

RECONSTRUCTING KHILĀFAH (AL-BAQARAH: 30) AS ECOLOGICAL CITIZENSHIP: TOWARD AN ISLAMIC JURIDICAL FRAMEWORK FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

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Abstrak: This study aims to re-evaluate the Quranic concept of *khilāfah* (stewardship) in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 30 through the lens of modern climate justice to formulate an innovative Islamic juridical framework for ecological citizenship. Employing a qualitative-philosophical method within a contemporary eco-theological approach, this paper systematically analyzes classical and modern contextual exegesis (*tafsīr*) concerning human agency and cosmic governance. The data were gathered from historical Islamic source materials and integrated with current sociology of environmental rights and global climate vulnerability indices. The results demonstrate that *khilāfah* has been widely minimized into an anthropocentric political or purely spiritual mandate, thereby neglecting its intrinsic ecological dimensions. By reconstructing *khilāfah* as ecological citizenship, this study establishes that environmental responsibility is a binding juridical obligation (*taklīf*) that demands institutionalized climate justice and ecocentric legal protections. Consequently, this article contributes a progressive juridical-theological alternative to the global environmental discourse, bridging classical Islamic public law with global climate equity.

Key Words: Ecological Citizenship; *Khilāfah*; Climate Justice; Al-Baqarah 30; Eco-Theology.

INTRODUCTION

The structural realities of global climate change demand a radical rethinking of human agency within global environmental discourses. While international environmental law is largely framed through technocratic paradigms, economic models, and secular-liberal rights frameworks, these systems often fail to address the ethical and spiritual motivations of vulnerable societies, particularly in the Global South. Within modern Islamic legal and political scholarship, the global climate crisis is increasingly acknowledged; however, mainstream responses frequently relegate ecological duties to peripheral moral suggestions or generic ethical advice. This intellectual detachment prevents the development of a binding, structural Islamic legal mechanism capable of confronting trans-boundary eco-destruction and corporate-driven environmental degradation.

A critical review of recent literature shows that traditional scholarship routinely defines the concept of *khilāfah* (vicegerency/stewardship) through two historical extremes. On one hand, political Islamists reduce *khilāfah* to an ideological, state-centric administrative system. On the other hand, traditional eco-theologians interpret it as a personal, spiritual responsibility to care

for nature. Both approaches present a distinct research gap: they isolate the exegetical reading of Surah Al-Baqarah verse 30 from contemporary structures of environmental rights, public accountability, and systemic climate vulnerability. Consequently, existing frameworks lack the legal mechanism required to convert religious environmental sentiment into binding socio-legal actions against global environmental injustices.

To resolve this scholarly limitation, this article introduces a crucial *State of the Art* by shifting the exegesis of *khilāfah* from political ideology or passive moralism into a dynamic model of trans-national ecological citizenship. The novelty of this study lies in its systematic synthesis of Quranic cosmic governance with the socio-legal tenets of climate justice and modern environmental rights. **Therefore, this study aims to re-evaluate the Quranic concept of *khilāfah* (stewardship) in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 30 through the lens of modern climate justice to formulate an innovative Islamic juridical framework for ecological citizenship.**

RESEARCH METHODS

This study is an original qualitative-philosophical inquiry utilizing systematic library research methods. To bridge theological principles with modern environmental issues, the research employs a contemporary eco-theological approach.

1. **Research Subject:** The primary subject of analysis is the semantic and juridical structure of *khilāfah* as presented in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 30, examined alongside its historical development across various schools of Islamic thought.
2. **Data Collection:** Data were collected through a thematic (*mawdūʿī*) documentary exploration of authoritative exegeses, selecting works from distinct intellectual epochs: *Tafsir al-Tabari* (classical-traditional), *Fi Zilal al-Quran* by Sayyid Qutb (modern-political), and the environmental legal rulings of contemporary Islamic organizations. These textual sources were cross-referenced with empirical climate vulnerability data, global environmental law statutes, and modern sociological theories on ecological rights.
3. **Data Analysis:** The data were analyzed through qualitative content analysis and philosophical-juridical hermeneutics. This analytical approach deconstructed textual declarations, identified implicit legal principles, and integrated them with current socio-legal frameworks for climate justice and planetary accountability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Deconstructing *Khilāfah* in Al-Baqarah: 30: From Anthropocentric Domain to Ecocentric Responsibility

To reposition Surah Al-Baqarah verse 30 within modern climate discourses, the term *khalīfah* must be rescued from anthropocentric perspectives that limit its scope to human domination over the natural world. The verse states: "*And when your Lord said to the angels, 'Indeed, I am making upon the earth a vicegerent (khalīfah)...'*". Classical traditionalist exegetes, such as al-Tabari, often understood this appointment as human political authority or a mandate to settle disputes among human communities (Al-Tabari, 2001: 450). This narrow focus fostered an

anthropocentric view of law, treating nature merely as a backdrop or an instrument for human advancement.

