

## Islamic Informed Environmental Governance in the Age of Ecological Crisis: A *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* Perspective

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This article examines the contribution of Islamic legal thought to the formulation of a Islamic informed environmental governance framework amid the increasingly complex global ecological crisis. Employing a normative critical qualitative approach and trans-disciplinary analysis, the study integrates classical and contemporary Islamic legal literature with theories of environmental governance and environmental ethics, as well as findings from modern ecological science. The findings demonstrate that Islamic legal principles can be reconstructed into environmental governance through two interrelated mechanisms. First, mutual critical reconstruction enables ecological science to expand juristic understandings of environmental harm and interdependence, while Islamic legal reasoning provides normative criteria for evaluating the justice and legitimacy of environmental responses. Second, these reconstructed principles are operationalized through a recursive governance cycle linking Islamic based normative sources, ethical translation, institutional mediation, policy implementation, and evaluative feedback. Based on these mechanisms, this study proposes a Islamic informed environmental governance model that moves beyond the normative integration of Islamic environmental values by providing a systematic pathway for translating Islamic legal norms into governance practices. Instruments such as *fatwas*, *fiqh* doctrines, and *waqf* mechanisms can thereby inform institutional deliberation, community action, and policy development. The model's distinctive contribution lies in combining mutual epistemological reconstruction with an institutionally mediated and continuously revisable governance process.

**Keywords:** ecology; environmental ethics; environmental governance; *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*; religion.

The global ecological crisis in the twenty-first century has reached an alarming level, marked by accelerating climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, and widespread environmental pollution (Díaz et al., 2019). Recent scientific reports indicate that human activities have pushed the Earth system beyond safe planetary boundaries, thereby threatening the sustainability of life on the planet (Rockström et al., 2009). In this context, the ecological crisis is no longer merely a technical issue; it has evolved into a multidimensional crisis encompassing ethical, political, economic, and even spiritual dimensions (Ostrom 2009). Consequently, environmental governance requires a more holistic and transdisciplinary framework (Jenkins 2018).

Although various science based policies and instruments have been developed within the framework of modern environmental governance, purely secular approaches often reveal significant limitations, particularly in fostering long term moral commitment and collective behavioural change (Hitzhusen 2007). Studies in environmental ethics emphasise that the ecological crisis is also rooted in a crisis of values and the dominance of anthropocentric paradigms in modernity (Hitzhusen 2007). Furthermore, the failure of many

global environmental regimes to meet agreed upon targets reflects the limited internalisation of ethical values in environmental governance and public policy (Agrawal 2005). This situation creates an opportunity to explore alternative normative sources, including religion, as a foundation for public environmental ethics.

Over the past several decades, religion has increasingly been recognised as an important actor in global ecological discourse. Scholarship in the field of religion and ecology demonstrates that religious traditions possess significant potential to cultivate ecological awareness, mobilise communities, and strengthen environmental stewardship (Denny 2003). In this regard, Islam, as one of the world's largest religions, offers a rich normative framework through concepts such as *khilāfah* (stewardship), *amānah* (trust), and *maṣlahah* (public interest), which constitute important foundations for Islamic environmental ethics (Kamali 2010). Nevertheless, the contribution of Islamic legal thought to global environmental discourse remains underrepresented within mainstream environmental governance scholarship despite its significant normative potential (Marshall 2025).

Although recent scholarship has begun to connect Islamic legal principles with environmental policy initiatives at regional and institutional levels, including studies on green fatwas, Islamic environmental governance, and eco-*waqf*, these contributions remain largely sectoral and context specific. A comprehensive and systematic framework that integrates Islamic legal thought with contemporary environmental governance theory, policy design, and implementation across broader governance contexts remains insufficiently developed. Accordingly, this article seeks not to fill an absence of policy oriented studies, but to advance a more integrated legal governance framework that bridges Islamic legal thought, environmental ethics, governance theory, and ecological science within a coherent conceptual model. This gap highlights the need for an integrative approach that bridges Islamic legal traditions, environmental sciences, and modern governance theories.

Within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, this article does not regard environmental protection (*ḥifẓ al-bi'ah*) as one of the original classical objectives formulated by early jurists. Rather, it adopts the contemporary *maqāṣid* perspective, which understands environmental protection as a logical extension of the preservation of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), wealth (*ḥifẓ al-māl*), and the broader realization of *maṣlahah*. In this sense, environmental sustainability represents an evolving objective of Islamic law that responds to contemporary ecological challenges while remaining rooted in classical jurisprudential principles.

