FROM CONTEXTUAL TO ACTUAL APPROACH: TOWARDS A PARADIGM SHIFT IN INTERPRETING THE QUR'AN

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Abstract: This article examines the paradigm shift in the interpretation of the Qur'an. The main thesis is that there is a paradigm shift in the approach to interpretation of contextualist figures and the need for a new paradigm to actualize interpretations. Therefore, this paper presents an explanation of how the construction and paradigm shift in the interpretation of contextualist figures; why the paradigm shift of contextual interpretation occurs, and what are the implications of this shift in the principles of the new paradigm of interpretation. This study is a literature review. As a sample of the data, there are five contextualist thinkers studied, namely Fazlur Rahman (Pakistan-America), Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd (Egypt-Netherlands), Farid Esack (South Africa), Abdullah Saeed (Maldives-Australia), and Sahiron Syamsuddin (Indonesia). Data were analyzed using comparative-relational analysis. This study concludes that the paradigm shift in interpretation cannot be separated from the influence of the sociopolitical and cultural context of each country. The paradigm of interpretation has shifted from a contextual approach to an actual approach. The latter approach emphasizes more on actual issues and solutions to national and state issues. This study also proposes a thesis that, different from the contextual paradigm that emphasizes the context of the Qur'an as a medium for understanding the text of the Qur'an, the actual approach emphasizes the text of the Qur'an as a medium for understanding the context of the Qur'an. It is because the text is a cultural representation of the reality of the time of revelation.
Keywords: actual; contextual; paradigm shift; Qur'anic approach.

Abstrak: Artikel ini mengkaji pergeseran paradigma (*paradigm shift*) dalam penafsiran al-Qur'an. Tesis utamanya adalah ada pergeseran paradigma dalam pendekatan penafsiran tokoh kontekstualis dan perlunya paradigma baru untuk mengaktualkan panafsiran. Untuk itu, tulisan ini menghadirkan penjelasan bagaimana konstruksi dan pergeseran paradigma penafsiran tokoh kontekstualis; mengapa pergeseran paradigma penafsiran kontekstual terjadi, serta apa implikasi pergeseran tersebut dalam prinsip paradigma penafsiran yang baru. Studi ini merupakan kajian kepustakaan. Sebagai sampel data, ada lima pemikir

kontekstualis yang dikaji, yaitu Fazlur Rahman (Pakistan-Amerika), Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd (Mesir-Belanda), Farid Esack (Afrika Selatan), Abdullah Saeed (Maladewa-Australia), dan Sahiron Syamsuddin (Indonesia). Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis komparatif-relasional. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa pergeseran paradigma penafsiran tidak terlepas dari pengaruh konteks sosiopolitik dan kultural negara masing-masing. Paradigma penafsiran mengalami pergeseran dari pendekatan kontekstual ke pendekatan aktual. Pendekatan yang terakhir lebih menekankan pada isu aktual dan solusi atas persoalan kebangsaan dan kenegaraan. Penelitian ini juga mengajukan tesis bahwa jika dalam paradigma kontekstual lebih menekankan konteks al-Qur'an sebagai media untuk memahami teks al-Qur'an, pendekatan aktual lebih menekankan teks al-Qur'an sebagai media untuk memahami konteks al-Qur'an, karena teks sejatinya merupakan representasi kultural atas realitas masa pewahyuan.

Kata kunci: aktual; kontekstual; pergeseran paradigma; pendekatan al-Qur'an.

Introduction

Albeit contextualist figures share a common view of the need to understand the text of the Qur'an contextually, the concepts and principles of their interpretation are not uniform. For Rahman, the essence of the message of a verse of the Qur'an is called "ideal moral."[1] It is named "*magzā*" by Abu Zayd[2] and "moral values" by Amina Wadud.[3] Asma Barlas calls it "moral purpose."[4] Meanwhile, Sahiron mentions it as the historical and dynamic significance.[5] Such diversity including its principles of interpretation influences their perspective in constructing the elements of their paradigm. The differences in the elements in their paradigm ultimately lead to a paradigm shift in the approach to interpreting the Qur'an.

Several studies have examined the thoughts of contextualist figures. In those studies, the principles and theories of their interpretation are compared. For instance, Ichwan maps out the

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[1] Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 17.

[2] Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, *Naqd al-Khiṭāb al-Dīnī* (Kairo: Sina li al-Naṣr, 1994), 144.

[3] Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Women: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Women's Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 29.

[4] Asma Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 59.

[5] Sahiron Syamsuddin, *Hermeneutika dan Pengembangan Ulumul Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: Pesatren Nawesea Press and Baitul Hikmah Press, 2017), 140.

hermeneutical thoughts of the Qur'an from Hanafi, Rahman, Esack, and Wadud.[6] Mustaqim focuses on a comparison of the thoughts of Rahman and Syaḥrūr.[7] Wahyudi compares the hermeneutical theory of Hanafī, al-Jābirī, and Madjid in the framework of the slogan "Back to the Qur'ān and the Sunna".[8] On the theme of ideal believers and women, Duderija touches on the principles, hermeneutics, and epistemology of the thinking of several progressive Muslim thinkers such as Rahman, Abu Zayd, Arkoun, Saeed, Khaled Abou El Fadl, Safi, Esack, Moosa, Kecia Ali, and Wadud.[9] On the theme of justice, Rahemtullah compares the views of liberation theology figures (Engineer and Esack) with gender discourse figures (Wadud and Barlas).[10] Looking at the relationship between the revelation theory and the flexibility of interpretation, Akbar compares Rahman, Soroush, Shabestari, and Abu Zayd;[11] he also compares the humanistic hermeneutics of the four figures.[12] However, all these studies have not thoroughly looked into the elements of the contextual interpretation paradigm and the paradigm shift in its interpretation.

Based on the research gap above, this paper will answer three main questions. First, how is the construction and paradigm shift in the interpretation of the Qur'an by contextualist figures? Second, why are there shifts and differences in their paradigm of interpretation? Third, what are the implications of those shifts on the principles of the new paradigm of interpretation? Using comparative-relational analysis, this research is a literature review related to the paradigm of

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[6] Moch. Nur Ichwan, "Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an: Analisis Peta Perkembangan Metodologi Tafsir Al-Qur'an Kontemporer" (Undergraduate Thesis, IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, 1995), 13.

[7] Abdul Mustaqim, *Epistemologi Tafsir Kontemporer* (Yogyakarta: LkiS, 2010), 4.

[8] Yudian Wahyudi, "The Slogan 'Back to the Qur'ān and the Sunna': A Comparative Study of the Responses of Ḥasan Ḥanafī, Muḥammad 'Ābid Al-Jābirī and Nurcholish Madjid" (Disertasi, McGill University, Montreal, 2002), iii–iv.

