

FIQH-BASED SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN FARMER EMPOWERMENT A Participatory Action Research Approach

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Abstract

A key challenge in contemporary Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) is its practical application to socio-ecological issues, such as sustainable agriculture and poverty alleviation. While Mas'udi's Fikih Transformatif (Transformative Fiqh) offers a critical-emancipatory framework, it remains understudied, with some scholars questioning its feasibility. This study bridges that gap by examining three key questions: (1) What theological principles underpin transformative fiqh? (2) How can it be operationalized to empower farmers? and (3) How does it inform eco-farming practices? Applying a law and society approach alongside a year-long Participatory Action Research (PAR) study, this research engaged Indonesian farmers in implementing transformative fiqh through three mechanisms: (1) Quranic and Sunnah-based agrarian ethics; (2) the operationalization of maslahah (public benefit) via a transition to sustainable agroecological methods; and (3) farmer-led action plans for equitable resource management. Findings suggest that transformative fiqh, deeply rooted in Islamic theology, can structurally empower farmers while fostering eco-farming. This study offers a practical model for integrating faith-based values into participatory development.



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[Tantangan utama dalam fikih kontemporer adalah bagaimana menerapkannya pada isu-isu sosial-ekologis, seperti pertanian berkelanjutan dan pengentasan kemiskinan. Untuk itu, Masdar F. Mas'udi menawarkan Fikih Transformatif dengan kerangka kerja emansipatoris-kritis, namun tawaran tersebut masih kurang diteliti, bahkan ada yang mempertanyakan kelayakannya. Tulisan ini mengisi kesenjangan tersebut dengan melihat tiga isu utama: (1) prinsip teologis yang mendasari fikih transformatif, (2) operasionalisasi fikih transformatif untuk pemberdayaan petani, dan (3) penerapan fikih transformatif pada pertanian ramah lingkungan. Dengan pendekatan hukum dan masyarakat dalam bentuk Penelitian Aksi Partisipatif (PAR) selama setahun, penelitian ini melibatkan petani dalam menerapkan fiqh transformatif melalui tiga Langkah pokok: (1) internalisasi etika agraria berbasis al-Qur'an dan Sunnah; (2) operasionalisasi masalah berbasis maqasid al-syari'ah melalui transisi ke metode agroekologi berkelanjutan; dan (3) rencana aksi mandiri untuk pengelolaan sumber daya yang adil. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa fiqh transformatif, yang berakar kuat dalam teologi Islam, dapat memberdayakan petani secara struktural sekaligus mendorong pertanian ramah lingkungan. Penelitian ini menawarkan model praktis untuk mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai berbasis agama ke dalam pembangunan partisipatif.]

Keywords: transformative fiqh, farmer empowerment, eco-farming.

A. Introduction

Contemporary Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) faces a pressing challenge: its ability to address critical social issues, including poverty, corruption, criminality, and ecological degradation.¹ Rooted in Islamic

¹ Jeremy Menchik, "The Co-evolution of Sacred and Secular: Islamic law and Family Planning in Indonesia", *South East Asia Research*, vol. 22, no. 3 (2014), pp. 359–78; R. Michael Feener, "Engineering Transformations in the 'Religion Development Nexus': Islamic Law, Reform, and Reconstruction in Aceh", *Religion*, vol. 51, no. 1 (2020), pp. 1-19; Bernard Adeney-Risakotta, "Traditional, Islamic and National Law in the Experience of Indonesian Muslim Women", *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, vol. 27, no. 3 (2016), pp. 1-17; Saefur Rochmat, "The Fiqh Paradigm for the Pancasila State: Abdurrahman Wahid's Thoughts on Islam and the Republic of Indonesia", *Al-Jāmi'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 52, no. 2 (2014), pp. 309-29; Neils Bubandt, *Democracy, Corruption, and the Politics of Spirits in Contemporary Indonesia* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014); Donna Lee Bowen, "Islamic Law and the Position of Women", in *Islam and Social Policy*, ed. by Stephen P. Heyneman (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004), p. 44-117, 75-7.

theology, fiqh carries a moral obligation to advance social welfare (*maṣlahah*) and uphold environmental stewardship. However, in practice, fiqh has often remained disconnected from structural transformations. In response, Indonesian scholars have introduced transformative fiqh, a paradigm aimed at bridging fiqh with societal change.² Yet, this framework remains underdeveloped, reinforcing the gap between legal theory and lived realities. This study operationalizes transformative fiqh as a tool for farmer empowerment, utilizing Participatory Action Research (PAR) as both a methodological and emancipatory approach.

Central to this study is the participatory nature of PAR, in which research subjects serve as agents of change while supervisors function as facilitators. Learning from society is integral to PAR's philosophy, ensuring that the issues explored emerge directly from community engagement. While employing PAR, this study remains anchored in fiqh research, adopting the law and society approach. Originally developed by Roscoe Pound as a framework for legal social engineering,³ this method is adapted within Islamic legal studies to explore how fiqh can serve as a mechanism for structural transformation within Muslim communities. Distinct from other legal research methods, including the legal-dogmatic, legal history, comparative legal, and legal anthropological approaches,⁴ this study positions fiqh as an instrument for social empowerment.

To demonstrate the application of transformative fiqh through PAR, this study examines Munggut Village, Padas District, Ngawi Regency, a community emblematic of structural poverty among Indonesian farmers. With 3,000 farmers comprising 86% of the local population, the village's agricultural land spans 448.08 hectares, covering 91% of its territory. Despite extensive agricultural activities, 90% of local farmers remain impoverished,⁵ facing systemic challenges such as limited education, debt dependency, inadequate irrigation, seed shortages, fertilizer constraints, and fluctuating grain prices. Previous studies on farmer resilience in the climate change era and free-market economy

² Masdar Mas'udi, "Paradigma dan Metodologi Islam Emansipatoris", in *Islam Emansipatoris: Menafsir Agama untuk Praksis Pembebasan*, ed. by Very Verdiansyah (Jakarta: P3M, 2004); Sahal Mahfudh, *Wajah Baru Pesantren* (Jakarta: Citra Pustaka, 2004).

³ Nazarudin Lathif, "Teori Hukum sebagai Sarana/alat untuk Memperbaharui atau Merekayasa Masyarakat", *Pakuan Law Review*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2017), pp.73-94.

⁴ Fikret Karcic, "How Islamic Law is Studied Today: An Overview", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, vol. 39, no. 1 (2019), pp. 129–34.

