an Tematik by The Ministry of Religion Affairs Republic of Indonesia. This conducted because it is suspected that it contains a gender bias interpretation. This research used a critical qualitative-interpretative design by investigating the interpretation of QS. al-Taubah / 9: 71 using a contextualization interpretation. The findings reveal that the Thematic Interpretation of Al-Quran by the Ministry of Religion affairs published for the first time in 2009 represents the interpretation of the QS. al-Taubah/9: 71 as legitimacy of limiting the area of political leadership for women. Therefore, the product of such interpretations tends to be bias because it limits the area of state leadership based on a particular gender. This interpretation seems to contrast with the meaning of the significance of the verse that is found through the exploration of textual, contextual-historical, and dynamic contextual approaches. The meaning of the significance obtained from this verse only discusses about the socio-spiritual relationship in the internal Muslim community, not in the political context. The same results can also be seen in Tafsir al-Wajiz, in which the work is also the interpretation of the Ministry of Religion published in 2016, as well as the interpretation of scholars in various classical commentaries. The implication of the results of the interpretation of gender bias in Tafsir Qur'an Tematik can have an impact toward government policies in positioning positions for women in the society, especially in the area of the structural leadership of the country.*

**Keywords:** *Kemenag Interpretation, Women in Public Sphere, Gender Bias, Interpretation of Contextualization.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The existence of women in state political leadership still tends to be positioned in the subordinate part of the discourse on the interpretation of the Qur'an. Such interpretations arise because they are affected by perspective bias in distinguishing between biological and sociological aspects in gender studies (Subhan, 2016: 2). A verse suspected to trigger such an interpretation is QS. al-Taubah/9:71. This can be seen from the interpretation represented by the team of commentators *Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf al-Qur'an*, Research and Development and Training Agency of the Ministry of Religion Affairs (Kemenag) RI in their third volume of al-Qur'an Thematic Interpretation that was published in 2009. Women appear to be interpreted biased in the interpretation result, especially in the area of leadership rights in society and the state (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf al-Qur'an, 2018: 44–47).

In fact, Ma'shumah (2012), Ainurrofiq (2019), (Ratnawati, Sulistyorini, & Abidin, 2019) and Wadud (2004) have specifically emphasized that gender identity is related to differences between women and men in non-biological categories including the distinction between functions, roles, and relations between both. In fact, The Qur'an has acknowledged these differences, thus, the differences do not lead to a bias meaning that tends to benefit one party and marginalize the other. Therefore, Syamsuddin, (2019) Mustaqim (2014), and Baidan (2012) reminded that the interpretation of the Qur'an actually requires three-dimensional studies, as follow; review of the meaning of textual (intertextual and intratextual), contextual (historical and dynamic), and *maghẓa* (meaning of significance) as a single perspective in understanding the paradigm of the Qur'an. Therefore, the spirit of the Qu'an to build equality and justice can't be ignored by reason of gender differences.

Basically, object of study about gender bias interpretation is not a new issue in the discourse on the interpretation of the Qur'an. This issue has been widely investigated by previous researchers, including; Atabik, (2016), Nurani, (2017), Islamy, (2020), Supriyadi, Julia, & Firdaus, (2019), and Aziz, Abdullah, & Prasojo, (2020). Although the objects of these studies are also related to gender issues in the interpretation of the Qur'an, they see them from various perspectives, from legal, ecological, phenomenological, and sociological aspects. It is different from this research that is only concerned with critical analysis of some of the interpretative products of the Ministry of Religion Affairs the Republic of

Indonesia. The object is chosen because it is part of the government's interpretation of the role of women, especially in the aspect of political leadership. Besides, researches are also found that specifically highlighted Kemenag's interpretation of various issues including; Muttaqin, (2017), Anhar, Sadewo, & Ari, (2018), Wartini, (2016), and Wiyono, (2016). These research are more inclined to the issue of scientific interpretation, education, and the power relation between the Ministry of Religion Affairs and the Government of Indonesia in the project of publishing their interpretive works. The research of gender interpretation in the *Tafsir Qur'an Tematik* work has not been specifically elaborated. Therefore, this opportunity is used in this research.

Based on the previous researches, this research is conducted to complete the discourse on interpretation of the Ministry of Religion Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia on various issues, especially issues related to the interpretation of gender bias. According to this case, three research questions are formulated, as follow; (1) How is the interpretation of QS. al-Taubah/9:71 represented by the Ministry of Religion Affairs the Republic of Indonesia regarding the gender bias of leadership in his *Tafsir Qur'an Tematik*? How to reveal the significance of QS. al-Taubah/9:71 using a contextualized interpretation approach?; and What is the position of women in the contestation of state political leadership in the discourse of other interpretations?