[9] Adis Duderija, *Constructing a Religious Ideal "Believer" and "Women" in Islam: Neo-Traditional Salafi and Progressive Muslims' Methods of Interpretation* (United States: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 3–4.

[10] Shadaab Rahemtulla, *Through the Eyes of Justice: A Comparative Study of Liberationist and Women's Readings of the Qur'an* (Oxford: University of Oxford, 2013).

[11] Ali Akbar, *Contemporary Perspectives on Revelation and Qur'anic Hermeneutics: An Analysis of Four Contemporary Discourses* (Melbourne: University of Melbourne, 2017).

[12] Ali Akbar, "Towards a Humanistic Approach to the Quran: New Direction in Contemporary Islamic Thought," *Culture and Religion*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (2018): 82–103.

interpretation of contextualist figures. This article departs from the basic assumption that the principles of the paradigm of interpretation by contextualist figures are not uniform, but they have shifted. This study also argues that a new paradigm in interpretation needs to be presented to link the ideal of interpretation with the actual reality. With the support of theoretical data from contextualist figures, the implications are described to develop a new paradigm in the interpretation of the Qur'an. For this reason, this paper presents a typology that complements the three typologies of interpretation approaches to the Qur'an (textual, semi-textual, and contextual) offered by Abdullah Saeed.

Elements of Paradigm and Paradigm Shifts

Paradigm is the core of every scientific discipline. Thomas S. Kuhn defines paradigm as "*the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community.*"[13] This means that a paradigm is a set of basic elements agreed upon in a community. Meanwhile, Kung uses the term paradigm with the meaning of models of interpretation; T.F. Torrance with the meaning of knowledge frameworks; Van Huyssteen with frames of reference and research traditions; Hiebert with belief systems.[14] Ritzer further mentions that a paradigm helps define what is being studied, the questions to be answered, how the questions are to be answered, and what rules must be followed to interpret the answers obtained.[15] This understanding shows the relationship between objects, problem formulations, methods, and methods of analysis in a paradigm.

The concept of paradigm was later developed by Ahimsa-Putra with the following definition: "*A set of concepts that are related to each other logically to form a framework of thought, which is used to understand, interpret, and explain the reality and/or problems encountered.*"[16] The word 'set' means that a paradigm must have several elements that are logically interrelated and form a framework of thought.[17] Ahimsa-Putra then

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[13] Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: Unversity of Chicago Press, 1996), 175.

[14] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (New York: Orbis Book, 1991), 168.

[15] George Ritzer, *Encyclopedia of Social Theory* (London: Sage Publications, 2005), 543.

[16] Heddy Shri Ahimsa-Putra, *Paradigma Profetik Islam: Epistemologi, Etos, dan Model* (Yogyakarta: UGM, 2016), 22.

[17] Ibid., 22-23.

formulates nine main elements in a paradigm: (1) basic assumptions or views about something accepted as true, (2) the ethos used as a standard of good-bad, right-wrong, and whether something is useful or not, (3) models or analogies about the symptoms studied, (4) research problems in the form of questions or hypotheses, (5), the main concept in the form of terms or words that are given a certain meaning, (6) research methods or data collection methods, (7) the data analysis methods to sort and classify the data and then interpret it, (8) the results of the analysis in the form of theory, and (9) the representation or scientific work that explains the results of the analysis that has been carried out.[18]

From the above understanding, the paradigm offered by Ahimsa-Putra is not only in the theoretical aspect, but also in the methodical aspect. In contrast to the concept of Kuhn's paradigm that emphasizes the change and development of knowledge, the paradigm in Ahimsa-Putra's view seeks to see the elements of a paradigm. For this reason, the authors also use the concept of this paradigm to look into the elements and principles of interpretation that have changed in the thoughts of contextualist figures.

For Kuhn, a paradigm does not evolve gradually into truth, but it undergoes periodic revolutions namely a paradigm shift.[19] However, it does not have to completely replace the previous paradigm. This is the view put forward by Ahimsa in response to Thomas Kuhn who says that the revolution of knowledge occurs when the old paradigm is replaced by a new paradigm. For Ahimsa, in the context of social and cultural sciences, changes and additions are part of the development of science.[20] Therefore, the emergence of a new paradigm in socio-cultural disciplines, including Islamic studies, does not have to replace the old paradigm, as is usually the case in natural science. The addition of elements or principles of the previous paradigm can be said to be the development of scientific disciplines. However, it should be noted that the previous theory can still coexist with the new theory, which is then termed the "school of thought". In the contextual approach, it can be called "the contextualist school of thought." All of which will help gain a more holistic and

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[18] Ibid., 24-38.

[19] Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 49,67.

[20] Heddy Shri Ahimsa-Putra, "Fenomenologi Agama: Pendekatan Fenomenologi untuk Memahami Agama," *Walisongo Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (2012): 272.

comprehensive understanding of the problem under study.[21] Therefore, the paradigm of the contextualist figures becomes an important basis in the development of the next paradigm of interpretation.

Contextual Approach and Elements of the Contextualist Figure Paradigm

For Saeed, the contextualist approach emphasizes that the values of the Qur'an are understood in terms of how these values were understood and practiced by the early generations as well as how these values are practiced in a modern context.[22] Scott defines a contextual approach to the Qur'an as a reading that involves the historical, social, and political context when the Qur'anic text was sent down to reveal the liberal intent that was emphasized so as to free Muslims from literal reading.[23] The contextual approach is one of the characteristics of the contemporary interpretation paradigm. Interpretation in this era is also more likely to use the thematic method as a critique of the atomistic and partial classical interpretation. To get contextual meaning, they tend to use modern scientific tools, such as linguistics, philosophy, social science, and anthropology so that they can reveal the significance behind the text.[24]

Basically, the contextual approach is based on the idea of Fazlur Rahman's double movement. In the process of understanding the Qur'an, the interpreter looks at the context of revelation to find the ideal moral and return to the present to apply it.[25] This theory was later developed by Saeed into a contextual approach. Saeed defines a contextual approach as an approach that emphasizes the socio-cultural context of the text and the current context.[26] In other words,

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[21] Heddy Shri Ahimsa-Putra, "Paradigma, Epistemologi, dan Metode Ilmu Sosial-Budaya: Sebuah Pemetaan". Makalah Pelatihan Metodologi Penelitian CRCS-UGM 12 Februari-19 Maret (Yogyakarta, 2007), 6.

[22] Abdullah Saeed, *Al-Quran Abad 21: Tafsir Kontekstual,* Trans. Ervan Nurtawab (Bandung: Mizan, 2016), 43.

[23] Rachel M Scott, "A Contextual Approach to Women's Rights in the Qur'an: Readings of 4 : 34," *The Muslim World*, Vol. 99, No. 1 (2009): 60.

[24] Mustaqim, *Epistemologi Tafsir Kontemporer*, 63–64.

[25] Rahman, *Islam and Modernity*, 5.

