

Non-Muslim Leadership in Local Democracy: A Comparative Reading of Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Sayyid Qutb in the 2024 Pematangsiantar Mayoral Election

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Abstract

The requirement of Islam as a qualification for political leadership remains a contested issue in contemporary Islamic political jurisprudence, particularly within plural and democratic nation-states. This article compares Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Sayyid Qutb on non-Muslim leadership and examines the implications of their respective frameworks in the context of the 2024 Pematangsiantar mayoral election. Using a descriptive-comparative qualitative design with normative and case-study approaches, the study draws on the primary works of both thinkers, election-related documents, and semi-structured interviews with six Muslim voters in Pematangsiantar. The findings show that al-Qaradawi, through *fiqh al-muwazana* and *fiqh al-awlawiyyat*, differentiates public offices according to the character of their authority and allows a contextual balancing of benefit and harm. Qutb, through *al-hakimiyyah* and his interpretation of Qur'an 5:51, places political loyalty and leadership within a stricter theological framework of divine sovereignty. Their divergence reflects different interpretive methodologies and conceptions of the relationship between religion and politics. In plural Pematangsiantar, these frameworks produce different normative implications for local executive elections, a variation also reflected in the interview responses.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a fundamental aspect of human life and cannot be separated from the continuity of a society. From an Islamic perspective, a leader is not merely a holder of power but a bearer of a significant trust, accountable horizontally to other human beings and vertically to Allah, as emphasized in the Prophetic tradition that every person is a leader and will be held accountable for those under his or her responsibility.¹

The question of leadership (al-imamah or al-wilayah) is one of the most central and historically significant themes in Islamic political thought. Following the death of the Prophet Muhammad, Muslims faced the fundamental question of who was entitled to continue the leadership of the newly formed community. The rivalry between the Ansar and the Muhajirun at Saqifah Bani Sa'idah, which culminated in the selection of Abu Bakr al-Siddiq as the first caliph, became an important historical precedent underscoring the significance of leadership in Islam. From that episode to contemporary debates over whether Muslims may elect a non-Muslim leader, one theme remains consistent: leadership has never been treated as a trivial matter in Islamic thought.²

In the contemporary era, the nation-state system that replaced the classical caliphate, the expansion of democracy as a dominant political system, and globalization's production of increasingly multicultural societies have generated new questions that are not fully addressed by classical jurisprudence. Among the most debated is whether a political leader must be Muslim or may be a non-Muslim. This question does not arise in a vacuum; it is rooted in several Qur'anic verses that, on a literal reading, appear to prohibit Muslims from taking non-Muslims as leaders or protectors (awliya'). The Qur'an states:³

"O you who believe, do not take the disbelievers as allies in preference to the believers. Do you wish to give Allah a clear case against you?" (Qur'an 4:144)

"O you who believe, do not take the Jews and Christians as allies; they are allies of one another. Whoever among you takes them as allies is indeed one of them. Surely Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people." (Qur'an 5:51)⁴

¹ Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, *Shahih al-Bukhari*, Kitab al-Ahkam, no. 7138; Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj al-Qusyairi al-Naisaburi, *Shahih Muslim*, Kitab al-Imarah, no. 1829.

² Muhammad Husain Haikal, *al-Siddiq Abu Bakr* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1988), pp. 77–95; Tariq Ramadan, *In the Footsteps of the Prophet: Lessons from the Life of Muhammad* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 198–200.

³ Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Fiqh al-Dawlah fi al-Islam: Makanatuha, Ma'alimuha, Thabi'atuha* (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 1997), p. 135; M. Din Syamsuddin, *Etika Agama dalam Membangun Masyarakat Madani* (Jakarta: Logos, 2000), pp. 78–89.

⁴ *Al-Qur'an al-Karim dan Terjemahnya* (Jakarta: Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019), p. 117.

