

Reconstructing the Meaning of Leadership through a Thematic Analysis of Leadership Verses in Tafsir al-Mishbah by M. Quraish Shihab

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Abstrak

Kepemimpinan merupakan amanah yang diberikan kepada seseorang untuk membimbing, mengarahkan, dan melayani masyarakat dalam mewujudkan kemaslahatan bersama melalui integritas moral, keadilan, musyawarah, dan tanggung jawab kepada Allah serta sesama manusia.. Penelitian ini **bertujuan** merekonstruksi makna kepemimpinan dalam Tafsir Al-Misbah melalui analisis tematik terhadap ayat-ayat kepemimpinan serta mengidentifikasi kontribusinya terhadap pengembangan paradigma kepemimpinan Qur'ani kontemporer. Penelitian ini menggunakan **metode** kualitatif berbasis tematik content analysis terhadap Tafsir Al-Misbah sebagai sumber primer, didukung oleh tafsir klasik dan modern, yaitu *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, *Al-Tahrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, dan *Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* sebagai sumber komparatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui studi dokumentasi terhadap ayat-ayat kepemimpinan beserta penafsirannya, kemudian dianalisis melalui pengodean tematik terhadap leksikon kepemimpinan, meliputi *khalīfah*, *imām*, *qawwām*, *ulī al-amr*, dan *shūrā*, untuk merekonstruksi prinsip-prinsip kepemimpinan yang berkembang dalam Tafsir Al-Misbah. **Hasil penelitian** menunjukkan bahwa Quraish Shihab merekonstruksi kepemimpinan sebagai amanah yang mengintegrasikan dimensi spiritual, moral, sosial, dan kemanusiaan melalui lima prinsip utama, yaitu *amānah*, *uswah*, *'adl*, *shūrā*, dan *maṣlahah*. Perbandingan dengan tradisi tafsir menunjukkan bahwa Tafsir Al-Misbah tidak memutus kesinambungan penafsiran sebelumnya, melainkan melakukan kontekstualisasi terhadap kebutuhan masyarakat Indonesia kontemporer. Ketika dibaca melalui perspektif kepemimpinan transformasional Bernard M. Bass, beberapa prinsip tersebut menunjukkan kesesuaian konseptual pada aspek kepemimpinan etis dan transformasional, meskipun tetap memiliki landasan teologis yang berbeda. Penelitian ini **berkontribusi** pada pengembangan studi tafsir melalui formulasi paradigma kepemimpinan Qur'ani yang kontekstual serta memberikan landasan konseptual bagi pengembangan kepemimpinan di lembaga pendidikan Islam.

Kata Kunci: *Tafsir Al-Misbah, Leadership, Reconstruction of Meaning, M. Quraish Shihab, Bernard M. Bass.*

Abstract

Leadership is a mandate given to a person to guide, direct, and serve the community in realizing the common good through moral integrity, justice, deliberation, and responsibility to Allah and fellow humans. **This research aims** to reconstruct the meaning of leadership in Tafsir Al-Misbah through thematic analysis of leadership verses and identify its contribution to the development of the contemporary Qur'anic leadership paradigm. The research uses a thematic-based qualitative **method** on Tafsir Al-Misbah as a primary source, supported by classical and modern interpretations, namely *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, *Al-Tahrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, and *Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* as comparative sources. Data were collected through a documentary study of the verses of leadership and their interpretation, then analyzed through thematic coding of the leadership lexicon, including *khalīfah*, *imām*, *qawwām*, *ulī al-amr*, and *shūrā*, to reconstruct the principles of leadership that developed in Tafsir Al-Misbah. **The results** of the study show that Quraish Shihab reconstructs leadership as a mandate that integrates spiritual, moral, social, and humanitarian dimensions through five main principles, namely *amānah*, *uswah*, *'adl*, *shūrā*, and *maṣlaḥah*. A comparison with the tradition of tafsir shows that Tafsir Al-Misbah does not break the continuity of previous interpretations, but contextualizes them to meet the needs of contemporary Indonesian society. When read through the perspective of transformational leadership by Bernard M. Bass, some of these principles show conceptual suitability in the aspects of ethical and transformational leadership, although they still have different theological foundations. **This research contributes** to the development of tafsir studies by formulating contextual Qur'anic leadership paradigms and provides a conceptual foundation for leadership development in Islamic educational institutions.