[26] Saeed, *Interpreting the Quran*, 3

the ethical meaning of the text when it was revealed is then related to the needs and current situation.[27]

Rahman actually denies the views of Muslims, especially some modernist Muslims, who say that the Qur'an has provided all the basic principles, and the sunnah and reason function to embody these principles in concrete solutions. For Rahman, that is not the way it is. The Qur'an does not provide many general principles. In fact, the verses of the Qur'an provide more concrete solutions and rules for specific issues. However, for Rahman, there is a rationality or logical idea behind the concrete solutions and specific rules of the verses that can be drawn into general principles.[28] In this regard, Rahman provides a direction that an interpreter must move from the particular to the universal, and then move from the universal to the particular.[29] This is what Rahman meant by "double movement".

Contextualists, as said by Saeed, believe that ethical legal verses comprise instructions and provisions that are closely related to important issues in the life of Muslims, such as marriage and divorce, buying and selling transactions, rules of worship, relations with non-Muslims, and other rules regarding commands and prohibitions.[30] This means that contextualists depart from the text of the Qur'an and see its relation to important contemporary issues. The verses are to be understood again to be more relevant to the current condition of Muslims. Although following in the footsteps of their modernist Muslim predecessors, the contextualists are somewhat different. They tend not to adopt a decisive approach to Islamic teachings; they do not emphasize the claim of what a Muslim should do and how a Muslim faces modernity. Contextualists are less dogmatic than modernist Muslims; they put forward a pluralistic and inclusive appearance of Islam.[31]

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[27] Abdullah Saeed, "Some Reflections on the Contextualist Approach to Ethico-Legal Texts of the Quran," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 71, No. 2 (2008): 221.

[28] Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, 20.

[29] Ibid. Rahman says, "First one must move from the concrete case treatments of the Qur'an-taking the necessary and relevant social conditions of that time into account-to the general principles upon which the entire teaching converges. Second, from this general level there must be a movement back to specific legislation, taking into account the necessary and relevant social conditions now obtaining."

[30] Saeed, "Some Reflections on the Contextualist Approach," 222.

[31] Ibid., 223.

Contextualists are more likely to implement conceptual values of justice and goodness, rather than applying rigid rules. They try to maintain human values so that these values are not reduced to fanaticism inside and outside the Muslim community. For them, the implementation of the values of justice and goodness must be rooted in the interpretation of the Qur'an. For this reason, complex problems in humanitarian issues are a call for progressive Muslims to reinterpret the text of the Qur'an.[32] They oppose the established traditional and conservative views of Islam. For this reason, according to Saeed, it is more appropriate to call contextualists social critics because they provide social criticism rather than ideology.[33]

Furthermore, the discussion in this subsection begins by evaluating and interpreting the previous literature related to the contextual approach to see the development of its principles. This investigation aims to see the differences, similarities, and relations between the theoretical data of contextualist figures. This study uses primary sources in the form of theoretical data from five figures from different countries, namely Fazlur Rahman (1919-1988),[34] Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd (1943-2010),[35] Farid Esack (1953-present),[36]

[32] Omid Safi, "'The Times They Are A-Changin': A Muslim Quest for Justice, Gender Equality, and Pluralism," in *Progressive Muslims on Justice, Gender, and Pluralism*, ed. Omid Safi (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003), 1–2.

[33] Saeed, "Some Reflections on the Contextualist Approach," 223.

[34] Fazlur Rahman was born in the Hazara district (Pakistan), 1919. He completed his doctoral studies at Oxford University by writing a dissertation on Ibn Sina. He taught at Durham University and McGill University, 1950-1958. He was invited by the President of Pakistan and served as Director of the Council of the Islamic Research Center, 1961-1968. Due to the controversy over his thinking, Rahman was forced to leave Pakistan by conservative clerics. He then accepted an offer from the University of California, then taught at the University of Chicago as a professor of Islamic studies and lived there until the end of his life, 1968-1988. See Abdullah Saeed, "Fazlur Rahman: A Framework for Interpreting the Ethico-Legal Content of the Quran," in *Modern Muslim Intellectuals and the Qur'an*, ed. Suha Taji-Farouki (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 37–39.

[35] Abu Zayd was born in Egypt, 1943. He is a leading intellectual in Qur'anic hermeneutics. After earning his doctorate in Islamic and Arabic Studies in 1981, he taught in the Department of Arabic at Cairo University, and then became a visiting professor at Osaka University. Because of his controversial writings, the Cairo Court issued an apostate fatwa against him in 1995. Abu Zayd and his wife moved to Europe and taught as a professor in Islamic studies at Leiden University. He received a fellowship at the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin. See Zeba Mir-Hosseini et al., *Gender Equality in Muslim Family Law: Justice and Ethics in Islamic Legal Tradition*, ed. Zeba Mir-Hosseini et. al. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 259.

Abdullah Saeed (1964–present),[37] and Sahiron Syamsuddin (1968–present).[38] Among dozens of contextualist thinkers, those are the five figures that will be studied while still taking into account the thinking of other figures. The intellectual relationship and influence between figures with different periods can provide an overview of the genealogy of basic ideas as well as changes in paradigm elements (paradigm shifts) in contextual interpretation. Their thoughts can be accessed through their works in the form of books, journal articles,

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[36] Esack was born in Wynberg, Cape Town, South Africa, 1956. He experienced the racism of the apartheid system since childhood. At the age of seventeen, Esack received a scholarship at the Karachi Madrasa, Pakistan. Eight years later, he completed his studies in the field of 'Ulumul-Qur'an. When he returned to South Africa in 1980, he and his friends formed the "Call of Islam", an anti-apartheid organization in the Muslim community. After the end of apartheid, Esack went to Germany to study biblical hermeneutics, then to the UK and obtained a doctoral degree in Qur'anic hermeneutics from the University of Birmingham. Esack is a Muslim scholar who was educated in two systems: Islamic and Western education. In 2009, he returned to South Africa and became a professor in Islamic studies at the University of Johannesburg. See Rahemtulla, "Through the Eyes of Justice: A Comparative Study of Liberationist and Women's Readings of the Qur'an," 51–52.

[37] Saeed was born in the Maldives, 1964. He earned his bachelor's degree in Islamic studies in Saudi Arabia, 1986. He completed his master's degree in applied linguistics and doctorate in Islamic studies at the University of Melbourne, 1992. Saeed became a junior lecturer in the Department of Asian Languages and Anthropology in 1993 and a senior lecturer in 1996. He later became a professor in Arabic and Islamic studies, 2003. His research focuses on the interpretation of the Qur'an, Islam and human rights, Islamic law, and the Muslim community in Australia. It is summarized from his biography in Saeed, *Al-Quran Abad 21*, 316.