"O you who believe, do not take My enemies and your enemies as close allies, extending affection toward them." (Qur'an 60:1)⁵

These verses, together with a number of Prophetic traditions, constitute a principal basis for scholars who categorically prohibit the election of non-Muslim leaders. Scholars nevertheless differ over the meaning of the term *awliya'* (أَوْلِيَاءُ) in these verses: whether it denotes political leaders (*al-wali al-siyasi*) or has a broader meaning such as protectors, strategic allies, or close companions. Divergent understandings of *awliya'* form an important starting point for major differences in contemporary Islamic political jurisprudence.⁶

Indonesia, which has the world's largest Muslim population, has repeatedly provided an empirical setting for this debate, particularly in local elections involving non-Muslim candidates in areas with substantial Muslim populations. One relevant case is the 2024 Pematangsiantar mayoral election. Located in North Sumatra Province, the city has a plural religious composition, with a large Muslim community living alongside Protestant Christian, Catholic, and other religious communities. According to Statistics Indonesia (BPS) data for Pematangsiantar in 2024, Muslims comprised approximately 47.3% of the population, Protestants 39.8%, Catholics 8.2%, and adherents of other religions 4.7%. In this demographic context, the candidacy of a non-Muslim in the 2024 local election generated debate among local Muslims, ranging from statements by religious figures to discussions on social media: some rejected such leadership on religious grounds, while others adopted a more pragmatic approach by considering candidates' capacity and track records.^{7,8}

Within this complex debate, two major figures of contemporary Islamic thought offer markedly different perspectives: Yusuf al-Qaradawi (1926–2022) and Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966). Al-Qaradawi, an Egyptian scholar often associated with *wasathiyyah*, developed his *ijtihad* methodology around the principles of *wasathiyyah* (moderation), *fiqh al-awlawiyyat* (jurisprudence of priorities), and *fiqh al-muwazanah* (jurisprudence of balancing benefits and harms). One of the scriptural foundations invoked for this approach is the following verse:

⁵ *Al-Qur'an al-Karim dan Terjemahnya* (Jakarta: Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019), p. 549.

⁶ Ibn Jarir al-Thabari, *Jami' al-Bayan fi Ta'wil Ayi al-Qur'an* (Cairo: Mu'assasah al-Risalah, 2000), vol. IX, pp. 403–420; al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an* (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Mishriyyah, 1964), vol. VI, pp. 216–220.

⁷ Komisi Pemilihan Umum Kota Pematangsiantar, *Data Hasil Rekapitulasi Pilkada Kota Pematangsiantar 2024* (Pematangsiantar: KPU, 2024).

⁸ Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Pematangsiantar, *Pematangsiantar Dalam Angka 2024* (Pematangsiantar: BPS, 2024), p. 42.

"They ask you about intoxicants and gambling. Say, "In both there is great sin and some benefit for people, but their sin is greater than their benefit." " (Qur'an 2:219)⁹

This contextual approach differs fundamentally from that of Sayyid Qutb, a writer, literary critic, and influential thinker associated with the Muslim Brotherhood, who was imprisoned by Gamal Abdel Nasser's government from 1954 and was executed in 1966. A central concept in Qutb's thought is al-hakimiyyah, or the absolute sovereignty of God, which locates the ultimate right to legislate in God alone. On this basis, Qutb criticized modern political systems such as liberal democracy, socialism, and nationalism when they position human beings as the highest source of law, characterizing this problem in theological terms sometimes described as 'political shirk.'

The debate over non-Muslim leadership is also rooted in classical jurisprudence. Imam al-Mawardi (974–1058 CE), in al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah, listed Islam as one of seven qualifications for an imam, alongside being male, rational, free, capable of ijtihad, physically sound, and of Qurayshi descent. At the same time, he distinguished imamah kubra (supreme leadership) from wilayah khashshah (more limited offices), for which the qualifications could be more flexible. Ibn Taymiyyah (1263–1328 CE) is also frequently cited in this debate for statements prioritizing order over anarchy and justice over religious identity, although the historical and textual contexts of such statements require careful attention. By contrast, other traditions are invoked by those who categorically reject non-Muslim leadership, including al-a'immatu min Quraysh ('the leaders are from Quraysh'; Ahmad no. 12244; al-Nasa'i, al-Sunan al-Kubra no. 8763) and the hadith concerning the obligation of allegiance to a ruler (Muslim, Kitab al-Imarah, no. 1851).^{10,11}

Contemporary Muslim scholarship spans a broad spectrum on this issue. At one end are Qutb and thinkers influenced by similarly strict readings, who reject political leadership by non-Muslims over Muslims. At another are thinkers such as Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im and Tariq Ramadan, who understand the religious qualification for leadership as historically situated and in need of reconsideration within modern constitutional nation-states. Al-Qaradawi occupies an intermediate position, attempting to mediate between these poles through maqashid al-shari'ah and the contextual balancing of benefit and harm.