⁵ *Data Statistik Desa Munggut*, 2018.

suggest that external interventions are crucial in enhancing their capacity to navigate these adversities.⁶

The integration of fiqh principles into farmer empowerment is particularly strategic, given that all farmers in Munggut Village are Muslim and possess a foundational understanding of Islamic jurisprudence. This study employs fiqh theories relevant to agrarian ethics and economic justice, including *maṣlahah*-oriented trade, equitable resource distribution, tenancy agreements, ethical loans, fair wages, and social consciousness. Moreover, transformative fiqh aligns with eco-farming principles, advocating for sustainable agricultural methods that honor Islamic ethics of environmental stewardship. These include practices such as water conservation, agroecology, and fair labor conditions, reinforcing fiqh as an instrument for ecological justice. Transformative fiqh is characterized by its commitment to supporting marginalized groups and fostering liberation, moving beyond normative prescriptions to effect tangible improvements in societal conditions.⁷

Despite its theoretical potential, transformative fiqh has yet to receive substantial scholarly attention in its practical application. Existing studies by Zubaidi,⁸ Arifi,⁹ Fanani,¹⁰ Nugroho,¹¹ and Hakim¹² primarily explore its emergence as a paradigm but lack critical engagement with its methodologies, steps, and implementation in marginalized communities. Consequently, efforts initiated by scholars such as M. Dawam Rahardjo,¹³

⁶ Rhino Ariefiansyah and Sophie Webber, “Creative Farmers and Climate Service Politics in Indonesian Rice Production”, *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, vol. 49, no 5 (2021), pp. 1-27; Jeff Neilson, “Global Markets, Farmers and the State: Sustaining Profits in the Indonesian Cocoa Sector”, *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, vol. 43, no. 2 (2007), pp. 227-250; Joko Mariyono et al., “Rural Modernisation through Intensive Vegetable Farming Agribusiness in Indonesia,” *Rural Society*, vol. 29, no. 2 (2020), pp. 1-18.

⁷ Wahid, “Menjadikan Hukum Islam”.

⁸ Zubaidi, “Membangun Fikih yang Berorientasi Sosial: Dialektika Fikih dengan Realitas Empirik Masyarakat”, *Al-Jāmi‘ah*, vol. 44, no. 2 (2006), pp. 429-52.

⁹ Ahmad Arifi, “Dinamika Pemikiran Fiqh dalam NU (Analisis atas Nalar Fiqh Pola Madzhab)”, *Ulumuna*, vol. 13, no. 1 (2009), pp. 189-216.

¹⁰ Muhyar Fanani, *Fiqh Madani: Konstruksi Hukum Islam di Dunia Modern* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2010).

¹¹ Anjar Nugroho, “Rekonstruksi Pemikiran Fikih: Mengembangkan Fikih Progresif-Revolutioner”, *al-Manabij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2015), pp. 1-20.

¹² Faisol Hakim, “Variasi Nalar Fikih di Kalangan Pesantren”, *Falasifa*, vol. 8, no. 2 (2017), pp. 241-58.

¹³ M. Dawam Rahardjo, *Transformasi Pertanian, Industrialisasi, dan Kesempatan Kerja* (Jakarta: UI-Pres, 1986).

Moeslim Abdurrahman,¹⁴ Abdurrahman Wahid,¹⁵ Sahal Mahfudh,¹⁶ Masdar F. Mas'udi,¹⁷ Kuntowijoyo,¹⁸ M. Habib Chirzin,¹⁹ and Mansour Fakih²⁰ have not received much attention.

This study seeks to address these gaps by examining three core issues: the theological principles, methodology, and application of transformative fiqh in farmer empowerment. In doing so, this study clarifies the concept of transformative fiqh and outlines strategies for its implementation in agricultural context. Hence, this study will provide a foundation future researchers interested in applying transformative fiqh by using participatory development method to improve the situation of marginalized communities.²¹

Employing a PAR design, this study integrates fiqh-based critical-emancipatory procedures into a grounded empowerment model for Indonesian farmers. Drawing from Masdar F. Mas'udi's framework, the research modifies and operationalizes his four procedures into field-based action strategies. These strategies are rooted in both Islamic theological values, particularly *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, and the critical theory tradition inspired by thinkers such as Horkheimer and Habermas. The operational steps of this study serve as the methodological axis through which transformative fiqh is applied.

Modifying Masdar F. Mas'udi's critical-emancipatory procedures, this study constructs a more operational and context-sensitive strategy for implementation in the field, namely, farmer empowerment through PAR.

¹⁴ Moeslim Abdurrahman, *Menuju Masyarakat Egalitarian: Transformasi* (Jakarta: API, 1987); Moeslim Abdurrahman, *Islam Transformatif* (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1997).

¹⁵ Wahid, "Menjadikan Hukum Islam".

¹⁶ Sahal Mahfudh, *Nuansa Fiqih Sosial* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1991); Mahfudh, *Wajah Baru Pesantren*.

¹⁷ Masdar F. Mas'udi, *Agama Keadilan*, 1st ed. (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1993); Mas'udi, "Paradigma dan Metodologi".

¹⁸ Kuntowijoyo, *Paradigma Baru Islam: Interpretasi untuk Aksi* (Bandung: Mizan, 1991).

¹⁹ M. Habib Chirzin, *Pesantren dan Pembaharuan* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1988).

²⁰ Mansour Fakih, "Mecari Teologi untuk Kaum Tertindas," in *Refleksi Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam: 70 Tahun Harun: 70 Tahun Harun Nasution* (Jakarta: LSAF); Mansour Fakih, *Masyarakat Sipil untuk Transformasi Sosial: Pergolakan Ideologi LSM Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1996).

²¹ Ravik Karsidi, "Paradigma Baru Penyuluhan Pembangunan dalam Pemberdayaan Masyarakat", in *Pemberdayaan Sumber Daya Manusia Menuju Terwujudnya Masyarakat Madani*, ed. by Pambudy and A.K. Adhy (Bogor: Penerbit Pustaka Wirausaha Muda, 2001).

The operationalization of the transformative fiqh paradigm is translated into a series of grounded and participatory steps, adapted to the lived realities of agrarian communities. These steps, each is co-developed with participants and deployed as part of a broader strategy to address socio-ecological injustice and structural marginalization, are as follows:

- 1) Encouraging farmers to internalize the value systems of the Qur'an and Sunnah, particularly regarding agriculture, justice, and communal welfare;
- 2) Fostering a commitment to uphold the five foundational elements (*al-daruriyyah al-khamsah*): protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth in all individual and collective activities;
- 3) Translating these commitments into a five-stage operational strategy, aligned with PAR methodology, which includes:
 - Critical reflection: analyzing social realities to identify structural obstacles to justice related to the five essential elements;
 - Vision construction: developing a transformative vision to restructure unjust conditions through Islamic ethical principles;
 - Action formulation: designing practical interventions and alternative support systems to promote justice and wellbeing;
 - Strategic resistance and action: engaging in organized efforts to challenge systems and structures that perpetuate injustice;
 - Cycle of reflection and renewal: continuously revisiting the earlier stages to adapt, reflect, and refine strategies in light of evolving conditions.

B. The Principles of Transformative *Fiqh*

In Indonesian society, fiqh holds profound significance, seamlessly adapting to local traditions and shaping socio-religious practices. This dynamic interplay fosters a voluntary embrace of fiqh among Indonesian Muslims, reflecting a harmonious dialectical relationship between jurisprudence and cultural realities. This integration manifests across various domains, including fiqh Nusantara,²² the co-evolution of Indonesian Islamic law and secular regulations on family planning,²³ the application of Islamic law as a catalyst for social transformation in

²² Abdurrahman Kasdi, "Reconstruction of Fiqh Nusantara: Developing the Ijtihad Methodology in Formulating Fiqh from Indonesian Perspective", *QIJIS: Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2 (2019), pp. 239-66.