[38] Sahiron was born in Cirebon, Indonesia, June 5, 1968. In 1987-1993, he completed a Bachelor of Arts degree majoring in Tafsir-Hadith at the Sharia Faculty of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, where he currently serves as Vice-Chancellor II. In 1996-1998, Sahiron continued his master's program at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Canada, and a doctoral program at Otto-Friedrich University of Bamberg, Germany, 2001-2006. Afterwards, in 2010, he did postdoctoral research at the Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt, Germany. He is a professor in *Tafseer* and Qur'anic Sciences. His academic career formed the Sahiron's horizon that combines classical Islamic traditions and progressive Islamic thoughts. Summarized from the writings of Ahmad Muttaqin, "Ayat tentang Mati Syahid dan Pesan Aktif Menjaga Kemaslahatan: Aplikasi Pendekatan Ma'nā-cum-Maghzā atas Q.S. Āli 'Imrān (3): 140," in *Pendekatan Ma'nā-cum-Maghzā atas Al-Qur'an dan Hadis: Menjawab Problematika Sosial Keagamaan di Era Kontemporer*, ed. Sahiron Syamsuddin (Yogyakarta: AIAT dan Lembaga Ladang Kata, 2020), 281–308.

and book chapters.[39] These five figures are chosen because,[40] apart from their focus and the frequent use of their thinking in the hermeneutic research of the Qur'an, they have a fairly systematic method of interpretation. Their thinking has become a discourse in contextual interpretation theory so that it needs to be re-analyzed to see the construct of their paradigm of interpretation.[41]

The selection of those five figures also takes into account the diversity of their nationalities. It is to see how the dynamics of the context of their nations construct their paradigm of interpretation. By looking at the context of their nations and countries, whether Muslim-majority countries in the East or Muslim-minority countries in the West, the factors that have colored their progressive thinking

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[39] Rahman's primary books: Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*; Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979); Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of The Qur'an* (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 1989); Abū Zayd's primary books: Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, *Mafhūm Al-Naṣṣ: Dirāsah fī ʿUlūm Al-Qur'ān* (Bairut: Al-Markaz al-Thaqafi al-ʿArab, 2000); Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd, *Naqd al-Khiṭāb al-Dīnī* (Kairo: Sina li al-Naṣr, 1994); Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, *Rethinking the Qur'an: Towards a Humanistic Hermeneutics*; An Esack's primary book: Esack, *Quran, Liberation and Pluralism: An Islamic Perspective of Interreligious Solidarity against Oppression*; Saeed's primary books: Abdullah Saeed, *Reading the Qur'an in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Routledge, 2014); Saeed, *Interpreting the Quran towards a Contemporary Approach*; Sahiron's primary books: Syamsuddin, *Hermeneutika dan Pengembangan Ulumul Qur'an*; Sahiron Syamsuddin, "Metode Penafsiran dengan Pendekatan Maʿna-cum-Maghza," in *Pendekatan Maʿna-cum-Maghza atas Al-Qur'an dan Hadis: Menjawab Problematika Sosial Keagamaan di Era Kontemporer*, ed. Sahiron Syamsuddin (Yogyakarta: AIAT dan Lembaga Ladang Kata, 2020), 1–18.

[40] There are several important figures from the same country. For representatives, the authors choose only one figure who appeared later, such as Abu Zayd from Egypt. It is because Abu Zayd was a student of Hanafi. In Indonesia, there are many other important figures, including Nurcholish Madjid, Amin Abdullah, Yudian Wahyudi, and Hamim Ilyas. The author chooses Sahiron because it indirectly also has to examine their progressive ideas because of the influence and dialectical relationship of their thoughts in the construction of Sahiron's thoughts. In that way, the genealogy of contextual thought can be seen later.

[41] Although scientific research examining Abdullah Saeed and Sahiron, the two later thinkers, has not been as extensive as the other three figures, the Saeed's thoughts in the last five years and the Sahiron's thoughts in the last three years have been increasingly studied in the form of books, journal articles, theses, and dissertations. For this reason, their thoughts are also part of the discourse on the study of the Qur'an, especially in Indonesia.

can be revealed.[42] The intellectual relationship and influence between figures with different periods can provide an overview of the genealogy of basic ideas as well as changes in paradigm elements (paradigm shifts) in contextual interpretation.

Based on the nine elements of the paradigm mentioned earlier, the five contextualist figures have various elements of the paradigm. Based on the results of the investigation and grouping of data, the elements of the paradigm of interpretation of the contextual figures can be mapped as follows.

Table I: Elements of the Paradigm of Contextualist Figures

Elements of Paradigm	Fazlur Rahman (Pakistan-USA)	Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd (Egypt-Netherlands)	Farid Esack (South Africa)	Abdullah Saeed (Maldives-Australia)	Sahiron Syamsuddin (Indonesia)
Basic Assumptions	The Qur'an as a moral holy book	The Qur'an as discourse	The Qur'an as a holy book of liberation	The Qur'an as a moral message	The Qur'an as a mercy
Values (Ethos)	- Theo-anthropocentric - Objective	- Humanistic - Free of ideological bias - Objective	- Human equality - Liberation - Gender equality - Subjective	- Humanistic - The interpretation is not ideologically biased	- Religious humanistic - The benefit of humans and nature
Models	God-human communication model	God-human communication model	A holy book of liberation	The Qur'an as scripture and communication between God and human	The Qur'an as a mercy, *mau'iẓah*
Problems	- Criticism of traditional Muslims - Islamic education discourse and Islamic doctrine issues - Classification: belief systems, general principles, orders, specific rules	- Criticism of literalism - Discourse on humanism, human rights - Classification: cosmology, God-human relations, moral ethical, social, punishment	- Criticism of discrimination, racism, aggression - Discourse on liberation and pluralism	- 21st Century Context - Discourse on human rights, moral ethics of Islamic law - Classification: obligatory, fundamental, protection, implementation, instruction	- The issue of extremism and interreligious conflict - Discourse on tolerance and religious relation - Classification: *muḥkam* and *mutasyābih*
Keywords	- *Taqwā*	- *Dilālāh*	- *Taqwā*	- *Ethico-Legis*	- Historical

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[42] Rahman is a Pakistani national and has spent his life in America. Abu Zayd is a figure born in Egypt then lived in the Netherlands. Farid Esack is a thinker born in South Africa. Abdullah Saeed was born in the Maldives and lives in Australia (1992-present). As for Sahiron, he was born in Indonesia and has spent a few years living in Canada and Germany. Apart from different nationalities, their domiciles represent five continents: Rahman in America (1968-1988), Abu Zayd in Europe (1995-2010), Esack in Africa (1956-1974 & 1982-present), Saeed in Australia (1992-present), and Sahiron in Asia (1968-1996 & 2006-present).