⁹ *Al-Qur'an al-Karim dan Terjemahnya* (Jakarta: Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019), p. 34.

¹⁰ Al-Mawardi, *al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah wa al-Wilayat al-Diniyyah* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1985), chap. I, pp. 5–6.

¹¹ Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Siyasah al-Shar'iyyah fi Ishlah al-Ra'i wa al-Ra'iyyah* (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, n.d.), pp. 14–18.

Given the complexity and contemporary significance of this issue, a systematic comparison of two influential frameworks in modern Islamic political thought, specifically al-Qaradawi's contextual-maqasidi approach and Qutb's text-centered framework of al-hakimiyyah, provides a useful basis for examining non-Muslim leadership. The purpose is not to produce a new fatwa or to privilege one position over another, but to present both arguments fairly and in sufficient depth so that their premises, methods, and implications can be understood.¹²

This article addresses three questions: (1) how do Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Sayyid Qutb view the election of a non-Muslim leader in a Muslim-majority society; (2) what ijihad methodologies and argumentative foundations underlie their respective positions; and (3) what implications do these positions have in the context of Muslim social and political life in Pematangsiantar? Accordingly, the study aims to describe and compare the two thinkers' views, identify their respective methods of ijihad, and analyze their contextual implications for contemporary Islamic political jurisprudence.

Previous studies have addressed parts of this debate. Irma Muania (2005) examined al-Qaradawi's views on leadership selection and their relevance to presidential elections in Indonesia, but did not compare them with Qutb. Ripyal Pahri (2017) discussed al-Qaradawi's views on democracy and leadership criteria, while Ludiansyah (2004) examined Islam and democracy in al-Qaradawi's thought; neither focused on Qutb or a local-election case. Muhammad Sakinul Wadi (2010) addressed the position of voters in elections according to al-Qaradawi without comparison to Qutb, while Marzuki Manurung et al. (2025) surveyed Islamic political thought from Qutb to Huwaidi without specifically examining the law of electing non-Muslim leaders or a local-election case study. This article extends those studies by systematically comparing al-Qaradawi and Qutb and relating their frameworks to the 2024 Pematangsiantar mayoral election, thereby offering a more contextual analysis of local democratic practice in Indonesia.¹³

¹² Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Fiqh al-Azlawiyyat: Dirasah Jadidah fi Dhaw' al-Qur'an wa al-Sunnah* (Cairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 1996), pp. 23–35.

¹³ Irma Muania, "Studi terhadap Pemikiran Yusuf al-Qaradawi tentang Sistem Pemilihan Pemimpin dan Relevansinya dengan Sistem Pemilihan Presiden di Indonesia" (undergraduate thesis, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2005); Ripyal Pahri, "Demokrasi; Pemilihan Umum dan Kriteria Pemimpin Perspektif Yusuf al-Qaradawi" (undergraduate thesis, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2017); Ludiansyah, "Pandangan Yusuf al-Qaradawi tentang Demokrasi" (undergraduate thesis, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2004); Muhammad Sakinul Wadi, "Kedudukan Pemilih dalam Pemilihan Umum Menurut Yusuf al-Qardhawiy" (undergraduate thesis, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2010); Marzuki Manurung et al., "Islam dan Demokrasi: Pergulatan Pemikiran Politik dari Qutb hingga Huwaidi," *Politea: Jurnal Politik Islam* 8, no. 2 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.20414/politea.v8i2.14208>.