Keywords: *Tafsir Al-Misbah, Leadership, Reconstruction of Meaning, M. Quraish Shihab, Bernard M. Bass.*

Introduction

Leadership is one of the fundamental themes in Islamic normative discourse and praxis, which has multidimensional implications in the social, political, and religious realms. (Basyariah, 2009) The Qur'an as the main source of Islamic teachings contains a number of verses related to the concept of leadership, both in the dimensions of power (*al-sultah*), moral responsibility (*al-amānah*), justice (*'adl*), and the relationship between leaders and society. (M. Q. Shihab, 2022) In the Islamic scientific tradition, the interpretation of the Qur'an has undergone a dynamic development along with the social and historical transformation of Muslims. (Gusmian, 2013)

The term Tafsir Nusantara refers to the tradition of interpreting the Qur'an that developed in the Indonesian region, with characteristics influenced by the social, cultural, linguistic, and intellectual dynamics of the people of the archipelago. Tafsir Nusantara is not just a tafsir written by Indonesian scholars, but an interpretation that seeks to dialogue the messages of the Qur'an with local reality so as to produce a contextual reading without

relinquishing its connection with the treasures of classical Islamic interpretation. (Pink, 2019) In Islah Gusmian's perspective, the development of interpretation in Indonesia shows a shift from textual interpretation patterns to an increasingly responsive approach to social, national, and humanitarian issues. (Gusmian, 2013)

Howard M. Federspiel's study shows that the development of interpretation in Indonesia has undergone a significant transformation since the 20th century, characterized by the use of Indonesian as the main medium of interpretation and increasing attention to the needs of Indonesian Muslim readers. (Federspiel, 1994) These findings are reinforced by Johanna Pink, who places Tafsir Al-Misbah as one of the important representations of modern interpretation that combines the authority of the classical interpretation tradition with the interpretive needs of contemporary Muslim society. (Pink, 2019) Meanwhile Yusuf Rahman emphasized that the development of tafsir in Indonesia shows a dynamic negotiation process between the intellectual heritage of classical Islam and the demands of the local context, resulting in a distinctive pattern of interpretation in the Indonesian Islamic scientific landscape.

In this context, Tafsir Al-Misbah by M. Quraish Shihab occupies an important position in the tradition of Tafsir Nusantara. This work not only refers to classical sources of interpretation, such as *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, *Maḥāṭib al-Ghayb*, *Al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān*, and *Al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, but also contextualizes the meaning of Qur'anic verses with the social reality, nationality, and life of the Indonesian people. Therefore, the main character of Tafsir Al-Misbah does not lie in the severance of the previous tradition of tafsir, but in its ability to recontextualize the treasures of classical tafsir into the needs of contemporary Indonesian Muslim society. This position makes Tafsir Al-Misbah worthy of understanding as one of the main representations of modern Nusantara Tafsir. (Nurtawab, 2024) So that the sacred text is not only understood normatively, but also integrated with the reality of Indonesian people's lives (Iswanto, 2022)

From an interpretive perspective, leadership has a strong foundation in the Qur'an. One of the verses that is often used as a reference is QS. Al-Baqarah verse 30 about the creation of man as a leader in Islam on earth:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ
وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

Meaning: “(Remember) when your Lord said to the angels, 'I am about to make a caliph on earth.' They said, “Do you want to make the one who destroys and sheds blood there,

while we praise You and sanctify Your name?” He said, “Surely I know what you do not know.”

While differing in emphasis, classical exegetes such as al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr, together with the contemporary interpretation of M. Quraish Shihab, understand this verse as referring to a divine trust (*amānah*) that entails not merely the exercise of authority but also moral and spiritual responsibility in governing human affairs and preserving the balance of life. (Efendi, Ahmad Fuad Nadjib, 2021) Meanwhile, in Tafsir Al-Misbah by M. Quraish Shihab, this verse is explained as indicating that humans are given the potential of reason and knowledge as the main provision in carrying out the function of leadership. In addition, QS. An-Nisa verse 59, which contains:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِيَ الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ۝٥٩

Meaning: O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger (Prophet Muhammad) and the *ululamri* (rulers) among you. If you have a difference of opinion about something, return it to Allah (the Qur'an) and the Messenger (his sunnah) if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is better (for you) and better as a result (in this world and in the Hereafter).

The above verse explains obedience to Allah, the Messenger, and *ulil amri* and also emphasizes the importance of a just leadership structure based on divine values. (Iswanto, 2022) The selection of these verses is based on their very strong relevance to the concept of leadership in Islam. QS. Al-Baqarah verse 30 provides an ontological basis that every human being is basically a leader (al-leadership in Islam), so that leadership does not only belong to a few people, but is a universal responsibility. Meanwhile, QS. An-Nisa verse 59 provides practical guidelines on how leadership is carried out in social life, namely with the principle of tiered obedience and still refers to the value of truth. These two verses complement each other: one emphasizes essence, while the other emphasizes governance. (Hanif, 2025)

