



ECO-CIVILIZATIONAL RESONANCE TAFSIR: DEVELOPING A CONTEXTUAL QUR'ANIC INTERPRETATION THROUGH AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH TO ECOLOGICAL VERSES



Ridwan¹, Rusydi AM², Zaim Rais³, Hendra Syafrianto⁴, Zulfi Akmal⁵

* Correspondence:

Email: ridwan@staiptq.ac.id

Authors Affiliation:

^{1,4,5} STAI Pengembangan Ilmu al –
Qur'an, Padang, Indonesia

^{2,3} Universitas Islam Negeri Imam
Bonjol Padang, Indonesia

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Abstract

The escalating global environmental crisis demands Qur'anic interpretations that effectively address contemporary ecological challenges. As the Qur'an often conveys its ecological messages implicitly, contextual interpretation is required to reveal its universal relevance. Using a descriptive-analytical library research design, this study applies Abdullah Saeed's contextual hermeneutics. Saeed's four-stage framework was selected over Fazlur Rahman's double movement theory and Amina Wadud's hermeneutics due to its granular analytical pathway, which integrates classical and contemporary exegesis, linguistic analysis, qirā'āt, mufradāt, literary context, and socio-historical backgrounds. The findings demonstrate that the Qur'an goes beyond encouraging earthly stewardship by assigning humans an ethical responsibility to maintain ecological balance and environmental sustainability. Based on these insights, this study proposes Eco-Civilizational Resonance Tafsir—an interpretive model that aligns Qur'anic ecological principles with environmental ethics, social responsibility, and sustainable development, thereby contributing to contemporary Islamic environmental discourse and ecological transformation.

Abstrak

Krisis lingkungan global menuntut penafsiran Al-Qur'an yang responsif terhadap tantangan ekologis kontemporer. Karena pesan ekologis dalam Al-Qur'an kerap disampaikan secara implisit, penafsiran kontekstual diperlukan untuk mengungkap relevansi universalnya. Penelitian kepustakaan berbasis deskriptif-analitis ini menerapkan hermeneutika kontekstual Abdullah Saeed. Pendekatan empat tahap Saeed dipilih karena menawarkan kerangka analisis yang lebih rinci dibanding double movement Fazlur Rahman atau hermeneutika Amina Wadud, dengan memadukan analisis tafsir klasik-kontemporer, kebahasaan, qirā'āt, mufradāt, konteks sastra, serta latar sosio-historis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Al-Qur'an tidak hanya memerintahkan pemakmuran bumi, tetapi juga menekankan tanggung jawab etis manusia dalam menjaga keseimbangan dan keberlanjutan ekologi. Sebagai kontribusi utama, penelitian ini merumuskan model Tafsir Resonansi Eko-Peradaban—sebuah pendekatan yang mengintegrasikan nilai ekologis Al-Qur'an dengan etika lingkungan, tanggung jawab sosial, dan pembangunan berkelanjutan guna memperkaya wacana lingkungan Islam serta mendorong transformasi ekologis kontemporer.

Background

Environmental crises have become one of the most pressing global challenges of the twenty-first century, reflected in climate change, deforestation, biodiversity loss, and ecosystem degradation driven largely by unsustainable human activity.¹ These conditions

¹ United Nations Environment Programme, "Emissions Gap Report 2023: Broken Record – Temperatures Hit New Highs, Yet World Fails to Cut Emissions (Again)" (Nairobi: UNEP, 2023), 35 – 45.



indicate that environmental degradation is not merely a technical or policy issue but stems from ethical paradigms,² particularly anthropocentrism, which places humans at the center of value while neglecting nature's intrinsic worth.³ From an Islamic perspective, the relationship between humans and nature is grounded in *tawhīd*:⁴ the Qur'an portrays nature as the signs (*āyāt*) of Allah and assigns humans the role of *khalīfah*, entrusted with the responsibility (*amānah*) to cultivate the earth (*isti'mār al-arḍ*) and prevent *fasād fī al-arḍ* — encompassing not only ecological concerns but spiritual, moral, and social responsibilities.

Over the past decades, numerous studies have demonstrated that the Qur'an provides a rich foundation for ecological ethics — highlighting environmental responsibility in Tafsir Al – Miṣbah,⁵ the principles of *mīzan* and *amanah*,⁶ a thematic – contextual ecological paradigm,⁷ biocentric dimensions,⁸ and the continuing relevance of Qur'anic ecological values,⁹ with similar conclusions across studies of Tafsir Al – Miṣbah,¹⁰ Tafsir Al – Azhar,¹¹ and Tafsir al – Maraghī.¹² Nevertheless, these studies have largely focused on identifying ecological values embedded in Qur'anic texts, while insufficiently explaining how these values can be transformed into an operational ethical framework that fosters ecological behavior and contributes to sustainable civilization.

In the development of contemporary Qur'anic studies, contextual interpretation has emerged as one of the most influential approaches to bridging the Qur'anic text, its historical context, and contemporary realities. Rather than limiting interpretation to the text's literal meaning, this approach seeks to uncover the Qur'an's universal ethical and moral values. As a result, its guidance remains relevant across changing social, cultural,

² Arne Naess, "The Shallow and the Deep, Long – Range Ecology Movement: A Summary," *Inquiry* 16, no. 1 – 4 (January 29, 1973): 95 – 100, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00201747308601682>.

³ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, "Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report: Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change," ed. Hoesung Lee and Josŷ Romero (Geneva: IPCC, 2023), 4 – 12.

⁴ Mawil Izzi Dien, *The Environmental Dimensions of Islam* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2000), 35 – 55.

⁵ Imam Habib Agri and Achyar Zein, "Ekoliterasi Lingkungan Hidup Dalam Al – Quran Perspektif M. Quraish Shihab," *Kamaya: Jurnal Ilmu Agama* 7, no. 2 (April 29, 2024): 101 – 13, <https://doi.org/10.37329/kamaya.v7i2.3205>.

⁶ Muhammad Amin, "Wawasan Al – Quran Tentang Manusia Dan Lingkungan Hidup Sebuah Kajian Tafsir Tematik," *Nizham Journal of Islamic Studies* 5, no. 2 (2016): 189 – 203.

⁷ Febri Hijroh Mukhlis, "Paradigma Ekologis Dalam Tafsir Al – Qur'an: Kajian Tematik – Kontekstual," *QOF* 6, no. 1 (June 15, 2022): 89 – 108, <https://doi.org/10.30762/qof.v6i1.396>.

⁸ Zainul Mun'im, "Etika Lingkungan Biosentris Dalam Al – Quran: Analisis Tafsir Pelestarian Lingkungan Hidup Karya Kementerian Agama," *SUHUF* 15, no. 1 (October 11, 2022): 197 – 221, <https://doi.org/10.22548/shf.v15i1.720>.