Conceptual Framework

Several key terms require clarification. In jurisprudential terminology, law (al-hukm) refers to God's address (khitab) concerning the acts of legally responsible persons (mukallaf), including the five categories of obligatory, recommended, permissible, disliked, and prohibited acts; in this article, the term refers specifically to the shari'a status of electing a non-Muslim leader. Leadership (al-imam/al-wali/al-hakim) is used broadly to include heads of state or government, regional executives, and public officials exercising significant legislative or executive authority. Non-Muslim (ghair al-Muslim) refers to citizens who do not profess Islam; within the modern nation-state, this terminology is more appropriate than the classical category of dhimmi, which belonged to a different political-legal context. Muslim society is considered in two settings: Muslim-majority states and Muslim-minority communities, which some scholars treat differently, as reflected in al-Qaradawi's concept of fiqh al-aqalliyyat. Finally, the comparative approach (muqaranah) refers to comparing scholarly positions in order to identify convergences, divergences, and asbab al-ikhtilaf, while assessing the structure of argument, use of evidence, and contextual relevance of each position.^{14,15,16,17,18}

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative, descriptive-analytical, and comparative method, combined with normative and case-study approaches to connect textual findings with an empirical context. The principal data consist of texts, scholarly opinions, and legal arguments drawn from the works of Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Sayyid Qutb. These materials are read alongside official documents and interview data to develop a comprehensive account of non-Muslim leadership in the thought of both figures and of how these ideas are received in a local setting.

The sources are divided into primary and secondary materials. Primary sources include major works by both thinkers: for al-Qaradawi, *Fiqh al-Dawlah fi al-Islam*, *Min Fiqh al-Dawlah fi al-Islam*, *al-Siyasah al-Shar'iyah fi Daw' Nusus al-Shari'ah wa Maqashidiha*, and *Ghair al-Muslimin fi al-Mujtama' al-Islami*; for Qutb, *Fi Zhilal al-Qur'an*, *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq*, *al-'Adalah al-Ijtima'iyah fi al-Islam*, and *al-Islam wa Mushkilat al-Hadarah*. Official documents concerning the 2024 Pematangsiantar mayoral

¹⁴ Al-Jurjani, *al-Ta'rifat* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1983), p. 102.

¹⁵ Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Fiqh al-Dawlah fi al-Islam* (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 1997), pp. 137–152.

¹⁶ Ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi, *al-Mughni* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1984), vol. IX, p. 290.

¹⁷ Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Fiqh al-Aqalliyyat al-Muslimah* (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, n.d.), pp. 3–25.

¹⁸ Wahbah al-Zuhaili, *Ushul al-Fiqh al-Islami* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr al-Mu'ashir, 1986), vol. II, p. 1065.

election are also used. Secondary sources include classical works of Islamic political jurisprudence such as al-Mawardi's *al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah* and Ibn Taymiyyah's *al-Siyasah al-Shar'iyyah*, relevant national and international journal articles, theses and dissertations, media reports concerning the Pematangsiantar election, and reports from institutions studying Islam and democracy.

Data were collected through documentary study, including the inventory, selection, verification, and extraction of relevant materials, and through purposive semi-structured interviews with six Muslim voters residing in Pematangsiantar who were eligible to vote in the 2024 mayoral election. The informants were selected to reflect variation in age and occupational background. The data were analyzed through four complementary techniques: (1) content analysis to identify key concepts, theological arguments, and textual evidence used by each thinker; (2) comparative analysis to examine their epistemological foundations, methods of legal inference, and interpretations of Qur'anic verses and hadith; (3) historical-contextual analysis to situate their thought in its socio-political setting and avoid anachronistic readings; and (4) case-study analysis to consider the implications of the two theoretical frameworks for the 2024 Pematangsiantar mayoral election.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Yusuf al-Qaradawi's Ijtihad Methodology and View

Yusuf al-Qaradawi (1926–2022) was widely associated with *wasathiyyah* and was sometimes described as a leading jurist of his age. His methodology of *ijtihad* rests on three central pillars: *wasathiyyah* (moderation), *fiqh al-awlawiyyat* (jurisprudence of priorities), and *fiqh al-muwazanah* (jurisprudence of balancing benefits and harms). From this framework, al-Qaradawi argued that the highest public offices should not be entrusted to non-Muslims, as stated in *Fiqh al-Dawlah fi al-Islam*:

*"As for the highest public offices, such as the head of state, head of government, supreme military command, and adjudication among Muslims, they may not be held by a non-Muslim."*¹⁹

This statement indicates that al-Qaradawi excludes non-Muslims from the highest leadership positions, including the head of state, supreme military command, and judicial authority over Muslims. At the same time, he permits non-Muslims to hold other state functions, as he continues in the same work:

¹⁹ Yusuf al-Qaradhawi, *Fiqh al-Dawlah fi al-Islam* (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 1997), p. 145.