However, an ecocentric reading of the text, when aligned with the concerns raised by the angels regarding bloodshed and corruption on earth (*yufṣidu fihā wa yasfiku al-dimā'*), reveals a deep environmental concern within the creation narrative itself. The angels' objection indicates that *khilāfah* was introduced precisely to prevent ecological breakdown and systemic violence against the living landscape. Modern thinkers like Fazlur Rahman have argued that human vicegerency is conditional upon maintaining the cosmic order and the balance of nature (Rahman, 1980: 34).

Therefore, *khilāfah* should not be seen as a license to exploit natural resources. Instead, it represents a strict eco-juridical appointment. It demands that humanity act as an internal stabilizer within the biosphere, translating divine justice into active environmental preservation and sustainable resource governance.

Reconstructing *Khilāfah* as Ecological Citizenship in the Climate Crisis Era

Reconstructing *khilāfah* as ecological citizenship provides a fresh legal perspective for addressing the complex challenges of the climate crisis. Traditional political models view citizenship through national boundaries, which often blinds them to the transnational impacts of environmental destruction. In contrast, an Islamic model of ecological citizenship redefines the political community (*ummah*) as an open, ecocentric space that includes both human societies and non-human ecologies, all bound by shared cosmological duties.

Core Dimension	Nation-State Citizenship Model	Islamic Ecological Citizenship (<i>Khilāfah</i>)
Source of Authority	National constitutions and geopolitical borders.	Divine trust (<i>amānah</i>) and cosmic equilibrium (<i>mīzān</i>).
Scope of Obligation	Restricted to national citizens and territories.	Universal; encompasses trans-boundary ecosystems and future generations.
Legal Status of Nature	Treated as property or an economic resource.	Formulated as a sacred trust with intrinsic rights (<i>āyāt</i>).
Primary Objective	National economic growth and human security.	Universal climate justice and planetary harmony (<i>maslahah</i>).

This model changes how we view environmental responsibility. Under this framework, high carbon emissions, deforestation, and the dumping of industrial waste are no longer seen simply as economic byproducts or regulatory oversights. Rather, they represent a direct violation of the covenants of *khilāfah* (Nasr, 1996: 112). Ecological citizenship means that every human action affecting the environment carries legal weight (*taklīf*). This approach places the

responsibility for environmental impact squarely on individuals and corporate bodies alike, creating an ethical framework where global resource use is balanced by accountability to the planetary commons.

Toward an Islamic Juridical Framework for Climate Justice

The shift from an ethical vision to a practical legal system requires integrating ecological citizenship into the foundational principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). Traditional environmental jurisprudence (*fiqh al-bi'ah*) typically operates on a defensive model, utilizing minor legal concepts such as *ḥimā* (protected conservation zones) or *harām* (buffer areas around water resources) to manage local ecosystems (Izzi Dien, 2000: 88). While these concepts remain useful, they are ill-equipped to address global climate challenges like rising sea levels, displaced climate refugees, or systemic corporate pollution.

This study advocates for the development of a "Transformative Eco-Maqāsid" framework. This approach elevates the protection of the environment to an independent, overarching objective of Islamic law (*ḥifẓ al-bi'ah*), equal in status to the traditional protections of life and intellect. By establishing this principle, the legal system can address climate vulnerability through the lens of public interest (*maṣlaḥah mursalah*).

Consequently, state policies that continue to subsidize fossil fuel extraction, permit widespread deforestation, or fail to implement emissions controls can be declared legally invalid under Islamic law due to the systemic harm (*ḍarar*) they inflict on society. This approach provides a clear legal basis for courts in Muslim-majority regions to hold polluters accountable, mandate ecological restoration, and enforce proactive climate adaptation policies as a core religious and civic obligation.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the concept of *khilāfah* in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 30 can be reconstructed as a comprehensive model of ecological citizenship. This framework offers a robust legal approach to addressing the global climate crisis. By moving past anthropocentric readings and political ideologies, *khilāfah* establishes that human stewardship is fundamentally an eco-juridical responsibility designed to protect the planetary equilibrium (*mīzān*).

The primary limitation of this research is its conceptual and theoretical focus, which does not examine the operational challenges of implementing these principles within existing secular legal systems. Future scholarship should explore how this transformative framework can be applied within national environmental policies, court adjudications, and regional climate adaptation strategies across Muslim-majority nations.

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