⁹ Wahida Rahim and Achmad Abubakar, "Nilai – Nilai Ekologis Dalam Al – Qur'an: Suatu Kajian Tafsir Tematik," *Diya Al-Afkar: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an Dan Al-Hadis* 13, no. 2 (2025): 23 – 34, <https://doi.org/10.24235/diyaafkar.v13i2.22356>.

¹⁰ Andika Mubarak, "Kelestarian Lingkungan Dalam Al – Qur'an: Analisis Pemikiran M. Quraish Shihab Dalam Tafsir Al – Misbah," *Hikmah* 19, no. 2 (December 30, 2022): 227 – 37, <https://doi.org/10.53802/hikmah.v19i2.174>.

¹¹ Retna Fitri, "Nilai – Nilai Pendidikan Lingkungan Dalam Q.S. Ar – Ruum Ayat 41 – 43 Menurut Tafsir Al – Azhar Karya Hamka," *Sulawesi Tenggara Educational Journal* 6, no. 1 (April 30, 2026): 780 – 93, <https://doi.org/10.54297/seduj.v6i1.1497>.

¹² Siti Chodijah and Juni Ratnasari, "Kerusakan Lingkungan Menurut Sains Dan Ahmad Mustafa Al – Maraghi (Studi Tafsir Al – Maraghi Pada Surat Al – Rum Ayat 41, Al – Mulk Ayat 3 – 4 Dan Al – A'raf Ayat 56)," *Al-Tadabbur: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 5, no. 1 (2020): 121 – 36, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30868/at.v5i01.702>.

and environmental contexts. As Ahmad Qoiman explains in his analysis of Amin Abdullah's thought on "the return to the Qur'an and Sunnah," this return should be understood not merely as a textual return but as a continuous effort to reinterpret its normative values in response to the dynamics of contemporary civilization.¹³ This paradigm has encouraged various contextual approaches, particularly Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement,¹⁴ Amina Wadud's contextual reading,¹⁵ and Abdullah Saeed's contextual hermeneutics.¹⁶ Genealogically, Saeed's approach builds on Rahman's contextualist project, retaining its emphasis on the socio – historical context of revelation while offering a more granular procedure operationalized through four stages: encounter with the world of the text, critical analysis, meaning for the first recipients, and meaning for the present. This operational distinction makes Saeed's framework particularly suitable for environmental verses, whose ecological meanings require careful examination of key terms, textual structures, and contemporary ethical implications — Saeed is therefore selected not for categorical superiority over earlier models, but because his methodological granularity aligns closely with this study's analytical needs.

Recent studies demonstrate that contextual and value – oriented approaches are increasingly employed in Qur'anic studies, particularly regarding gender, family, ethico – legal issues, and environmental concerns: Rahman's Double Movement has been applied to Q.S. al – Anfal [8]:17 and family law,¹⁷ Wadud's approach to gender equality,¹⁸ and Saeed's hermeneutics to gender, inheritance, and adoption. These studies demonstrate the flexibility of contextual approaches, although their application to ecological issues remains relatively limited. Recent ecological studies have nevertheless begun to explore Qur'anic environmental ethics through other approaches: Afrizal Nur examines Qur'anic ecotheology and forest protection through khalīfah, mīzan, and the prohibition of fasad;¹⁹ Rohma and Putri employ a maqāṣidī interpretation of plastic pollution through ḥifẓ al – nafs and ḥifẓ al – bi'ah;²⁰ and Juwita applies Saeed's contextual approach to prophetic

¹³ Ahmad Qoiman, "Spirit "Kembali Kepada Al – Qur'an Dan Sunnah" Di Era Disrupsi Dalam Muhammadiyah Perspektif Amin Abdullah," *Jurnal Studi Hadis Nusantara* 3, no. 1 (July 1, 2021): 48, <https://doi.org/10.24235/jshn.v3i1.9014>.

¹⁴ Muhammad Yusuf, Sofyan Hadi, and Minan Jauhari, "Fazlurahman's Double Movement and Thematic Methods of Interpretation of the Al – Qur'an," *Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Sharia Economics (IIJSE)* 7, no. 3 SE – Articles (October 2024), <https://doi.org/10.31538/ijse.v7i3.5647>.

¹⁵ Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 25 – 29, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195128369.001.0001>.

¹⁶ Ridwan Ridwan, Yuni Kartika, and Siti Sarah, "The Phenomenon of Modern Hedonism (Abdullah Saeed's Contextual Hermeneutics Analysis of Surah At – Takatsur): Fenomena Hedonisme Modern (Analisis Hermeneutika Kontekstual Abdullah Saeed Terhadap Surat At – Takatsur)," *International Journal of Islamic Thought, Research and Practice* 2, no. 2 (2025): 14 – 22.

¹⁷ Miatul Qudisia and Muhammad Faishal Haq, "Analisis Surat Al – Anfāl Ayat 17: Upaya Mengungkap Sisi Transendental Hermeneutika Double Movement," *Jurnal Al-Fanar* 4, no. 1 (February 27, 2021): 17 – 30, <https://doi.org/10.33511/alfanar.v4n1.17-30>.

¹⁸ Aji Febriansyah, Aldi Armansah Prayoga, and Siti Maysaroh, "Kesetaraan Gender Menurut Amina Wadud: Penafsiran Kontekstual Dalam Al – Qur'an," *ALMUSTOFA: Journal of Islamic Studies and Research* 2, no. 1 (2025): 338 – 53.

¹⁹ Afrizal Nur et al., "Qur'anic Ecotheology and the Ethics of Forest Protection in Indonesia," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis* 26, no. 2 (July 31, 2025): 351 – 82, <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.v26i2.6312>.

²⁰ Dika Purnama Aulia Rohma and Lintang Dewi Fi'liya Putri, "Manusia Dan Pelestarian Lingkungan: Perspektif Tafsir Maqāṣidī Dalam Penanganan Sampah Plastik," *Canonica Religia* 2, no. 1 (August 25, 2024): 87 – 108, <https://doi.org/10.30762/cr.v2i1.2972>.

traditions on energy management.²¹ These studies differ from the present study in object and methodological orientation — none specifically examines Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 through Saeed's four-stage framework to reconstruct its socio-historical meaning and relate it systematically to contemporary ecological responsibility. The novelty of the present study therefore does not lie in introducing ecological concepts such as *khalīfah*, *mīzan*, or *fasad* as entirely new themes, but in developing a specific contextual interpretation of Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 that extends its ethical implications toward ecological consciousness and sustainable civilizational practice. This gap—the limited methodological pathway connecting textual interpretation with an operational ethical framework—provides the analytical basis for developing Eco-Civilizational Resonance Tafsir. This integrative framework extends Saeed's contextual hermeneutics toward ecological and civilizational transformation.