²³ Jeremy Menchik, "The Co-Evolution of Sacred and Secular: Islamic Law and Family Planning in Indonesia", *South East Asia Research*, vol. 22, no. 3 (2014), pp. 359-78.

Aceh,²⁴ its role in advancing women's equality,²⁵ its engagement with *sharia* idealism and democratic reform,²⁶ and its adaptation to the mechanisms of free-market economies.²⁷

Transformative fiqh is characterized by its critical-emancipatory paradigm, distinct from the formalistic-textual and social-contextual approaches within fiqh Nusantara. The majority of rural Indonesian communities adhere to the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) tradition, which encompasses three primary fiqh paradigms.²⁸ The first, the formalistic-textual paradigm, is led by KH. Zainal Abidin (Krapyak, Yogyakarta), KH. Masduqi Mahfudh (Malang), and KH. Sadid Jauhari (Jember). As the dominant approach, it emphasizes strict adherence to classical fiqh texts and established jurisprudential rulings. The second, the social-contextual paradigm, developed by KH. Sahal Mahfudh, is often termed the social fiqh paradigm.²⁹ This approach employs five key methodologies: (1) contextualizing fiqh doctrines to contemporary realities, (2) shifting from *qauli madhbhab* (adherence to specific rulings) to *manhaj madhbhab* (following jurisprudential methodologies), (3) verifying the distinctions between *asl* (principles) and *furu'* (branches) in legal reasoning, (4) positioning fiqh as a framework for social ethics, and (5) integrating philosophical and socio-cultural perspectives into jurisprudence.³⁰ The third, the critical paradigm, often associated with Muḥammad Shaḥrūr,³¹ a Syrian scholar, is championed in Indonesia by Masdar F. Mas'udi.³² Frequently described as a progressive-revolutionary approach, this paradigm challenges traditional juridical structures, advocating for fiqh as a catalyst for social transformation and liberation. It critiques conventional jurisprudence, arguing that legal frameworks must evolve to address contemporary realities.³³ By offering innovative interpretations, this paradigm aligns fiqh with social justice principles, emphasizing its role in empowering

²⁴ Feener, "Engineering Transformations".

²⁵ Bernard, "Traditional, Islamic and National Law".

²⁶ Robert W. Hefner, "Indonesia: Shari'a Politics and Democratic Transition", in *Shari'a Politics: Islamic Law and Society in the Modern World and Democratic Transition*, ed. by Robert W. Hefner (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2011), pp. 280-317.

²⁷ Ali Yafie et. al., *Fiqh Perdagangan Bebas* (Jakarta: Teraju, 2003).

²⁸ Faisol Hakim, "Variasi Nalar Fikih di Kalangan Pesantren", *Falasifa*, vol. 8, no. 2 (2017), pp. 241-58.

²⁹ Zubaidi, "Membangun Fikih", pp. 429-52.

³⁰ Mahfudh, *Nuansa Fiqh Sosial*, Sahal Mahfudh, *Wajah Baru Pesantren*.

³¹ Fanani, *Fiqh Madani*.

³² Arifi, "Dinamika Pemikiran Fiqh", pp. 189-216.

³³ Nugroho, "Rekonstruksi Pemikiran Fikih".

marginalized communities and fostering systemic change.

The critical paradigm remains the least explored within fiqh discourse, largely due to the limited number of scholars who have systematically engaged with its framework. Its intellectual roots lie in the critical theory tradition of social science, particularly in the thought of early 20th-century Frankfurt School figures such as Max Horkheimer (1895-1973),³⁴ Theodor Adorno (1903-1969), Herbert Marcuse, Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), and Jürgen Habermas (1929-2009).³⁵ This tradition, which gained prominence between the 1970s and 1990s, developed analytical tools for interrogating power, ideology, and domination. One influential proponent, Trent Schroyer, emphasized the liberation of marginalized groups, including farmers, from entrenched systems of oppression.³⁶

In fiqh, this critical mode of inquiry inspires reform-oriented legal action grounded in participatory philosophy, seeking not only reinterpretation of norms but also structural transformation. In the Indonesian context, Masdar F. Mas'udi articulates four key procedures that embody this paradigm. First, capturing the value systems embedded in the Qur'an and Sunnah, with a focus on justice, equality, and liberation. Second, revitalizing *maqāṣid al-shari'ah*, particularly the five essential objectives (*al-ḍarūriyyah al-khamsah*): the protection of religion, life, intellect, dignity, and wealth. Third, fostering critical and rational engagement with non-hegemonic material realities in order to counter dominant paradigms that marginalize grassroots communities. And fourth, revitalizing transformative visions, addressing asymmetrical power relations between employers and workers, scholars and communities, and rulers and citizens.³⁷ Through this lens, communities are empowered to critically reflect on their lived realities, uncover systemic injustices, and cultivate a shared commitment to transformative change.

³⁴ Max Horkheimer, *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell and Others (New York: Continuum, 2002).

³⁵ Alan How, *Critical Theory* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. x; Douglas Kellner, *Critical Theory, Marxism and Modernity* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1989), p. 1-2.

³⁶ Trent Scroyer, *The Critique of Domination: The Origins and Development of Critical Theory* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973); Trent Scroyer, "Towards a Critical Theory of Advanced Industrial Society", in *Recent Sociology No. 2: Patterns Of Communicative Behavior* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), pp. 210-34.

³⁷ Mas'udi, "Paradigma dan Metodologi"; Fanani, *Fiqih Madani*.

C. The Implementation of Transformative Fiqh

1. *Internalizing the Value Systems of the Qur'an and Sunnah on Agricultural Economics*

The value systems underpinning agricultural economics in Islamic jurisprudence are derived from the foundational principles of Islamic economics, which are rooted in *tawhīd* (the oneness of God), belief in the Day of Judgment, *taqwā* (God-consciousness), and *riḍāʾillāh* (the pursuit of divine pleasure). This ethical framework informs an economic system that recognizes both individual and communal ownership of resources, emphasizing balance between personal autonomy and collective responsibility. Within this system, the affluent are morally and legally obligated to support the welfare of others, most notably through compulsory *zakaāt*, voluntary endowments (*waqf*), and other initiatives such as mosque construction. Unlike Marxism, which promotes class struggle, the Islamic economic model eschews class antagonism, instead advocating for *al-ta'āwūn* (mutual cooperation) among all members of society.³⁸ Such cooperation undergirds the pragmatic principles of fiqh, which prioritize responsible and purposeful reasoning (*ijtibād*) over speculative or arbitrary actions.³⁹ Speculative contracts (*gharār*), including exploitative arrangements like bonded buy-sell systems, are explicitly prohibited in Islamic law, as they contravene principles of justice, transparency, and communal equity.

