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The Position of Women in The Public Space Quran and Cultural Perspective

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Abstract: This study discusses women in the public sphere based on the perspective of the Koran and culture. This study uses a literature study research method with a descriptive approach that originates from the literature. This research discusses the role and position of women in the public sphere from the Al-Quran perspective, there are more or less three choices or opinions that we can accept. First, the opinion which states that since its emergence in Mecca and Medina, Islam has never allowed women to be involved in the social or public sphere. Second, the opinion which states that Islam has introduced the concept of women's involvement in the social sphere from the beginning. Third, the opinion which states that there are certain positions that can be occupied by women and there are other parts that cannot be touched by women. In terms of culture. Various corners of the region have their own perceptions in understanding the existence of a woman and most of them have an unfair understanding of the existence of a woman. It can be concluded that the position of women in the public sphere according to the Qur'an and culture has various views, but both of them recognize the role of women both in several positions.

Keywords: *women; public sphere; al-qur'an; culture*

A. INTRODUCTION

Discussions about women are always interesting to discuss. The biological differences between women and men evoke different implications both in terms of discourse and phenomena in social life. Regarding equality between women and men, it still causes controversy, whereas in the socio-cultural phenomenon, men are

still dominant in holding control of power, where men remain the standard for recognition of policies and power.

The verses of the Qur'an have explained in such a way regarding the position of men and women who are equally dignified as humans, especially in spiritual matters. In addition, the hadith has shown many similarities in the dignity of men and women.



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In this way, the Qur'an and hadith have eternal truth, but their relative interpretation becomes something that cannot be avoided. In one period, the level of intellect becomes dominant, but in another period, the level of emotionality becomes prominent. This is what causes the perception of women in Islam to change (Mazhar ul-Haq Khan, 1994) what should be in this increasingly developing era, women should have survived their role as they should, but in fact it is still a cause for concern.

The culture of the local community also influences the role of women in the social sphere. Women are still overwhelmed with limitations to move. Sometimes women who want to contribute to society are seen as violating tradition, those who seek a position are seen as selfish, and those who dare to show themselves are avoided. It can be said that in the cultural construct women are still considered as the second class whose existence is not taken into account. The implication of the concept and common sense of unequal positioning has become a force in the separation of the life sector into the "domestic" sector and the "public" sector, where women are considered as people who only take part in the domestic sector, while men are in the public sector.(Tanti Hermawati, 2017)

This patriarchal culture has already positioned women in a marginal angle. The existence of a dominating attitude between certain groups over other groups is the forerunner to the birth of a patriarchal culture. This patriarchal culture becomes a benchmark for behavior that is considered

appropriate so that it leads to restrictions on rights, participation, access, roles, status and control of women both in society. In the end, the behavior that is considered appropriate (appropriate) and inappropriate for men and women varies among society. This fact is inseparable from the hegemony of men who perceive as a more superior person and regard women as subordinate to men.(Ali Hendri, 2019) For example, in the construct of Javanese culture, the wife is seen as *kanca wingking*, which means a back friend, namely managing household affairs. Besides that, there is a adage that a wife must be able to cook, *macak* and cook, or words that are also attached to women, namely *kitchen*, *pupur*, *mattress*, *well*. Ofcourse this creates a stigma that women are powerless in the public sphere.

Then how should women position themselves? In this case, we will discuss the position or role of women in the social or public sphere based on the perspective of the Qur'an and the culture of society.

B. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method in this study is a qualitative research method. Qualitative research methods are research methods used to examine natural object conditions which are the opposite of experiments, in this method the researcher is the key instrument (Sugiono, 2013, p. 15) Bodgan and Taylor argue that qualitative research is a research procedure whose data results are in descriptive form, namely in the form of speech or writing and behavior that can be observed from the people or the subject itself.(Kiswanto, 2021, p. 63)

This study uses a literature study method with a descriptive approach or uses library research sourced from the literature. So that the data needed is textual data, not the field. In practice, the author collects qualitative data which is described and then analyzed in an exploratory form with the aim of obtaining information, insights, knowledge, ideas, ideas and understanding as a form of effort to formulate the problem.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Women in the Perspective of the Qur'an

a. The Qur'an Speaks of the Existence of Women

The Qur'an discusses women with several mentions including mar'ah, nisaa, and camel. (Nurul Mubin, 2008, pp. 34–35) The mention of mar'ah, for example, is found in the Qur'an Surah Ali Imran verse 35:

إِذْ قَالَتِ امْرَأَتُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

"Remember when Imran's wife said: O my Lord, in fact I made a promise to You that the child in my womb would be a righteous and solemn servant (in Baitul Maqdis). Therefore accept the vow from me. Indeed, You are the All-Hearing, All-Knowing." (Q.S. Ali Imran: 35).

The mention of nisa', for example, is found in the Qur'an Surah Ali Imran verse 14:

زَيْنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِصَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ ذَلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَاِبِ

"Make beautiful in (the view of) humans the love of what they want, namely women, children, lots of treasures of the kind of gold, silver, horses, choice of cattle and fields. That is the pleasure of living in the world and with Allah is a good place to return." (Q.S. Ali Imran: 14).

The mention of camels as found in the Qur'an Surah an-Nisa verse 124:

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا

"Whoever does good deeds, both male and female while he is a believer, then they will enter Paradise and they will not be wronged even in the slightest." (Q.S. an-Nisa: 124).

The word nisaa shows the meaning of the female gender. The mufrod form of the word nisaa is mar'ah which shows the meaning of wife. The word nissaa is meant for married women or women who are widows. The words nisaa and mar'ah are used more to indicate the biological function of women, not to refer to women who are underage. In addition to the three words mentioned above, there is also a word to refer to women, namely azwaj which is the plural of

the word *zaujat*, this word denotes the meaning of a partner or adult woman. The word *azwaj* is interpreted in pairs for every thing and all creatures created by Allah SWT. While the meaning of women for children, the Qur'an calls it *bintu* as in the letter *an-Nisa* verse 23.(Balgis, 2017, p. 134)

The verses above emphasize that the Qur'an acknowledges the existence of a woman. Even the Qur'an emphasizes its position in every word to mention it. Like the word *mar'ah*, Allah shows that women have a role, namely a position as a wife. *Zaujat* said, the Qur'an tries to emphasize that women were created to complement and perfect their partner, meaning that when one is not there then life is not direct, life will not go as it should. The word *nissaa* shows that God did not only create creatures that are male but also women, both of whom have the same role and have the same position in God's eyes.

Islam is a religion that is present in an environment where traditions and patterns of ignorance have decayed. Many of the human values of the ignorant society were destroyed after the arrival of Islam. One of the traditions of ignorance that Islam burned down was that when they gave birth to a baby girl they only had two choices, namely letting her live in shame or burying her alive. The birth of a baby girl

during the *Jahiliyah* era was considered a disgrace and humiliation for family members. Islam in the present context is still quite relevant in positioning the existence of women. So that the Qur'an as a way of life for Islamic society does not only discuss men's issues, but women as well.

Allah shows this in His words, including:

- 1) The Al-Qur'an uses words that are generally applicable to all genders, such as; *yes ayyuhan naas* (O people), *yes children of Adam* (o children of Adam), *yes ayyuhal ladzina amanu* (o believers).
- 2) The Qur'an aligns the existence of men and women as in *Surah al-Hujarat* verse 13.
- 3) In the Qur'an Allah SWT. Giving an award and reward to humans is not based on gender. Men and women have equal degrees before Allah's law, the only difference between the two is their piety. This is explained deeply by Allah in the letter *Ali Imran* verse 195.
- 4) Humans are created from the same element and one soul, both male and female. The Qur'an talks