Against this background, this article addresses two principal questions: (1) How can Islamic legal thought contribute conceptually and normatively to modern environmental governance? and (2) How can such a framework engage constructively with contemporary science and ecology? This article argues that a Islamic informed environmental governance approach can not only enrich the ethical dimension of environmental governance but also offer a more holistic alternative paradigm based on *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, which incorporates environmental protection as an integral objective of Islamic law. Accordingly, the integration of Islamic legal thought into environmental governance may provide a significant contribution to addressing the global ecological crisis in a more just and sustainable manner.

## Literature Review

The concept of environmental governance has undergone significant evolution from a state-centric regulatory approach to a more complex, multi-actor model involving markets, civil society, and various institutions. In contemporary scholarship, governance is understood not merely as a regulatory instrument but as a dynamic process encompassing the negotiation of values, the distribution of power and mechanisms of accountability across multiple levels (Newell et al., 2012). Key issues that have emerged within this discourse include sustainability, climate justice and the effectiveness of global policy regimes in addressing ecological crises (Koehrsen & Ives 2025). Nevertheless, an important critique is that modern governance frameworks tend to be technocratic and often fail to integrate substantive ethical dimensions, thereby limiting their capacity to foster enduring collective moral commitment (Jenkins 2018).

In response to these limitations, the field of religion and ecology has developed rapidly, incorporating spiritual and ethical dimensions into environmental discourse. Numerous studies demonstrate that religion can shape value orientations, strengthen moral responsibility and mobilise collective action on a broad scale. Furthermore, the science religion dialogue has become increasingly relevant to the construction of holistic ecological approaches, in which empirical knowledge is integrated with normative frameworks rooted in religious traditions (Bikku 2025). Within this perspective, religion is positioned not only as a source of ethical inspiration but also as an epistemological partner in fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the human nature relationship.

Within the Islamic tradition, concern for the environment can be traced through both classical sources and contemporary developments in Islamic legal thought. The environmental concern has evolved beyond its classical theological foundations into a dynamic field of contemporary Islamic legal scholarship. While many scholars continue to interpret *khilāfah* and *amānah* primarily as ethical obligations that cultivate environmental responsibility, others argue that these concepts should be operationalized within environmental governance, public policy, and sustainable development frameworks. Likewise, *maṣlahah* has developed from a classical juristic principle of public welfare into a broader analytical framework capable of legitimizing environmental protection, climate action, and intergenerational justice. These diverse interpretations illustrate that contemporary Islamic environmental thought is evolving from predominantly normative discourse toward more policy oriented and governance-based approaches. (Md Taha et al., 2025). Contemporary scholarship has further developed these concepts in response to the global ecological crisis, particularly through the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, which emphasises the protection of life and ecological balance (Nurholis 2025). However, much of this literature remains normative and descriptive and has yet to establish substantial connections with the concrete mechanisms of contemporary environmental governance. Moreover, engagement with modern environmental science and governance theory remains relatively limited, resulting in an underarticulated understanding of Islamic law's contribution to global environmental discourse (Sari et al., 2026).

In light of these gaps, this article adopts a normative critical theoretical framework combined with a transdisciplinary approach. In this study, transdisciplinarity is understood not merely as the combination of multiple disciplinary perspectives but as the construction of a shared conceptual framework through continuous interaction between Islamic legal thought, environmental governance theory, and ecological science. Contemporary ecological findings are first employed to identify the nature and urgency of current environmental challenges, while governance theory provides analytical criteria concerning institutional effectiveness, participation, accountability, and sustainability. These empirical and conceptual insights are subsequently interpreted through the normative principles of Islamic law, particularly *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, *maṣlahah*, *khilāfah*, and *amānah*, to formulate an integrated ethical governance framework. The outcome is not simply a juxtaposition of disciplines, but a reconstructed model of faith informed environmental governance in which scientific evidence defines environmental realities, governance theory structures institutional responses, and Islamic jurisprudence provides normative and ethical direction for policy and collective action.