*"The People of the Covenant have the right to hold certain state functions, as Muslims do, except for offices that are specifically tied to Islam."*²⁰

Al-Qaradawi therefore allows a degree of political participation by non-Muslims while reserving the highest offices, military command, judicial authority, and positions considered specifically Islamic. He further frames political judgment through the balancing of benefit and harm, stating:

*"If a non-Muslim can realize greater benefit and avert greater harm for Muslims, then, according to the jurisprudence of priorities (fiqh al-awlawiyyat), the relevant consideration is to vote for the option that brings the greater benefit. If this achieves that objective more effectively than voting for a weak or less competent Muslim candidate, it takes priority."*²¹

This contextual orientation marks an important difference between al-Qaradawi and Qutb. Al-Qaradawi lived and wrote for much of his later life in a comparatively stable environment, particularly after settling in Qatar in 1961, and interacted directly with questions of pluralism and modern democracy through public scholarship, media programs such as *al-Shari'ah wa al-Hayah* on Al Jazeera, and engagement with Muslim minority communities in different parts of the world.

2. Sayyid Qutb's Ijtihad Methodology and View

Sayyid Qutb Ibrahim Husayn Shadhili was born on 9 October 1906 in Musha, Asyut Province, Egypt. He was a writer, literary critic, educator, and influential thinker associated with the Muslim Brotherhood. His period of study in the United States (1948–1950) reinforced his critical view of Western civilization, which he came to describe through the concept of *jahiliyyah* despite its material achievements. Qutb was imprisoned by Gamal Abdel Nasser's government from 1954 during much of the remainder of his life and was executed on 29 August 1966 after being convicted of plotting against the government. This experience of imprisonment and repression is an important context for reading the development of his thought on power and leadership.²²

A central concept in Qutb's thought is *al-hakimiyyah*, the absolute sovereignty of God, which he developed into an influential and contested theological-political principle. For Qutb, *al-hakimiyyah* is closely connected to *tawhid*: the ultimate authority to legislate belongs to God rather than to human beings or human-made institutions. From this starting point, Qutb criticized modern political systems such as liberal democracy,

²⁰ Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Fiqh al-Dawlah fi al-Islam* (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 1997), p. 146.

²¹ Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Fiqh al-Awlawiyyat: Dirasah Jadidah fi Dhaw' al-Qur'an wa al-Sunnah* (Cairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 1996), pp. 178–179.

²² Adnan Musallam, *From Secularism to Jihad: Sayyid Qutb and the Foundations of Radical Islamism* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2005), pp. 130–133.

socialism, and nationalism when they place human sovereignty above divine law, describing such a condition in theological terms as a form of 'political shirk.' Qutb's development of al-hakimiyyah was influenced by Abul A'la al-Maududi (1903–1979), founder of Pakistan's Jama'at-e-Islami, who had systematized a similar concept. Qutb extended it further and used the language of jahiliyyah to characterize contemporary political orders, including those in Muslim-majority countries.

In his Qur'anic commentary *Fi Zhilal al-Qur'an*, Qutb discusses Qur'an 5:51:

*"O you who believe, do not take the Jews and Christians as allies; they are allies of one another. Whoever among you takes them as allies is indeed one of them. Surely Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people."*²³

Commenting on this verse in *Fi Zhilal al-Qur'an*, Qutb writes:

*"Loyalty to Allah, His Messenger, and the Muslim community is what binds the believers together ... There is therefore no loyalty except to Allah, His Messenger, and the Muslim community, and no loyalty to disbelievers from among the People of the Book or others."*²⁴

In the same work, he also states:

*"Choosing non-Muslim rulers to administer the affairs of Muslims is contrary to the Islamic method, because the task of the ruler in Islam is to uphold God's law and safeguard His religion."*²⁵

Qutb also invokes verses concerning al-hukm (judgment or rule) to reinforce his argument:

"Judgment belongs to Allah alone. He has commanded that you worship none but Him. That is the upright religion, but most people do not know." (Qur'an 12:40)²⁶

"Whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed; those are the disbelievers." (Qur'an 5:44)²⁷

3. Comparative Analysis: Convergences, Divergences, and Methodological Foundations

The divergence between al-Qaradawi and Qutb on non-Muslim leadership is rooted in a more fundamental difference in how they understand the relationship between Islam and politics and how they read the scriptural sources. Al-Qaradawi works within the juristic tradition and employs interpretive tools such as *ta'wil* (contextual interpretation), *takhsis* (specification), *taqyid* (qualification), and considerations of *maqashid al-shari'ah*.