Muslims across the world implement Islamic economic principles to varying extents, often guided by shared ethical values such as communal benefit,⁴⁰ the essential nature of humanity, justice, balance, freedom, compassion, divine accountability, and autonomy from conflicting or narrow interests.⁴¹ These ethical underpinnings reflect a system rooted in spiritual consciousness and moral responsibility. Importantly, Islamic economics stands apart from both capitalism and socialism. While capitalism privileges individual property rights and grants unrestricted

³⁸ Wahbah az-Zuhailī, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī wa-Adillatub* (Damaskus: Dār al-Fikr, 2008), pp. 23-4.

³⁹ Sami Zubaida, *Law and Power in the Islamic World* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), p. 16.

⁴⁰ Abdul Aziz Sattam, *Sharia and the Concept of Benefit: The Use and Function of Maslaha in Islamic Jurisprudence* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015); Felicitas Opwis, *Masḥala and the Purpose of the Law Islamic Discourse on Legal Change from the 4th/ 10th to 8th/ 14th Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

⁴¹ Az-Zuhailī, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, vol. IV, p. 21.

economic freedom, often at the expense of communal welfare, socialism centers collective ownership and restricts individual autonomy in favor of societal regulation. In contrast, Islamic economics integrates both principles: it upholds individual ownership and economic initiative, while mandating responsibility toward others through fair, ethical mechanisms.

In the Indonesian context, this economic vision aligns closely with the principles of Pancasila, the State philosophy, particularly as articulated by Mohammad Hatta, who emphasized social justice and collective welfare.⁴² Furthermore, it resonates with Soekarno's doctrine of Ekasila, where the essence of Pancasila is distilled into a single guiding principle: cooperation.⁴³ Thus, the Islamic economic model reinforces Indonesia's foundational values by promoting ethical governance, distributive justice, and communal solidarity.

Agricultural economic management in Indonesia should be guided by the values embedded in Pancasila's economic vision, which, in substance, aligns with the teachings of Islamic economics, albeit articulated through different terminologies. Both frameworks emphasize mutual assistance, distributive justice, and the moral obligation to support the poor. Accordingly, Indonesia's agricultural economy should be built on principles of fairness, cooperation, and balanced development, ensuring that every farmer receives equitable support in sustaining agricultural livelihoods, particularly in the face of threats posed by free-market forces and climate change. Neglecting these farmers not only undermines economic resilience but constitutes a moral failure, a breach of justice, by both state and society.

Efforts to protect and uplift farmers are therefore acts of fidelity to both Pancasila and Islamic jurisprudence. Islamic fiqh directly addresses agricultural practice through legal constructs such as *ihyā' al-mawāt* (revival of barren land),⁴⁴ *musāqab* (garden-sharing contracts),⁴⁵ *mukhābarah* (landowner-seeded rice field contracts),⁴⁶ and *muẓārah'ah* (cultivator-seeded sharecropping).⁴⁷ These frameworks reflect a longstanding tradition of

⁴² Mohammad Hatta, *Mohammad Hatta: Politik, Kebangsaan, Ekonomi (1926-1977)* (Jakarta: Penerbit Buku Kompas, 2015), p. 336-477.

⁴³ Yudi Latif, *Negara Paripurna: Historisitas, Rasionalitas, dan Aktualitas Pancasila* (Jakarta: Gramedia Putaka Utama, 2015), p. 18-9.

⁴⁴ Az-Zuhailī, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, vol. IV, pp. 421-41.

⁴⁵ Ibn Rushd, *Bidāyatul Mujtahid wa Nihāyatul Muqtashid*, vol. II (Semarang: Maktabah Usaha Keluarga), pp. 184-9; Az-Zuhailī, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, vol. V, pp. 499-518.

⁴⁶ Az-Zuhailī, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, vol. IV, p. 21.

⁴⁷ Az-Zuhailī, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, vol. IV, pp. 481-99.

agrarian justice and farmer empowerment within Islamic law. However, the transformative potential of these concepts remains largely untapped, restrained by the dominant logic of neo-liberal economic pressures that continue to shape Indonesia's agricultural landscape.⁴⁸

2. *Fostering Ethical Commitment to the Maqāṣid Shari'ah*

The theory of divine intent (*maqāṣid al-shari'ah*), commonly associated with al-Shāṭibī, emphasizes the alignment between God's purposes and human welfare, known as the *maqāṣid* theory.⁴⁹ It is regarded as a hallmark of al-Shāṭibī's jurisprudential thought, developed through thematic induction (*istiqrā' ma'nawī*) and his distinctive methodological reasoning.⁵⁰ This theory seeks to uncover the higher objectives of Islamic law, ensuring that legal rulings serve the preservation and flourishing of essential human values. In the Indonesian context, this approach was adopted and expanded by KH. Sahal Mahfudz, who applied *maqāṣid*-based reasoning to contemporary welfare distribution. For instance, he interpreted the term *sabilillāh*, one of the categories of those eligible to receive zakat, in its broadest sense, encompassing not only military struggle but also social, educational, and developmental initiatives in both wartime and peacetime. He states:

Zakāt is efficient and appropriate. However, we need to define "sabilillah" broadly and should not limit our understanding only to the war. If we agree to take a broad definition, sabilillah can mean all things related to principles of public benefit included in the category of sabilillah.⁵¹

The *fiqhīyyah* method of reasoning inspired by al-Shāṭibī and the *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* theory constitutes the foundational step of transformative fiqh. By emphasizing the substance (*jamhar*) of *shari'ah*, rather than its formalistic dimensions, this approach enables fiqh to

⁴⁸ Ahmad Izudin, "Gerakan Sosial Serikat Petani Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta 2006-2015: Strategi, Pola, dan Tantangan", Master Thesis (Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2015), pp. 157-66, 182.

⁴⁹ Mohamed el-Tahir el-Mesawī, "Maqashid asy-Syari'ah: Meaning, Scope, and Ramifications", *al-Shajarah*, vol. 25, no. 2 (2020), pp. 263-95.

⁵⁰ Abd. Al-Karīm, *at-Tajdid wa al-Mujaddidūn fī Usūl al-Fiqh*, 3rd ed. (Kairo: al-Maktabah al-Islamiyah, 2007), p. 265-334; Al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustasfā min 'Ilm al-Usūl*, ed. by M. Mustafa Abu al-Ilā (Dār al-Jundi); Al-Ghazālī, *Shifā' al-Ghalīl*, ed. by Hamad al-Kunais (Bagdad: al-Irsyad, 1971), p. 159, 161, 163; Al-Shāṭibī, *al-Muwāfaqāt*, vol. IV, ed. by Abdullāh Darāz (Egypt: Matba'ah arRahmaniyyah); Al-Jābirī, *Bunyāt al-'Aql al-'Arabī* (Beirut: al-Markaz as-Saqafi al-'Arabī, 1993), pp. 544-6.