The normative dimension is employed to explore the foundational principles of Islamic law, particularly within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, as a basis for environmental ethics. The critical dimension serves to evaluate the limitations of contemporary governance models while opening avenues for dialogue between Islamic legal traditions and contemporary scientific knowledge. By integrating law, theology, ecology, and ethics, the transdisciplinary approach facilitates the development of an analytical framework that is not only conceptually robust but also practically relevant to contemporary public policy contexts. In doing so, this article seeks to transcend the dichotomy between religious normativity and scientific rationality.

Conceptually, the position advanced in this article is integrative rather than apologetic. The primary objective is not to defend Islamic tradition in a normative sense, but to foster a productive dialogue between

Islamic legal thought and contemporary environmental governance. This approach regards Islamic law as one of several epistemological resources capable of contributing both critically and constructively to responses to the global ecological crisis. The critical dimension adopted in this study does not seek to question the authority of classical Islamic legal sources, but rather to critically examine how classical juristic concepts can be reinterpreted and reconstructed in light of contemporary ecological realities. It evaluates whether traditional legal formulations remain adequate for addressing issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental governance, while employing the objectives of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* as a framework for contextualizing Islamic legal principles within present-day environmental challenges. In this sense, the critical approach is reconstructive rather than deconstructive, aiming to preserve the normative foundations of Islamic law while enhancing their contemporary relevance through dialogue with ecological science and governance theory.

By linking the principles of Sharī'ah with issues such as sustainability and ecological justice, this article seeks to broaden the horizons of global environmental discourse while proposing an alternative framework that is more ethical, inclusive, and sustainable.

The theoretical contribution of this article extends beyond the normative integration of Islamic values into environmental discourse. Existing scholarship in religion and ecology, Islamic environmental ethics, and Islamic environmental jurisprudence has made significant progress in demonstrating the ethical relevance of religious traditions to sustainability. However, these approaches generally remain either normative, focusing on ethical principles, or sectoral, concentrating on specific instruments such as green *fatwas*, eco *waqf*, or Islamic based environmental initiatives, without explaining the institutional and epistemological mechanisms through which Islamic legal norms can systematically interact with ecological science and contemporary environmental governance. To address this gap, this article develops the Islamic informed environmental governance framework based on two complementary theoretical innovations. First, the concept of mutual critical reconstruction conceptualizes an epistemological dialogue in which ecological science and Islamic legal reasoning reciprocally refine one another rather than occupying separate domains of facts and values. Second, the recursive governance cycle explains how Islamic legal norms are translated through ethical articulation, institutional mediation, policy implementation, and evaluative feedback into adaptive governance practices. By integrating these two mechanisms within a single analytical framework, this article advances a theory building contribution that provides a systematic explanation of how religious normativity can become institutionally operational while remaining responsive to scientific knowledge and changing ecological realities. Accordingly, the proposed framework offers scholars a more comprehensive analytical model for examining the interaction between religion, governance, and environmental policy than existing approaches that primarily emphasize ethical compatibility or normative integration.

A critical synthesis of the existing literature reveals that each major approach contributes important insights while also exhibiting significant limitations. Secular environmental governance has developed sophisticated institutional frameworks emphasizing participation, polycentric governance, adaptive learning, and policy effectiveness; however, it often treats ethical values as external variables and provides limited explanation of how enduring moral commitments are cultivated within society. Conversely, religion based governance and environmental ethics offer strong normative foundations capable of shaping ecological responsibility and collective behaviour, yet they frequently remain at the level of ethical affirmation without specifying institutional pathways through which religious values influence governance processes. Similarly, scholarship on Islamic environmental law has successfully articulated concepts such as *khilāfah*, *amānah*, *maṣlahah*, and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, but much of this literature remains normative and sector specific, focusing on particular instruments such as green *fatwas*, eco *waqf*, or Islamic environmental movements rather than developing an integrated governance framework. This article advances the literature by bridging these fragmented perspectives through the Islamic informed environmental governance framework, which combines mutual critical reconstruction as an epistemological mechanism and the recursive governance cycle as an institutional mechanism for translating Islamic legal norms into adaptive, evidence informed, and continuously evaluable environmental governance practices.

### Method

This study employed a qualitative methodology with a normative-critical approach to explore and reconstruct the contribution of Islamic legal thought to contemporary environmental governance. The primary sources consisted of classical works of Islamic jurisprudence and legal theory representing the Sunni legal tradition, particularly texts discussing *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, *maṣlaḥah*, *khilāfah*, *amānah*, and environmental responsibility. These were complemented by contemporary scholarly publications on Islamic environmental law, environmental governance, religion and ecology, and sustainability published in peer reviewed journals and academic books. The literature was selected based on its relevance to environmental governance, Islamic legal theory, and contemporary ecological challenges.