- about it in the letter al-A'raf verse 189.
- 5) Allah SWT. Giving confirmation that there is no difference in the process of human formation as in the Qur'an sura al-Qiyamah verses 36-39.
 - 6) Allah SWT. Connecting the word male (dzakar) with the word female (untsa) in Surah An-Nisa verse 124 shows that the existence of men and women are two beings who always accompany wherever and wherever. (Nurul Mubin, 2008)
 - 7) Adam and Eve were both actively involved in the cosmic drama. Adam and Eve were created in heaven and made use of the facilities of heaven as in the Qur'an in Al-Baqarah verse 35. Both of them got the same quality of temptation from Satan as the Al-Qur'an mentions in Surah Al-A'raf verse 20. Both of them also ate the fruit. khuldi and both accept the consequences of falling to earth, the Qur'an mentions in the letter al-A'raf verse 22.
 - 8) Men and women receive the primordial agreement. Men and women equally carry out the mandate and receive the primordial agreement with God. According to ar-Razi, there is not a single human child born on this earth who does not pledge the existence of God and their pledge is witnessed by angels. In Islam individual responsibility takes place since in the womb. There is no known gender discrimination as in the Qur'an Al-A'raf verse 172.
 - 9) Men and women have the potential to achieve achievements. There is no difference between men and women when it comes to achieving maximum performance, emphasized in several letters, namely Q.S. Ali Imran verse 195, Q.S. an-Nisa verse 124, Q.S. an-Nahl verse 97 and Q.S. Ghafir verse 40. (Nurjannah Ismail, 2003, pp. 288-294)

From the verse above we can understand that equality between men and women does not need to be doubted or debated. The verses

above try to describe a phenomenon of Islamic women, in this case explaining the position and role of women based on the Qur'an. Women are like pillars of a building of life without which life will not stand firm, so women must be given potential and opportunities.

b. Women's Authority in the Public Sphere According to the Qur'an

The word public comes from the Latin word *publicus* which according to Roman society means a space where people are generally discussed, some terms mean a social space that involves many people or a space that can be accessed by everyone. Public space is formed by citizens who respect each other's rights. (Gelgel, 2016, p. 180) Public space here refers to the position or power of women in society based on the explanation of the Qur'an.

The position of women in the social structure is very concerning, especially in the pre-Islamic era. In the pre-Islamic era, women were human beings who were not recognized by law, because they were considered not as legal beings, so they did not deserve to be included in statutory regulations. Women are also perceived as property that has the right to do anything according to the will of the buyer, do not have divorce and inheritance rights, instead they

become inheritance like property, do not have the right to look after their children because they are considered to have a male family, even burying baby girls alive is the greatest tragedy in history before the advent of Islam. (Salamah Noorhayati, 2013, p. 95)

During the Islamic era, men and women were treated the same way. Islam gives obligations to both and makes both of them have the same responsibility. Islam's great concern for women is seen in the Qur'an, as in Surah An-Nisa. The Qur'an also mentions women in various verses and other letters as explained in the previous discussion. This shows that it is important and urgent that the attitude of Islam respects and establishes women's rights. (Al-Thahir Al-Hadad, 1972, pp. 10–11)

So far, the understanding that develops in society there are two different views. The first view states that women must stay at home, serve their husbands and only play a domestic role, and are not allowed to play a role in the public sphere. While the opposite view states that women have the freedom to play a role. This happens because they do not understand the concept of women's rights purely, and they still understand the text of the Qur'an with a gender bias. The main points in the problems above are basically related to the involvement of women in the world

of professions (careers) whose space for movement is in the public sector, while on the other hand women have responsibility for internal household problems, namely as *ra'iyah fi baity zaujiha*. (Putri Alya Nurhaliza et al., 2021, p. 134) As in the letter Al-Ahzab verse 33:

وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ
الْأُولَىٰ وَأَقِمْنَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ
اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ
الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

Sayyid Qutb argues that the word qarna means heavy, steady and settled. However, that does not mean that they are not allowed to leave the house, this implies that in the household women have their main duties, apart from that their place does not live or is not their main task. In al-Maraghi's interpretation it is explained that the word qarna comes from the word qorro, yaqorru which comes from the word iqorrna but the alif is removed which means "stay you all". (Putri Alya Nurhaliza et al., 2021)