⁵¹ Mahfudz, *Nuansa Fiqh Sosial*, p. 149.

meaningfully address contemporary social challenges and resonate more closely with the lived realities of Muslim communities. Al-Shāṭibī's emphasis on thematic induction reorients jurisprudence away from rigid textualism and toward value-based objectives like justice, welfare, and human dignity.

However, transformative fiqh cannot rely solely on the maqāṣid framework. It must also embrace rational, critical engagement with social reality in order to expose and confront structures of domination and hegemony that constrain agency. This broader critical sensibility, already signaled in the work of Muhammad Iqbal, advocates for a reformation of fiqh responsive to the complex demands of modernity.⁵² In rural farming communities, such hegemonies manifest in multiple forms: a rigidly textualist (*qauli*) interpretive tradition, unfavorable agricultural regulations, and the structural grip of the global agri-industrial complex, including capital owners, intermediaries, and exploitative market forces.

3. *Translating Commitments into an Operational Strategy*

a) Critical Reflection on Agricultural Social Realities

The agricultural challenges confronting many Indonesian farmers are vividly illustrated in Munggut Village, where communities grapple with seed dependency, limited water access during dry seasons, rat infestations, and chronically low crop yields. These problems are not merely ecological or technical in nature; they are the outcome of centralized, top-down, and uniform agricultural development policies that prioritize physical infrastructure and capital accumulation over human capacity and rural autonomy. While productivity remains the dominant target, little attention is paid to strengthening farmer independence and long-term welfare. The disempowerment of Munggut's farmers is further reflected in their limited individual and institutional capacities, weak organizational networks, and constrained access to decision-making spaces. These deficits hinder their ability to respond to systemic challenges, participate meaningfully in development programs, or pursue collective autonomy. This condition underscores the urgent need for capacity-building initiatives, particularly those that cultivate critical awareness and strengthen farmers' ability to solve problems contextually.

⁵² Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Dubai: Kitab al-Islamiah, 1974); H. Chad Hillier, "Muhammad Iqbal on al-Fiqh: Towards a Natural Law Jurisprudence", *Journal of Islamic Law and Culture*, vol. 12, no. 3 (2010), pp. 258-83.

These conditions are not simply the result of natural challenges or isolated community shortcomings, they reflect deeper structural weaknesses in agricultural policy and governance. The centralized, top-down policy frameworks prioritize production metrics and capital investment over participatory development and agrarian justice. As a result, farmers are positioned as passive recipients rather than active agents of policy, their knowledge and autonomy sidelined in favor of uniform programmatic interventions. This study, therefore, critiques not only the outcomes of these policies but also the ideological assumptions that underpin them: namely, that economic growth through agricultural intensification will trickle down to smallholders. Instead, the experience of farmers in Munggut illustrates how such policies exacerbate marginalization, rendering communities vulnerable to climate shocks, global market volatility, and the consolidation of agrarian capital.

Crucially, efforts toward agrarian transformation must align state interests with the lived realities of farmers, establishing a framework rooted in fairness, subsidiarity, and mutual respect. The ideal agricultural development model must be grounded in self-reliance, ensuring that farmers are free and equipped to make autonomous decisions about their livelihoods, and partiality in favor of the marginalized, requiring government action that actively supports and protects their welfare. In this vision, enabling farmer sovereignty is not an act of charity but an ethical imperative, and neglecting their struggles in the face of climate crises and global market forces constitutes a violation of justice. Fulfilling the promises of Pancasila and fiqh-based ethics demands sincere, structured, and sustained commitments to agrarian equity.

b) Developing a Transformative Vision

Transformation is a pivotal element in research-based community service programs. It refers to the process of change occurring both within individual farmers and across broader social structures. Such transformation fundamentally shapes relationships, among farmers themselves, and between farmers and external actors or institutions, including the government, the agricultural industry, and intermediaries.

The transformative process begins with identifying farmers' lived problems and probing the deeper roots of those problems. This study frames those roots as structural and systemic rather than incidental or behavioral. In other words, the conditions facing farmers are perpetuated and reinforced by social systems, be they regulatory,

economic, or institutional. Recognizing these structural origins is crucial, as transformative research regards social problems not simply as deficits to be corrected but as manifestations of deeper institutional asymmetries.⁵³ Interventions, therefore, are not targeted at symptoms, but at the underlying systems that sustain inequity.

Based on observations, in-depth interviews, and focused group discussions, this research identified and mapped key agricultural challenges using the value chain framework, often referred to as the agricultural production cycle. This analytical tool segments the farming process into three distinct yet interrelated stages: (1) input stage, involving land access, seed procurement, and water resource availability; (2) maintenance stage, encompassing fertilization and the management of pests, fungi, and weeds; (3) harvest and post-harvest stages, including the processes of harvesting, handling, storage, and marketing of agricultural products. By applying this framework, the study reveals where systemic bottlenecks emerge, enabling a more targeted intervention through transformative fiqh-based empowerment strategies.

From the perspective of transformative fiqh, the prevailing agricultural practices in Munggut Village are misaligned with the objectives of *shari'ah*, as they inflict *maḍarat* (harm) on farmers' well-being and dignity. These patterns undermine farmers' autonomy and land sovereignty, leading to forms of dehumanization through dependency and structural disempowerment. Liberalized agricultural models often demand high production costs while yielding minimal profits, thereby perpetuating poverty among smallholders. This economic marginalization cascades into other fundamental spheres, limiting access to education and healthcare, both of which are integral rights under Islamic ethics. Moreover, these exploitative practices have detrimental ecological consequences, exacerbating environmental degradation and threatening the long-term viability of agrarian life. In this context, transformative fiqh calls for a reimagining of agricultural development, one that prioritizes justice, sustainability, and the moral imperative to protect both human dignity and the environment.

⁵³ Loretta Pyles, *Progressive Community Organizing Transformative Practice in a Globalizing World* (New York & London: Routledge, 2021); Malvin Delgado and Lee Staples, *Youth-led Community Organizing: Theory and Action* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Ross Gittel and Avis Vidal, *Community Organizing: Building Social Capital as Development Strategy* (California: Sage Publications, Inc., 1998); Rinku Sen, *Stir It Up: Lessons in Community Organizing and Advocacy* (San Francisco: Josey-Bass, 2003); Joyce S. McKnight, *Community Organizing: Theory and Practice* (New York: Pearson, 2015).

From the perspective of transformative fiqh, farmers are encouraged to cultivate critical awareness in order to uphold the five essential objectives of *shari'ah*, the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. Agricultural practices that undermine farmer welfare, compromise independence, or damage ecological balance stand in direct contradiction to these objectives and must therefore be reconsidered or abandoned. One such harmful practice is the use of electrified tools to control rat infestations, an approach that tragically claimed the lives of three farmers in Munggut Village in 2018.⁵⁴ Similarly, the long-term use of chemical pesticides poses severe ecological risks, echoing warnings first raised by Rachel Carson in 1962 regarding environmental toxicity.⁵⁵ These examples illustrate how prevailing agricultural models often neglect both human dignity and ecological integrity. Given that Islamic education has long been part of farmers' early learning, transformative fiqh can serve as a familiar and empowering framework for reorienting agricultural practices. It encourages farmers not only to question exploitative systems but also to recognize the profound ethical connection between Islam and the pursuit of healthy, just, and sustainable farming ecosystems.