The analysis was conducted in four stages. First, relevant legal concepts were identified and extracted from the selected classical and contemporary Islamic legal literature. Second, these concepts were subjected to conceptual analysis to identify their normative meanings and underlying legal objectives. Third, the findings were comparatively examined alongside contemporary theories of environmental governance and ecological science to identify points of convergence, divergence, and complementarity. Finally, the results were synthesized into an integrated conceptual framework of Islamic informed environmental governance based on the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*.

This analytical procedure enabled the systematic integration of Islamic legal principles, governance theory, and ecological science into a coherent conceptual framework capable of explaining the normative foundations of Islamic informed environmental governance.

### Results and Discussions

#### *Core Concepts of Islamic Legal Thought Relevant to Ecology*

Islamic legal thought provides a set of ethical legal principles that are highly relevant to addressing contemporary ecological crises, particularly through the notion of human responsibility towards the environment. This principle is rooted in the conception of human beings as stewards of the Earth who bear a moral trust (*amānah*) to preserve the sustainability of life-supporting systems (Md Taha et al., 2025). Within this framework, the human nature relationship is not exploitative but grounded in responsibility and intergenerational accountability (Jenkins 2018). The environmental ethics literature similarly affirms the importance of an ethic of responsibility as a foundation for collective ecological behaviour (Kopnina 2012). Consequently, this principle may be understood as an ethical legal norm that encourages the integration of individual moral obligations into public policy frameworks in environmental governance.

Furthermore, the concept of balance and harmony constitutes a central element in the construction of an environmental ethic grounded in Islamic law. Islamic intellectual traditions emphasise the preservation of cosmic balance as an integral aspect of the order of creation, which, in a contemporary context, can be associated with ecosystem stability and planetary boundaries. This perspective resonates with contemporary ecological approaches that highlight the interdependence of biospheric components and the necessity of maintaining the integrity of natural systems (Steffen et al., 2015). Accordingly, the principle of balance is not merely metaphysical but also carries practical implications for the formulation of environmental policies grounded in sustainability and the precautionary principle.

Moreover, an orientation towards public welfare and sustainability is reflected in the concept of *maṣlaḥah*, which, in its contemporary development, can be articulated as an ethical policy framework aimed at maximising collective well being without compromising the interests of future generations (Mohd Zain et al., 2024). This principle bears a strong conceptual affinity with the notions of sustainable development and intergenerational justice in the modern governance literature. In this regard, Islamic law provides not only moral norms but also an evaluative framework for assessing environmental policies based on their impacts on social and ecological justice. This demonstrates that the principle of *maṣlaḥah* can function as a bridge between normative ethics and concrete policy practice.

On the other hand, the ethical prohibition of environmental destruction constitutes a key principle that establishes moral limits on human interaction with nature. The prohibition of actions that cause corruption or destruction (*fāsād*) may be understood as a preventive principle closely aligned with the harm-prevention approach in contemporary environmental ethics. Within the framework of Islamic law, this principle regulates not only individual conduct but can also be institutionalised through public regulations aimed at preventing excessive exploitation and ecosystem degradation (Nurholis 2025). Thus, the prohibition of environmental harm serves as an ethical-legal norm that emphasises collective responsibility and the need for oversight mechanisms within governance systems.

Taken together, these core concepts within Islamic legal thought demonstrate that the tradition possesses significant potential to contribute to contemporary environmental governance discourse. It is important to emphasize that these principles should not be viewed merely as religious doctrines; rather, they constitute ethical legal frameworks that can be operationalized within the contexts of public policy and global governance (Sari et al., 2026). By articulating the principles of responsibility, balance, public welfare, and the prohibition of harm in an inclusive and dialogical language, this article positions Islamic legal thought as a relevant conceptual partner in the effort to develop governance paradigms that are more just, sustainable, and environmentally responsible.

### ***Engaging Contemporary Ecology: Dialogue with Science***

Contemporary ecological science provides increasingly robust empirical evidence that ecological crises are systemic and interconnected (Ciullo et al., 2025). However, while science can diagnose ecological degradation and its consequences, it does not by itself determine the normative principles that should guide collective responses.