In the context of modern and contemporary interpretation, the meaning of leadership verses has expanded in orientation. Some *mufasir* interpret the normative-theological dimension regarding the legitimacy of leadership based on religious authority, while others emphasize the aspects of humanity, social ethics, democracy, and justice as the core of Qur'anic leadership. (Ichwan, 2003) Leadership is an important instrument in directing individuals and society towards common goals, both in this world and the hereafter. In the

context of educational, social, and spiritual aspects, leaders play the role of role models, directors, and guardians of values. Therefore, leadership based on the values of the Qur'an is an urgent need to create a harmonious, just, and meaningful life.(Iswanto, 2022)

So far, leadership studies in the Qur'an tend to be dominated by normative studies oriented to fiqh siyasah and classical interpretation, while studies that examine the interpretation of the archipelago with a cultural and humanistic approach are still relatively limited.(M. Q. Shihab, 2002) Based on this background, this study aims to analyze and reconstruct the meaning of leadership in the interpretation of the archipelago through a comparative study of the verses of leadership in Tafsir Al-Misbah. This research is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of Qur'anic interpretation studies in Indonesia, especially in formulating Qur'anic leadership concepts that are contextual, humanist, and relevant to the social reality of the archipelago.

Research Method

This research is a qualitative research with a library research method.(Moleong, 2018) The research aims to analyze the meaning of leadership in the verses of the Qur'an based on the perspective of Tafsir Al-Misbah by M. Quraish Shihab. Research data was obtained through the study of various literature sources without involving field research. The research data consists of primary and secondary sources. Primary data is in the form of leadership verses in the Qur'an and their interpretation in Tafsir Al-Misbah, especially QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 30, QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 124, QS. An-Nisa' [4]: 34, QS. An-Nisa' [4]: 59, and QS. Ali Imran [3]: 159. Secondary data were obtained from books, scientific journals, and previous research related to interpretation and leadership theory.

Data collection is carried out through documentation methods and literature studies by identifying leadership verses, examining their interpretation in Tafsir Al-Misbah, and collecting relevant supporting literature. Furthermore, the data is classified based on leadership themes such as trust, example, justice, deliberation, and social responsibility. The data were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive content analysis of thematic Quranic exegesis, while Bernard M. Bass's transformational leadership theory served as an interpretive lens to examine the contemporary relevance of the leadership concepts identified in Tafsir Al-Misbah concepts that essentially demonstrate the enduring relevance of the Qur'an. The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis within a thematic (*mawḍūʿī*) tafsir approach.(Al-Farmawi, 1978) The unit of analysis consisted of M. Quraish Shihab's commentary on selected Qur'anic verses related to leadership in *Tafsir Al-Misbah*.

The analysis began by identifying and classifying leadership themes across the selected verses, followed by examining their textual meanings, interrelationships, and contextual interpretations. From this process, the core principles of Qur'anic leadership, including *amānah* (trust), *‘adl* (justice), *uswah* (exemplary conduct), *shūrā* (consultation), and *maṣlahah* (public welfare), were inductively reconstructed from the exegetical data. These reconstructed principles were subsequently interpreted through Bernard M. Bass's transformational leadership viewpoint to explore their relevance to contemporary leadership discourse. (Riggio, 2006) This analysis is grounded in rigorous textual validation rather than a mere compilation of existing literature. Interpretations rely on verbatim excerpts from Tafsir Al-Misbah, with every analytical claim supported by secondary references. To ensure interpretive fidelity, each verse is explained within its textual context, taking into account its thematic connections to other verses on leadership, the relevant context of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*) where applicable, and the methodological coherence of M. Quraish Shihab's exegesis throughout Tafsir Al-Misbah. These procedures ensure that the reconstructed leadership framework is derived systematically from the primary text and remains consistent with the author's exegetical approach (Kaelan, 2012).

Results and Discussion

Analysis of the Meaning of Leadership in Leadership Verses Perspective of Tafsir Al-Misbah

In Tafsir Al-Misbah, leadership is understood as a mandate that integrates spiritual, moral, and social responsibilities, especially to oneself. The statement is not built on a single verse, but through the interconnectedness of various verses that form the concept of Qur'anic leadership. Therefore, this analysis focuses on five main themes, namely khalīfah (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]:30), justice (Q.S. Ṣād [38]:26), deliberation (Q.S. Āli 'Imrān [3]:159), exemplary (Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]:21), and benefit (Q.S. al-Qaṣaṣ [28]:26). In Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]:30, Shihab states that the “caliph” is the one who prospers or preserves the earth and its contents which is addressed to all human beings without discrimination. According to him, this meaning not only shows the change of generations, but also the mandate to manage the earth according to the will of Allah. (M. Q. Shihab, 2022) Furthermore, in interpreting Q.S. Ṣād [38]:26, Shihab asserts that the Prophet Daud was appointed as caliph in order to “decide matters among men justly and not to follow lust.” This interpretation shows that justice is the core of leadership legitimacy in the Qur'an. (Aulia et al., 2025)