This study identifies the neo-liberal economic system as the primary structural factor behind the agricultural challenges confronting farmers in Munggut Village. As such, it becomes imperative to resist neo-liberal strategies and address the complex agricultural issues through alternative frameworks rooted in justice and empowerment. Efforts to empower farmers must be reoriented toward liberating them from neo-liberal constraints and guiding them toward the realization of *maqāsid al-shari'ah*. While the path toward emancipation is fraught with structural and ideological obstacles, the farmers of Munggut have demonstrated a steadfast commitment to envisioning change. Through transformative fiqh, they strive to cultivate a new agrarian vision, formulate practical and ethical strategies, and engage in sustained collective action to confront and overcome their conditions of marginalization.

c) Designing Action Plans

This Participatory Action Research (PAR) project articulated and implemented three key action plans in close collaboration with the farmers of Munggut Village. The first action focused on strengthening

⁵⁴ Police Report of Padas Sector, 2018.

⁵⁵ Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994), p. 123-69.

farmers' capacity for self-reliance. To build this capacity, the research team organized comparative field studies with successful farmer groups who had demonstrated models of community empowerment. Two visits were conducted: one to Kelompok Tani Muda Mandiri in Kandri, Semarang (approximately 150 km from Munggut), and another to Telogoweru, Demak (approximately 180 km away). These exchanges were designed to facilitate experiential learning, inspire new strategies for grassroots empowerment, and encourage farmers to reflect on viable models of autonomous development.

The second action involved the revitalization of a spring and the initiation of a reforestation program, a foundational step toward conserving water resources in Munggut Village. This environmental intervention aimed to raise awareness among farmers about the ecological importance of water preservation and to shift practices away from unsustainable extraction. By restoring spring water sources and planting trees for catchment regeneration, this initiative laid the groundwork for building long-term water resilience in the face of climate uncertainty.

The third action targeted the institutional strengthening of farmer groups. In Munggut Village, several farmer groups have served dual roles: as distributors offering free marketing channels for agricultural products, and as brokers mediating between farmers and government assistance programs (e.g., in the form of agricultural technology or subsidies). However, despite having submitted proposals for aid, these groups have yet to develop comprehensive strategies to ensure the effective and equitable use of such resources. Strengthening their organizational and planning capacities is therefore essential to transition from passive recipients of assistance to proactive agents of agrarian transformation.

These action plans are grounded in a *maqāṣid*-driven framework that positions agricultural empowerment as a form of safeguarding the five fundamental objectives of *sharī'ah*: religion, life, intellect, lineage/honor, and wealth. The comparative visits strengthen intellectual capacity (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*) and affirm dignity through participatory learning. The environmental restoration initiative aims to protect life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) and property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*) by preserving water ecosystems essential to agrarian survival. Meanwhile, the institutional strengthening of farmer groups directly addresses wealth preservation by enhancing their agency in navigating economic and policy structures. Collectively, these actions embody the spirit of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, translating theological ethics into practical, community-led solutions for social transformation.

d) Implementing Strategic Actions

Having collaboratively developed a series of action plans with the farming community, the next phase of this PAR project was the implementation of empowerment strategies based on those plans. The first initiative focused on broadening the farmers' agrarian perspectives through comparative learning. This was operationalized by facilitating study visits to Kelompok Tani Muda Mandiri in Kandri Village (Semarang) and Telogoweru Village (Demak), allowing Munggut farmers to engage with diverse agricultural models beyond their local context. These visits were designed not merely as observational excursions but as dialogical encounters, intended to expose farmers to alternative strategies in agribusiness management, institutional organization, and community resilience. Through this exposure, the farmers expanded their knowledge base and gained new conceptual and practical options for reimagining their own agricultural practices.

Following the comparative studies that enhanced farmers' self-reflective capacity, the PAR team facilitated a second intervention: a Transformative Class aimed at deepening knowledge, developing practical skills, and fostering independence and sustainability. This forum brought together speakers with expertise in fertilizer production, organic pest control, and farmer organization, areas identified as essential for long-term agrarian empowerment.

Within the Transformative Class, farmers were encouraged to analyze their current challenges and critically examine the relationship between these challenges and their own agricultural practices. In open and reflective discussions, they surfaced concerns over declining soil fertility, shrinking water resources, increasing pest resistance, and rising input costs. Through dialogue, they began to recognize that many of these problems were structurally linked to their reliance on genetically modified seeds, chemical fertilizers, and synthetic pesticides. This growing awareness echoes Rachel Carson's ecological critique of DDT in the post-World War II United States, underscoring the latent dangers of industrial agricultural models.⁵⁶ The class, therefore, became a space for critical consciousness-raising, aligning with *ḥifẓ al-nafs*, *ḥifẓ al-māl*, and *ḥifẓ al-'aql* by promoting ecological awareness, financial sustainability, and rational discernment rooted in fiqh-based ethics.

The third empowerment initiative focused on raising farmers' awareness of sustainable water resource management. This action was

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8-98.

facilitated through community discussions on several interconnected themes: the ecological importance of spring revitalization, the detrimental effects of excessive reliance on well pumps in rice cultivation, the value of rainwater harvesting through groundwater absorption, and the role of reforestation, particularly the planting of water-retaining vegetation, in watershed restoration. These discussions aimed to foster an ecological ethic grounded in both environmental sustainability and *maqāṣid*-aligned stewardship.

The final empowerment step involved strengthening the organizational capacity of farmer groups, a vital move toward institutional resilience. Just as individual capacity had been enhanced through earlier initiatives, these groups showed notable growth in collective agency. A significant outcome was the formation of the BETA (Bela Tani, Farmer Defend) Community, established at the close of the PAR process, as a formal platform for continued solidarity, strategic planning, and advocacy. BETA represents a locally rooted, farmer-led structure committed to agrarian justice and long-term self-determination.

e) Reflection: Growing the Knowledge

The final stage of this research-based community empowerment program, conducted through the PAR approach, was the reflective stage. This phase invited participants, farmers in Munggut Village, to critically evaluate the learning processes and internal transformations sparked by the implemented actions. The reflection was facilitated through focused group discussions and guided by the ethical and procedural framework of transformative *fiqh*, aimed at realizing both the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and personal and structural transformation. To stimulate critical dialogue, the researchers posed four guiding questions: (1) What new knowledge have the farmers gained? (2) What new awareness or realizations emerged from their involvement? (3) What behavioral or procedural changes have they undertaken? (4) What individual or collective plans do they intend to pursue after the study?