The dialogue between Islamic legal thought and contemporary ecological science, however, involves significant epistemological tensions that cannot be resolved through simple conceptual equivalence. Ecological science operates primarily through empirical observation, measurement, and continuously revisable explanations of ecosystem dynamics, whereas Islamic legal thought derives its normative authority from revelation and juristic reasoning oriented towards determining obligations, values, and the realization of *maṣlaḥah* (Foltz, 2000). This distinction raises a fundamental question concerning how evolving scientific knowledge can inform the interpretation and application of relatively stable normative principles without reducing Islamic law to scientific determinism or subordinating ecological evidence to predetermined theological assumptions. At the same time, contemporary ecology challenges Islamic legal thought to reconsider the traditionally human centred articulation of welfare and harm by recognizing the systemic interdependence of human and non human life (Khalid, 2010). The dialogue therefore requires a process of mutual critical engagement in which ecological science expands the empirical understanding of environmental harm, while Islamic jurisprudence provides normative criteria for evaluating responses to ecological risks that scientific knowledge alone cannot ethically determine.

Nevertheless, the limitations of technocratic environmental governance cannot be addressed merely by inserting religious values into existing policy frameworks. A more fundamental challenge concerns how Islamic normative principles can be translated into publicly accessible ethical and policy language within pluralistic societies without either losing their distinctive religious foundations or imposing particular theological commitments on diverse communities. Principles such as *maṣlaḥah*, prevention of harm, and responsibility may contribute to public deliberation when articulated through broadly shared concerns such as ecological justice, sustainability, and intergenerational responsibility, while remaining rooted in their Islamic normative foundations (Qi et al., 2025; Camponeschi 2022; Sanson & Masten 2024). At the same time, Islamic legal thought must engage critically with the epistemic authority of ecological science, whose findings are empirical, probabilistic, and continually revisable. Rather than treating scientific knowledge as either normatively self sufficient or subordinate to predetermined legal conclusions, Islamic jurisprudence can regard it as an essential source for understanding contemporary realities and assessing environmental consequences, while retaining its distinctive role in determining the ethical and legal significance of those realities.

Accordingly, the relationship between Islamic legal thought and contemporary ecological science should be understood not as a simple division of labour in which science supplies facts and religion supplies values, but as a process of mutual critical reconstruction. Ecological knowledge can challenge Islamic jurisprudence to reassess the scope of harm, responsibility, and public welfare in light of complex ecological interdependence, long-term uncertainty, and impacts extending beyond immediate human interests (Saputro et al., 2025). Conversely, Islamic legal reasoning can critically interrogate the normative assumptions embedded in scientific and technocratic responses, including questions concerning whose interests are prioritised, how environmental risks are distributed, and what constitutes a just and morally legitimate policy response. This reciprocal engagement neither grants science exclusive authority over environmental decision making nor instrumentalises Islamic law as a source of moral legitimation for predetermined policies (Marshall 2025). It creates a deliberative space in which empirical knowledge and normative reasoning can jointly reshape the conceptual foundations of environmental governance. In this sense, Islamic informed environmental governance emerges not from the mere addition of religious ethics to scientific expertise, but from their critical interaction in constructing ecologically informed, ethically accountable, and socially just responses to environmental crises.

### ***Towards Islamic Informed Environmental Governance***

The concept of Islamic informed environmental governance advanced in this article refers to a framework that integrates religion based ethical values into the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of environmental policies. Unlike purely secular approaches, which tend to be technocratic in orientation, this model positions religion as a normative source that shapes public values and collective moral orientations (Agrawal 2005). In this context, Islamic legal thought offers an ethical legal framework that is not only theologically relevant but also capable of being operationalised within modern governance systems (Denny 2003). Recent governance research further indicates that normative values alone are insufficient to generate effective public governance. Successful governance requires institutional capacity, organizational readiness, stakeholder collaboration, regulatory clarity, and adequate resource allocation. Consequently, Islamic informed environmental governance should also be understood as an institutional ecosystem in which ethical values are translated into effective governance through capable public institutions and collaborative governance arrangements (Prachumrasee et al., 2025). Accordingly, Islamic informed governance should not be understood as a form of policy theocratisation; rather, it represents an effort to enrich the ethical dimensions of environmental governance.