This principle was then linked to Q.S. Āli 'Imrān [3]:159, which ordered deliberation as a decision-making mechanism; Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]:21, which placed the Prophet as an example of leadership (*uswah ḥasanah*),⁴ and Q.S. al-Qaṣaṣ [28]:26, which affirmed that the ideal leader has two main characteristics, namely *al-qawīyy* (competent) and *al-amīn* (trustworthy). Based on the thematic synthesis of the five verses, Tafsir Al-Misbah interprets leadership as a mandate that is realized through justice, example, deliberation, competence, and orientation to the benefit of the community, as in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 30:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّىْ جَاعِلٌ فِى الْاَرْضِ خَلِیْفَةًۭ

“Remember when your Lord said to the angels: Surely I will make a caliph on earth.”
(QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 30).

As M. Quraish Shihab has explained, the appointment of Prophet Daud (a.s.) as caliph is different from the appointment of Prophet Adam (a.s.). If Adam received a direct mandate from Allah SWT as the caliph for mankind, then Daud was appointed in the context of the society of the Children of Israel as the successor of the previous kings, leaders, and prophets. This shows that leadership is not only derived from a divine mandate, but also has to do with acceptance and responsibility for the society it leads. Therefore, a leader is obliged to uphold justice, provide protection, and strive for the welfare of the entire community without discrimination. (M. Q. Shihab, 2022)

This interpretation emphasizes that the concept of *khalīfah* in Tafsir Al-Misbah is interpreted as a mandate that demands moral and social responsibility, not just power. Every human being is essentially a *khalīfah fī al-ard* who is tasked with bringing benefits through devotion to Allah SWT and service to others. (Nuha, 2020) This view is in line with the tradition of classical commentary, including Ibn 'Āshūr in *al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir*, who emphasized the position of the leader as a mandate that must be carried out with justice and integrity, although his view of the criteria of the leader was influenced by the social context and sect of his time ('Asyur, 1998)

Furthermore, Quraish Shihab explained that the dialogue between Allah and the angels in the verse contains an acknowledgment of the duality of human potential, namely the potential to do harm as well as the ability to bring goodness. This positive potential is the basis for designating human beings as caliphs. Therefore, leadership in the perspective of Al-Misbah has a humanistic and transformative orientation, namely developing human potential through knowledge, reason, and morality in order to realize common prosperity.

In Tafsir Al-Misbah, Quraish Shihab emphasizes that the leadership of the Prophet Ibrahim was obtained after going through various tests of life. (M. Q. Shihab, 2022) This shows that the legitimacy of leadership is not built on heredity, social status, or political power, but on moral integrity and the ability to be an example for society. When Prophet Ibrahim asked for leadership to be given to his descendants, Allah replied:

لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ

“My promise does not apply to the unrighteous.” (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 124).

The verse contains the principle of meritocracy, which places justice and piety as the main requirements for leadership. This finding reflects a moral conception of leadership in which legitimacy derives from justice, trustworthiness, and accountability before God and society. Although this understanding shares important features with the ethical leadership framework developed by Brown, Treviño, and Harrison, it is rooted primarily in the Qur'anic conception of *amānah* and *‘adl* as interpreted by M. Quraish Shihab.

In addition to the social context, the Qur'an also explains leadership in the family through QS. An-Nisa' [4]: 34:

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ

“Men are qawwam over women.” (QS. An-Nisa' [4]: 34).

According to Quraish Shihab, the term *qawwām* in Q.S. al-Nisā' [4]:34 does not indicate the superiority of men over women, but rather the responsibility to maintain, protect, and provide for the needs of the family. The phrase *al-rijālu qawwāmūna 'ala al-nisā'* should be understood together with the continuation of the verse, “*bi-mā anfaqū min amwālihim*”, which shows that *qiwāmah* rests on economic and social responsibility, not domination. (Quraish Shihab, 2007) Tafsir Al-Misbah interprets leadership as a mandate oriented towards service and welfare. This view is also consistent with Shihab's explanation in the Qur'an's Insight that the hadith on leadership emphasizes responsibility according to the mandate carried out, not the absolute legitimacy of male leadership. (Q. Shihab, 2010) Thus, the concept of *qiwamah* emphasizes the division of functions and responsibilities rather than power relations. This interpretation also reconstructs the patriarchal understanding that develops in society. In the contemporary context, the concept is in line with the theory of

responsibility-based leadership which places service, sacrifice, and protection as the core of leadership. (Bhattacharya, S. Venkatesh, V. G. Chatterjee, 2024)

Meanwhile, the dimension of socio-political leadership is explained in QS. An-Nisa' [4]: 59:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولَى الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ

“O you who have believed, obey Allah, obey the Messenger, and ulil amri among you.” (QS. An-Nisa' [4]: 59).

