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Synergizing Islamic Ecotheology and Baduy Ecological Wisdom: A Framework for Sustainable Environmental Ethics

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Abstract: The escalating global ecological crisis demands solutions that transcend mere technical fixes, drawing instead on the profound synergy between sacred religious values and deeply rooted indigenous wisdom. This study, pioneering in its examination of the integration of Islamic ecotheology with the centuries-old ecological traditions of the Baduy community, crafts a groundbreaking environmental ethics model tailored for contemporary Indonesia. Utilizing a qualitative narrative-comparative research design, insights were dynamically gathered through an immersive mix of literature reviews, field observations, in-depth interviews, and meticulous documentation. Subsequent thematic analysis uncovers a powerful, harmonious alignment between core Islamic concepts—such as *khalīfah* (stewardship), *amānah* (trust), and *mīzān* (cosmic balance)—and the foundational Baduy principles of *pikukuh karuhun* (ancestral mandates), strict ecological taboos, and sacred forest conservation. Remarkably, both value systems independently champion a shared ethos of deep moral responsibility, voluntary simplicity, and an absolute rejection of environmental exploitation. By weaving these two worldviews together, this research produces a highly holistic environmental ethics model that bridges divine religious legitimacy with time-tested, practical indigenous conservation methods. Rather than treating faith and tradition as static relics, this integrated framework revitalizes them into active catalysts for deep ecological awareness. Ultimately, this newly forged model offers transformative strategic potential, providing an authentic and culturally resonant blueprint to revolutionize environmental education, reshape grassroots policy development, and drive sustainable community empowerment initiatives across the nation.

Keywords: Baduy community; deep ecology; environmental ethics; indigenous knowledge; Islamic ecotheology.

Introduction

The global environmental crisis has become a key challenge for the 21st century and has rightly occupied the national and international agendas for some time. Global temperatures could increase by 1.5ºC-2ºC by the end of this century if greenhouse gas emissions continue to be ratileted/insufficiently mitigated (IPCC, 2021a). The cascade is predicted to amplify disaster occurrence, speed up biodiversity loss, and jeopardize socio-economic systems. In Indonesia, ecological strains are most clearly felt in the vast destruction of forests and soil, and in widespread air and water pollution. The country has been losing around 1.1 million hectares of forest each year that is heart-breaking in terms of ecosystem stability and the ecological services forest landscapes offer (WRI Indonesia, 2020).

This situation highlights the need to develop a value-based environmental ethic rooted in religious teachings and the ecological wisdom of indigenous peoples. Islamic fundamental principles such as khalīfah (stewardship), amanah (trusteeship), and the injunction against tampering with the

balance of nature by way of fasād (corruption, including environmental damage) are considered significant for the development of ecological awareness (Ahmad et al., 2025). Indigenous peoples such as the Baduy represent long-standing sustainable environmental management based on pikukuh karuhun, regional ecosystem integrity, and adat natural resource management (Arsyad & Hasanah, 2025; Setiawan et al., 2023). Emerging scholarship indicates that contextualizing Islamic ecotheology through indigenous ecological narratives could provide a unique modality through which to address twenty-first century environmental crises (Antoni et al., 2025; Sakdiah et al., 2026).

In Islamic theological and ethical discourses, ecological responsibility is a fundamental aspect of human responsibility as khalīfah or God's representative on Earth. Instructions of the Qur'ān, including QS al-A'raf: 56, to avoid corrupting the Earth after God has beautified it are constant. Nasr (1968) in his article *Man and nature: The spiritual crisis of modern man* reads such verses as proofs of the sacred character of the natural world, and that ecological harm is a breach of the metaphysical unity of creation (tawḥīd) (Nasr, 1968). Mizan (balance) and Tawazun (equilibrium) also impose in a moral sense that the humanity should maintain ecological balance on this world, a world which it now dominates (Wulan, 2025).