Research Method

This study employs a qualitative library research design, with Abdullah Saeed's contextual hermeneutics serving as the primary analytical framework.²² It focuses on Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 as the principal text, with Q.S. al-Rūm [30]:41 and Q.S. al-A'rāf [7]:56 as supporting verses. The primary sources are classical and contemporary commentaries — Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī, Tafsīr al-Kashshāf, al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr, Tafsīr al-Mishbah, and Tafsīr al-Azhar — analyzed through a thematic and contextual reading (*tafsīr mawḍū'ī*) to examine how the exegetes interpret *khalīfah*, *isti'mār al-arḍ*, ecological balance, and the prohibition of *fasād fī al-arḍ*. Secondary sources comprise relevant journal articles and scholarly studies on Qur'anic environmental ethics and contextual hermeneutics, used to critically engage the findings with previous scholarship, identify research gaps, and situate the interpretation within contemporary ecological discourse. The study selected sources based on their relevance, scholarly authority, and contribution to the study's objectives.

To interpret the data, this study employs Abdullah Saeed's contextual hermeneutics to examine the linguistic, historical, and contextual meanings of the selected verses, supported by the theories of Hans Jonas (Principle of Responsibility, for ecological ethics), Pierre Bourdieu (*habitus*, for the internalization of ecological values), Andrew Dobson (ecological citizenship, connecting environmental ethics with civic responsibility), and Arne Naess and Murray Bookchin (critiquing anthropocentrism and reconstructing a harmonious human-nature relationship). These perspectives are integrated dialogically with the Islamic concepts of *tawḥīd*, *amānah*, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, and *fiqh al-bī'ah* to formulate the proposed Eco-Civilizational Resonance Tafsir framework.

Tawḥīd and Isti'mār al-Arḍ: Reconstructing the Qur'anic Human-Earth Relationship through Contextual Hermeneutics

Abdullah Saeed is a leading contemporary scholar of Qur'anic studies and is widely recognized for developing a contextualist approach to Qur'anic interpretation. His

²¹ Utari Maysa Juwita, Iril Admizal, and Ican Mandala, "Revitalisasi Konservasi Lingkungan Di Era Modern; Telaah Hadist Pengelolaan Energi Dalam Pendekatan Kontekstual Abdullah Saeed," *Jurnal Studi Islam* 12, no. 2 (December 2, 2023): 166–81, <https://doi.org/10.33477/jsi.v12i2.5641>.

²² John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. (California: SAGE Publications, 2018), 18–22.

approach is grounded in the recognition that Qur'anic verses were revealed within particular socio–historical circumstances while simultaneously conveying moral and ethical values that transcend their original contexts.²³ Accordingly, Qur'anic interpretation should not be confined to the text's literal meaning. Still, it should also consider the circumstances of revelation, the text's linguistic and literary structure, the socio–historical conditions of its first recipients, and the relevance of its underlying values to contemporary realities.²⁴ Saeed develops this interpretive process through four interconnected stages: encounter with the world of the text, critical analysis, meaning for the first recipients, and meaning for the present. Within this framework, Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 can be read not merely as a historical narrative concerning the Prophet Ṣāliḥ and the people of Thamūd, but as a Qur'anic discourse that articulates the theological and ethical foundations of the relationship between human beings and the earth. A contextual reading of this verse shows that this relationship is grounded in tawḥīd and expressed through the concept of isti'mar al–arḍ, indicating that human responsibility toward the environment is not an isolated ethical obligation but a consequence of recognizing humanity as part of God's creation and a participant in the order He has established.²⁵

The first stage, encounter with the world of the text, situates Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 within the historical and narrative context of the Prophet Ṣāliḥ and the people of Thamūd. In this context, Allah sent Ṣāliḥ to call the Thamūd to worship Allah alone, abandon their wrongdoing, seek forgiveness, and return to obedience.²⁶ The verse therefore begins with *tawḥīd* before referring to the human relationship with the earth:

وَالِى تَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا قَالَ يَاقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ هُوَ أَنشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا
إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَبِّي قَرِيبٌ مُجِيبٌ ٦١

*And to Thamūd [We sent] their brother Ṣāliḥ. He said, "O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him. He produced you from the earth and settled you in it, so ask forgiveness of Him and then repent to Him. Indeed, my Lord is Near and Responsive."*²⁷

Al–Ṭabarī, al–Qurṭubī, and Ibn Kathīr converge on reading *ista'marakum fīha* as Allah granting the Thamūd the ability to inhabit, settle, and develop the earth—a reminder that they were given the earth as a place of habitation, yet remained bound to obedience.²⁸ The verse's arrangement is significant: the command to worship Allah precedes the description of human origins and their role in developing the earth, establishing a close

²³ Abd Aziz Faiz, "Epistemologi Tafsir Al–Qur'an Kontekstual Abdullah Saeed Dalam Arus Perubahan Sosial–Budaya Masyarakat Kontemporer," *Empirisma: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Kebudayaan Islam* 33, no. 2 (June 15, 2024): 271–90, <https://doi.org/10.30762/empirisma.v33i2.2019>.

²⁴ Hatib Rachman, "Hermeneutika Al–Qur'an Kontekstual: Metode Menafsirkan Al–Quran Abdullah Saeed," *Afkaruna* 9, no. 2 (2013): 148–61, <https://doi.org/10.18196/aiijis.2013.0025.148–161>.

²⁵ Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 116–50.

²⁶ Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al–Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'an Ta'Wīl Āy Al-Qur'Ān*, vol. 15 (Beirut: Dār al–Kutub al–'Ilmiyyah, 1999), 368–69.

²⁷ English translations of Qur'anic verses in this article are adapted from the Sahih International translation, with minor adjustments by the author for contextual clarity.

²⁸ Al–Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'an Ta'Wīl Āy Al-Qur'Ān*, 15:370; Al–Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi' Li Ahkām Al-Qur'Ān*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al–Kutub al–'Ilmiyyah, 2006), 367–70; Ismā'īl Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-'Aẓīm*, vol. 4 (Riyadh: Dār Ṭayyibah, 1999), 331.

relationship between *tawhīd*, human existence, and the responsible use of the earth that forms the basis for the next stage of Saeed's approach.

At the second stage, critical analysis, Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 is examined through its linguistic features and interrelationship with other verses, focusing on two principal expressions: *huwa ansha'akum mina al-arḍ* and *wa ista'marakum fihā*. The first indicates that Allah brought human beings forth from the earth; the verb *ansha'akum* (from أَشَاءَ) conveys creating, originating, and causing something to emerge, establishing a direct ontological connection between human existence and the earth rather than portraying humanity as detached from the natural world.²⁹

The second expression, *wa ista'marakum fihā*, contains the verb *ista'marakum*, which derives from the past-tense verb اسْتَعْمَرَ (*ista'mara*), from the root ع-م-ر. The term is associated with meanings such as inhabiting, cultivating, constructing, developing, and making a place prosperous. In the context of Q.S. Hūd [11]:61, *isti'mār al-arḍ* therefore indicates the capacity Allah granted human beings to inhabit and develop the earth. The relationship between *ansha'akum* and *ista'marakum* matters because the verse first establishes the relationship between human beings and the earth through their origin, then describes their capacity to cultivate and develop it.³⁰ Thus, the verse presents human existence and human agency toward the earth as two interconnected dimensions rather than as separate realities. Classical Qur'anic exegesis converges on this meaning: Al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, and al-Qurṭubī all interpret *ista'marakum fihā* as Allah granting the Thamūd—and, by extension, humanity—the ability to inhabit, settle, and develop the earth as a divine provision.³¹ Accordingly, *isti'mār* cannot be reduced to mere physical occupation or possession of land; rather, it refers to an active human role in establishing and developing life on the earth.