	- *Islām* - *Imān* - *Social justice*	- *Magzā*	- *Tauḥīd* - *Al-Nās* - *Al-Mustaḍ'fūn* - *'Adl, Qisṭ* - *Jihād*	- Macro context I - Macro context II - Connector context	meaning - Historical significance - Dynamic significance - Ideal significance
Methods of Research	Sources of interpretation: The Qur'an, social reality, hadith, sense, history, classical Islamic tradition	Sources of interpretation: The Qur'an, sunnah, tradition, reality, reason	Sources of interpretation: The Qur'an, hadith, reason, Arabic reality, present reality	Sources of interpretation: The Qur'an, reality, hadith, reason, history	Sources of interpretation: The Qur'an, hadith, reason, history, old & present reality
Methods of Analisis	- Understanding the historical context of the verse and its ethical morals - Generalizing specific answers as a general principle goal - Applying the general principles or ideal morals of the verse in the current context	- Analytical of keywords and main ideas of the text - Revealing the sociocultural meaning contextually - Developing the significance of the text - Paying attention to the speaker and the intended discourse - Observing the way the discourse is delivered	- Regressive by discovering the historical factors and mechanisms that produce the text - Progressive by re-examining to determine the contextual and contemporary meaning of the text	- Initial considerations - Ensuring text accuracy - Micro context analysis I (7th Century) - Macro context analysis II (21st Century)	- Linguistic analysis - Micro- and macro-context of verses - Intratextuality and intertextuality - Capturing and developing the significance of verses
Results of Analysis/ Theories	- Objectivism - Contextual Interpretation	- Objectivism - Contextual Interpretation	- Subjectivism - Actual Interpretation	- Objectivism-cum-Subjectivism - Contextual Interpretation	- Objectivism-cum-Subjectivism - Actual Interpretation
Representations	- Thematic-holistic interpretation	- Thematic-holistic interpretation	- Thematic-holistic interpretation - Current issues	- Thematic-holistic interpretation - Contemporary issues	- Thematic-holistic interpretation - Current issues

Forms of Shift and Factors of Change

Although the contextual principle in understanding the Qur'an is rooted in Rahman, later thinkers made a number of developments. Rahman calls the core concept of his interpretation "the double movement"; Abu Zayd terms it "humanistic hermeneutics"; Esack terms it "the hermeneutics of liberation"; Saeed develops the term "contextualist approach"; Sahiron calls it "the *ma'na-cum-maghza* approach". If traced from the various writings produced, their intellectual relationship is hierarchical, but it is dynamic. Rahman influences four other figures. Abu Zayd is influenced by Rahman and

influences Esack, Saeed, and Sahiron. Esack is influenced by Rahman and Zayd, and influences Saeed and Sahiron. Saeed is influenced by Rahman, Zayd and Esack, and influences Sahiron. Sahiron is influenced by the four figures, and has a dialectical intellectual relationship with Saeed due to his contemporaries.

Several contextual principles are also developed by the figures who come after him. For example, Rahman, according to Saeed, views that a hierarchy of moral values should be developed. Rahman calls it "unified and comprehensive socio-moral theory", but Rahman does not discuss the detailed framework.[43] In fact, one of Rahman's criticisms towards classical scholars is the failure to systematize fundamental terms and principles hierarchically. As a result, specific principles are often used as general principles or vice versa.[44] Saeed then develops it with the term "a hierarchy of values" with the five value hierarchies mentioned earlier.[45] Esack also develops the keywords *islām, īmān,* and *taqwā* initiated by Rahman[46] by proposing six keywords, including *taqwā* in his liberation theology. Although Abu Zayd and Sahiron are both inspired by Hirsch,[47] each of them develops it with a different concept. Abu Zayd distinguishes *dilālah* (meaning) and *magzā* (significance), while Sahiron develops it in a more detail way into *al-ma'nā al-tārikhī* (historical meaning), *al-magzā al-tārikhī* (historical significance), *al-magzā al-mutaḥarrik* (dynamic significance), and ideal significance. From this, it can be seen that genealogically there is a change as well as a development of the principle of a contextual approach that indirectly leads to a process of changing paradigm elements (paradigm shifts) within the contextual paradigm circle itself. Not only the principle of approach, but the idea of social justice initiated by Rahman also becomes the inspiration for the emergence of various main discourse topics from each figure; such as the Esack's issue of liberation theology; the human rights

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[43] Saeed, "Fazlur Rahman: A Framework," 54.

[44] Taufik Adnan Amal (Peny.), *Metode dan Alternatif Neomodernisme Islam Fazlur Rahman* (Bandung: Mizan, 1994), 62; Fazlur Rahman, "Interpreting the Qur'an," *Inquiry*, Vol. 3, No. 5 (1986): 45–49.

[45] Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'ān*, 126.

[46] Fazlur Rahman, "Some Key Ethical Concepts of the Qur'ān," *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (1983): 170–185.

[47] E.D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967), 8.

issue by Saeed; and the issue of tolerance and interreligious relations by Sahiron.

In looking at the historical context and classical tradition, each has a different emphasis. Rahman emphasizes the historical context of revelation, while Abu Zayd emphasizes the historicity of the nature and origin of Arabia, and an approach that sees the Qur'an as a work of Arabic literature.[48] This departs from the assumption that the author cannot be studied. Therefore, the text and its recipients need to be studied by looking at the reality and the Arabic culture (*muntaj ṣaqāfī*) as empirical facts.[49] Although Saeed is heavily influenced by Rahman, the two differ in positioning the exegetical traditions documented in post-Qur'anic interpretation. Rahman does not pay much attention to the tradition of classical interpretation from time to time, while Saeed and Sahiron give attention to the documentation of interpretation from generation to generation. Saeed calls it "a connector context",[50] while Sahiron calls it *al-maghzā al-mutaḥarrik* (dynamic significance). Both believe that the tradition of interpreting the past will provide flexibility in determining the meaning of the present.

In addition to the influence, criticisms towards the thoughts of his predecessors also emerge. Esack criticizes Rahman for not appreciating the complexity of the hermeneutical task and the nature of intellectual diversity.[51] Sahiron himself criticizes Saeed for still accepting the concept of verse abrogation. For Sahiron, the concept of abrogation is not applicable since each verse has its own context. In addition, the Saeed's writings on the connecting context of the past and present are not elaborated further. This is what Sahiron develops by looking at the phenomenal dynamic significance of interpretation from time to time to see the connection between the past and the present.