Contemporary Muslim intellectuals have broadened this conversation to talk about a more expansive ethics based around the rights of all living things. Al-Qaradhawi (2002), holds that to treat other beings: unjustly and destructively is something that humans ought not do (Al-Qaradhawi, 2002). Arsyad & Hasanah (2025), affirms that Islamic ecology ethics cover vertical relations between human and "God," and horizontal relationships between humans and non-human as social-ecological form of worship (Arsyad & Hasanah, 2025). The paradigm of rahmatan lil 'alamin for this reason provides a theologically universalist frame for environmentalism (Muizudin, 2026).

The Baduy people are an ideal example of native people whose ecological philosophy is encapsulated in their traditional principle of pikukuh karuhun. It demands a regulated more of simpleness, ecological moderation, and veneration for natural constraint. Its practice can be observed in the ban on the destruction of leuweung kolot (old forest), protection of leuweung kolot (sacred forest areas), and opposition to certain modern technologies considered harmful to the environment (Permana, 2006; Senoaji, 2011). These are practices that are also endorsed by a spiritual outlook that sees nature as a sacred realm that is in need of constant protection (Habiyaremye & Korina, 2021).

The Baduy practice of natural resource use also exhibits a strong tendency to long-term ecological soundness. Traditional huma agriculture is based on natural processes, free of synthetic chemicals, and the forest is zoned to enable the land under cultivation to be naturally reabsorbed (Bakti et al., 2025). As noted by Asteria et al., (2024) and Senoaji (2010), the resilience of the Baduy ecological way of life is closely tied to their customary patterns, ritual performance and collective social responsibility in the care of their environment (Asteria et al., 2024; Senoaji, 2010).

The integration of Islamic ecotheological principles with Baduy ecological traditions holds that the development of environmental conservation in Indonesia has enormous strategic opportunities. Islamic ideas about the sacrality of nature and the forbiddance of environmental devastation also map quite closely onto Baduy life principles of simpleness, frugality, and durability (Nasr, 1968; Wulan, 2025). This convergence provides a rich drawing board from which to develop an environmental ethic that merges religious authenticity and empirically validated indigenous ecological knowledges.

Integration of the Islamic spiritual ethos with the ecological traditions of the Baduy could lead to a more compelling unified environment ethic defined by communal, moderate, and self-disciplined care. Islamic teachings on communal and ecological responsibility are in parallel with the Baduy communal system that prioritizes the environment over the individual (Asteria et al., 2024; Muizudin, 2026; Susana et al., 2025). Such convergences, while not exhaustive, are fertile ground in which to grow a resilient communal ecological ethos for addressing present-day ecological concerns.

Yet, inquiries into Islamic ecotheology and Baduy ecological expression have, so far, prioritized these realms unto their separate ends. Much of the scholarship on Islamic ecotheology is centered around the normative without addressing how it might be explicated within indigenous ecologies. In contrast, investigations of the Baduy most often attend to traditional environmental practices without considering religious ecological viewpoints, producing a disjointed corpus of knowledge.

Furthermore, attempts to synthesize religious ethics with local ecological knowledge are few and far between, and when these do occur, they are more thematic than synthetic in nature. Neglecting

Islamic ecotheology with Baduy ecology is to leave an important aspect of the discussion open which with systematicity and depth is a challenge for any researcher. In response to this gap, the present article with a comparative–integrative interpretive model reads the principles of Islamic ecotheology and Baduy life ways. The study is interested in how they can be brought together and the possible synergistic relations between the two, with the aim of developing an integrated model of environmental ethics that is applicable in Indonesias current conservation movement.

In order to really understand how Islamic ecotheological values relate to and complement those of the Baduy, one must engage with the theological, anthropological and philosophical underpinnings of both systems of thought. It is born out of a recognition that ecological turmoil today is not simply physical destruction, but also spiritual and cultural disorientation. Nasr (1968), contends that the cause of environmental degradation in the modern age is man's separation from transcendental values, which means that the solutions would also lie in the ethical and spiritual aspects (Nasr, 1968). Within this perspective, Islamic ecotheology and Baduy ecological wisdom emerge as parallel thought systems that have the potential to broaden out discussions in environmental stewardship and serve as a robust normative foundation for ecological conservation efforts in Indonesia. The theoretical apparatus of Deep Ecology as developed by Naess (1973), provides a critical perspective to examine to what extent the ecological ethos adherent in both traditions are rooted and conceptually converge/diverge (Naess, 1973).