Quraish Shihab is of the opinion that this does not mean that women are allowed to work, Islam does not prohibit it, but Islam does not encourage it. Islam allows it only if there is an emergency and does not make it a basis, then he continued the explanation that

women at the time of the Prophet worked, if conditions required them to work. But the problem is not whether there are rights or not because Islam does not tend to justify women leaving the house. (Quraish Shihab, 1993, p. 11)

Tafsir al-Mizan by Muhammad Husain at-Thabatha'I provides a different interpretation. His opinion states that the advantage of men over women is because he has the ability to think which therefore gives rise to courage, strength and the ability to overcome various difficulties. Meanwhile, women are sensitive and emotional. (Putri Alya Nurhaliza et al., 2021)

There are differences in the interpretation between Sayyid Qutb and at Thabathab'I, because the methods of interpreting the Qur'an are different between the two, so Sayyid Qutb believes that women do not have to stay and stay forever at home and not leave the house at all because the house is used as a place primary or primary while the other is secondary. Meanwhile, at-Thabathaba'I provides an exception if it is an interest.

Women in the public sector or social roles according to the Qur'an include:

c. Woman as a witness

Before Islam existed, women were not allowed to sit and converse with many people. But after Islam

was present they were allowed to even stand in front of the court to testify against other people, as the Qur'an stipulates the validity of women's testimony for the determination of debts, namely in the letter Al-Baqarah verse 282: *"and ask for the testimony of two witnesses from your men. If there are not two men, then one man and two women may be witnesses that you are pleased with, so that if one person forgets the others can remind"*.(Al-Thahir Al-Hadad, 1972)

1) Female leadership

In discussing leadership, the most popular verse of the Qur'an used as a basis is Surah an-Nisa verse 34: *"Men are leaders for women, because Allah has made some of them (men) superior to some of them." other (women), and because men have spent part of their wealth. So a pious woman is one who obeys Allah and takes care of herself when her husband is not around because Allah has taken care of them"*.(Ulandari, 2017, p. 11)

Ibn Katsir interprets this verse that men are responsible for women as heads, leaders and rulers and straighten women when there is inequality. This is because men are more important than women so that the title of holder of power is in the hands of men.

The opinion of Quraish Shihab states that he does not reject women's leadership other than in

the household. According to him, the verse above only focuses on household leadership as a husband's right, so that women do not have leadership rights that are natural (give) and which are earned (income).

Based on this explanation, we can understand that Islam does not prohibit women's leadership in the public sphere, because the context is in household leadership. This is in line with the opinion of Justice Aftab Hussain who stated that what underlies the ability of women to become leaders in the public sphere is the principle that applies in all matters, which is permissible, until there is evidence showing that it is not permissible.(Ulandari, 2017)

Several important events that strengthen if women are allowed to become leaders are the events of Queen Bilqis during the time of Prophet Sulaiman and Siti Aisyah Ra. who led Jamal's war. Queen Bilqis is one of the historical figures mentioned in the Al-Qur'an letter An-Naml verse 23, namely a woman who was selected by history and showed the world that women have the ability and equality in roles to advance and carry out leadership tasks.(Nurul Mubin, 2008)

2) The role of women as workers

The role of women in work is as contained in the Qur'an Surah an Nisa verse 32: *"And do not be jealous of what Allah has bestowed upon some of you more than others.*

Because for men there is a share of what they earn, and for women there is a share they earn and ask Allah from His bounty. Verily Allah knows all things".(Putri Alya Nurhaliza et al., 2021)

The verse was revealed when Umm Salamah asked Rasulullah SAW. Regarding whether women can get equal rewards with men who strive in the way of Allah or not, this question was answered by the Messenger of Allah so that they are not wishful thinking or jealous, because both of them get the same reward according to what they try.(Putri Alya Nurhaliza et al., 2021)