This research is important to carry out because the work of *Tafsir Qur'an Tematik* published through *Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf al-Qur'an* of Ministry of Religion Affairs RI is interpretation prototypes issued by the Indonesian government agencies. If this is not disclosed through a critical analysis review, it will be backfire on government policies in determining the role of women in the society, especially in relation to issues of state leadership. Based on these considerations, this research argues that QS. al-Taubah/9:71 is not a verse that is specifically related to the political context, but is purely a social-spiritual verse. Therefore, it is clear that the verse is not appropriate if it is placed as legitimacy to limit the status of women in the structural politics of the state. Hence, this verse needs to be discussed in depth in the form of critical analysis. It does not mean blaming the previous interpretation, but only as part of the scientific discussion in developing a paradigm of interpretation based on the spirit of science and the paradigm of the Qur'an as *rahmatan li al-'alamin* (Abdullah, 2012: 9). It also confirms that although the text of the

Qur'an is still (*tsawabi*), the reading of the interpretation of the Qur'an continues to move (*mutabarrik*), according to the development of the social context in space and time (Barazangi, 2004: 5).

## DISCUSSION

### **The *Tafsir Qur'an Tematik* by Ministry of Religion Affairs Republic of Indonesia**

*Tafsir Qur'an Tematik* was first published in 2008 by Ministry of Religion Affairs RI. In the first publish, the interpretation is divided into three volumes that discuss: 1) relations between religious believers; 2) al-Qur'an and empowerment of the *dluafa'*; and 3) build a harmonious family. In the following year (2009) the Ministry of Religion published a second stage thematic commentary with an additional five volumes that discussed: 1) community-based economic development; 2) the role and position of women; 3) ethics in building family, community and political relationships; 4) social movements in environmental preservation; and 5) health in the view of the al-Qur'an (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf al-Qur'an, 2018: ix-x). *Tafsir Qur'an Tematik* has been reprinted five times, the last printing was published in 2018. The *Tafsir Qur'an Tematik* section studied in this paper is in volume three of the chapter on women leadership, especially the sub-chapter on women leadership in the social and state spheres.

This thematic interpretation was compiled by a working team consisting of various interpreters (*mufasir*), experts, and scholars from various related scientific fields. In addition, the team was also supported by prof. Dr. H Quraish Shihab, MA., Prof. Dr. H. Nasaruddin Umar, MA., Prof. H. Didin Hafidhuddin, M.Sc., and Dr. H. Ahsin Sakho Muhammad, MA as interviewees (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf al-Qur'an, 2018: xiv-xv). This interpretation is structured to provide guidance on problems faced by society. Therefore, thematic interpretations are considered suitable to answer the needs and current problems (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf al-Qur'an, 2018: xv-xviii).

As the name, interpretation method used in is thematic method (*maudlu'i*). There are nine steps that have been determined by the team in interpreting the al-Qur'an text using thematic methods that include: 1). Defining the topic or theme of the discussion; 2). Collecting the Qur'an verses into one topic of discussion; 3). Arrangement of the order of the verses of the Qur'an according to the classification of the order of their descent; 4).

Understanding the intertextuality of the verses of the Qur'an; 5). Understanding the historical context of the verse through information asbab al-nuzul; 6). Completing the discussion with the traditions and opinions of the scholars; 7). Exploring the meaning of the substance of the verse in depth; 8). Carrying out a complete and comprehensive investigation of the verse by compromising between *'am* and *kbash*, *mutlaq* and *muqayyad*, and so on; and 9). Concluding the interpretation of the verse from the issues discussed (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf al-Qur'an, 2018: xxi-xxii).

### **The Relation of Region and Gender in Interpretation of Religious Texts**

The terms of sex and gender is important to clarify. Thus, in further discussion, the reader is not trapped in which areas belong to the divine nature that is fixed and non-exchangeable and in which areas are changeable and interchangeable. The term of sex is used based on biologically determined human sex criteria. An individual's sexual status is permanently immutable and it is a divine provision that has been established for every creature, especially for humans (Mansour, 2004: 8). The term of gender is a trait inherent in men and women. Gender is flexible based on social and cultural constructs, for example, women tend to be known as gentle, caring, or motherly, while men are known to be strong, rational, male, and strong. In fact, these traits are not absolute characters, because they can be exchanged between the two. For example, it is found that men are caring, gentle, even motherly. Likewise, it is found that women have rational, strong, and mighty characteristics. Therefore, all these characteristics can be exchanged because they are affected by the situational context of each person called gender (Mansour, 2004: 9).

Likewise, gender tendencies can be basically formed, socialized, strengthened, and even constructed socially and culturally through a variety of information that affects them, including religious teachings, cultural norms, and state regime policies (Janah, 2017: 21). Gender differences do not really matter when they do not lead to interpretation bias (gender inequalities). in fact, gender differences tend to have an unbalanced impact on policies, both for men and women. Gender bias is a polarized system. It sacrifices social equality simply because of differences in labels between men and women. Such injustice is manifested in various forms, such as economic marginalization, subordination of political rights, negative stereotypes, "violence" in the aspect of labor costs, and ideological socialization of the value of gender roles (Mansour, 2004: 12-13).