Islamic ecotheology is based on the premise that nature is one of the manifestations of God's signs (āyāt), and harm to the environment is considered a breach of the Divine trust. In Islamic doctrine, humanity plays the role of khalīfah (vicegerent) which means as well that it has moral and spiritual duties in terms of environment (Agita & Harun, 2025; Arsyad & Hasanah, 2025). This appointment is not a titular one but a moral command that defines humans as custodians, not absolute owners, of the earth. And the Qur'anic concept of mīzān (balance) defines creation as a balanced arrangement, and the disturbance of this balance is nothing but fasād which is an unlawful act as explained in QS. Al-A'raf and 56; QS. Ar-Rum:41, (Al-Qur'an, 2022). Moral values like wasathiyah (balanced), ihsān (excellence), and the disallowance of isrāf (spending too much / waste of resources) become the mainstay of an environmentally conscious sustainable ethic (Al-Jayyousi et al., 2022; Wulan, 2025). Scholars such as Al-Qaradhawi, (2002), and Nasr (1968) are of the view that our present ecological crisis is intensified by the commodification of nature and reduction of nature to an object of commercial utilization, detached from spiritual consciousness (Al-Qaradhawi, 2002; Nasr, 1968). Islamic ecotheology, therefore, not only furnishes theological and ethical imperatives but also spiritual paradigms that inspire an ecological consciousness as a form of worship.

Empirical studies confirm that these ecological teachings have been converted into practical models among diverse Muslim groups-via green pesantren practices, environmental fatwas, and environmentally sustainable agriculture practices of Islamic environmental jurisprudence (fiqh al-bi'ah) (Muizudin, 2026; Mukhroman & Haryanti, 2025; Susana et al., 2025). These are few illustrations of the capacity of Islamic ecology to infuse radical change which in nature makes it an answer to the Indonesian environment. From a theoretical perspective, Islamic ecotheology is a novel faith lens for sustainability in faith-based societies where religion remains the primary ethical force.

In contrast, the Baduy ecological custom is a native wisdom that has been maintaining ecological balance from one generation to the next through well-maintained customary pillars. Motivating by pikukuh karuhun, the Baduy follow the ancestors' teaching which govern the interactions between human and nature on every aspect (Bakti et al., 2025; Permana, 2006). Their system of forest zoning which includes leuweung kolot (the sacred forest), leuweung tutupan (the closed forest), and leuweung garapan (the cultivated land) reflects an indigenous ecological governance system which protects the sustainability of resources and regeneration of the natural environment (Senoaji, 2011). The Baduy mode of farming relies on non-chemical shifting cultivation (huma), on indigenous seed, and on a land rotation system-that is, it corresponds to principles of sustainability, even though it's traditional (Habiyaremye & Korina, 2021; Senoaji, 2010).

The Baduy ecological restoration governance is further empowered by socio-cultural instruments such as ecological taboos, ritual practices, community-wide punishment which make one more comply to the customary rules (Asteria et al., 2024). Literatures like Habiyaremye & Korina (2021) recognize the indigenous peoples as key global stewards of biodiversity, given their normative obligations, sustainable use of resources, and their social capacity (Habiyaremye & Korina, 2021).

Therefore, ecological wisdom of the Baduy can be formulated as an integral ecology with great potential to be utilized as a model for national conservation strategy.

Deep Ecology of Naess may provide a philosophical entrance to discuss the ecological dimension of both Islamic and Baduy worldviews. The theory recommends that there are intrinsic values in all living things, and it opposes the anthropocentrism ideology (Naess, 1973). Its notion of ecological egalitarianism, decreased consumption, simplicity, and ecological self-awareness align too well with the ethical obligation of Islamic ecotheology and the cultural practice of the Baduy Homeland. The notion of self-realization in Deep Ecology is similar to the interconnected cosmology of Islam and the sacredness of nature upheld by the Baduy. This conceptual tool helps articulate the way in which both systems tend towards a non-exploitative, value-based environmental ethic.