3) The role of women as academics and politicians

During the Islamic era, women had the freedom to express ideas and participate in social life. Public life was like a stage where women and men were involved. Even the women discussed and argued with the Prophet. Until the period of the Nubuwwah era, women and men had the same role as subjects of education. Each has the same learning opportunities and responsibilities. This happened because the Prophet never divided community issues into religious and worldly matters, social and individual matters, men's and women's matters. There are clear differences, but still within reasonable limits.(Ulandari, 2017)

Learning and teaching for women has been applied since the time of Rasulullah SAW. and khulafaurrashidin. Like Siti Aisyah, Hafsa bint Umar bin Khattab and Siti Fatimah Az-Zahra who became influential women of their time. They became a reference for friends after the death of Rasulullah SAW. this shows that Islam encourages its people to have knowledge, the opportunities for women and men are the same in studying knowledge. Likewise in politics, not only men, women also have the same rights. As in the Qur'an letter At-Taubah verse 71: *"and those who believe, men and women some of them become helpers to some others. They order the ma'ruf and obey Allah and His Messenger. They will be given grace by Allah, verily Allah is Mighty, Wise."*(Putri Alya Nurhaliza et al., 2021)

The verse above confirms that the right to have knowledge and involvement in politics in Islam is important for a woman in the midst of social life. Ownership of knowledge and women's participation in politics are used as an urgent means of spurring the advancement of civilization.

2. Women in Cultural Construct

a. Cultural Perceptions of Women

Discussing women is very closely related to gender issues where cultural factors are one of the dominant ones in their formation.

Various regions and even countries have their own perceptions in understanding the existence of a woman, most of them have an unfair understanding of the existence of a woman.

The position of women in culture seems to still reflect oppression that has been so established and prolonged. This establishment makes one forget that there has been structural and institutional oppression, almost without even paying attention to the hoarse voices of the oppressed. The oppression of women who are so well-established has numbed one's awareness to defend those who are oppressed. With this establishment, oppression appears in everyday life as if it has become a normal thing.(Nurhayati, 2014, p. 316) However, not a few cultures in society have upheld the position of women, meaning that women are given the opportunity to express themselves.

The Greek civilization which is the oldest civilization in the world, this civilization has never considered the position of women important, Socrates once stated that women are a big source of chaos and division in the world. Socrates describes women as like a deadly fruit even though it looks beautiful. Javanese culture gives a perception of women as beings who have various weaknesses and humiliations. Its existence requires

women to be people who only play a role behind the scenes, their duties are limited to wells, kitchens and mattresses. Likewise, Chinese civilization views women, women are called wretched water. Then the culture of Arab society before the arrival of Islam also did not position women in the right position, the birth of women was considered a disgrace at that time.(Nurul Mubin, 2008)

In ancient Sundanese society, when viewed from the mythology of Sundanese women, a matriarchal culture had developed where women had a higher position than men. Traditions and beliefs in ancient Sundanese place the position of women as influential figures in human life. Women could have had very high roles and positions in society in the past, even at the highest positions in society, namely the rishi and the queen. Rishi is a religious teacher or priest who is the highest position for someone who is pious or has religious knowledge. Several scientific figures stated that in the past Sundanese had experienced a matriarchal cultural system, but in the following period experienced a shift from matriarchy to pariah. According to several sources, it was stated that this started from the incoming outside cultural influences, some stated that the shift occurred when Sundanese culture came in contact with

Javanese culture, some stated when contact with Arab culture entered along with the spread of Islam in the Pasundan region. at the end of the 16th century it began with the establishment of the first Islamic kingdoms, namely the kingdoms of Banten and Cirebon. Even though Islam actually wants to elevate the dignity of women.(Istianah, 2020, pp. 201–202)

Suku Basemah views the status and roles of men and women differently, so that both are educated in different ways. Boys are prepared to be leaders and able to socialize well. Meanwhile, girls are taught compassion and sincerity to care for their parents and family. Women are like the pillars of the family who have a role as harmonizers of family harmony and warmth.(Maila Dinia Husni Rahiem, Wahdi Sayuti, 2020, p. 176)