However, the linguistic and exegetical meaning of *isti'mār* should not be understood as an unrestricted legitimation of human exploitation of the earth and its natural resources. The human capacity to inhabit, cultivate, and develop the earth, as indicated in Q.S. Hūd [11]:61, must be read together with other Qur'anic verses that address the consequences of human actions for the order of the earth. In critical analysis, the interrelationship among verses matters because a verse's meaning is understood not only through its internal structure but also through its connection to the broader Qur'anic message. Therefore, Q.S. al-Rūm [30]:41 and Q.S. al-A'raf [7]:56 are employed as supporting verses to clarify the ethical dimension of *isti'mār al-arḍ*. Q.S. al-Rūm [30]:41 states:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ٤١

Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned, so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done, that perhaps they will return [to righteousness].

²⁹ Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir ibn Muḥammad Ibn 'Āshūr, *Al-Taḥrīr Wa Al-Tanwīr*, vol. 8 (Tunis: al-Dār al-Tūnisiyyah li al-Nashr, 1984), 115–18.

³⁰ M.Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Miṣbāḥ: Pesan, Kesan, Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, vol. 6 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), 263–86.

³¹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy Al-Qur'ān*, 15:370; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Aẓīm*, 4:332; Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi' Li Ahkām Al-Qur'ān*, 2:367–70.

This verse demonstrates that the human capacity to develop the earth carries moral consequences: development cannot be evaluated solely by the benefits it produces for human beings. Still, it must also be assessed by its consequences for the continuity of life. When human activity produces *fasād*, the capacity originally granted for constructive development becomes an activity that causes destruction.³²

Meanwhile, Q.S. al – A'raf [7]:56 states:

وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ٥٦

And cause not corruption upon the earth after its reformation. And invoke Him in fear and aspiration. Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to the doers of good.

This verse explicitly prohibits corruption on the earth after it has been set in order; the expression *ba'da iṣlāḥihā* points to an existing condition of order that must be maintained. The prohibition thus establishes a normative principle directing human activity toward preservation rather than destruction — *iṣlāḥ* being the principle opposite to *fasād*, referring to efforts to maintain and restore the order of life.³³ Read intertextually, the three verses reveal a complementary structure: Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 establishes the positive capacity for *isti'mār* — to inhabit and develop the earth; Q.S. al – Rūm [30]:41 shows the possibility of *fasād* as a consequence of misusing that capacity; and Q.S. al – A'raf [7]:56 prohibits corruption and affirms the importance of *iṣlāḥ*. Accordingly, the critical analysis of Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 shows that *isti'mār* is not a mandate free from ethical constraints: it operates within a normative framework connecting the human capacity to develop the earth with the obligation to prevent destruction and maintain ecological order, embodying a principle of responsible development rather than unrestricted exploitation.

At the stage of meaning for the first recipients, Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 must be understood in relation to the Thamūd's social, moral, and religious condition: a people who could inhabit, cultivate, and develop the earth, yet whose achievements did not prevent their destruction when they rejected divine guidance.³⁴ Al – Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al – Qurṭubī, and al – Zamakhsharī converge in reading Ṣāliḥ's call as a summons to affirm Allah's sole worship and to recognize that the ability to inhabit and develop the earth was a divine provision.³⁵ The first recipients would therefore not have understood *isti'mār al-arḍ* merely as an economic mandate, but as a divine blessing embedded within a theological framework of moral responsibility.

The narrative of the Thamūd thus introduces an important moral dimension: the Qur'an does not reject human civilization or material progress, but the fate of the Thamūd shows that achievement detached from obedience and moral responsibility can become a source of civilizational failure. The enduring message of Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 is consequently not a prohibition against developing the earth, but a requirement that human capacity to develop it remain grounded in worship, accountability, and obedience to God.

³² Al – Zamakhsharī, *Al-Kashshāf 'an Ḥaqā'iq Al-Tanzīl*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al – Ma'rifah, 1995), 482 – 84.

³³ Ibn 'Āshūr, *Al-Taḥrīr Wa Al-Tanwīr*, 8:173 – 74.

³⁴ HAMKA, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, vol. 5 (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1982), 3499 – 3505.

³⁵ Al – Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy Al-Qur'ān*, 15:368 – 69; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsir Al-Qur'ān Al-'Aẓīm*, 4:331; Al – Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi' Li Ahkām Al-Qur'ān*, 2:367 – 70; Al – Zamakhsharī, *Al-Kashshāf 'an Ḥaqā'iq Al-Tanzīl*, 2:406 – 8.

From this perspective, *isti'mār al-arḍ* should be understood as a civilizational mandate with ethical limits: human beings are granted the capacity to inhabit, cultivate, and develop the earth, but this capacity does not constitute unrestricted authority over nature, since human agency remains subordinate to God as Creator and sovereign. *Isti'mār* therefore encompasses two inseparable dimensions — capacity and responsibility — bounded by Qur'anic principles such as *'adl* (justice), *mīzān* (balance), and the prohibition of *fasād* (corruption). *Isti'mār*, accordingly, is more appropriately understood as responsible cultivation and flourishing rather than unrestricted exploitation.

This interpretation also reveals a conceptual relationship between *isti'mār al-arḍ* and *khalāfah*. Although Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 does not explicitly use the term *khalīfah*, its portrayal of humanity as endowed with the capacity to develop the earth resonates with the Qur'anic understanding of humanity as entrusted with responsibility within creation—a delegated responsibility rather than absolute sovereignty. Human beings may act upon nature because God has granted them the capacity to do so, but remain accountable for the consequences of their actions,³⁶ making stewardship and trusteeship a better description of human interaction with the earth than absolute ownership.

The foundational role of *tawḥīd* in this relationship becomes clearer when Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 is read alongside Seyyed Hossein Nasr's critique of modern ecological consciousness. Nasr argues that the contemporary environmental crisis is rooted not only in technological or economic failure but in a spiritual crisis arising from the desacralization of nature — the reduction of nature to a material object valued only for its usefulness to human beings. From an Islamic perspective, by contrast, nature is part of God's creation and a manifestation of His signs.³⁷ *Tawḥīd* thus functions not only as a theological doctrine concerning the oneness of God but as an ontological and ethical foundation for the human relationship with the natural world. Since all elements of creation belong to a single order established by the same Creator,³⁸ humanity cannot legitimately position itself as an autonomous center with absolute freedom over nature. In this sense, *isti'mār* becomes a practical manifestation of *tawḥīd* in social, civilizational, and ecological life.