The relation between gender equality and religious teachings are basically not mutually exclusive because the principle of all religious teachings is to uphold justice. The teachings of Islam are embedded in the Qur'an as divine revelation. It also puts the principles of justice in various aspects such as economic justice, political justice, social justice and including gender justice. Thus, in several verses of the Qur'an, it often emphasizes the spirit of equality between the positions of men and women in various aspects of social life. For example, in QS. al-Nisa'/4:1 and QS. al-Zumar/:6, both explain that men and women are created from the *nafs wahidah* that aims to complement each other through their potential (Mansour, 2004: 128). Likewise, in QS. al-Hujurat/ 49: 13, it emphasizes that the two of them are “caliphs” who are only differentiated based on the level of socio-spiritual quality (Subhan, 2015: 30–31). Therefore, both of them have a strong relation to work together to fight for social equality by eliminating the relationship gap due to gender differences.

### **The Role of Interpretation of Contextualization in Revealing the Significance of the Qur'an**

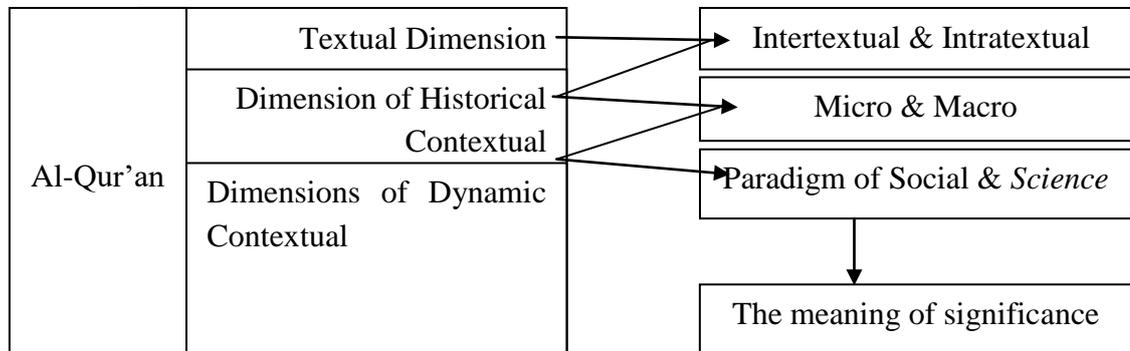
Interpretation is dialectic product of text, historical context, and dynamic context that intertwine together with the logic of the commentators. The three of them require a dialectical relation that continues to develop, because the interpretation activity does not stagnate (Mustaqim, 2014: 15). The continuity of the development of interpretation is caused by changes that continue to occur in the social context faced by humans as the times develop. Changes that occur in humans are related to cultural changes, the development of science, traditions, perspectives on the object under study, and other factors. There are from the difference in the reasoning ability of the commentators in reviewing or studying the verses of the Qur'an (Syamsuddin, et al, 2003: 246–247). In other words, the representation of the interpreters social identity can affect the style of interpretation they construct (Yahya, 2018: 205).

In line with this case, Gadamer also revealed that the understanding of a *mufasir* can also be affected by certain social contexts including their traditions, culture and life experiences. Before interpreting the text, they already have a pre-understanding or initial understanding of the text formed by their knowledge, as well as the historical context in each period in which they live (Syamsuddin, 2011: 35–38). It is at this point, the effect of

the interpreter's (ideological) views on certain problems is one of the factors that causes differences in the results of interpretation. Therefore, the results of their interpretation can tend to be bias. It depends on the effect of the “interests” that surround them (Agustina, 2016: 360). It was also expressed by van Dijk that the subjectivity of interpretation can't be separated from the ideological interests of the exegetes because it is the basis for representing their alignments with power, both as a coalition and as an opposition to the state regime. Ideology affirms basic principles that play an important role in organizing and controlling the behavior of a group and its members (T. A. Van Dijk, 2001: 97). Besides, Foucault also explained that dominant discourse is constructed in the form of hegemony of knowledge, mainly through the interpretation of religious texts by certain individuals or groups. Interpretation functions as social control ("*panoptikon*") that implicitly aims to normalize a claim of truth. The dominant group can control other groups through knowledge representation (interpretation), both totality and partially, as well as individually and communally (Basalamah & Elyas, 2014).

Besides to ideology tendency, the method of interpretation also makes a difference in producing the meaning of the verse. In general, there are two methods used. First is the method of interpretation that is oriented towards textual-dictionary meaning (*literalistic*); and Second is the method of interpretation that is oriented towards the contextual-substantive (*meaning of significance*) that does not only refer to the textual meaning alone, but also considers the historical and dynamic aspects of reality that accompany the contextualization process of the Qur'an (Musbikin, 2016: 10– 11). Interpretation methods that are oriented towards individual textual meanings generally rely on a verbal frame of mind. Thus, the resulting interpretations tend to rely on bayani reasoning. Reasoning is limited to referring to a frame of mind that constructs meaning through textualization in accordance with normative linguistic norms. Meanwhile, the interpretation method that is oriented to the meaning of significance (*maghza*). It is based on a framework of thought that develops in contemporary social methods. The correctness of interpretation according to this method is measured by the process of interpretation in accordance with the logical assumptions of the knowledge structure. Thus, the results of this interpretation seem to be more able to synergize with every social context in each "*shalih li-kulli zaman wa makan*" (Syamsuddin, 2017a); (Syamsuddin, 2020).