The interpretation of Q.S. al-Nisā' [4]:59 in Tafsir Al-Misbah continues the classical tradition of tafsir, which distinguishes obedience to Allah and the Messenger from obedience to ulī al-amr. As explained by al-Rāzī (Adz-Dzahabi, 1995) and later developed by Rashīd Riḍā, the non-repetition of the word aṭī'ū before ulī al-amr shows that obedience to the leader is conditional, that is, as long as it does not contradict the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Quraish Shihab maintains this understanding, while extending the meaning of ulī al-amr not only to political rulers, but also to every party that has authority and competence in managing public affairs, such as scholars and experts in their fields. Thus, the legitimacy of leadership in Tafsir Al-Misbah is not based on absolute power, but on moral accountability, justice, and conformity with the values of revelation. This shows that the legitimacy of leadership is limited by the principles of justice and the values of revelation. The findings reinforce the theory of good governance, which emphasizes the importance of accountability, transparency, and the rule of law in managerial governance. (Kaufmann, Daniel and Kraay, n.d.) The participatory aspect of Qur'anic leadership is explained through QS. Ali Imran [3]: 159:

وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ

“And consult with them in the matter.” (QS. Ali Imran [3]: 159).

According to Quraish Shihab, the deliberation order given to the Prophet Muhammad after the Battle of Uhud shows that community participation is a fundamental principle in Islamic leadership (M. Q. Shihab, 2002). Deliberation is understood as a form of respect for human dignity and a mechanism to prevent the abuse of power. Thus, leadership in Al-Misbah's perspective is not authoritarian, but prioritizes dialogue, engagement, and collective decision-making. These findings are in line with participatory leadership theory, which places member participation as an important element in the leadership process. (Asyibli et al., 2025)

Based on the overall findings, it can be concluded that the meaning of leadership in the verses of the Qur'an according to the perspective of Tafsir Al-Misbah is oriented towards trust, example, responsibility, justice, accountability, and participation. The results of this study not only confirm modern leadership theories such as Stewardship Leadership, Ethical Leadership, Good Governance, and Participative Leadership, but also show that the Qur'anic leadership concept has a more comprehensive spiritual and moral dimension. Thus, leadership in the perspective of Al-Misbah can be seen as an integrative leadership model that combines responsibility to Allah, humans, and the environment in order to realize the common good.

Synthesis of Leadership Interpretation Paradigm

The study of the leadership verses in Tafsir Al-Misbah shows that M. Quraish Shihab builds a leadership paradigm of the Qur'an that is comprehensive, integrative, and contextual. In contrast to some classical interpretations that tend to place leadership within the framework of political power and formal authority, Al-Misbah views leadership as a humanitarian mandate rooted in divine values, social ethics, and moral responsibility. This paradigm can be traced through various leadership terminologies spread in the Qur'an, such as caliph, imam, qawwam, ulil amri, and shura, each of which describes a different but complementary dimension of leadership.

Table 1. *The Dimensions of Leadership in Tafsir Al-Misbah*

Ayat	Meaning in Tafsir Al-Misbah	The Dimension of Leadership
QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:30	Stewardship (amanah) in managing the earth	Theological–Humanistic
QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:124	Exemplary leadership and moral integrity	Ethical–Prophetic
QS. An-Nisa' [4]:34	Responsibility and protection	Family–Social
QS. An-Nisa' [4]:58-59	Foundation of leadership based on trust and justice, Legitimate and accountable authority	Moral Governance, Political and Social
QS. Ali Imran [3]:159	Consultation (shūrā) and participatory decision-making	Democratic

In interpreting QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 30 regarding the creation of man as a caliph on earth, Quraish Shihab emphasizes that the concept of caliph does not refer solely to political rulers, but to all human beings who have a divine mandate to manage, prosper, and maintain the balance of life on earth.(M. Q. Shihab, 2022) This interpretation expands the

understanding of leadership from mere structural authority to the universal responsibility inherent in each individual. This perspective is different from classical interpretations that tend to focus on aspects of generational change or government power. The meaning of the caliph shows that every human being will live on earth as a servant of Allah (Al-Thabari, 2000) while Ibn Katshir emphasizes the aspect of law enforcement of Allah through human authority (As-Sobuni, 1981). Meanwhile, Al-Misbah shifted the orientation towards the concept of trust and social responsibility that must be realized through the use of science, ethics, and public benefit.