The primary contribution of Islamic legal thought lies in its capacity to shape public values oriented towards ecological responsibility. Principles such as human stewardship of the earth, balance and public welfare can be translated into universal ethical principles that support sustainability (Kamali 2010). From an environmental ethics perspective, these values serve as moral drivers that strengthen both individual and collective commitments to environmental protection. Moreover, such values can enhance the legitimacy of environmental policies, particularly within societies where religious affiliations play a significant role in shaping social norms and public behaviour.

With regard to social and behavioural change, general environmental behaviour research demonstrates that values, social norms, collective identity, and institutional arrangements play an important role in shaping environmentally responsible practices (Stern 2000; Whitmarsh & O'Neill 2010). Similarly, community based governance scholarship highlights the importance of local institutions and collective participation in translating environmental objectives into sustained social action (Agrawal 2005; Adger et al., 2003). These theoretical perspectives, however, do not in themselves provide direct evidence of the specific capacity of Islamic institutions to mobilise environmental action. Such claims require engagement with empirical scholarship examining how religious authority, Islamic institutions, and faith based social networks operate in particular environmental contexts.

Empirical studies of Islamic environmental initiatives in Indonesia, for example, provide concrete evidence of how religious institutions can translate normative values into collective ecological action.

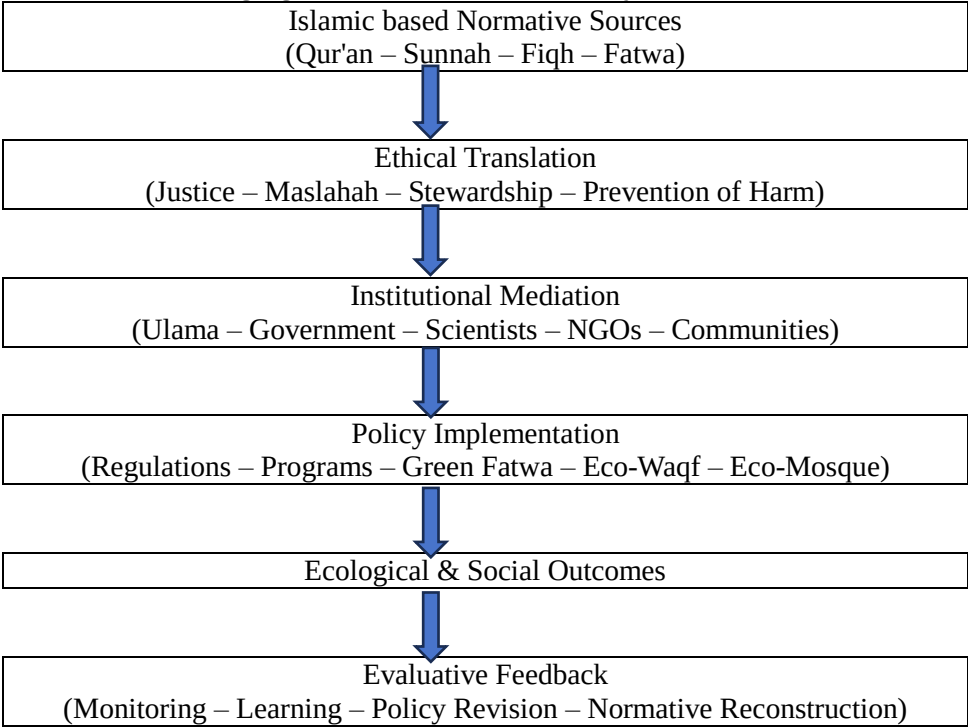
Research on *eco pesantren* demonstrates that Islamic boarding schools can integrate environmental awareness into religious education and institutional practices, thereby fostering environmentally responsible behaviour among students and surrounding communities (Herdiansyah et al., 2016; Supriatna, 2018). Similarly, studies of Indonesian green fatwas show how religious authority can articulate environmental protection as a matter of Islamic legal and moral responsibility, while also revealing the institutional challenges involved in translating non-binding religious rulings into broader environmental governance and legal compliance (Mangunjaya & McKay, 2012; Hidayat & Yahya, 2022). Mosque-based environmental initiatives further demonstrate that mosques can function not only as places of worship but also as institutional platforms for environmental education, community mobilisation, and collective ecological practices (Mangunjaya & McKay, 2012; Hidayat & Yahya, 2022). Taken together, these empirical cases demonstrate that the practical contribution of Islamic law to environmental governance depends not merely on the normative strength of concepts such as *amānah*, *maṣlaḥah*, and the prevention of harm, but also on the institutional capacity of Islamic actors to interpret, communicate, and translate these principles into sustained environmental practices and governance mechanisms.