**Figure 1.** Framework of Three Dimensions Contextual



The procedure of such contextual interpretation (see figure 1) is first, by revealing the meaning of the text according to its function in the 7<sup>th</sup> century hijriah (Islamic calendar). This information can be found in the Arabic *mu'jam* literature, such as the *Lisan al-Arabic book*, *Al-Wujub wa al-Nazha'ir*, and other al-Qur'an encyclopedias. Furthermore, an investigation is carried out on the historical context underlying the revelation of the verses of the Qur'an, both from a micro historical perspective (*asbab al-nuzul*) and from a macro perspective (Arabic history in the 7<sup>th</sup> century in universal). After the investigation is fulfilled, the social context adjusts according to the problems faced by each commentator (contextualization). Thus, the interpretation of the Qur'an does not only refer to the rule of "*Al-'ibrah bi-general al-lafzhi la bi-kebushush al-sabab*" (the meaning of the al-Qur'an is understood based on its general editorial, not the specificity of the cause) or vice versa. However, it can also refer to the rule "*Al-Ibrah bi maqasidih*" (the meaning of the Qur'an based on the significance/substance). Through this principle, a *mufasir* can try to find a creative synthesis in interpreting the text, by holding fast to the meaning of the significance of the verses of the Qur'an (Syamsuddin, 2020). Such interpretation also referred to by Fazlur Rahman with the term "*ratio legis*", al-Thalibi calls it *maqashid* (verse goals), and Sahiron Syamsuddin and Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd call it *maghza* (meaning of verse significance) (Syamsuddin, 2017b : 58). This framework tries to be applied in this research to observe deeper into the meaning of the significance of QS. al-Taubah/9:71, especially in terms of countering the interpretation that has been presented by the Indonesian Ministry of Religion in its *Tafsir Qur'an Tematik*. Yet, before this is finished, the interpretation of the Ministry of Religion's version of the verse is first described.

***Tafsir Qur'an Tematik: Women Leadership in Society and State in QS. al-Taubah/9: 71***

Women leadership becomes a discussion in Thematic Interpretation of the Qur'an by Ministry of Religion Affairs arranged by Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf al-Qur'an: Research and Development and Training Agency of the Ministry of Religion Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Balitbang Kemenag RI). In general, the *mufasir* articulates women's leadership that is described in the interpretive work covering four aspects, namely (1) Women leadership in the family; (2) Women's leadership in worship; (3) Women's leadership in society; and (4) Women leadership in the state. However, this research only focuses on the third and fourth perspectives, especially those manifested in QS. al-Taubah/9:71 (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf al-Qur'an, 2018: 44–47). The following below is the editorial of the verse:

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ  
 الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ  
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ (71)

*"The believers, men and women, some of the become helpers for some others. They conduct [doing] makruf and prevent [doing] evil, enforce prayers, pay zakat, and obeying Allah and His Messenger. They will be given mercy by Allah. Allah is all-powerful, all-wise."* (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2019: 272).

In the introduction that discusses about women leadership, *mufasir* (commentator/reviewer) of Religion affairs citing the views of scholars (who were not mentioned) in classifying the six standard characteristics of a superior leader, namely; (1) authoritative; (2) firm; (3) fair; (4) side with the interests of the people; (5) have a strong vision; and (6) able to bring change for the better. The leadership narrative displayed in this category was then strengthened by the Ministry of Religion's exegesis team as in the leadership figures of several world figures who were considered successful in leading the country well, for example the leadership of Park Chung Hee (South Korea), Dr. Mahatir Muhammad (Malaysia), Kholifah Umar bin Abdul Azis, Prophet Yusuf, and Prophet Muhammad SAW (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf al-Qur'an, 2018: 31–32). Based on these

criteria, the Ministry of Religion reviewer emphasized that leadership is a very heavy responsibility for a person, both before God and before humans. It is further explained that, placing women leadership roles in these criteria is a mandate and responsibility that can't be linked to equal rights (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf al-Qur'an, 2018: 35). In the narrative, it appears that the alignment of the *mufasir* implicitly makes the mandate and heavy leadership responsibilities not included in the natural domain of women. Yet, the responsibility and mandate are more appropriate or only able to be carried by men. In view of such an interpretation, women are indirectly positioned as weak creatures, both physically and psychologically, thus, they are not considered capable of carrying out their responsibilities as leaders. By nature, interpreters place women as beings who manage household managerial.

As the interpretation, thus, *mufasir* of Ministry of Religion Affairs limit women to become leaders in the social realm only, especially in the household area, or at the highest at the managerial structural level, such as school principals, chancellors, heads of hospitals, heads of non-governmental organizations, and other social education sectors. Yet, the Ministry of Religion Affairs' team of commentators did not mention the appropriateness of the position of women to assume state political positions such as becoming president or head of state. The following is an excerpt from the statement;

*"... women may still be leaders in social activities that are useful for community development ... for example, to become rectors at a university or at other educational institutions. because with his gentle and authoritative leadership, it is expected to make students calmer. Likewise, in the health sector ... or become the leader of NGOs engaged in community empowerment."* (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf al-Qur'an, 2018: 45).