Within such a framework, the epistemological distinctions become more analytically perspicuous. Islamic ecotheology is based on God's revelation, the ecological practices of the Baduy on their adat, and Deep Ecology on a universal philosophical ecology. Regardless of these contrasts, they all stressed the ethical obligation towards the care of the environment. In this way Deep Ecology provides for a total integrative synthesis, in which spiritual, cultural and philosophical ecological commitments are united.

The integration of Islamic ecotheology, Baduy traditions, and Deep Ecology yields a multidimensional environmental ethics model encompassing normative-theological, practical-cultural, and philosophical-reflective dimensions. At the normative level, Islam provides a theological foundation for ecological responsibility through the concepts of khalīfah, amanah, and mīzān. At the practical level, the Baduy contribute empirically verified systems of environmental management. At the philosophical level, Deep Ecology orientates environmental ethics toward intrinsic value and ecological interconnectedness.

Consequently, this integrated framework holds strong theoretical potential for informing environmental ethics, policy design, educational curricula, and community-based conservation models in Indonesia (Muizudin, 2026; Susana et al., 2025). Accordingly, the literature demonstrates both the theoretical grounding and practical promise of integrating Islamic ecotheology and Baduy ecological traditions into a coherent, contextually relevant, and sustainable environmental ethics paradigm.

Therefore, this combined approach has high theoretical applicability for the development of environmental ethics, policy formulation, pedagogic content, and community-led conservation in Indonesian context (Muizudin, 2026; Susana et al., 2025). Thus, the research literature reflects both a sound theoretical basis and significant practical potential to fuse Islamic ecotheology and Baduy ecological traditions into a unified, context-sensitive, and enduring paradigm of environmental ethics.

Method

This study employs a qualitative narrative–comparative design to examine how Islamic ecotheological values and the ecological traditions of the Baduy community may converge into a dialogical model of religious environmental ethics. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the research seeks to explore meanings, interpretations, lived experiences, and value systems constructed by cultural and religious actors within specific social and spiritual contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Rather than measuring variables quantitatively, this study focuses on understanding how ecological awareness is embedded in theological discourse and customary practice.

The narrative–comparative design enables the researcher to analyze two dominant ecological narratives: (1) Islamic theological discourse on environmental ethics and (2) the Baduy customary ecological worldview grounded in *pikukuh karuhun*. Narrative inquiry is particularly relevant in religious and cultural studies because it allows researchers to examine how beliefs are articulated textually and enacted in lived practice (Riessman, 2007). The comparative dimension facilitates the identification of convergences, tensions, and dialogical possibilities between the two traditions (Azra, 2006). This approach aligns with interpretive qualitative research, which seeks to uncover layered meanings embedded in cultural and religious systems (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017).

The fieldwork was conducted in the Baduy customary territory-covering Baduy Dalam and Baduy Luar-in Kanekes Village, Leuwidamar Subdistrict, Lebak Regency, Banten, Indonesia. The site was selected because it represents a living indigenous ecological system governed by customary

law that has been maintained for centuries (Permana, 2006). The Baduy community is widely recognized in ethnographic and environmental studies as an example of indigenous ecological governance grounded in spiritual cosmology and social discipline (Iskandar & Iskandar, 2017). To contextualize Islamic ecotheological perspectives, complementary interviews were conducted with Muslim religious leaders and scholars in Banten who are engaged in environmental discourse. This broader engagement allows the study to situate local customary practice within contemporary Islamic environmental thought.

Informants were selected purposively based on their knowledge, authority, and involvement in ecological and religious matters (Patton, 2015). The participants included; Baduy elders who preserve knowledge of *pikukuh karuhun, f*armers experienced in *huma* agriculture and forest protection, religious leaders knowledgeable in Islamic environmental theology, scholars in Islamic studies, environmental studies, and anthropology. Purposive sampling ensures depth of information rather than statistical representation, which is consistent with qualitative research goals.