The same paradigm also appears in the interpretation of QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 124 concerning the appointment of Prophet Ibrahim as an imam for mankind. In this verse, leadership is understood as the result of a long process of proving integrity, piety, and success in facing various tests of life. Quraish Shihab emphasized that the legitimacy of leadership is not based on lineage or social standing, but on a person's moral and spiritual qualities. This interpretation is in line with the view of Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, who views imamah as a spiritual degree given to individuals who achieve moral perfection. However, Al-Misbah places a stronger emphasis on the principle of meritocracy, which is that leadership should be given to individuals who have proven capacity and integrity. (Al-Rāzi, 1995) Thus, leadership in Al-Misbah's perspective is a blend of divine legitimacy and moral competence.

The dimension of family leadership is explained through the concept of qiwamah in QS. An-Nisa' [4]: 34. In interpreting this verse, Quraish Shihab takes a relatively moderate and contextual position compared to some classical mufasir. If Ibn Katshir understands qiwamah as a form of male leadership over women based on certain advantages bestowed by Allah, then Al-Misbah emphasizes responsibility and protection as the main essence of qiwamah. Male leadership in the family is not understood as absolute superiority, but as a consequence of the obligation to provide sustenance, protection, and service to family members. Therefore, qiwamah in Tafsir Al-Misbah is closer to the concept of responsible leadership than the concept of patriarchal domination. This interpretation shows an attempt to reinterpret gender verses to remain relevant to the dynamics of modern society without ignoring the basic principles of the Qur'an.

Furthermore, the concept of ulil amri in QS. An-Nisa' [4]: 59 shows how Al-Misbah understood leadership in the social and political spheres. In contrast to some classical mufasir who limit ulil amri to rulers or government leaders, Quraish Shihab expands its meaning to include all parties who have authority and competence in certain fields, such as scholars, academics, professionals, and social leaders. This interpretation shows a transformation of

leadership understanding from a centralized model to a multidimensional model based on competence. In the context of an increasingly complex modern society, authority is no longer monopolized by the state or political elites, but is also owned by various social actors who have scientific capacity and professionalism. Thus, leadership is understood as a social function that can be carried out by anyone who has competence and integrity.

Meanwhile, the principle of participation in leadership is reflected through the concept of deliberation (*shura*) as contained in the QS. Ali Imran [3]: 159 and QS. Ash-Shura [42]: 38. In Tafsir Al-Misbah, deliberation is seen as an important instrument to maintain a balance between the authority of the leader and the participation of the community. Quraish Shihab affirms that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was still commanded to deliberate with the companions even though he received revelation (M. Q. Shihab, 2002). This shows that deliberation is not just an administrative procedure, but an ethical principle that respects human dignity and prevents leadership from the tendency of authoritarianism.

In interpreting Q.S. Āli 'Imrān [3]:159, M. Quraish Shihab interprets *shūrā* not merely as a decision-making procedure, but as an ethical obligation that demands openness, respect for the opinions of others, and the moral responsibility of a leader. Deliberation is positioned as a means of building decisions oriented towards the common good, not just a formal mechanism to gain political legitimacy. This interpretation has a common point with the deliberative democratic literature that emphasizes the importance of dialogue and rational consideration in decision-making, but this study does not intend to equate the concept of *shūrā* in Tafsir Al-Misbah with the theory of deliberative democracy. (Gutmann, A., & Thompson, 2004) Instead, the study argues that Quraish Shihab places *shūrā* primarily as an ethical requirement of leadership, i.e., a leader's moral obligation to involve others in the deliberative process before making decisions. (Gutmann, A., & Thompson, 2004) Instead, the study argues that Quraish Shihab places *shūrā* primarily as an ethical requirement of leadership, i.e. a leader's moral obligation to involve others in the deliberative process before establishing.

If all of these concepts are analyzed in a synthesis, it can be seen that the leadership paradigm in Tafsir Al-Misbah is built on five main foundations, namely trust, example, justice, deliberation, and benefit. Trust is an ontological foundation that emphasizes that leadership is a mandate from God that must be accounted for. Example is a moral condition that determines the legitimacy of a leader (M. Q. Shihab, 2002). Justice serves as an operational principle that directs the use of power so as not to deviate from the goals of humanity. Deliberation is a social mechanism that ensures community participation and

involvement in the decision-making process. The benefit is the ultimate goal of all leadership activities oriented toward the welfare and sustainability of life together.

These findings show that Tafsir Al-Misbah no longer views leadership as an instrument of power domination, as found in classical political discourse. Instead, leadership is understood as a process of social transformation that aims to build a just, participatory, and dignified life. Thus, the leadership paradigm offered by Quraish Shihab can be reconstructed as a Humanistic-Transformational Leadership model, which integrates spiritual trust, moral integrity, social participation, and welfare orientation into a conceptual framework relevant to the needs of contemporary Muslim society. This model also shows the important contribution of Tafsir Al-Misbah in developing the treasures of Nusantara tafsir that can bridge the normative message of the Qur'an with modern social realities in a more contextual and progressive manner.