The explanations seems positioning QS. al-Taubah/9:71 as a verse that explains the aspects of leadership limited to the leadership of social social structures for women (according to the subtitle of the title). It means that it can be understood indirectly that the verse negates the highest aspect of political leadership for women. This ability is also required with guarantees for women who are still able to carry out their duties as housewives, as the statement appears in the following quote.

*"... What needs to be a concern, when women become leaders in these social activities that they must not neglect their more important duties, such as housewives in the context of giving birth and building *zurriyah tayyibah* (superior and good generation)." (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf al-Qur'an, 2018: 45).*

Hence, Ministry of Religion Affairs representation of the interpretation in QS al-Taubah/9:71 has indirectly closed the opportunity for women to be able to occupy positions as the highest government leaders. This means that the current reality with the discovery of facts in the field about women who have succeeded in becoming regents, governors, ministers, and even the president or prime minister has violated this interpretation. Therefore, this interpretation seems to oppose social reality, and reduces the spirit of the al-Qur'an that promotes equality and equality of roles between men and women in the public, especially in the area of structural state leadership.

In order for the reading of the interpretation of the Ministry of Religion Affairs not to be claimed as framing, this research also looks at the perspective of the role of women leadership in the State (politics). Mufasir of Ministry of Religion Affairs strengthens their interpretation by referring to the QS. al-Naml/:23-24. According to them, these verses basically describe the history of the leadership figure of Queen Bilqis. The Qur'anic interpretation of the Ministry of Religion Affairs explains that this verse is a historical event that can't be used as a legal basis to legalize women as top leaders. Thus, this verse is not sufficient reason for legitimacy for the ability of women to occupy leadership positions in the political structure of the state.

The Qur'anic interpretation Ministry of Religion Affairs of QS. al-Naml/: 23-24 as a portrait of the failure of women (Queen Bilqis) in carrying out her leadership. This is based on the premise they construct that Queen Bilqis' government had failed in building the values of faith and monotheism, because both are the basic foundations in religious teachings to measure the success of a leadership. Thus, the foundation indicates its failure in other social development as well. The following is an excerpt from the interpretation in question:

*"This verse deals with historical events and we know that history can't be used as a legal basis. In the same verse, it is explained about Queen Bilqis who has extraordinary power, but she and her people do not believe in Allah, even they are sun worshipers. This verse even seems to describe the failure of a female king in building the values of faith and monotheism, and of course it will have an impact on development in other social fields ... ". (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf al-Qur'an, 2018: 45).*

Based on the interpretation of Ministry of Religion Affairs, It seems that the interpreter only focuses on Queen Bilqis' failure in the normative aspect without seeing a more comprehensive side of other successes. In fact, the leadership of Queen Bilqis has been recognized by the Qur'an as a leader who has succeeded in building her society in a democratic, fair, wise, dedicated, and not promoting violence. Information related to this case can be seen intratextually in the following verses (Surah al-Naml/27:29-33). Thus, it can be seen that the interpretation of the Ministry of Religion Affairs seeks to consistently maintain their assumption of not supporting women as leaders in the political sector of the state. They also strengthen the premise by quoting the editorial of the hadith narrated by Imam al-Turmudzi as follows;

”عَنْ أَبِي بَكْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لَنْ يُفْلِحَ قَوْمٌ وَلَوْ أَمَرَهُمْ  
امْرَأَةٌ.“

*"The people are not fortunate if they are led by women"* (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf al-Qur'an, 2018: 46).

It seems that *mufasir* of Religion ministry misinterpreted because it is only for textual aspect, without the historical context of the emergence of the hadith editorial, both micro and macro (this explanation is described in the next discussion). It could be conducted to support the initial assumption that women do not have the opportunity to occupy leadership positions in the realm of state politics. In the following explanation, the *mufasir* the Ministry of Religion Affairs in Republic of Indonesia also stated that;

*"The President or the head of the region has a big responsibility. Therefore, it should not be given to women. Leaders must often do incognito, check the condition and condition of their community, even at night ... (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf al-Qur'an, 2018: 46) "*

Indirectly, they put women as weak figure and they play a role at the level of social leadership that has a small territory, such as households or educational institutions. Women are naturally considered weak in the physical aspect because they are unable to play an active role in examining the condition of their society intensively. Likewise, it is weak in the aspect of competence because it is unable to carry out the responsibility that involves the larger community as a leader. Such a view is of course bias because the ability in leadership management is not measured by gender, but the competencies possessed by each individual based on their background experience.