Masyarakat Basemah highly upholds the honor of a woman, especially her chastity. They are really guarded not to be able to meet with men carelessly. In choosing a mate, it is usually also the choice of the parents, but the consent of the daughter is still important, so it is not absolutely necessary to marry only at the will or choice of the parents. The Basemah tribe believes that preventing acts of violence against women can be done by maintaining

the honor of women. The way the Basemah community maintains the honor of women is by controlling how they behave, dress, socialize and have sex. Restricting women to determine their desires is not in line with women's human rights.(Maila Dinia Husni Rahiem, Wahdi Sayuti, 2020)

In line with the culture of the Basemah people, the Madurese people also view and position women as part of the family that must be protected and as a symbol of men's struggle to cultivate self-esteem in front of society, so that women are placed in a sacred space and separate from the men's realm. they the main education for women is education based on religious teachings, so that most Madurese women study at Islamic boarding schools. In terms of profession, they do not limit themselves only as housewives.(Rizca Yunike Putri & Fajar Muharram, 2016, p. 48)

b. Myths against women

The discussion on women is a study that is never finished to be discussed. Even though it is often the subject of discussion, it still exists and is relevant for study, especially the position of women in the social and cultural spheres. To position women in a position is not easy, often women who want to contribute are seen as violating tradition, those seeking a position are seen as selfish and only selfish,

those who dare to show themselves are often avoided. It is not the hope of a woman if in the end she is forced to be looked down upon in society. However, that is the awareness and understanding of the majority of the public towards the existence of women.

There are many myths about women that develop in society, these women's myths even develop and are maintained for decades. Many clans, tribes and tribes place women in a disadvantageous position. The following are myths about the existence and position of women that develop in society:(Nurul Mubin, 2008)

1) Slow at Work

Women are considered as someone who is slow at work and makes big decisions. Myths like this are very concerning because in reality many women are able to carry out various activities in a relatively short period of time, even in the world of careers many women are able to show various achievements to be proud of. However, there are certain companies that still differentiate based on gender in determining the base salary of their employees. This shows that our world and civilization still view men as someone at a higher level than women.

2) Not a Policy Maker

Our society still thinks that policy makers are in the hands of men, while women are only seen as implementers of the policy. But myths like this can now be broken with the many judges from among women, as well as decision-making by women concerning family and children's affairs, now considered careful and very influential, even women are used as the spirit of men's success.

3) Problem Vulnerable

A myth that is also attached to a woman is something that can trigger problems. This is illustrated in several cases that occur in society such as cases of infidelity and rape, women are often considered to be the sole cause of these incidents, even though in reality this is not true.

4) Thorough, Tenacious and Diligent

Meticulous, tenacious and diligent attitudes are very attached to women. Therefore, women often get assignments and jobs that require precision, tenacity and craftsmanship. Even though it's not only women who can do the job, men can too. For example, a job as a secretary, this job seems only for women. Most

companies choose women to become secretaries and even personal secretaries. Though the work can also be done professionally also by men.

5) Human Stigma Number Two

Women are considered as human number two or *kanca wingking*. Classification number two certainly contains a very discriminatory meaning, women are considered not first and foremost human beings in various important policies. Being number two certainly does not have freedom in making a policy. Person number two only provides input and consideration, the rest of the decisions are in the hands of the first person.

6) Stigma Weak, sensitive and unstable

Stigma like this is also so attached to women. This gentle attitude will be said to be a characteristic that is inappropriate for men to have, except for being weak in the context of doing heavy work that relies solely on strength or physics.