Data were collected through four primary techniques; the literature review covered Qur'anic and Hadith texts, classical and contemporary Islamic scholarship on environmental ethics, studies on Baduy local wisdom, and theoretical frameworks such as Deep Ecology (Naess, 1973; Nasr, 1968). Literature review in qualitative research provides conceptual grounding and theoretical sensitivity (Bowen, 2009). Non-participant observation, field observations were conducted with respect to Baduy cultural restrictions regarding external interaction. Observations focused on landscape organization, forest zoning, agricultural patterns, rituals related to nature, and daily ecological practices. Observation enables researchers to understand practices beyond verbal explanation (Spradley, 1980). In-Depth Semi-Structured Interviews, interviews were conducted using semi-structured guidelines to allow flexibility and depth while maintaining thematic focus (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Interviews were recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim. Documentation, field notes, contextual photographs (where permitted), and supporting documents were collected to enrich the dataset and support triangulation.

Results and Discussion

Islamic Ecotheology: Principles, Narratives, and Practices

Islamic ecotheology is rooted in the Qur'anic worldview which regards humans as khalīfah (vicegerent of God) who have a moral responsibility to maintain ecological harmony. The application of the concept of khalīfah in QS. Al-Baqarah:30 is regarded as an ethic of stewardship and not of lordship (Arsyad & Hasanah, 2025; Sakdiah et al., 2026). This is in accord with the Earth Stewardship model where humans are considered as ethical actors to maintain the vitality of planetary systems (Mathevet et al., 2018). The Qur'anic idea of amanah (QS. Al-Ahzab:72) has theological consequences for the qarawanesia environment, with any breach in ecological wholeness is tantamount to breaking a divine trust (Al-Qaradhawi, 2002; Sayem, 2021).

The ban against *fasād* (QS. Al-A'raf:56; Ar-Rum:41) is now taken to include physical destruction and environmental devastation such as deforestation, pollution and desertification (Agita & Harun, 2025). These tenets contribute to today's narratives surrounding environmental harm, and therefore frame Islam as a normative discipline that can engage with global ecological concerns. Also, in Islāmic cosmology, the religion's core mīzān (balance) principle underscores the precision and balance inherent in creation (QS. Ar-Rahman:7–9). Wulan (2025) as well as Nasr (1968) and Mukhroman and Haryanti (2025) emphasize the relevance of these principles to contemporary ecological thought, particularly in relation to concepts of ecosystem balance (Mukhroman & Haryanti, 2025; Nasr, 1968; Wulan, 2025).

Islam equally advocates wasathiyah (moderation) in consumption and use of resources as a practical ethic. Classical hadiths which discourage waste even with a flowing river, have been interpreted as proto teachings on a low impact lifestyle and degrowth principles (Al-Jayyousi et al., 2022; Hamdi et al., 2025). Moreover, Islamic principles recognize the inherent worth of all living things, as reflected in biocentric ethics (Sponsel, 2008). Nasr (1968) asserts that harming animals, plants, or water sources contradicts the tawhidic perception of nature as sacred signs (ayat kauniyah) (Nasr, 1968).

Modern exegetes deepen this religious basis within the frame of theological ecology with focus on justice, compassion, and intergenerational stewardship (Halim et al., 2023; Susana et al., 2025). The culmination of these values corresponds with global sustainability rhetoric and establishes Islamic ecotheology as an ethical voice within environmental ethics. Research indicates that Islamic principles can be adapted to local cultural frameworks that strengthen conservation paradigms at the community level (Abumoghli, 2025; UNEP, 2022).

Empirical evidence from Muslim society confirms that certain ecotheological principles are a source of ecological engagement. Several pesantren have embraced green movement including reforesting, waste management, organic composting-actions based on new interpretations of khalīfah and ʾamaanah (Hamdi et al., 2025; Muizudin, 2026). Islamic schools have started to incorporate ecotheology in tafsir and fiqh lessons to educate youth and foster environmental awareness.

At the same time, the Majelis Ulama Indonesia and other religious authorities have issued environmental fatwas on waste disposal, forest fires and water conservation, conferring theological approbation for ecological practices. These activities suggest that Islamic ecotheology may find expression at the grassroots, as well as the policy, levels (Izmuddin et al., 2022).

In the economic field, the activities of Muslim farmers were wasathiyah and mīzān in the principle of wasathiyah were their applied in economic activities in the fields of organic fertilizers, water utilization efficiently cultivation of local seed (Kismawadi, 2024). These activities are in line with resilience eco-system, as they promote living within their capacity in this changing climate (Al-Jayyousi et al., 2022).