However, something surprising occurred when the thematic categorization in QS. al-Taubah/9:71 in *Tafsir Qur'an Tematik* compared to other Ministry of Religion Affairs Tafsir works, such as *Tafsir al-Wajiz li al-Qur'an al-Karim: Tafsir Ringkas al-Qur'an al-Karim* that first published in 2015. If *Tafsir Qur'an Tematik* included QS. al-Taubah/9:71 into the category of the theme of Women's Leadership, precisely in the interpretation of the *Tafsir al-Wajiz*, it is categorized under the theme of Bad Behavior and Threats to Hypocrites. In the *Tafsir al-Wajiz*, it is explained that QS. al-Taubah /9:71 includes verses that emphasize the nature of believers with the characteristics of reminding each other of virtue and reprimanding each other for badness, as well as being obedient and obedient to carrying out God's commands (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf al-Qur'an Balitbang Kemenag RI, 2016). Even in his description, it does not touch on political aspects at all, and more dominantly contains normative descriptions.

The difference in both works could be influenced by *mufasir* team involved. In the work of *Tafsir al-Wajiz* by the Ministry of Religion Affairs, the drafting team that was directly involved as the *mufasir* included Quraish Shihab, and Ahsin Sakho Muhammad, while in *Tafsir Qur'an Tematik*, both were only positioned as supervisors or not directly involved as *mufasir* as in the previous work. If it is observed, the names involved in the compilation of the *Tafsir Al-Wajiz*, it is found that there are only five names that are still involved in the compilation of *Tafsir Qur'an Tematik*, and some are different. The following are the names of the same and different *mufasir* who appear in the two works:

<i>Tafsir al-Wajiz</i> (2015)	<i>Tafsir al-Qur'an Tematik</i> (2009)
Prof. Dr. H. M. Quraish Shihab, MA.	Prof. Dr. H. Darwis Hude, M.Si.
Prof. Dr. H. Sayyid Aqil Husein al-Munawwar, M.A.	Prof. Dr. H. M. Abdurrahman, MA.
Dr. KH. Andi Malik Madaniy, M.A.	Prof. Dr. Hj. Huzaimah T. Yanggo MA.
Dr. H. Muchlis M. Hanafi, M.A.	Dr. H. Muchlis M. Hanafi, M.A.
Dr. H. Asep Usman Isma'il, M.A.	Dr. H. Asep Usman Isma'il, M.A.
Dr. H. Ali Nurdin, M.A.	Dr. H. Ali Nurdin, M.A.
Dr. H. Ahmad Husnul Hakim, M.A.	Dr. H. Ahmad Husnul Hakim, M.A.
Dr. H. M. Bunyamin Y. Surur, M.A.	Dr. H. M. Bunyamin Y. Surur, M.A.
H. M. Arifin M.A.	Dr. H. Ahmad Luthfi Fathullah, MA.
Prof. Dr. H. Yunan Yusuf, M.A.	Dr. H. Setiawan Budi Utomo, MA.
Prof. Dr. H. Hamdani Anwar, M.A.	Dr. Hj. Sri Mulyati, MA.
Prof. Dr. H. A. Thib Raya, M.A.	H. Irfan Mas'ud, MA.
Dr. H. Ahsin Sakho Muhammad, M.A.	dr. H. Muslim Gunawan
Dr. H. Wahid Mu'thi, M.A.	
Dr. Hj. Umi Husnul Khatimah, M.A.	
Dr. Hj. Romlah Widayati, M.A.	

The list of *mufasir* names is presented in table (1). It shows differences in the number, as well as the similarities and differences in some of the names involved in the compilation of the work of the Ministry of Religion affairs compiling *Tafsir al-Wajiz* and *Tafsir Qur'an Tematik*. The difference in the names of course can affect the dynamics and dialectics of the interpretation of the two works. However, this research is still limited in order to find further information regarding the reasons for the change in the format of the commentator team. Thus, it is quite reasonable if the results of the interpretations of the two are somewhat different. However, in order to be more balanced, this study then seeks

to investigate the interpretation using the three-dimensional approach that has been operationally described in the previous description. The aim is to find out which version of the two works of The Ministry of Religion Affairs are more identical to the results found in the investigation of this study.

### **Understanding QS. Al-Taubah/9:71 in Scope of Study of Text, Context, and Maghza**

The important keyword to be explored in editor of QS. al-Taubah/9: 71 is diction of “أولياء” (*awliya*), that is suspected to be a reference in the Ministry of Religion's *Tafsir al-Qur'an Tematik* to include the verse as part of political verses. Basically, the word أولياء is the plural or plural form of estimation (Irregular plural nouns) taken from the word of “ولي” (*waliy*). When referring to the book *al-ujub wa al-Nazha'ir* by Muqatil bin Sulaiman, it is found that the term contains at least 11 meanings. However, the book puts the term "*waliy*" in QS. al-Taubah/9:71 into the meaning of "*al-'awn*" that means helper (Al-Balikhī, 2006: 201). The *Qamus al-Qur'an: Al-Ishlah al-Wujub wa al-Nazha'ir fi al-Qur'an al-Karim* by al-Husain bin Muhammad al-Damgani puts the meaning of "*waliy*" in the surah on the meaning "*Al-mawla min al-territory al-din*", that means protecting or helping each other in aspects of The Ministry of Religious Affairs (Al-Damagani, 1983: 498). The same thing was expressed by Imam al-Tabari that the verse was only devoted to the religious context. That is, the term "*awliya*" which is meant in that verse is only in the aspect of helping each other in religion (Al-Tabari, 2000: 347).