²³ *Al-Qur'an al-Karim dan Terjemahnya* (Jakarta: Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019), p. 117.

²⁴ Sayyid Qutb, *Fi Zhilal al-Qur'an* (Cairo-Beirut: Dar al-Shuruq, 1412 H), vol. II, p. 895 (commentary on Qur'an 5:51).

²⁵ Sayyid Qutb, *Fi Zhilal al-Qur'an* (Cairo-Beirut: Dar al-Shuruq, 1412 H), vol. II, p. 896.

²⁶ *Al-Qur'an al-Karim dan Terjemahnya* (Jakarta: Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019), p. 240.

²⁷ *Al-Qur'an al-Karim dan Terjemahnya* (Jakarta: Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019), p. 115.

Qutb, by contrast, develops a political theology centered on al-hakimiyyah and reads the relevant texts in a more direct and comprehensive manner, distinct from the juristic instruments emphasized by al-Qaradawi.²⁸

Their historical contexts also differed considerably. Although al-Qaradawi experienced political pressure and exile, much of his later writing was produced in a comparatively stable environment. Qutb, by contrast, spent a substantial part of his most productive period in prison and experienced state repression and physical abuse. The influence of Abul A'la al-Maududi on Qutb's concept of al-hakimiyyah is also significant, although Qutb developed the concept further within his own theological-political framework.^{29,30}

Despite their different legal conclusions, the two thinkers share several points of concern. Both regard political leadership as a serious matter with theological implications; both refer to Qur'an 5:51 as a central text in the debate; and both frame the welfare of the Muslim community as an important concern, although they define and measure that welfare differently. Their most substantial differences can be grouped into three areas. First, epistemologically, al-Qaradawi distinguishes wilayah 'ammah (general or supreme authority) from wilayah khashshah (limited or technical authority), whereas Qutb tends to approach leadership over Muslims primarily through the broader principle of al-hakimiyyah. Second, methodologically, al-Qaradawi weighs benefit and harm case by case through fiqh al-muwazanah, whereas Qutb treats restrictions on wala' toward non-Muslims as part of a theological boundary that is not readily displaced by worldly calculations of benefit. Third, in political practice, al-Qaradawi treats modern democratic procedures as instruments that may be accommodated within an Islamic framework, while Qutb offers a more fundamental critique of democratic sovereignty when human majorities are treated as the ultimate source of law.

This contrast can also be seen in contemporary fatwa institutions. The European Council for Fatwa and Research (al-Majlis al-Urubi li al-Ifta' wa al-Buhuth), which was chaired by al-Qaradawi, issued rulings that allowed Muslim minorities in Europe considerable flexibility in political participation, including voting for non-Muslim candidates when this was judged more beneficial to Muslim interests. The maqashid al-shari'ah approach associated with Imam al-Shatibi (d. 790 AH) in al-Muwafaqat,

²⁸ Tariq Ramadan, *Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 45–78.

²⁹ Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Ibn al-Qaryah wa al-Kuttab: Malamiyah Sirah wa Masirah* (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 2002), vol. II, pp. 200–210.