Therefore, it could be said that an Islamic ecotheology is not only a theological ideal, it is an ethical ideal that can lead to the transformation of community conservation. Concepts like stewardship, moderation, balance, and avoidance of harm are all very compatible with the ecological sciences including deep ecology and environmental ethics. This compatibility with the concept gives a firm ground to weave Islamic ecotheology with the indigenous Baduy ecology in the following part of this study.

Comparative Thematic Analysis: Convergences and Divergences

A restrospective thematic analysis of similarities and differences between Islamic ecotheology and Baduy ecology tradition exhibits significant convergences in the portrayal of nature as a morally, spiritually, and socially practice- imbued concept. Neither perspective subscribes to extraction, ignoring nature as an economic resource only. The disavowal in Islamic philosophy is anchored in the notions of amanah and khalīfah as spiritual responsibilities, and in the Baduy perception, is embodied in pikukuh karuhun which requires humans to co-exist with cosmic order (Arsyad & Hasanah, 2025; Iskandar & Iskandar, 2017).

There are two implications for this convergence: Ecological responsibility is the first. Islam teaches that humans are responsible for the Earth, QS. QS Al-Aʻraf:56, QS. Ar-Rum:41, remarking explicitly towards the implication of harming the environment (Al-Qur'an, 2022). In Baduy, the sense of ecological responsibility is cultivated through rigid customary rules (larangan), among which are the restrictions on arbitrary cutting down of a tree, the haphazard clearing of land, and the exploitation of the environment beyond its bearable limit. Although coming from different epistemological positions, both traditions express ecological accountability as a religious duty (Nadroh, 2018; Permana, 2006).

The second similarity is that they both oppose overexploitation. The Islamic notion of fasād includes ecological and moral degradation that should be prevented (Agita & Harun, 2025). Likewise, the Baduy observe ecological prohibitions that ban the employ of modern instruments and the unauthorized cutting of the forest or engaged in any activity which could shake the ecological stability. When it comes to they both see exploitation as tyrannizing natural processes to the extent that it undermines our social and spiritual well-being.

A third similarity is found in the ethics of simple living. Islam advocates wasathiyah or moderation and forbids israb or wastefulness, which may cause damage to the environment (Wulan, 2025). The Baduy embody this ethic through their restrained use of technology, reliance on local food systems, and minimalist lifestyle. These practices serve not only as cultural norms but also as ecological strategies to maintain long-term sustainability.

A fourth convergence relates to collective social mechanisms as guardians of ecological values. Among the Islamic institutions—mosques, pesantren, majelis taklim-dissemination of ecological teaching through preaching, formal teaching and religious law is inseparable from the life function of these institutions. In addition, the Baduy, too, depends on customary leadership structures (Jaro, Pu'un, and cooperative labor systems-sauyunan) to preserve social unity in relation to regulating its ecological principles (Asteria et al., 2024; Nadroh, 2018). These parallels demonstrate that ecological values are most resilient when upheld by strong social institutions.

Fifth Convergence: Respect for Nature as Part of the Cosmos. In Islam nature is regarded as a sign (āyah) of God (āyāt kauniyyah) and it has inherent spiritual value (Nasr, 1968). In the Baduy mind-set, nature is holy because it is connected to ancestral presence and cosmological order. Even though they have different theological bases, both traditions develop a deep respect for nature that place ethical restrictions on overexploitation.

But there are a number of basic epistemological differences that become clear. Islamic ecotheology is based on revelation-i.e. the Qur'an and Hadith-while Baduy ecological wisdom is derived from adat (customary law), mythology, and lived ecological wisdom. Islam places environmental ethics within the human–God axis, while Baduy ethics are focused on human interaction with nature and the spirits of the ancestors. These distinctions underscore the different epistemic pathways through which ecological consciousness is articulated.