This understanding also resonates with contemporary developments in *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. The classical objectives of Islamic law—protecting religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property—cannot be sustainably realized without a healthy environment, since environmental degradation directly threatens human life, health, food security, and the well-being of future generations. Environmental protection (*ḥifẓ al-bī'ah*) has therefore become an important dimension of contemporary *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and a necessary condition for realizing *maṣlaḥah*.³⁹ This is reinforced by *fiqh al-bī'ah*, which reorients the

³⁶ Lintang Dewi Fi'liya Putri, Brillian Zaki Ramadhan Ahmadi, and Kamailia Karimatul Aulia', "Membaca Krisis Lingkungan Melalui Lensa Tafsir Ekologi: Analisis QS. Al-Rūm [30]: 41," *Canonica Religia* 3, no. 1 (August 22, 2025): 35–48, <https://doi.org/10.30762/cr.v3i1.3143>; Lalu Musiban Jumadissani, "Pelestarian Lingkungan Hidup Dalam QS Al-Baqarah (2):11 Perspektif 'Ali Jum'ah Dalam Kitab Al-Nibras Fi Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Karim," *KALAMIZU: Jurnal Sains, Sosial, Dan Studi Agama* 1, no. 4 (2025): 391–405.

³⁷ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 8–9.

³⁸ Akhmad Alim and Bahrum Subagiya, "Diskursus Pendidikan Islam Berwawasan Lingkungan Dengan Pendekatan Tafsir Maudhu'i," *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 11, no. 01 (February 28, 2022): 59, <https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v11i01.2036>.

³⁹ Matsna Afwi Nadia and M Riyan Hidayat, "Fiqh Lingkungan: Analisis Atas QS. Ar-Rum [30]:41 Perspektif Maqasidi," *At-Tahfidz: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 5, no. 1 (2023): 35–48, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.53649/at-tahfidz.v5i1.360>.

human – nature relationship from a paradigm of absolute ownership to one of trusteeship (*amanah*): nature is part of a divinely established order that requires responsible interaction, not a resource for unlimited extraction. In the context of Q.S. Hūd [11]:61, *isti'mār* thus mandates developing human life without undermining the ecological foundations that sustain it — utilization and preservation belong within the same ethical framework.

The Qur'anic conception of *isti'mār* can also be placed in dialogue with Arne Naess's theory of deep ecology, which criticizes anthropocentric approaches and argues for recognizing the intrinsic value of non – human life.⁴⁰ Although deep ecology emerges from a distinct philosophical tradition, it converges with the Qur'anic worldview in criticizing excessive anthropocentrism: creation is not reducible to its utility for human beings, and concepts such as *mīzān* and the prohibition of *fasād* provide ethical grounds for limiting destructive human intervention.⁴¹ This dialogue reinforces the proposition that human development must be evaluated not only by material benefits but also by its consequences for the integrity of the wider ecological system.

The fourth stage of Saeed's contextual hermeneutics, meaning for the present, brings Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 into direct engagement with contemporary environmental realities— climate change, deforestation, pollution, biodiversity loss, and ecosystem degradation — which demonstrate modern humanity's unprecedented capacity to transform the earth.⁴² The central question is therefore no longer whether human beings can modify their environment, but how they should exercise that capacity without undermining the ecological conditions on which life depends; *isti'mār al-arḍ* thus requires contextual reconstruction as a moral and civilizational responsibility rather than mere inhabitation. Contemporary exegetes reinforce this reading: Ibn 'Āshūr connects *isti'mār* to the constructive dimension of human civilizational agency,⁴³ Shihab understands it as a capacity subject to divine guidance and responsibility,⁴⁴ and Hamka emphasizes that the privileges granted to humanity must be accompanied by moral responsibility rather than unrestricted exploitation.⁴⁵ These interpretations confirm that *isti'mār*'s civilizational dimension must remain connected to ethical responsibility.

From this perspective, the contemporary significance of Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 lies not in rejecting development but in redefining its normative foundation. Modern economic and technological development represents a contemporary form of *isti'mār*. Yet, its legitimacy depends on whether it helps preserve the conditions necessary for life: development that destroys forests, contaminates water, accelerates climate change, or undermines vulnerable communities cannot fully represent the Qur'anic ideal of *isti'mār*. The concept therefore requires a shift from a purely anthropocentric model of development to a responsible ecological one, in which economic and technological progress becomes

⁴⁰ Arne Naess and David Rothenberg, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 78 – 83.

⁴¹ Fitri, "Nilai – Nilai Pendidikan Lingkungan Dalam Q.S. Ar – Ruum Ayat 41 – 43 Menurut Tafsir Al – Azhar Karya Hamka."

⁴² Achmad Cholil Zuhdi, "Krisis Lingkungan Hidup Dalam Perspektif Al – Qur'an," *Mutawatir: Jurnal Keilmuan Tafsir Hadis* 2, no. 2 (September 9, 2012): 140, <https://doi.org/10.15642/mutawatir.2012.2.2.140> – 162.

⁴³ Al – Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'an Ta'Wīl Āy Al-Qur'Ān*, 15:370.

⁴⁴ Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Miṣbāḥ: Pesan, Kesan, Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, 6:263 – 86.

⁴⁵ HAMKA, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, 5:3499 – 3505.

ethically legitimate only when it helps preserve life, ecological balance, social justice, and the welfare of present and future generations.

The contextual interpretation of Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 thus reveals an interconnected conceptual structure: *tawhīd* provides the theological foundation by affirming God's sovereignty over creation; *anṣa'ukum mina al-arḍ* establishes humanity's ontological connection with the earth;⁴⁶ *isti'mār al-arḍ* articulates humanity's civilizational responsibility to inhabit, cultivate, and develop it; while *khilāfah* and *amānah* clarify that this responsibility constitutes stewardship rather than domination;⁴⁷ and the principles of *mīzān*, *ʿadl*, and the prohibition of *fasād* establish ethical boundaries against destructive exploitation.⁴⁸ *Isti'mār al-arḍ* should therefore be reconstructed not as a theological justification for domination over nature but as a *tawhīd* – based civilizational mandate — a relationship between humanity and the earth that is neither domination nor separation, but responsible participation.

Human beings are granted the capacity to inhabit, utilize, and develop the earth, but *tawhīd* governs this capacity, moral accountability constrains it, and the continuity of life directs it. The contextual meaning of *isti'mār* therefore extends beyond physical development toward an ethical civilization that maintains ecological balance and promotes justice across generations and species — *tawhīd* thus serving not merely as the foundation of faith but as the theological basis of a Qur'anic environmental ethic, and the starting point for an eco – civilizational paradigm integrating human flourishing, ecological sustainability, and divine accountability within a single moral framework.