Therefore, based on textual analysis, then QS. al-Taubah/9: 71 does not explain at all about the context of leadership in state politics, but only in the area of religious relations. This is reinforced in the phrase "*ya'murun bi al-ma'ruf, wa yanhaun 'an al-munkar*". That phrase was also articulated by Imam al-Tabari as a manifestation of the command to believe in Allah by carrying out the commandment of worship. This can be seen in the next clause "*yuqimun al-shalah, wa yu'tun al-zakah, wa yuthi'un Allah wa Rasulah*" (Al-Tabari, 2000: 347). This argument is more emphatically connected with the verses before and after. QS. al-Taubah/ 9:70 explained about the condition of the previous people (the people of Prophet Noah and Prophet Abraham) that Allah warned them to worship and be with Him. However, they actually ignore it, even tend to ignore it. As for the QS. al-Taubah/9:

72 describes the reward for those who obey Allah's orders to worship him, so that they are promised rewards of enjoyment in Heaven (Al-Razi, 2000: 101). Duruzat Muhammad 'Izzat emphasized in his work *Al-Tafsir al-Hadith* that the verses 71 and 72 are interrelated and cannot be separated ('Izzat, 1963: 494). If it is traced from conventional classical commentaries, it is not found any interpretation of those who position QS. al-Taubah/9:71 into the political context. Instead, they put it as a verse to help in socio-religious issues (Al-Maturidi, 2005: 426). This means that as a whole the construction of the verses is limited to matters of worship, not on political issues.

Although there is no specific information found regarding the micro historical context of QS. al-Taubah/ 9:71, yet Al-Maturidi explained that the verse is still closely related to the context of the revelation of the QS. al-Ma'idah/5:51 that is related to the prohibition to prefer cooperation or help in the area of religion, with other than fellow believers (Al-Maturidi, 2005: 426). This means that the context in which the verse is revealed has nothing to do with the criteria of political leadership, mainly for gender reasons. In macro terms, this verse is included in the category of verses that were revealed after the Prophet Muhammad's migration to Medina. In that context, the Prophet built fraternal relations between the Muhajirin and Ansar Muslim groups. The goal is that they can help each other to fellow believers, thus, they do not trigger conflict just because of other differences in identity. It should be noted that the people of Medina, before the arrival of the Prophet Muhammad, were often in conflict only because of ethnic identity (Yakub, 2019: 31-61). Hence, after the Prophet Muhammad came, he tried to dissolve this tradition by tying them into their religious identity, so that other identity conflicts would not occur again. Therefore, QS. al-Taubah/9: 71 includes a reconciliation section of the context. After the revelation of these verses, the Medina Charter consensus was formulated to bind the relationship between Muslims and others in Medina (Burhanuddin, 2019: 1-20).

Textual and contextual explanation above show that meaning of the historical significance of the QS. al-Taubah/9:71 basically aims to fuse social identity, including gender into spiritual (religious) identity. The dynamic significance means that Muslims are always encouraged to help each other, advise and establish harmonious relationships in religious matters. *Furu'iyah* (secondary) Disagreement should not make the the relation gets bad. Therefore, QS. al-Taubah/ 9:71 is actually not building political perceptions, but only

at the level of socio-spiritual relations. Thus, the historical context of the passage of the verse was aimed at responding to the relationship between the Anshar and Muhajirin groups, as well as other tribes in Medina at that time. As for the dynamic context, it is to continue to strengthen the emotional relationship of brotherhood between Muslims who are still often in polemic just because of differences of opinion in understanding religious teachings.

### **Gender Bias in The Qur'anic Interpretation of QS. Al-Taubah/9: 17**

The results of the interpretation represented in the *Tafsir al-Qur'an Tematik* by Ministry of Religion Affairs show that there is a tendency for the commentators to position the QS. al-Taubah/9:71 into the political context. Through this verse, the *Mufasir* of the Ministry of Religion used it as legitimacy to limit the realm of women's leadership. According to them, the position of women only deserves to be placed in the realm of non-state social leadership, as well as the structural managerial landscape of education. They do not open up opportunities in the area of state political leadership as the leadership area for men. Unlike the case with the representation of the interpretation of the Ministry of Religion on *Tafsir al-Wajiz's* work, it does not categorize QS. al-Taubah/9:71 as a political verse. The same case is also in line with the meaning of significance found through the interpretation process using three-dimensional analysis (textual, historical contextual, and dynamic contextualization). The findings show that QS. al-Taubah/9: 71 in no way shows any indication that the verse speaks in a political context, but only in the area of religious and social relations.