³⁰ Abul A'la al-Maududi, *Nazhariyyah al-Islam al-Siyasiyyah* (Cairo: Dar al-Anshar, 1969), pp. 30–56.

commonly summarized through the protection of religion (hifzh al-din), life (hifzh al-nafs), intellect (hifzh al-'aql), lineage (hifzh al-nasl), and property (hifzh al-mal), provides an important framework for al-Qaradawi's reasoning. Within this approach, the question becomes whether requiring a Muslim officeholder is always the only way to secure these objectives, or whether particular circumstances might require a different judgment when comparing the justice, competence, and conduct of available candidates.^{31,32}

An important distinction often overlooked in popular debate is that between wilayah 'ammah (general or supreme authority) and wilayah khashshah (limited or technical authority). Classical jurists did not generally treat technical offices, such as engineers, court physicians, or economic advisers, in the same way as supreme political authority. Their principal restrictions concerned wilayah 'ammah in the sense of ultimate leadership with authority to make and enforce law over the Muslim community. In a modern state characterized by separation of powers, determining which level of government falls within the classical category of wilayah 'ammah becomes a complex question not fully anticipated by classical jurisprudence, creating space for contextual approaches such as al-Qaradawi's.³³

4. Relevance to the 2024 Pematangsiantar Mayoral Election

Pematangsiantar is a multiethnic and multireligious city in which Muslims constitute a relative plurality (47.3%) alongside Protestant Christians (39.8%), Catholics (8.2%), and adherents of other religions (4.7%). This demographic composition makes the city a relevant setting for examining how the two frameworks of Islamic political jurisprudence operate within local democratic practice. The presence of a non-Muslim candidate in the 2024 mayoral election generated debate among local Muslims: some religious figures rejected the candidacy on religious grounds, while others adopted a more pragmatic approach emphasizing capacity, track record, and policy programs.

Read through al-Qaradawi's framework, the office of mayor may be treated as a form of public authority at the local level rather than the supreme headship of the state. Its status therefore requires case-specific consideration through fiqh al-muwazanah: to what extent can a non-Muslim candidate realize greater public benefit and avert greater harm for residents compared with the available Muslim alternatives? Within this framework, capacity, integrity, governing record, and commitment to the common good become

³¹ Al-Majlis al-Urubbi li al-Ifta' wa al-Buhuth, *Qararat wa Fatawa al-Majlis al-Urubbi li al-Ifta' wa al-Buhuth, al-Dawrah al-Thalithah* (Dublin: ECFR, 2000), pp. 34–67.

³² Abu Ishaq al-Syathibi, *al-Muwafaqat fi Ushul al-Syari'ah*, ed. Abdullah Darraz (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, n.d.), vol. II, pp. 4–10.

³³ Al-Mawardi, *al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah*, chap. II (on wizarah), pp. 24–45.

relevant variables alongside religious identity. Read through Qutb's framework, by contrast, entrusting political authority over a community that includes Muslims to a non-Muslim would be assessed through the principles of *wala'* and *al-hakimiyyah*, with less distinction between local and national executive authority.

In Pematangsiantar's plural socio-political setting, the two frameworks therefore produce different analytical orientations. Al-Qaradawi's framework allows greater space for weighing public benefit, the scope of an office's authority, competence, integrity, and a candidate's record, whereas Qutb's framework places *wala'* and *al-hakimiyyah* at the center of the normative analysis. This contrast helps explain why Muslim responses to non-Muslim candidacy in Pematangsiantar are not uniform but instead form a spectrum shaped by different ways of weighing religious identity, public authority, and the common good.

5. Interview Findings: Empirical Perspectives of Muslim Voters in Pematangsiantar

To deepen the empirical dimension of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted purposively with six Muslim informants residing in Pematangsiantar who were eligible to vote in the 2024 mayoral election. They were selected to reflect variation in age and occupational background: Informant 1 (63 years old, retired employee of the Office of Religious Affairs), Informant 2 (24, self-employed), Informant 3 (53, homemaker), Informant 4 (56, employee of a state-owned enterprise), Informant 5 (24, university student), and Informant 6 (36, homemaker). All six reported having exercised their voting rights in the election won by Wesley Silalahi, a Christian candidate, in a city with a large Muslim electorate.