Contextualizing the Ecological Trust in Contemporary Life

Having completed Critical Analysis and Meaning for the First Recipients, Abdullah Saeed's contextual hermeneutics proceeds to its final stage: Meaning for the Present. This transition is essential because historical interpretation is not the ultimate objective of exegesis but the foundation for identifying universal values applicable across contexts — requiring the message of Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 to be reconsidered in relation to the environmental crisis arising from humanity's changing relationship with nature.

At the Meaning for the Present stage, the analytical focus shifts from how the Thamūd understood the verse to how its moral values can guide contemporary society. Shihab, in *Tafsir al-Miṣbāḥ*, explains *isti'mār* as humanity's capacity to inhabit and develop the earth responsibly rather than destructively,⁴⁹ while Hamka, in *Tafsir al-Azhar*, links human authority over the earth to obedience to Allah.⁵⁰ Following Saeed's approach, the universal principle embedded in *isti'mār al-arḍ* is that humanity's capacity to develop civilization is inseparable from its ethical responsibility to preserve the earth — human beings are not merely consumers of natural resources but moral agents entrusted with ensuring that development does not undermine the ecological system.

⁴⁶ Amin, "Wawasan Al – Quran Tentang Manusia Dan Lingkungan Hidup Sebuah Kajian Tafsir Tematik."

⁴⁷ Fadila Ikke Nuralita and Abad Badruzaman, "Tafsir Ilmi Perlindungan Lingkungan Terhadap Ekologi Dan Keadilan Lingkungan," *Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 14, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.15408/quhas.v14i1.39957>.

⁴⁸ M Syukron Mahendra and Adnan Nugraha, "Akibat Dekadensi Moral Terhadap Degradasi Lingkungan Menurut Wahbah Zuhaili Dalam Tafsir Al – Munir QS Ar – Rum:41," *JUTEQ: Jurnal Teologi & Tafsir* 2, no. 6 (2025): 1251 – 62.

⁴⁹ Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Miṣbāḥ: Pesan, Kesan, Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, 6:263 – 86.

⁵⁰ HAMKA, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, 5:3499 – 3505.

In the contemporary context, this ecological trust encompasses social, intergenerational, and ecological responsibility—dimensions that show the message of Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 extends far beyond its original setting. Whereas the Thamūd were condemned for letting civilizational achievement foster arrogance and reject divine guidance, the same moral failure can manifest today in environmental exploitation and development paradigms that disregard ecological limits. This resonates with Hans Jonas's Imperative of Responsibility. Because modern technology has given humanity unprecedented power to shape nature, ethical decision – making can no longer be limited to present interests. It must also consider the long – term consequences of human actions for future generations.⁵¹ Jonas's principle converges with the Islamic concept of ecological trusteeship (*amānah*), as both reject short – term interests pursued at the expense of environmental sustainability.

Nevertheless, Jonas and the Islamic worldview diverge philosophically: Jonas grounds responsibility in rational reflection on the existential risks of technological civilization, whereas Islamic environmental ethics derives responsibility from humanity's relationship with God as Creator and Owner of the earth.⁵² Ecological responsibility in Islam is thus both a rational – philosophical and a spiritual – theological obligation, as the dialogue between Jonas and thinkers such as Fazlun Khalid demonstrates.⁵³ Andrew Dobson's concept of ecological citizenship further explains how society should embody this trusteeship: environmental issues cannot be reduced to individual choices but involve collective civic responsibility, since environmental degradation results from systems of production, consumption, and public policy.⁵⁴ This aligns closely with the Islamic concept of *farḍ kifāyah* (collective obligation), making environmental stewardship a shared obligation essential to sustaining both human society and the wider community of life.⁵⁵

This social dimension means that implementing *isti'mār al-arḍ* cannot rely on personal awareness alone; it requires transformation in education, policy, and cultural values. Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus offers insight here: human behavior is shaped not only by rational decisions but by deeply internalized habits and social structures, so lasting ecological transformation requires cultivating an ecological habitus — socially embedded dispositions through which environmental care becomes part of personal identity and collective practice.⁵⁶ This resonates with the Islamic concept of *adab*, which signifies the ability to place oneself appropriately within the divinely ordained order of creation; a person possessing ecological *adab* recognizes that the relationship between humanity and nature must be governed by respect, balance, and responsibility.⁵⁷

⁵¹ Hans Jonas, *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 37 – 40.

⁵² Jonas, 39 – 44.

⁵³ Fazlun Khalid, *Signs on the Earth: Islam, Modernity and the Climate Crisis* (Birmingham: Kube Publishing, 2019), 85 – 105.

⁵⁴ Andrew Dobson, *Citizenship and the Environment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 87 – 110.

⁵⁵ Ahmad Naufal Afifi, "Etika Lingkungan Dalam Tafsir Nusantara: Studi Komparatif Marāḥ Labīd Dan Al – Misbah," *Indonesian Journal of Innovation Multidiscipliner Research* 4, no. 2 (May 12, 2026): 1755 – 67, <https://doi.org/10.69693/ijim.v4i2.660>; Mun'im, "Etika Lingkungan Biosentris Dalam Al – Quran: Analisis Tafsir Pelestarian Lingkungan Hidup Karya Kementerian Agama," 197 – 221.

⁵⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 22 – 30.

⁵⁷ Alfa Ilmiyatun Nafi'ah, "Konservasi Sumber Daya Laut Dan Pemanfaatannya Bagi Kehidupan Manusia (Analisis Ayat – Ayat Maritim Perspektif Tafsir Al – Qur'an Tematik Pelestarian Lingkungan Hidup Kemenag RI)" (UIN KH Abdurrahman Wahid, 2021).

Ecological transformation within Islam thus requires not only behavioral adjustment but the cultivation of moral character, making care for the earth an expression of spiritual excellence.

In conclusion, the dialogue between Abdullah Saeed's contextual hermeneutics, contemporary Qur'anic exegesis (Shihab and Hamka), Hans Jonas's ethics of responsibility, Andrew Dobson's ecological citizenship, and Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus demonstrates the enduring relevance of Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 to contemporary environmental challenges. *Isti'mār al-arḍ* thus extends beyond its historical meaning as a mandate to cultivate the earth, emerging as a comprehensive principle of ecological ethics that integrates civilizational progress, moral responsibility, and accountability before God — a principle of responsible civilizational development in which human flourishing is inseparable from ecological sustainability.

Social Transformation Toward an Ecological Civilization

Having completed the Meaning for the Present stage, the next step in Saeed's contextual hermeneutical framework is to translate these values into practical social applications, since Qur'anic interpretation must respond to humanity's evolving needs across changing historical contexts. *Isti'mār al-arḍ* should therefore not be understood merely as an individual moral principle but as a foundation for social transformation reshaping economic systems, cultural values, and humanity's relationship with the environment. The trust (*amānah*) embedded in *isti'mār al-arḍ* requires a paradigm shift from exploitative models of development toward ecological balance, since degradation is not simply the result of individual behavior but is embedded within social structures that shape production, consumption, and the treatment of nature.⁵⁸ Ecological transformation must therefore occur simultaneously at three levels: spiritual (renewed awareness of humanity's relationship with God), social (transformation of collective values and cultural practices), and structural (reform of development models and public policy).