Although the five contextualist figures depart from the basic principles that are not different, equating them in that way will generate its own problems. It is because, in addition to the similarity

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[48] Farid Esack, *The Qur'an: A User's Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2007), 143.
[49] Abu Zayd, *Mafhūm al-Naṣṣ*, 24.
[50] Saeed, *Al-Quran Abad 21*, 161.
[51] Farid Esack, *Quran, Liberation and Pluralism: An Islamic Perspective of Interreligious Solidarity against Oppression* (England: Oneworld, 1997).

of principles, they actually have differences in basic principles.[52] The mapping analysis above shows that the elements of the contextual interpretation paradigm are not singular. In the paradigm of interpretation, there are several different principles, trying to present the methodical development. That is, the paradigm that requires a similar understanding of views as in natural science is not applicable absolutely in social science, including the study of interpretive theory. The paradigm of interpretation will always be influenced by the context of experience and reality faced by each thinker in his nation and country. Interpreters, including contextualists, cannot be separated from the epistemic view of their world, including their preconceptions and knowledge.[53]

Basically, the hermeneutical idea of the contextualist figures above is similar to that of progressive Muslims. Progressive Muslims, according to Duderija, emphasize radical changes in the context between the interpretive community during the revelation of the Qur'an and the contemporary interpretive community in which the Qur'an operates. Therefore, the method of interpretation also emphasizes the important role of context and makes context a character in their interpretation methodology. In this regard, progressive Muslims are appropriately called "comprehensive contextualists".[54] The common assumption of progressive Muslims is identified by Duderija by citing the Stanley Fish's term the "community of interpretation", where they have certain interpretational assumptions in common, both from epistemology, hermeneutics, and methodology when contextualizing and interpreting religious texts.[55] They are also committed to discussing themes related to the power of global political, social, economic and cultural hegemony, as well as the interpretation of the patriarchal and exclusive hegemonic in the Islamic tradition. This means that progressive Muslims are not only criticizing existing discourses, but also hegemonic practices.[56] Another term similar to this is "progressive Islamic hermeneutics" or "contextualist Islamic

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[52] Adis Duderija, *The Imperatives of Progressive Islam* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 6.
[53] Ali Akbar, "Fazlur Rahman's Influence on Contemporary Islamic Thought," *The Muslim World*, Vol. 110, No. 2 (2020): 147.
[54] Duderija, *Constructing a Religious Ideal "Believer" and "Women"*, 146.
[55] Duderija, *The Imperatives of Progressive Islam*, 3.
[56] Ibid., 5.

hermeneutics" which emphasizes the role of context and history of the revelation community in interpreting fundamental religious texts.[57]

However, there is a difference in emphasis between contextualist figures and progressive Muslims. Progressive Muslims depart from the actual issues that occur. The contextualists depart from the verses of the Qur'an to be connected to current issues. For this reason, the mapping of textualists, semi-textualists, and contextualists that has been introduced by Saeed, has not completely looked at the difference between these two attitudes: between contextualists and progressive modernist Muslims. To complete it, this progressive modernist Muslim, in the context of attitudes and views on the interpretation of the Qur'an, can be categorized with the actual approach. This category, although rooted in contextualism, is more responsive to actual issues.

If it is seen from the tendency of each topic that has been discussed in the problem section, the mapping of the results of their interpretation has similarities in the lens of contextual interpretation. However, their interpretations have different contextual levels. Rahman, Abu Zayd, and Saeed more dominantly depart from verses related to social problems, while Esack and Sahiron put more focus on the actual issues that occur. Saeed emphasizes that the contextual approach must look at the continuity of changes in the environmental, social, and cultural context before interpretation is considered relevant.[58] From this, it can be mapped that the interpretation of Rahman, Abu Zayd, and Saeed is indeed more appropriately categorized as a contextual interpretation, while Esack and Sahiron need to be included in a different category from the contextual approach. Since the interpretation is based on actual issues, the categorization can be called an actual interpretation. That way, Esack and Sahiron can be categorized in the actual approach. From the explanation of their paradigm elements, it is also illustrated that the contextualist figures have a paradigm of interpretation that changes from contextual to a paradigm that addresses actual problems, as will be discussed in the following subsection.

The factor that influences their paradigm shift is the role of their life experiences. Rahman uses historical criticism as an attempt to reconcile Western disciplines with Islamic traditions; Abu Zayd uses

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[57] Ibid., 5–6.
[58] Saeed, *Al-Quran Abad 21*, 13.

discourse analysis; Esack defines six key words and the Christian liberation theology as his hermeneutical analytical terms; Saeed emphasizes the contemporary macro-context; and Sahiron maintains the old tradition in the process of interpretation. In addition, the topic of their interpretation product is not a random choice, but it is closely related to the struggles and problems faced in life. Rahman focuses on ethical morals and Islamic education; Abu Zayd focuses on countering ideological bias in interpretation; Esack focuses on the struggle for equality; Saeed focuses on the issue of modernity; Sahiron focuses on extremism and religious tolerance and moderation. From this, it can be seen that their life experiences play a role in building the principles of interpretation and producing interpretation. At this point, this paper argues that the shift or change in the principles of their contextual interpretation is influenced by the socio-religious, political, and cultural background of their respective countries.

The Need for An Actual Approach

Before Saeed, Adnan has already introduced a contextual approach.[59] However, Saeed does the mapping in a more detail way, namely textual, semi-textual, and contextual.[60] In response to the Saeed's mapping, Sahiron perfects it with the three mappings of contemporary interpretation of the Qur'an in terms of meaning, namely (1) conservative quasi-objectivist, (2) subjectivist, and (3) progressive quasi-objectivist.[61] Based on the mapping approach of Saeed, Amin also proposes two readings in interpretation, namely *qirā'ah taqlidiyyah* (textual and semi-textual) and *qirā'ah tārikhiyyah-maqāṣidiyyah* (contextual). However, Amin then develops a contextual-progressive method of interpretation that emphasizes two principles, namely the meaning with an interactive style and the meaning of a

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[59] Taufik Adnan Amal and Samsu Rizal Panggabean, "A Contextual Approach to the Qur'an," in *Approaches to the Qur'an in Contemporary Indonesia* (London: Oxford University Press, 2005), 107–134; Taufik Adnan Amal and Samsu Rizal Panggabean, *Tafsir Kontekstual Al-Qur'an: Sebuah Kerangka Konseptual* (Bandung: Mizan, 1992).

[60] Saeed first maps out interpretation into three categories: (1) textualists who consider that the meaning of the Qur'an has already been fixed and appropriate to be applied anywhere and anytime, (2) semi-textualists who still follow a textualist perspective and reject the historical social context, but they package *ethico-legal* in somewhat modern terms, (3) contextualists who emphasize the socio-cultural context of the text and the current context. Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'ān*, 3.

[61] Syamsuddin, *Hermeneutika dan Pengembangan Ulumul Qur'an*, 57–58.

text with a fluid character.[62] In addition to principles, he adds two features to this approach, namely (1) *asbāb al-nuzūl al-qadīm* and *asbāb al-nuzūl al-jadīd*, and (2) maqashidi interpretation with the six features of Jasser Auda's system approach.[63] What is still awaited from this approach are concrete definitions and examples of interpretation so that the points of difference can be seen when compared to the contextual approach.