As a conceptual contribution, this article proposes an integrative model that connects four key elements: faith, ethics, policy, and practice. Within this framework, religious values (*faith*) serve as a source of ethical inspiration (*ethics*), which is subsequently translated into public policy (*policy*) and ultimately implemented through social action (*practice*). The model emphasizes the importance of continuity between normative and operational dimensions, thereby minimizing the gap between values and action (Adger, 2006). Through this approach, Islamic informed environmental governance can serve as a framework that is not only normative but also practical and applicable in addressing the global ecological crisis in a more holistic and sustainable manner.

Operationally, the faith, ethics, policy, and practice model functions as a dynamic process of normative translation rather than a simple linear sequence. At the faith level, Islamic legal sources and instruments, such as Qur'anic principles, fiqha doctrines, fatwas, and waqf mechanisms, provide the normative foundations for environmental responsibility. These foundations are subsequently articulated into publicly relevant ethical principles, including the prevention of harm, ecological justice, stewardship, and intergenerational responsibility. At the policy level, these ethical principles enter processes of institutional deliberation involving religious authorities, policymakers, scientific experts, and affected communities, through which they may inform regulations, public programmes, or institutional mechanisms. For example, a fatwa prohibiting environmentally destructive conduct may provide normative legitimacy for community based conservation programmes, while an ecowaqf mechanism may translate the principle of enduring public benefit into the protection and sustainable management of ecological assets. At the practice level, implementation generates social and ecological outcomes that can be evaluated and fed back into subsequent ethical interpretation and policy revision. The model therefore operates as a recursive governance cycle, i.d. faith, ethical translation, institutional mediation, policy implementation, and evaluative feedback, rather than as a one directional pipeline. The importance of institutional mediation is also supported by empirical governance studies demonstrating that environmental sustainability is strongly influenced by institutional quality, regulatory effectiveness, technological capacity, and educational development. Green finance alone is insufficient to improve environmental outcomes unless accompanied by robust governance institutions capable of implementing and monitoring environmental policies (Edet et al., 2024). This finding reinforces the present framework by indicating that Islamic legal norms likewise require institutional mediation before they can effectively influence environmental governance.

Rather than representing a linear sequence, the Islamic informed environmental governance model functions as an analytical governance framework that explains the causal interactions among normative, institutional, and policy dimensions. Islamic based legal sources generate normative principles that are translated into publicly accessible ethical values, which subsequently influence institutional deliberation involving religious authorities, policymakers, scientific experts, civil society organizations, and local communities. Through these governance processes, ethical principles are transformed into regulations, policy

instruments, and collective environmental practices. The implementation of these policies generates ecological and social outcomes that are continuously monitored through evaluative feedback, allowing both policy adjustment and normative reinterpretation in light of new scientific evidence and changing environmental conditions. Accordingly, the model is recursive rather than linear, emphasizing continuous learning, institutional adaptation, and iterative interaction between religious normativity, scientific knowledge, and governance practice. The following figure shows the model of analytical structure:



The proposed Islamic informed environmental governance framework should be understood not merely as an ethical extension of existing governance models, but as a complementary analytical framework that engages directly with contemporary governance theory. While polycentric governance emphasizes the distribution of authority across multiple decision-making centres, the present model highlights the role of religious institutions as additional governance actors capable of generating normative legitimacy, mobilising collective action, and strengthening social compliance (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Likewise, adaptive governance stresses learning, flexibility, and institutional adjustment in response to ecological uncertainty. These principles are reflected in the recursive governance cycle proposed in this study, where evaluative feedback continuously informs both policy revision and normative reinterpretation (Armitage et al., 2009). From the perspective of collaborative governance, the model expands stakeholder interaction by incorporating religious authorities, Islamic institutions, scientists, policymakers, and civil society into shared deliberative processes (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Furthermore, the framework complements *social-ecological systems theory* by recognising that ecological resilience depends not only on institutional capacity and ecological knowledge but also on ethical commitment, public legitimacy, and culturally embedded value systems (Armitage et al., 2009). Empirical studies further reveal that community resilience is strengthened by social capital, disaster awareness, educational attainment, and institutional preparedness. Communities with stronger local institutions and higher levels of education tend to demonstrate greater preparedness and adaptive capacity in facing disasters (Jacinto et al., 2025). Rather than replacing existing governance theories, Islamic informed environmental governance enriches them by integrating normative, institutional, and epistemological dimensions that remain relatively underdeveloped within mainstream environmental governance scholarship.