This resonates with Murray Bookchin's theory of social ecology: ecological crises cannot be separated from social crises, since environmental destruction is rooted in systems of domination and exploitation within human society — when societies institutionalize domination over other people, they extend the same logic of domination to the natural world.⁵⁹ Resolving ecological crises therefore requires not only environmentally friendly technologies but profound transformation of the social structures that perpetuate exploitation. Bookchin's perspective resonates with the Qur'anic critique of the Thamūd, who were condemned not for their civilizational achievement but because their development became detached from moral consciousness, leading to arrogance and rejection of divine guidance — a critique of civilizations that pursue material progress while neglecting social and ecological responsibility.

Nevertheless, Bookchin's approach differs from the Islamic perspective on the roots of the environmental crisis: whereas Bookchin emphasizes socio – political structures, Nasr locates the crisis at a deeper spiritual level rooted in the desacralization of nature—a distinction already noted in this study's earlier discussion of *tawhīd*.⁶⁰ Contemporary

⁵⁸ Delsi Amelia Putri et al., "Tafsir Ekologis: Membaca Ayat – Ayat Alam Sebagai Etika Konservasi Dalam Krisis Iklim Global," *Al-Furqan: Jurnal Agama, Sosial, Dan Budaya* 4, no. 3 (2025): 570 – 84.

⁵⁹ Murray Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy* (Palo Alto: Cheshire Books, 1982), 19 – 40.

⁶⁰ Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature*, 3 – 15.

Qur'anic exegesis reinforces the spiritual reading: Shihab, in *Tafsir al-Miṣbāḥ*, emphasizes that the earth's resources are God's provision to be used responsibly rather than exploited destructively,⁶¹ while Hamka, in *Tafsir al-Azhar*, links human responsibility toward the earth to obedience and gratitude toward Allah.⁶² These interpretations confirm that *isti'mār al-arḍ* cannot be separated from ethical and spiritual responsibility.

In conclusion, the social transformation envisioned by Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 is a multidimensional process encompassing spiritual renewal, structural reform, and meaningful human relationships with the earth. The dialogue between Saeed's contextual hermeneutics, contemporary exegesis (Shihab, Hamka), Bookchin's social ecology, and Nasr's ecological spirituality shows that environmental crises cannot be resolved through technical solutions alone but require a fundamental transformation of civilizational paradigms. *Isti'mār al-arḍ* thus represents far more than a command to develop the earth physically; it is a divine mandate to build a civilization founded on *tawḥīd*, justice, balance, and respect for creation—one that redirects human progress toward harmony with the divine purpose of sustaining life on earth.

Dialogical Synthesis: From Contextual Interpretation to Ecological Civilization

The concepts emerging from the contextual interpretation of Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 — *tawḥīd*, *khalīfah*, *amānah*, *mīzān*, and the prohibition of *fasād fī al-arḍ* — indicate that ecological responsibility extends beyond individual moral conduct toward restructuring human relationships with nature, society, and institutions. Five theoretical perspectives sharpen this reading in complementary ways: Hans Jonas contributes the dimension of intergenerational responsibility; Pierre Bourdieu, the formation of ecological habitus; Andrew Dobson, the dimension of ecological citizenship; Arne Naess, the recognition of the intrinsic value of non-human life; and Murray Bookchin, the structural transformation of society. Read together with Abdullah Saeed's contextual hermeneutics, these perspectives show that the Qur'anic ecological message can develop into a transformative paradigm — moving from theological recognition to ethical responsibility, from responsibility to habitual practice and citizenship, and ultimately to structural transformation. An ecological civilization thus requires the simultaneous transformation of human consciousness, social practice, civic responsibility, and socio-political structure, grounded in the Qur'anic principle of maintaining balance and preventing ecological destruction. The following section develops this synthesis into a more systematic conceptual model.

Eco-Civilizational Resonance Tafsir: A Conceptual Model

Abdullah Saeed's hermeneutical framework shows that the contextual interpretation of Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 cannot reduce *isti'mār al-arḍ* to the physical use or development of the earth; through its four stages, the verse reveals a broader ethical relationship among human beings, God, and the earth. This is grounded in both classical exegesis — Al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, and al-Qurṭubī all relate *wa ista'marakum fīhā* to God's granting

⁶¹ Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Miṣbāḥ: Pesan, Kesan, Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, 6:263–86.

⁶² HAMKA, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, 5:3499–3505.

humanity the capacity to inhabit, settle, and cultivate the earth⁶³ — and contemporary exegesis: Shihab foregrounds responsible management directed toward *maṣlaḥah*,⁶⁴ while Hamka reinforces the moral and spiritual consciousness underlying that responsibility, tying humanity's ability to benefit from nature to awareness of God's greatness.⁶⁵ Together, these perspectives provide the textual foundation for the conceptual synthesis developed in this study.

When these contextual findings enter dialogue with the theoretical insights of Jonas, Naess, Dobson, Bourdieu, and Bookchin, five interconnected dimensions emerge: Tawḥidic Consciousness, Sacred Stewardship, Ecological Responsibility, Eco – Habitus Formation, and Eco – Civilizational Transformation. These dimensions are not mechanically derived from the structure of the preceding subsections, nor imposed in advance through external theoretical categories, but emerge from the convergence of meanings identified through contextual interpretation, classical and contemporary exegesis, and contemporary ecological theory — forming a conceptual synthesis rooted in the Qur'anic text while responding to changing ecological realities.

The first dimension, Tawḥidic Consciousness, emerges from the opening command in Q.S. Hūd [11]:61, *u'budū Allāha mā lakum min ilāhīn ghayruh*, which establishes worship of God as the theological foundation for humanity's relationship with the earth. Al – Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, and al – Qurṭubī converge on placing tawḥīd at the center of Ṣāliḥ's call before discussing humanity's relationship with the earth—indicating that humanity's capacity to develop the earth is not an autonomous right but a responsibility exercised in recognition of God's sovereignty. This resonates with Naess's critique of anthropocentrism and his recognition of the intrinsic value of non – human life, generating a broader ontological consciousness in which nature is part of an integrated order of divine creation. *Tawḥidic* Consciousness is thus the first analytical outcome: an ethical relationship with the environment must begin with a transformation in humanity's understanding of its place within creation.