From the perspective of knowledge acquisition, farmers expressed that the research process introduced new understandings, particularly regarding the intrinsic relationship between *fiqh* and agriculture. They learned that agricultural activity is intimately tied to the five higher objectives of *sharī'ah*, the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage/honor, and property. They came to recognize that actions endangering these objectives, for example, the use of electric traps that resulted in

the deaths of three farmers in Munggut in 2018, violate the moral aims of Islamic law. In contrast, environmentally conscious practices such as spring revitalization, reforestation, and the transition from chemical to organic farming were seen as actions that safeguard the *maqāṣid* and reflect their alignment with Islamic ethical principles.

Additionally, farmers gained practical knowledge on the production and application of organic fertilizers, including the necessary ingredients, manufacturing steps, and ecological benefits for soil health and plant vitality. They recognized that these inputs not only reduce production costs but also improve crop outcomes, contributing to both economic self-reliance and ecological sustainability.

One participant, Pono (pseudonym), described his experimentation as follows:

I've tried making organic fertilizer just as we learned in the class. I haven't used *turi* leaves yet, it takes two weeks, but I've already begun using tobacco, which is easier to find. My first batch was two days ago, and I made another this morning. It feels different now, I'm not just following instructions; I'm applying what I learned. I even made insecticide from *sepet* (palm husks).⁵⁷

This testimony illustrates an important epistemic shift: from passive knowledge reception to critical engagement and practice. Pono's efforts to test and adapt organic fertilizer and natural pest control mark the early emergence of agency, a central outcome of transformative fiqh praxis, rooted in experiential ethics and ecological consciousness. His experimentation with accessible resources also signals a growing sense of sustainability, safe productivity, and localized innovation.

Like Pono, farmers in Munggut Village have developed new insights into sustainable pest control, emerging from critical reflections during the empowerment process. Historically, pest management has depended heavily on chemical pesticides, and in more extreme cases, the use of hazardous methods such as electrified traps to eradicate rats, approaches that have endangered human life and destabilized ecological balance. One tragic instance involved the deaths of three farmers in 2018 due to electrical rat control methods.

These practices have disrupted the natural food chain within rice field ecosystems, primarily through the hunting and decimation of natural rat predators such as owls and snakes. The absence of these predators

⁵⁷ Interview, 15 December 2018.

has rendered the rat population increasingly unmanageable, leading to an unbalanced agroecosystem that poses escalating risks to the farmers' livelihoods. This evolving ecological consciousness among farmers reflects the internalization of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, particularly *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (protection of life), *ḥifẓ al-māl* (protection of property), and *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah* (environmental preservation, as an emergent ethical extension of the *maqāṣid* thinking). It also affirms the transformative potential of fiqh-based education in inspiring critical, life-affirming shifts in agricultural praxis.

This research program also reintroduced farmers to the ethical imperative of restoring ecological balance within rice field ecosystems. Through guided reflection and collaborative dialogue, farmers recognized the importance of reviving the natural food chain, particularly by protecting and reintroducing rat predators such as owls (*Tito Alba*) and snakes, and discontinuing harmful practices like predator hunting. These actions were understood as part of a broader effort to rebalance agroecosystems and minimize the need for hazardous pest control methods. Moreover, the comparative study equipped farmers with practical knowledge on owl cultivation, including the quarantine process and the construction of *Rububa* (*Rumah Burung Hantu*, owl nesting houses). This knowledge transfer enabled farmers to envision ecologically integrated strategies for rodent management, rooted in both environmental ethics and indigenous wisdom, and aligned with the *maqāṣid* of protecting life, property, and long-term ecological stability.

The farmers also developed a critical understanding of the long-term effects of chemical dependency on soil fertility. During the reflection process, they acknowledged that this research enabled them to identify one of the underlying causes of declining productivity: the excessive and prolonged use of chemical inputs. In their pursuit of improved yields, many had adopted the common practice of increasing chemical fertilizer and pesticide application from one planting season to the next. However, they observed that even maintaining the same dosage often resulted in diminished yields, revealing a cycle of diminishing returns and environmental exhaustion. This realization marked a turning point in the farmers' awareness, as they began to understand the causal relationship between soil degradation and chemical overuse. The research program thus served not only to transfer technical knowledge but also to cultivate ecological literacy, framing responsible land stewardship as both a practical necessity and a *maqāṣid*-aligned ethical obligation.

Another farmer, Randi (pseudonym), shared his candid reflection on the challenge of shifting away from chemical dependency:

It's clear that farmers today are less concerned with soil fertility. They've come to rely on chemical fertilizers. I've used manure in the past, but it didn't yield optimal results like chemical fertilizers do. That's why we still use chemicals.⁵⁸

Randi's statement highlights the practical dilemma faced by smallholder farmers: the immediate efficiency of chemical inputs often overshadows long-term considerations of sustainability and soil health. His reflection reveals not resistance to change, but rather a perceived lack of viable alternatives that match the productivity demanded by current agricultural systems. This insight underscores the need for transitional strategies in organic farming that are both context-sensitive and yield-conscious, rooted in ongoing experimentation and critical learning.

The farmers in Munggut Village also gained critical knowledge regarding water resource management. Through the research process, they developed an understanding of the causal links between water scarcity and environmental degradation, particularly the extensive exploitation of water for agricultural purposes and the deforestation of surrounding areas. They identified that the depletion of local wells and the drying up of natural springs were directly related to the loss of vegetation capable of storing water, such as deep-rooted trees and forest cover.

This research program introduced sustainable alternatives, including the construction of water absorption wells designed to harvest rainwater and facilitate its infiltration into the soil, thus preventing excessive runoff and enhancing groundwater retention. Additionally, farmers received information on the ecological benefits of planting water-storing trees, such as Gayam (*Inocarpus fagifer*) and Banyan, which can act as natural reservoirs and stabilize the hydrological cycle in agricultural landscapes. These insights reflect a growing awareness of agroecological ethics, aligning with the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* by advancing the protection of life, safeguarding property and livelihood, and environmental stewardship as an emergent ethical domain. The farmers' commitment to such practices demonstrates the practical embodiment of transformative fiqh in the pursuit of ecological justice.

The following reflection aligns with the second question: What new awareness did the farmers gain? During the reflective phase, the farmers

⁵⁸ Interview, 15 December 2018.

of Munggut Village identified three areas of heightened awareness:

- **Spiritual-Ethical Awareness:** Farmers articulated a renewed understanding that their religion advocates for the preservation of life and its essential sources. They recognized that *shari'ah* does not merely prescribe ritual obligations but also forbids practices that endanger life and degrade the environment. This theological insight has begun reshaping how they evaluate their relationship with nature and agricultural tools.
- **Ecological Consciousness and Intergenerational Responsibility:** Participants expressed concern about ongoing environmental degradation and the potential consequences for future generations. Confronted with worsening ecological conditions, they acknowledged the urgency of action, not only for immediate survival but also as a moral obligation to protect the village's natural heritage for their children and grandchildren. This awareness has galvanized incremental, community-driven environmental initiatives.
- **Communal Solidarity and the Role of Farmer Organizations:** The farmers realized that collective action is indispensable in addressing systemic agricultural challenges. They understood that effective responses, such as implementing organic farming systems, reforestation of spring areas, managing water resources, and advocating for well regulation, require the institutional coordination and strategic planning that organized farmer groups provide. This marks a significant shift from individual coping to structural mobilization.