**Opportunities and Challenges**

Islamic informed environmental governance offers several significant advantages in addressing the global ecological crisis. One of its primary strengths lies in its ability to establish a stronger ethical foundation

than purely technocratic approaches. Religion-based values, such as moral responsibility and justice, can reinforce the intrinsic motivations of both individuals and communities to engage in environmentally responsible behavior (Stern, 2000). Furthermore, research has demonstrated that religious institutions and traditions possess extensive capacities for social mobilization (Agrawal, 2005). Consequently, this approach has the potential to enhance the effectiveness of policy implementation through the internalization of ethical values.

Nevertheless, this approach also faces serious challenges within the context of global pluralism. The diversity of religious traditions and value systems may generate tensions if religious values are not integrated inclusively. Governance literature emphasizes the importance of deliberative approaches that accommodate value diversity and foster constructive dialogue among diverse stakeholders (Dryzek, 2000). In this regard, the contribution of Islamic legal thought must be translated into the language of universal ethics to ensure broader acceptance and applicability.

A further challenge concerns the dominance of secular paradigms in contemporary environmental governance. Many policy frameworks maintain a strict separation between religion and the public sphere, leading religious contributions to be perceived as irrelevant or inappropriate within policymaking processes (Habermas, 2006). Yet integrating normative values can strengthen the moral legitimacy of environmental policies and enhance public engagement. Accordingly, there is a need for models of coexistence that harmonize religious values with scientific rationality rather than pitting them against one another.

In addition, the risk of the politicization of religion represents a critical concern. Religious narratives and institutions may be instrumentalized for short term political interests, thereby undermining public ethics and weakening trust in governance processes (Asanova, 2006). For this reason, a critical approach is required, one that preserves the ethical autonomy of religious traditions while ensuring transparency, accountability, and democratic oversight within governance structures (Dryzek, 2000).

Despite these challenges, Islamic informed environmental governance possesses considerable potential to contribute to global environmental discourse and practice. Values such as responsibility, sustainability, and justice have a universal character that transcends specific religious traditions. Through an inclusive and dialogical approach, Islamic perspectives can participate alongside other faith traditions and ethical frameworks in a broader global conversation on environmental stewardship. As such, Islamic informed environmental governance has the potential to serve as a transdisciplinary framework that strengthens collective responses to the global ecological crisis.

## **Conclusion**

This study concluded that the contribution of Islamic legal thought to environmental governance lies not merely in affirming religious concern for nature, but in its capacity to participate in a process of mutual critical reconstruction and institutional translation. The analysis demonstrates that ecological science can reshape juristic understandings of harm, responsibility, and public welfare by revealing complex ecological interdependence, while Islamic legal reasoning can critically evaluate the justice and legitimacy of scientific and technocratic responses. These interactions become operational through a recursive governance cycle linking Islamic based normative sources, ethical translation, institutional mediation, policy implementation, and evaluative feedback. The central implication is that Islamic environmental norms acquire governance relevance not automatically through their normative authority, but through institutional processes that translate, negotiate, implement, and continuously reassess them in response to ecological evidence and social contexts. Islamic Informed Environmental Governance therefore offers a framework for moving Islamic environmental thought from normative affirmation toward adaptive, institutionally mediated, and ethically accountable governance.

The conceptual and normative character of this study constitutes an important limitation, as the proposed Islamic informed environmental governance model has not yet been empirically tested within

specific institutional, political, or community contexts. Accordingly, the model should be understood as an analytical and theoretically grounded framework rather than as an empirically validated governance solution. Its practical relevance nevertheless generates testable propositions concerning how Islamic based norms are translated through institutional mediation into environmental policies and practices, and how evaluative feedback may reshape subsequent normative interpretation. Future research should therefore empirically examine these mechanisms through comparative case studies of green fatwas, eco *waqf*, mosque based environmental initiatives, or other Islamic based governance practices across diverse local contexts. Such empirical investigation would enable the model to be tested, contextualised, and refined, while identifying the institutional conditions under which Islamic informed environmental governance can contribute effectively to environmental policy and collective action.

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