Reinterpretation of the Meaning of Leadership in the Tafsir Al-Misbah Perspective of Transformational Leadership Psychology Bernard M. Bass

A comparison with selected classical and modern Qur'anic commentaries demonstrates that the concept of leadership in Tafsir Al-Misbah exhibits strong continuity with the broader exegetical tradition while introducing a more contextual interpretation. Al-Ṭabarī emphasizes leadership in terms of authority and responsibility, al-Rāzī expands this understanding through rational and theological analysis, Ibn 'Āshūr highlights the objectives of the *Sharī'ah* (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*), and al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī situates it within the Qur'an's moral and spiritual framework. Building upon these exegetical traditions, Quraish Shihab frequent connections perspectives through a contextual approach that emphasizes *amānah* (trust), justice (*'adl*), consultation (*shūrā*), exemplary conduct (*uswah*), and public welfare (*maṣlaḥah*) as the foundational principles of Qur'anic leadership relevant to contemporary Indonesian society. (Shihab, 2002)

Thus, leadership is understood not as a symbol of social prestige or personal authority, but as a divine trust (*amānah*) that requires integrity, justice, and accountability. From an analytical perspective, this ethical orientation bears a limited conceptual resemblance to Bass's dimension of Idealized Influence, in that both emphasize the moral integrity of the leader as a source of legitimacy and trust. However, the two concepts differ in their foundations: whereas Idealized Influence describes followers' perceptions of a leader's exemplary behavior, *amānah* in Tafsir Al-Misbah is the ultimate accountability to Allah.

Accordingly, Bass's frame of thought is employed here only as an analytical lens rather than as an equivalent conceptual framework. (Bernard et al., 2023)

Table 2. *Reconstructing the Meaning of Leadership in Tafsir Al-Misbah*

No	Ayat	Meaning in Tafsir Al-Misbah	Reconstructed Outcome in the Contemporary Context
1.	QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:30 (<i>khalifah</i>)	Human beings as stewards (<i>khalifah</i>) of the earth	Human being will live on earth to continue the cycle of life in the the earth as his servant.
2.	QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:124 (<i>imam</i>)	Moral exemplarity	Merit-based and ethical leadership
3.	QS. An-Nisa' [4]:34 (<i>qawwam</i>)	Responsibility and protection	Collaborative and inclusive leadership
4.	QS. An-Nisa' [4]:58-59	Trust (<i>amanah</i>) and justice	Good governance, accountable leadership and Democratic and rule-based leadership
5.	QS. Ali Imran [3]:159	Role	Participatory leadership

Furthermore, Tafsir Al-Misbah emphasizes that ideal leadership must be built on the principles of justice and exemplarity. This can be seen in the interpretation of QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 124, which tells the story of the appointment of the Prophet Ibrahim as an imam for mankind after successfully passing various tests of life. Quraish Shihab explained that the appointment shows that leadership is the result of the process of character formation and proof of integrity, not solely due to hereditary factors, social status, or political power. Leadership is given to those who are able to demonstrate moral consistency and steadfastness in practicing the values of truth.

This meaning is further emphasized through the word of Allah, which states that the promise of leadership is not given to the unrighteous. This verse shows that justice is a fundamental requirement in leadership. A leader who loses his commitment to justice has essentially lost the moral legitimacy to lead. In this context, leadership is no longer understood as a coercive authority, but as a moral authority born from the ability to be an example for society. This perspective strongly aligns with the Idealized Influence dimension in Bernard M. Bass's theory, where transformational leaders are seen as role models who inspire followers through integrity, credibility, and commitment to shared values.(Bernard et al., 2023)

In addition to being based on justice and example, leadership in Tafsir Al-Misbah is also built on the principles of deliberation and participation. This principle is seen in the interpretation of QS. Ali Imran [3]: 159, which ordered the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to deliberate with the companions in social affairs. According to Quraish Shihab, the order shows that Islamic leadership does not want an authoritarian and closed pattern of relationships. Even a prophet who receives the guidance of revelation is still commanded to involve others in the decision-making process. This shows that the appreciation of participation is an integral part of Islamic leadership ethics.

This meaning is reinforced by Q.S. *al-Shūrā* [42]:38, which identifies consultation (*shūrā*) as a defining characteristic of the believing community. In Tafsir Al-Misbah, *shūrā* is understood not merely as a procedural mechanism for reaching decisions but as an ethical principle that promotes participation, mutual responsibility, and collective deliberation. Leadership is therefore conceived as a collaborative process that involves those affected by public decisions. Rather than corresponding to Bass's dimension of Intellectual Stimulation, this understanding is more appropriately interpreted as reflecting participatory leadership and collaborative governance, where the legitimacy of leadership is strengthened through inclusive consultation and shared responsibility.