An interpretation is an effort to make social change. Therefore, the paradigm of interpretation of the Qur'an must give implications for an interpretation that has a transformative vision. In this regard, an interpreter needs to identify the actual problems that exist. From the beginning when it was revealed, the Qur'an, as Qs. Al-Muddaththir [74]: 1-10 states implicitly, has an argumentative character that the Prophet Muhammad is sent to a community that needs reform.[64] This message is captured by progressive Muslim thinkers. For them, there is a relationship between Muslim intellectuals and social activism. From the dialectical relationship between the two, a term "social hermeneutics" as what is called by Duderija emerges. This hermeneutics is an attempt by progressive Muslim thinkers to make socio-political changes with a belief-based framework. That is, religious discourse becomes the basis of social transformation. This discourse focuses on issues of gender justice, human rights, democracy, structural accountability, and political institutions.[65] This is similar to the hermeneutics of liberation by Farid Esack and Ḥasan Ḥanafī.

A study by Wahyudi shows that the hermeneutics of Ḥanafī and al-Jābirī pays great attention to *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* in interpretation. Because interpretation is a revolutionary socio-political responsibility, Ḥanafī prioritizes struggles for property (*māl*) with the spirit of liberation of Muslim lands from foreign occupation. On the other hand, al-Jābirī prioritizes reason (intellectual) over the other four maqashids. Therefore, he fights for intellectually by accepting modernity. Although they are different, they both use interpretation

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[62] M. Amin Abdullah, *Multidisiplin, Interdisiplin, & Transdisiplin: Metode Studi Agama & Studi Islam di Era Kontemporer* (Yogyakarta: IB Pustaka, 2020), 209.

[63] Ibid., 211–219.

[64] Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, "The 'Others' in the Qur'an: A Hermeneutical Approach," *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (2010): 287.

[65] Duderija, *The Imperatives of Progressive Islam*, 2.

as an effort to defend the interests of the people.[66] Voelker also discusses the thoughts of Rahman, Arkoun, and Abu Zayd about the nature of the Qur'an and its interpretation as the basis for the reform scheme. He sees that these three Muslim scholars have ideas for reform at the level of individual consciousness, society and science, and links these ideas with their understanding of the Qur'an and its interpretation.[67] This shows that progressive Muslim thinkers have an awareness of actual problems and social change for the better.

In contrast to the contextualists who begin with the objective or linguistic meaning of the verse, this actual approach actually begins with an emphasis on identifying the core problem of the actual issues that occur. Wahyudi notes that Ḥanafī even uses the factual situation analysis as one of the principles of his thematic interpretation.[68] As an agent of social change,[69] an interpreter must be able to identify actual problems, especially socio-religious. This effort is inseparable from the principle of "interpretation as criticism" built at the beginning. As a critic, the interpreter or reader of the text must be able to analyze the actual problems, its roots, motives, and its relationship to the text of the Qur'an. The link between reality and the ideal of interpretation is the key.

With this approach, interpretation is oriented to actual problems and transformations to achieve national and state ideals. Therefore, this approach has implications for the addition of one typology approach from the three typologies mentioned by Saeed. In order not to be separated from the typology, this approach is called the actual approach. The actual approach is the approach used to actualize the values of the Qur'an by considering the context of revelation and the present, by identifying actual issues and the latest problems that arise in particular contexts. This cannot be separated from the spirit of interpretation that has ideals to be fought for by solving problems in various aspects of nationality and statehood.

The spirit of interpretation within the boundaries of the state actually has a precedent in the history of Islam during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. The precedent of unity that transcends religious

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[66] Wahyudi, "The Slogan 'Back to the Qur'ān and the Sunna'," 266–267.

[67] Katharina Voelker, *Quran and Reform: Rahman, Arkoun, Abu Zayd* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang BmbH, 2017).

[68] Wahyudi, "The Slogan 'Back to the Qur'ān and the Sunna'," 280.

[69] Ibid., 259.

and ethnic boundaries can be seen in the agreement between the Muslims and the original inhabitants of Medina, both from the Jews and the pagan tribes. The community structure which was originally based on ethnicity and religion was transformed into a unified community structure as an informal state.[70] In the interpretation of the Qur'an, ideology does not completely have to be seen as to obscure interpretation. Ideology has become an important principle in contextualizing moral ideals in the present context. The Qur'an itself carries ideologies. Farid Essack and Amina Wadud, for example, believe that the Qur'an brings the spirit of liberation. Esack, for example, emphasizes the importance of the relevance of the text in the contemporary context so that the necessary new meanings are found according to the needs and the particular context (socio-political-religious) of his country, South Africa.[71] In addition to Esack, Saeed also emphasizes that the interpretation effort would be successful and accepted if the interpreter involves as many as possible aspects that could change, which include mindsets, norms, and cultural values that are in accordance with the development of society.[72]

Figure I. Typology of Approaches to Understanding the Qur'an
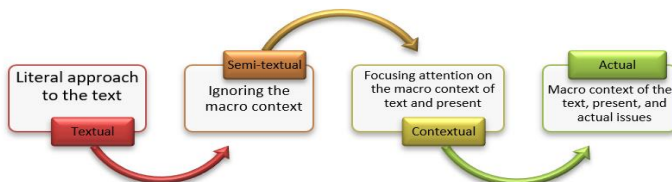
From this definition, a question arises: what are the steps to actualize the interpretation? The spirit of the actual approach has actually been applied by some progressive Muslim thinkers. Sahiron, for example, interprets Qs. al-Mā'idah [5]:51 because of the increasing cases of the politicization of religion in Indonesia.[73] Besides Sahiron, Wahyudi also has interpretive characteristics that always relate to

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[70] Fazlur Rahman, "Interpreting the Qur'an," 45–49; Amal (Peny.), *Metode dan Alternatif*, 61.

[71] Esack, *Quran, Liberation and Pluralism*, 63.

[72] Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'ān*, 115.

[73] Sahiron Syamsuddin, "Ma'na-Cum-Maghza Approach to the Qur'an: Interpretation of Q. 5:51," *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research (ASSEHR)* 137 (2018): 131.

actual issues in understanding the verses of the Qur'an, such as surah al-Qadr, al-Ḍuhā, and the term *"khalīfah"* in Qs. al-Baqarah [2]: 30-38. The reading of the significance development model like this, by Gracia, is called the "implicative function" in interpretation. The implicative function seeks to reveal the implications of the meaning of historical texts for contemporary readers.[74] One of the peculiarities in Wahyudi's interpretation, according to Djidin and Sahiron, is to reveal the symbolic meaning of key words in the verse so that they can be used for the benefit of human life.[75] This symbolic meaning is achieved by using the analogy of abstract ideas in a verse into concrete problems in various aspects of life, whether religious, social, and political. It is in this way that Wahyudi produces actual interpretations. The character of Wahyudi's interpretation, according to Lia, is more focused on phenomena and his interpretation is according to context. He emphasizes the interpretation of the Qur'an on the benefit and significance in life.[76] What is done by Wahyudi is an effort to present a concrete example of interpretation so that it could be easily understood by the wider community. Therefore, the aspect that needs to be considered when carrying out actual interpretation is to find symbolic meanings and implicative functions that are connected in a concrete context. The implicative function can be achieved through analogy that is connected to the actual problems.