Another farmer, Sudi (pseudonym), emphasized the importance of collective empowerment and institutional support:

One of us has already tried making organic fertilizer and natural medicine. But doing it individually, we lacked confidence. That's why we need an organization. I feel this is the organization we've been waiting for. I hope we can benefit from it. Togetherness is important. We really hope the village government supports and facilitates this group.⁵⁹

Sudi's account reveals a transitional consciousness among farmers, moving from fragmented individual attempts to a shared recognition of the need for organized collaboration. His reflection illustrates how empowerment cannot be separated from institutional scaffolding; farmers require not only knowledge but also supportive structures to activate and sustain that knowledge in practice.

⁵⁹ Interview, 15 December 2018.

The final dimension of farmers' reflection centered on the recognition that government support is critical to the continuity and scalability of their empowerment programs. Farmers acknowledged that effective collaboration with village authorities is necessary to translate their priorities into policy, regulatory frameworks, and budgetary allocations, particularly through the village fund (*dana desa*), for instance. This awareness reflects a growing political literacy among farmers: the realization that structural transformation requires both grassroots initiative and institutional alignment.

In addition to new knowledge and awareness, the farmers identified several potentials that can serve as strategic resources for future action. One notable resource is a parcel of land owned by the Koperasi Unit Desa (KUD, Village Unit Cooperatives), which has been designated as an agricultural laboratory, a site for hands-on practice in manufacturing organic fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides, and herbicides. Its remote location makes it suitable for such experimentation without disturbing nearby residents.

The availability of local materials further supports this initiative. Although livestock ownership has declined, manure remains accessible, and leaf litter is abundant, enabling group-based production of organic inputs. These materials provide the ecological capital necessary to operationalize sustainable farming practices at scale. Additionally, owl cultivation (*Tito Alba*) has been identified as a crucial strategy to restore the rice field ecosystem's food chain. The farmers located owl habitats around Munggut and have begun constructing *rubuha* (owl cages) using bamboo from the leftover materials of the mosque construction, an example of both ecological initiative and circular resource use. Another strategic potential lies in the network of experts in organic input production, pest control, and agroecology. These practitioners can be mobilized to provide ongoing guidance, ensuring that the community's transition remains adaptive and technically supported.

Importantly, all of these initiatives have been formally accommodated within the village development plan, which is expected to be ratified through deliberations over the village budget and expenditure plan (*Rencana Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Desa*). By embedding self-reliance programs into village policy instruments, farmers ensure that their efforts receive institutional endorsement and financial support, thereby securing the long-term sustainability of transformative, *maqāṣid*-aligned agrarian reform.

Despite substantial gains in knowledge and awareness, the reflection process also surfaced key challenges faced by farmers in Munggut Village. One significant issue was their limited awareness of the long-term environmental impacts of conventional farming practices. Many participants had yet to fully grasp the ecological consequences of chemical overuse and water exploitation. This gap underscores the ongoing need for sustained ecological literacy efforts, including collective socialization, demonstration projects, and peer-led discussions, to support the shift toward organic farming and environmental restoration.

Moreover, the farmers revealed a form of self-distrust and uncertainty in applying newly acquired knowledge. Although some were eager to embrace organic practices, many expressed apprehension about potential reductions in yield during the transition phase. Concerns over crop failure and economic insecurity prompted skepticism, particularly in the absence of tangible evidence that organic systems could deliver comparable or improved results. This anxiety reflects the structural vulnerability of smallholder farmers, whose livelihoods are directly bound to seasonal output, and whose experimentation with alternative methods involves real personal risk.

While a few farmers had begun practicing the manufacture of organic fertilizers and natural pest control, most had not yet translated knowledge into action. This highlights the importance of practical demonstration, follow-up mentoring, and community-based experimentation to support experiential learning and build collective confidence. Ultimately, the goal is to foster a gradual yet determined transition toward self-reliant, ecologically sustainable agriculture, a vision rooted not only in technical knowledge, but also in ethical conviction and shared community resilience.

Another challenge identified during the reflection process was the persistence of consumptive farming patterns. Farmers in Munggut Village described how economic pressures had led them to adopt intensive planting cycles, cultivating rice throughout the year in response to rising household needs. These include not only food security but also expenditures on electronics and the increasingly high cost of children's education. As Harjono, the former head of Munggut Village, aptly stated:

The community's current demand is to produce as much yield as possible because their daily needs keep rising. They need food, electronic equipment, and money for their children's schooling. As a result, nature becomes the victim.

This reflection underscores the tension between economic survival and ecological sustainability, revealing that over-cultivation is not a matter of ignorance but a rational response to structural insecurity. Farmers understood that such practices have contributed to ecosystem exhaustion and biodiversity loss, yet felt trapped by immediate material pressures. In light of their newfound awareness and the concrete steps planned toward agricultural self-reliance, the farmers emphasized the critical role of supportive policies and advocacy. Ecosystem restoration and the transition to sustainable systems require long-term commitment and substantial resources, both of which lie beyond the reach of smallholders acting alone. Thus, village and district-level governments must act as institutional guarantors of sustainability by integrating agroecological restoration into regulatory frameworks, providing budgetary support, and facilitating multi-sectoral collaboration.

Ultimately, this calls for the state to function as a transformative partner, not just a regulator of agricultural production but a facilitator of *maqāṣid*-aligned agrarian justice. Without such policy infrastructure, the weight of ecological care unfairly falls on those least equipped to bear it.

D. Concluding Remarks

This study addressed three primary research questions. *First*, transformative fiqh emerges as a critical-emancipatory paradigm that empowers marginalized communities through consciousness-raising efforts grounded in the value systems of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Central to this paradigm is the safeguarding of five core objectives of *shari'ah*: religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property (*maqāṣid al-shari'ah*). *Second*, the operationalization of transformative fiqh in Indonesian agriculture unfolds through three key steps: (1) Encouraging farmers to internalize the ethical and systemic values of the Qur'an and Sunnah in agricultural and social welfare; (2) Empowering them, both individually and collectively, to protect the five core elements in every facet of agricultural practice; and (3) Inspiring concrete commitments through five stages of participatory transformation. *Third*, the applicability of this framework is demonstrated in the empowerment processes among farmers in Munggut Village. Through reflective learning and action, they articulated strategies to enhance agricultural self-reliance, including owl cultivation, organic farming revitalization, and the integration of farmer-driven programs into the village development budget. The formation of the BETA (Bela

Tani) group further institutionalized these initiatives as a vehicle for long-term transformation. However, follow-up research is needed to assess BETA's progress and resilience over time.

This study faced limitations, most notably in the duration and scope of its engagement. Structural and institutional change, especially in the agrarian sector, demands sustained efforts and longitudinal commitment. Nonetheless, the research succeeded in revealing key cognitive, behavioral, and collective shifts that may contribute to broader systemic reform.

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