The interviews indicate that religious considerations were not ignored, but neither were they always treated as an absolute condition that automatically excluded a non-Muslim candidate. Informant 1 said that the main considerations were candidates' ideas, work programs, and legal track records, adding that religious identity did not itself guarantee integrity. Informants 2 and 4 placed leadership capacity alongside religious considerations: both said that a Muslim leader would ideally be preferred, but that a non-Muslim candidate perceived as more just and capable could still be accepted. Informant 3 emphasized the candidate's vision, mission, and ability to lead the city toward improvement, while Informant 6 said that religion was not the primary concern as long as the candidate was considered capable of serving as mayor. Informant 5 differed from this pattern by stating that religious identity was the initial consideration, although the informant also acknowledged that an unjust or incapable Muslim candidate could lead a voter to consider a non-Muslim alternative. These variations illustrate different ways of balancing religious and practical considerations; several responses resemble the case-

specific weighing of benefit and harm found in al-Qaradawi's *fiqh al-muwazanah*, while Informant 5 placed religious identity more clearly at the starting point of the decision.

Assessments of the elected mayor's performance varied among the six informants and ranged from positive to neutral and critical. Informants 1, 4, and 5 described the municipal administration as generally functioning normally and said they had not observed major problems, while Informant 3 perceived progress and referred to the absence, in that informant's view, of a corruption case during the current term. Informants 2 and 6 were more critical, referring to reports of alleged legal issues surrounding the administration and to a limited perceived impact of policies on the public. Regarding treatment across religious communities, most informants did not perceive discriminatory conduct. Informant 1 noted that Islamic religious events were often represented by the deputy mayor or relevant staff, while Informant 3 referred to the mayor's attendance at a *Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ)* event in 2026 and Informant 4 mentioned participation in Muslim religious events as indications of accommodation toward Muslim community activities. These statements are presented as informants' perceptions rather than independent evaluations of the administration.

The most direct interview question, whether a Muslim may vote for a non-Muslim leader, produced generally permissive responses, with one clear exception. Informants 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 said that it could be permissible provided that the candidate was considered suitable, competent, and just. Some added that Muslim identity did not guarantee better leadership, although Informant 3 also mentioned having heard religious sermons that prohibited such a choice. Informant 5 explicitly stated that it was not permissible, consistent with the religious consideration emphasized in the preceding response. In analytical terms, this answer is closer to the stricter normative position represented in this article by Qutb, whereas most of the other responses gave greater weight to concrete considerations of public benefit, a pattern that has points of contact with al-Qaradawi's *fiqh al-muwazanah* and *fiqh al-awlawiyyat*.

Overall, the interviews reveal variation in how Muslim voters in Pematangsiantar negotiate religious considerations, capacity, track record, and the common good. Five of the six informants articulated considerations that share elements with al-Qaradawi's *fiqh al-muwazanah* and *fiqh al-awlawiyyat*, while Informant 5 expressed a stricter normative orientation with points of contact with Qutb's framework. Findings based on six informants are not intended for statistical generalization; rather, they provide an exploratory illustration of how the two frameworks of Islamic political jurisprudence may be understood and negotiated in local political experience.

CONCLUSION

Three principal conclusions can be drawn. First, Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Sayyid Qutb differ substantially in their approaches to electing non-Muslim leaders. Al-Qaradawi allows non-Muslims to occupy certain public offices provided that these are not the highest forms of wilayah 'ammah, such as the head of state, supreme military command, or judicial authority over Muslims, or offices regarded as specifically Islamic, and he incorporates contextual considerations of benefit and harm. Qutb, by contrast, rejects non-Muslim political authority over Muslims in principle because he reads political loyalty and leadership through the theological framework of tawhid and al-hakimiyyah.

Second, these different legal conclusions are rooted in different methodologies of ijtihad. Al-Qaradawi employs a contextual-maqasidi approach through fiqh al-muwazanah and fiqh al-awlawiyyat, allowing context and public benefit to shape legal assessment. Qutb relies on al-hakimiyyah and a more text-centered reading of verses concerning wala' and al-hukm, resulting in stricter normative boundaries around leadership and political loyalty.

Third, in the multiethnic and multireligious setting of the 2024 Pematangsiantar mayoral election, the two frameworks lead to different normative implications. Al-Qaradawi's framework emphasizes distinctions among types of public office and the balancing of benefit and harm, whereas Qutb's framework emphasizes al-hakimiyyah and the limits of political loyalty. The interviews indicate that both kinds of reasoning appear in the informants' responses in different proportions. Future research could broaden the number and diversity of informants and incorporate additional institutional data to examine more fully the relationship between jurisprudential norms and voting behavior.

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