The times have progressed, the myths as explained above should not have developed in our social life. Many of our people are highly educated, so they don't just accept information raw before

knowing the truth or checking the truth. However, in reality, such myths cannot be avoided from the life of our society. So that this is troubling for women who are still underestimated in this developing era.

c. Analysis of Both Views

Based on the explanation of the verses of the Qur'an above regarding the position of women, we can understand that Islam is a religion that highly respects the role and position of women and understands how important women are in life. The verses of the Al-Qur'an above explicitly view men and women as equal in their existence. So that the existence of women is used as a balancing force for men. However, in reality what is happening in society is that there is still an oppression of the role of women. Whereas theologically the Qur'an has absolute and eternal truth. This is influenced by the differences of *mufasir* in interpreting the Qur'an, their interpretation is also influenced by the situation and background of their life, so that the truth of their interpretation can be relative. The condition and role of women in Islam is back or even often becomes a debate because it is influenced by the interpretation of women's position in the Qur'an, the method of interpretation of the Al-Qur'an is not completely objective. Each

interpretation raises a number of subjective choices.

Talking about the role and position of women in the public sphere from the perspective of the Koran, there are three options or opinions that we can accept. First, the opinion which states that since its emergence in Mecca and Medina, Islam has never allowed women to be involved in the social or public sphere. Second, the opinion which states that Islam has introduced the concept of women's involvement in the social sphere from the beginning. Third, the opinion which states that there are certain positions that can be occupied by women and there are other parts that cannot be touched by women.

The first group, as explained above, is about Ibn Kathir who interpreted the Qur'an in Surah an-Nisa verse 34. According to him, men are more important than women, so that the title of power holder is in the hands of men, women cannot be in a position like men. Likewise Muhammad Husain at-Thabatha'I in interpreting the verses of the Qur'an regarding the position of women in the public sphere, according to him those who are more appropriate to have this role are men because the superiority of men over women is having the ability to think it breeds courage

and strength, whereas women are sensitive and emotional.

The second group is according to the interpretation of the Qur'an in Surah an-Naml verse 23 which tells about the role of queen Bilqis as a queen in Saba. This verse shows that Islam has introduced the concept of women's involvement in the social sphere from the beginning. The Qur'an explains the success of Queen Bilqis in carrying out her leadership duties. Likewise the interpretation of Surah an-Nisa verse 32 which tells the Prophet's answer to Umm Salamah's question about women who get equal rewards with men who fight in the way of Allah.

The third group, as Quraish Shihab in interpreting Surah an-Nisa verse 34, according to him, the Qur'an does not reject women's leadership except in the family, the verse is focused on leadership in the household, so women cannot touch on that position, but women may occupy a position if outside the household because the context of the verse is leadership in the household.

In essence, the Qur'an does not absolutely prohibit women from playing a role in the public sphere. Islamic teachings juxtapose and equate the existence of men and women while at the same time demonstrating the alignment of Islam as a teaching that regulates a more just and equal social system.

Gender differences have never been questioned in Islam, the differences that exist are used as one identity that complements each other. Even though there are different roles, they spur to achieve the same goal.

Likewise, culture in viewing the role of women in the public sphere, there is a culture that allows, there is also a culture that is not allowed, this is influenced by the community's background and the geographic location of the community. In addition to these factors, there are several factors that cause women in society's culture to be underestimated. There are still men's suspicions that women have a position only by relying on their physical beauty, not because of their rationality, so that women receive less recognition for their achievements. In addition, men also feel worried if a brilliant woman competes with men. Women are still suspected of being negative, so they have less room for expression. Various pressures on women have reduced their motivation to take part in the public arena. The innate negative understanding of women makes it difficult for women to get a role, besides that the influence of other cultures also causes a reversed understanding of women, which initially upheld the role of women.

D. CONCLUSION

The position of women in the public sphere according to the Qur'an and culture has various views, but both of them recognize the role of women both in several positions. From past historical events documented in the Qur'an it is also stated that women have occupied positions in the public sphere, besides that in several other interpretations it is also stated that the Al-Qur'an does not absolutely prohibit women from having a role in the public domain. In terms of culture, not all cultures prohibit women from playing a role in the public sphere, depending on how the cultural background develops in society. In addition, there are some cultures that have a good view of women but due to other cultural influences, the role of women is limited.

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