From the explanation above, the actual approach has an interpretive orientation that does not only interpret verses in the contemporary context, but it also has a vision of solving the actual problems that exist. The solution of interpretation must be seen by considering the basic vision of a particular nationality or country that contains the values of future ideals. Thus, the product of interpretation must be in the actual context with an insight into the national or state vision. In addition, in the actual approach, there is a

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[74] Gracia Jorge J. E., *A Theory of Textuality: The Logic and Epistemology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 161.

[75] M. Djidin and Sahiron Syamsuddin, "Indonesian Interpretation of the Qur'an on Khilāfah: The Case of Quraish Shihab and Yudian Wahyudi on Qur'an 2: 30-38," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (2019): 164.

[76] Lia Fadhliyah, "Penafsiran Prof. Drs. K.H. Yudian Wahyudi, B.A., B.A., M.A., Ph.D tentang QS. Al-Duha dan Signifikansinya pada Kehidupan," in *Pembaruan Islam Yudian Wahyudi: Komparasi dengan Hasbi Ash Shiddieqy, Hazairin, Nurcholish Madjid, dan Quraish Shihab*, ed. Khoirul Anam and Biky Uthbek Mubarok (Yogyakarta: Suka Press, 2021), 175.

paradigmatic change in viewing the text. The text of the Qur'an has been the main target of interpretation with the aid of context; in the actual approach, the context of the Qur'an becomes the main target of interpretation with the aid of the text of the Qur'an. This argument is based on the view that the text represents the social and cultural system that becomes the context of the revelation of the text. From this context, the true core spirit of the Qur'an must be explored.

Theoretical implications: Text as Tool for Understanding Context

One of the main hermeneutical elements in this approach is the text of the Qur'an as a cultural text. Text is generally interpreted as a medium where symbols are used to convey messages to the audience. The text is just a fragment of the more macro part. The text that appears may not be entirely complete, but it is a representative part of the larger discourse behind the appearance of the text. It is the discourse behind the text that needs to be explained when analyzing a particular text.[77] As a religious text, the Qur'an is still positioned as a revelation from God to humans. Muslims believe in the Qur'an as the word of God to humans. In this case, there is a dialectical relationship between the Qur'an and its cultural audience.[78] Thus, the text of the Qur'an must be seen as a cultural representation that contains the core message of the purpose of revelation.

As a cultural text, the Qur'an responds to the social and cultural situation of the time of revelation. It has also received a broad cultural response. As a cultural response, the Qur'anic text has received –borrowing the function classification of the Gracia text– its cultural functions, such as verses related to law, literature, philosophical, religious, historical, entertaining, and inspirational.[79] The response to it is manifested in the books of commentary. This response also has implications for the values and teachings of the Qur'an that have undergone a transformation in the form of interpretation. This transformation process makes the Qur'an not only a holy text, but also a cultural text. After responding to the cultural events during the revelation period, it becomes the central text that generate cultural

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[77] Sara McKinnon, "Text-Based Approaches to Qualitative Research," *The International Encyclopedia of Media Studies* VII (2013): 3.
[78] Saeed, *Al-Quran Abad 21*, 162.
[79] Gracia, *A Theory of Textuality*, 89–95.

changes for its readers. This principle automatically places the text of the Qur'an as a *waḍ'ī* text, contextual, concrete, humanistic, and horizontal. In addition, the implication of positioning the Qur'anic text as a sociocultural record of the revelation period is as a tool to understand the context of revelation. In that way, on the one hand, the text also becomes an entry medium for capturing messages from the historical macro-context.

In essence, the contextual approach epistemology is more likely to position the context, especially the one that surrounds the descent of the text, as a means of understanding the text. This idea is central to the approach of some of the contextualist figures above. However, this idea raises a fundamental problem. Contexts that contain the broad flexibility of meaning will be limited by the structure of the text. Whereas actually, the core values and teachings that need to be revealed actually hide behind the historical context of the text, not in the text itself. The text only represents the core message in the historical context at the time of revelation. Therefore, it is not context that is positioned as a tool for understanding text. On the contrary, text should be positioned as a tool for understanding context.

Looking at its theoretical novelty, this paradigm adds to the Saeed's categorization of interpretive approaches (textual, semi-textual, and contextual) with the actual approach. The actual approach is at least built on the assumption that interpretation must address the actual context and has a vision of social transformation. In contrast to the tendency of a contextual approach that positions context as a tool for understanding the text, this approach is built on the assumption that the text of the Qur'an is a cultural representation so that it becomes a tool for understanding the represented Qur'anic context. Thus, there is a paradigm shift in positioning the context of revelation from the tool to be the main object of interpretation.

Conclusion

Based on the explanation above, the interpretation approach of each figure turns out to be varied and has each interpretation principle that cannot be separated from the influence of the sociocultural and sociopolitical context of each country. Their approach of interpretation is also inseparable from the elements of a paradigm that have changed. This change has implications for a paradigmatic shift from the approach of contextual interpretation to

the actual interpretation. The actual approach is more oriented towards actual issues and ways to provide solutions to actual problems. Interpretation must address reality and provide solutions to ideals. In that way, the interpretation becomes more actual.

Thus, in terms of theoretical novelty, this paper adds to the Saeed's categorization of interpretive approaches (textual, semi-textual, and contextual) with the actual approach. The actual approach is at least built on the assumption that interpretation must address the actual context and has a vision of social transformation. The paradigm shift also has implications for the basic assumptions regarding the position of the text and context in the interpretation process. In contrast to the tendency of a contextual approach that positions context as a tool for understanding the text, this approach is built on the assumption that the text of the Qur'an is a cultural representation so that it becomes a tool for understanding the represented Qur'anic context. Thus, there is a paradigm shift in positioning the context of revelation from the tool to be the main object of interpretation.

Nevertheless, this research has limitations. This research only looks into the thoughts of five main figures. Meanwhile, there is a need to analyze the thoughts of contextualist thinkers from various parts of the world, especially regarding the elements that make up their paradigm of interpretation. In addition, this study only proposes the basic assumptions of the actual approach. To become a paradigm of interpretation, other elements still need to be built, including values, problems, concepts, models, research methods, analytical methods, theoretical results, and representations. Therefore, further research needs to examine more contextualist figures and explain the elements of their paradigm of interpretation. This approach of interpretation also needs to be tested on examples of verses with inductive research logic so that the result of interpretive studies using this approach can be oriented to produce critical and theoretical contributions in developing a paradigm of interpretation of the Qur'an that is in actual context.

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