The second dimension, Sacred Stewardship, emerges from *isti'mār al-arḍ* as both a divine provision and a responsibility to inhabit, cultivate, and develop the earth. Al – Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, and al – Ṭabarī converge on reading *isti'mār* as God granting humanity the capacity to inhabit, settle, and benefit from the earth, while contemporary exegetes extend this meaning—Shihab as cultivating the earth into a suitable place for life, and Hamka as connected to gratitude and responsibility toward God.⁶⁶ Together, these perspectives show that *isti'mār* contains an active dimension of cultivation but does not, in itself, constitute unlimited authorization for domination. Brought into dialogue with Naess's emphasis on the intrinsic value of nature, *isti'mār* thus acquires a stewardship – oriented significance: Sacred Stewardship is the principle through which the Qur'anic mandate to develop the earth is translated into a careful, sustainable, and morally accountable mode of interaction with natural resources.

The third dimension, Ecological Responsibility, emerges from the convergence of *amānah*, *isti'mār*, and the prohibition of *fasād*. Although Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 does not explicitly employ the term *amānah*, its portrayal of humanity's capacity to develop the

⁶³ Al – Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy Al-Qur'ān*, 15:368 – 69; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-'Aẓīm*, 4:331; Al – Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi' Li Ahkām Al-Qur'ān*, 2:367 – 70.

⁶⁴ Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Miṣbāḥ: Pesan, Kesan, Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, 6:263 – 86.

⁶⁵ HAMKA, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, 5:3499 – 3505.

⁶⁶ HAMKA, 5:3499 – 3505.

earth points toward a responsibility clarified by al-Qurṭubī, Shihab, and Hamka as a moral obligation accompanying the divine gift of that capacity.⁶⁷ This becomes particularly significant alongside Hans Jonas's principle of responsibility, which requires human beings to consider the long-term effects of their actions beyond the present generation, and Andrew Dobson's ecological citizenship, which extends this responsibility from individual conduct to collective participation. Ecological Responsibility thus emerges from a synthesis connecting the Qur'anic responsibility embedded in *isti'mār* with intergenerational ethics and collective citizenship, moving ecological awareness beyond consciousness toward accountable action.

The fourth dimension, Eco-Habitus Formation, emerges from the recognition that Qur'anic ecological values require repeated social practice, not merely intellectual acknowledgment, to generate sustained transformation. Ibn Kathīr's reading of Ṣāliḥ's call emphasizes repentance and a change in conduct;⁶⁸ al-Qurṭubī connects the divine command to directing human activity toward its proper purpose;⁶⁹ and Shihab and Hamka emphasize responsible conduct in managing the earth.⁷⁰ In dialogue with Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus, ecological transformation can be understood as a process in which values become internalized through repeated practice within families, educational institutions, and religious communities. Eco-Habitus Formation thus refers to the process through which ecological values move from normative principles into sustained patterns of everyday behavior.

The fifth dimension, Eco-Civilizational Transformation, emerges when the preceding four dimensions are considered in relation to the broader social and institutional structures that organize human life. Al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, and al-Qurṭubī all relate the Thamūd's rejection of divine guidance despite substantial blessings and capacities, showing that civilizational capability alone does not confer moral legitimacy; Shihab and Hamka likewise emphasize that managing the earth should be directed toward responsible life rather than arrogance and destruction. This exegetical foundation gains a structural dimension through Murray Bookchin's Social Ecology, which connects ecological degradation to social hierarchy and exploitative institutional arrangements—extending the prohibition of *fasād* from an individual ethical concern to a structural question about the systems that reproduce ecological destruction. Qur'anic principles such as *iṣlāḥ*, *iḥsān*, *amānah*, and *maṣlahah* provide normative resources for constructing social arrangements oriented toward ecological justice, making Eco-Civilizational Transformation the culmination of the preceding dimensions—translating theological consciousness, stewardship, and ecological responsibility into institutional and civilizational change.

The five dimensions are analytically interconnected rather than independent categories: *Tawḥīdic* Consciousness establishes the ontological reorientation needed to overcome an exclusively anthropocentric worldview; Sacred Stewardship translates this into a responsible relationship with the earth; Ecological Responsibility transforms stewardship into accountable individual and collective action; Eco-Habitus Formation embeds this responsibility within everyday social practice; and Eco-Civilizational Transformation extends these practices into institutional and structural change. These

⁶⁷ Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi' Li Ahkām Al-Qur'ān*, 2:367–70; Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Miṣbāḥ: Pesan, Kesan, Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, 6:263–86; HAMKA, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, 5:3499–3505.

⁶⁸ Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-'Azīm*, 4:331.

⁶⁹ Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi' Li Ahkām Al-Qur'ān*, 2:367–70.

⁷⁰ HAMKA, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, 5:3499–3505.

dimensions draw on classical exegesis (Al – Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al – Qurṭubī) for theological grounding, contemporary exegesis (Shihab, Hamka) for present – day application, and the five theorists for their respective critiques of anthropocentrism, intergenerational responsibility, ecological citizenship, habitus, and structural transformation.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 presents *isti'mār al-arḍ* not as an unrestricted authorization to exploit nature, but as a *tawḥīd*–based moral and civilizational responsibility to inhabit, cultivate, and develop the earth while preserving ecological balance. Through Abdullah Saeed's contextual hermeneutics and engagement with primary exegetical sources, particularly *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, *Tafsīr al-Kashshāf*, *al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, *Tafsīr al-Miṣbāḥ*, and *Tafsīr al-Azhar*, the study establishes that *isti'mār* is inseparable from divine guidance, moral accountability, and responsible human conduct. Q.S. al – Rūm [30]:41 and Q.S. al – A'raf [7]:56 further reinforce that human development must be directed toward *iṣlāḥ* and constrained by the prohibition of *fasād*. Based on this contextual interpretation, the study proposes Eco – Civilizational Resonance Tafsir as a conceptual extension of Saeed's contextual hermeneutics, consisting of five interconnected dimensions — Tawḥīdic Consciousness, Sacred Stewardship, Ecological Responsibility, Eco – Habitus Formation, and Eco – Civilizational Transformation — emerging from the synthesis of Qur'anic interpretation, primary exegetical traditions, and contemporary ecological theories: Naess's critique of anthropocentrism, Jonas's intergenerational responsibility, Dobson's ecological citizenship, Bourdieu's ecological habitus, and Bookchin's structural transformation.

This study's principal contribution is extending ecological Qur'anic interpretation from interpretation to transformation: *isti'mār al-arḍ* is reconstructed as a mandate to develop human civilization without undermining the ecological conditions that sustain life, connecting theological consciousness with responsible stewardship, ecological practice, and institutional transformation. This study is nevertheless limited by its primary focus on Q.S. Hūd [11]:61 and its reliance on a conceptual rather than empirical framework; although Q.S. al – Rūm [30]:41 and Q.S. al – A'raf [7]:56 serve as supporting verses, broader engagement with ecological Qur'anic passages is needed to test and refine the model. Future research should therefore apply Eco – Civilizational Resonance Tafsir to a wider range of ecological verses and examine its application empirically in environmental education, Muslim communities, public policy, and sustainable development.

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