Likewise the explanation described by Quraish Shihab in *Tafsir al-Misbah*, it explains that QS. al-Taubah/9:71 is as an illustration of the obligation of cooperation between men and women in various fields of social life, especially in religious matters. This is manifested in the command sentence to do what is *ma'ruf* and prevent from doing what is unkind. However, in another of his works, *Membumikan al-Qur'an*, Quraish Shihab mentioned QS. al-Taubah/ 9:71 as the argument for cooperation between women and men who have the same opportunity to be involved in managing all areas of life, including in the political sphere. According to him, there are no religious provisions that state the prohibition of women's involvement in politics (Shihab, 2007: 273-274). In addition, Quraish Shihab also did not use the hadith "*lan yuflih al-qawm, even amarabum imra'ab*" to interpret the QS. al-

Taubah/9: 71. Thus, the interpretation is more moderate towards the role of women in the public sphere. Shihab actually considered that the editorial of the hadith was at a weak level of narration (*dlo'if*), hence, it was not appropriate to be used as a bayan (explanation) for QS. al-Taubah/ 9: 71 (Shihab, 2017: 163).

Inline with Quraish Shihab, Tsuriyah Iqshari also explained that the weak status of the hadith regarding the prohibition of women becoming leaders is evidenced by the weaknesses in the transmission line of *isanad* and their eyes. The weakness in the eye is reflected in the contradiction between the editors of the hadiths and the editors in the al-Qur'an, as well as against the editors of other hadiths. While the weakness is in the *isanad* transmission route, because there are two narrators who are considered not *tsiqqah* in the narration of the hadith. In addition, the hadith history is also contrary to historical facts in the prophetic era (Iqsari, 2017: 216). Iqshari also interprets QS. al-Taubah/9: 1 as a verse that actually supports equality between men and women in carrying out *amr ma'ruf* and *nahi munkar*. This order is an act that is mandated for all social strata, both in the political, social, economic and cultural realms. In interpreting the sentence "*ba'dhubum awliya'u ba'dh*", Iqshari explicitly interpreted it with some of the men or women being the leaders for others. This interpretation shows that, both women and men have equal opportunities to occupy state political positions. (Iqshari, 2017: 157–158). Ahmad al-Khamlisi also stated that women can become leaders in any sector based on QS. al-Taubah/9:71. This is based on the assumption that there is no *nash sharib* that prohibits women from becoming leaders, this prohibition comes from the social construction (*ijma'*) of society, and not from a text that clearly prohibits women from becoming leaders (Iqshari, 2017: 158).

In addition, Iqshari also quoted Kifah Haddad's view that QS. al-Taubah/9: 71 is the most important verse related to the role of Muslim women in all aspects of life. The importance of the message of this verse is the commandment of *amar ma'ruf* and *nahi munkar* which is the subject of Islamic teachings that both men and women must practice. In this case, the position of women is equal to that of men. Therefore, it is clear that in the verse no meaning is found that leads to a form of discrimination, but both encourage and help each other to realize cooperation in various aspects. Both have the same goal, namely rejecting all forms of negative actions and doing something positive in order to create a better social life. (Iqshari, 2017: 159). Thus, rights and responsibilities can be balanced in

carrying out the mission given by God to competent men and women. Both men and women must be responsible for carrying out the mandate in the midst of society in the economic, political, administrative, thought and social spheres. Women and men can assume this role provided they have competence in these fields. Of course to become a president, governor, regent and other structural political positions in the state, what is needed is not only the competence of leadership but also depends on the choices of the people, such as the principles adopted in a democratic country such as Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

Interpretation results of *mufasir* (commentator) of Ministry of Religion Affairs toward QS. al-Taubah / 9: 71 found in the *Tafsir al-Qur'an Tematik* 2009, represents the verse as part of political verses. This verse is articulated as legitimizing the scope of the leadership area for women who are only allowed in a limited social structure, such as the academic structural area. According to them, this verse does not open up opportunities for women to participate in the contestation in higher leadership areas, for example in the area of state leadership (President). In fact, based on the results of the interpretation explored using an elaborate review between textual, contextual-historical, and dynamic-contextualization, it is revealed that QS. al-Taubah/9:71 apparently has nothing to do with the political context. Likewise, classical (conventional) exegetical literatures only interpret it in the area of social-religious relations. It also occur in another interpretation of the Ministry of Religion, *Tafsir al-Wajiz*. That work actually puts QS. al-Taubah/9:71 not at the level of discussion of politics, but only at the discussion of socio-religious relations. Although several studies conducted by Tsurayah Iqshari, Ahmad al-Khamlisiyi, Kifah Haddad and Quraish Shihab also touched on the political context in QS. al-Taubah/ 9:71. However, they in no way limit the area of state political leadership based on gender criteria, especially for women. That is, if QS. al-Taubah/9: 71 remains “forced” as part of a political verse, however, that verse can’t be interpreted in terms of gender bias, especially in the aspect of state political leadership. In a democratic system, the criteria for leadership are actually measured not based on gender, but by aspects of expertise, abilities, and community support.

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