Similarly, Quraish Shihab interprets leadership for the community in Tafsir Al-Misbah. This orientation is seen in the interpretation of QS. Al-Hajj [22]: 41, which explains the character. According to Quraish Shihab, the power given by Allah should be used to uphold good values, strengthen social life, create justice, and improve the welfare of society (M. Q. Shihab, 2002). Thus, the success of leadership is not measured by the breadth of power or the height of social position, but by its contribution to the progress and benefit of the public.

This beneficial orientation shows that the leadership in Al-Misbah has a very strong transformational character. A leader is required to build a vision that can inspire society toward higher goals and bring positive changes in life together. In Bernard M. Bass' theory, this characteristic relates to the dimension of Inspirational Motivation, which is the leader's ability to instill optimism, build collective commitment, and move followers toward a vision that goes beyond individual interests. However, this study does not equate *maṣlaḥah* with Bass's framework; instead, transformational leadership is employed only as an analytical lens for interpreting the ethical orientation of Quraish Shihab's reconstruction of Qur'anic leadership. (Bernard et al., 2023)

Based on the overall analysis, Tafsir Al-Misbah offers a significant reinterpretation of the concept of leadership in the Qur'an. Leadership is no longer understood as a hierarchical and dominative power relationship, but as a process of moral and social transformation based on trust, justice, example, participation, and benefit. These findings show a strong fit between the Qur'anic leadership paradigm in Tafsir Al-Misbah and Bernard M. Bass's transformational leadership. (van Knippenberg, D., & Sitkin, 2013) If these principles emerge from the thematic interpretation of leadership verses and collectively form a coherent Qur'anic framework for leadership in contemporary society. (M. Q. Shihab, 2002)

When viewed through the analytical lens of Bernard M. Bass's transformational leadership theory, several elements of this framework, particularly moral influence, inspirational guidance, participatory decision-making, and concern for the common good, show important conceptual parallels with transformational leadership. However, the present study does not argue that Quraish Shihab adopts Bass's theory. Instead, it demonstrates that Tafsir Al-Misbah offers a distinctive Qur'anic reconstruction of leadership whose ethical orientation may be interpreted in dialogue with contemporary leadership studies while remaining rooted in the exegetical tradition of the Qur'an.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the concept of leadership in the verses of the Qur'an according to the perspective of Tafsir Al-Misbah by M. Quraish Shihab is not interpreted as an authority of power alone, but as a mandate that integrates spiritual, moral, social, and humanistic dimensions. Based on the analysis of QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:30, QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:124, QS. An-Nisa' [4]:34, QS. An-Nisa' [4]:58-59, and QS. Ali Imran [3]:159, found that Qur'anic leadership is built on five main principles, namely trust, example, justice, deliberation, and benefit. These five principles form a leadership paradigm that places leaders as bearers of responsibility to realize common prosperity through moral integrity, accountability, participation, and service to the community.

The results of the study also show that the leadership paradigm in Tafsir Al-Misbah is strongly compatible with Bernard M. Bass' theory of Transformational Leadership, especially in the dimensions of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. This conformity shows that the Qur'anic leadership values are not only relevant in the normative context of religion, but are also capable of enriching modern leadership theory through the integration of transcendental values and human ethics. Thus, this research contributes to advancing the study of Nusantara

interpretation by offering a Qur'anic Transformational Leadership Model in the Perspective of Tafsir Al-Misbah, which integrates mandate as an ontological foundation, justice and exemplary as moral legitimacy, deliberation as a social mechanism, and benefit as the main orientation of leadership.

From an educational perspective, these findings provide a conceptual foundation for leadership development in Islamic educational institutions. For madrasa principals and Islamic boarding school leaders, *amānah* implies that leadership should be exercised as a moral responsibility rather than institutional authority; *shūrā* encourages participatory decision-making involving teachers, students, and the wider school community; while *uswah* emphasizes exemplary conduct as the basis of educational leadership. These principles may also inform leadership training curricula by integrating Qur'anic ethical values with contemporary educational leadership practices. In this way, the study contributes not only to the development of Qur'anic leadership studies within the Indonesian exegetical tradition but also to the discourse on ethical leadership in Islamic education.

This research still focuses on the literature review of Tafsir Al-Misbah, so the next research is recommended to conduct a comparative study with the Nusantara tafsir as well as other classical and contemporary interpretations, as well as examine the implementation of the Qur'anic transformational leadership model through empirical research on educational institutions, Islamic organizations, or government institutions. Further studies can also develop instruments for measuring Qur'anic leadership based on the dimensions of trust, justice, example, deliberation, and benefit as a contribution to the development of Islamic leadership theory and practice in the contemporary era.

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