The second distinction has to do with attitudes toward technology. Islam allows for the use of contemporary technology, provided it does not damage the environment, within a proper Islamic ethical consideration of renewable energy, organic farming, and green technology (Susana et al., 2025). In contrast, the Baduy people are extremely conservative when it comes to modern technology, as they believe it disrupts cosmic order and collective solidarity, so the introduction of technology in Baduy society is very limited and controlled (Nadroh, 2018). This means that they have a more conservative and minimalist mind toward ecology and nature in general.

The third distinction has to do with the spatial orientation of environmental practice. Islamic ecological ethics-and principles-are not only 'universal', but they are also relatable in many different cultural and regional contexts. On the other hand, Baduy ecological practices are very place-based; they are enacted within a particular territory and in specific ethnic landscapes. Therefore, the Baduy model is largely based on stability of the local environment, while Islamic ecotheology contains principles that may be generalized to a higher level of contextualization.

A fourth difference relates to the deeper motivations for environmental action. In Islam, environmental ethics emanate from worship and submission to God. Conversely, in Baduy ecology is a way of life sustained by obedience to the teachings of the ancestors and the fear of upsetting the cosmic order. They both generate environmentally-friendly thoughts and actions, though dictated by conflicting spiritual perspectives (Nadroh, 2018).

Another distinction lies in the nature of spiritual experience. Islamic ecotheology views nature as an expression of divine mercy and as a vehicle for spiritual elevation, where ecological conduct is worship. In Baduy belief, spirituality and ecological living are one and the same; nature is not metaphor, but an essentially living force that must be respected at all times. While Islamic spirituality has to be understood through texts in relation to ecological realities, Baduy spirituality is lived.

In sum these similarities and dissimilarities provide an excellent soil for a more model visionary environmental ethics. The similarities provide a coherent foundation of values, and the differences bring epistemic depth and interpretive flexibility. An informed appreciation of the two promises a framework of environmental ethics that is place-based and culturally significant which also enables the transposition of diverse horizons. The integrated model based on these insights is the topic of the next section.

Integrated Model of Islamic Ecotheology and Baduy Ecological Tradition

The Islamic ecotheological-Baduy traditional ecological wisdom model is an attempt to reconcile two different, yet convergent ethical worldviews. Islamic ecotheology is based on divine revelation and affirms that humans are khalīfah and have the responsibility to protect the earth. Baduy ecological ethics on the other hand are embedded in pikukuh karuhun-ancestral teachings that call for a life in balance with the environment (Bakti et al., 2025; Permana, 2006). Combining such

methodologies creates a structure that utilizes normative theological principles to inform traditional native environmental methods (Asteria et al., 2024).

A central pillar of the model is shared ecological responsibility. Islam promotes principles of amanah and not to commit the harm of fasād, Baduy traditions have also very particular provision regarding what people can and cannot do in the forests and rivers and their farm land (Permana, 2006). In combination, these have crafted a binary moral system that renders the responsibility to environmental care as a spiritual obligation, as well as a social responsibility (Agita & Harun, 2025; Senoaji, 2011).

The other features the sustainable prominence of simplicity. And in Islam, natürlich are taught via wasathiyah (moderation) and are opposed to the following of israf (excessive consumption) (Wulan, 2025). The Baduy live a minimalist existence of both limited consumption and depend on local source for their needs (Habiyaremye & Korina, 2021). Their amalgamation gives rise to a spiritual grounded ethic of sustainable consumption that speaks to present day ecological predicaments. Cosmological views more reinforce cohesion. In Islam nature is considered āyāt kauniyyah signs of God and for the Baduy nature is a sacred space associated with ancestral spirits (Nasr, 1968; Sponsel, 2008). This common admiration of nature facilitates an ecospiritual worldview that accepts the inherent value of ecology (Naess, 1973).

At the practical level, integration is revealed in territorial management. The Baduy forest stratification-leuweung kolot, leuweung tutupan and leuweung Garapan-is consistent with Islamic worldview of preserving mīzān (balance), promoting a hierarchized stewardship of ecology that is reminiscent to the modern concept of conservation (Permana, 2006; Wulan, 2025). The model includes, as well, collective social processes. Islamic ideas on fardhu kifayah mirror Baduy sauyunan (collective labor) in this way, conservation at the community level can be considered a shared responsibility (Asteria et al., 2024; Susana et al., 2025). This is reflective of Ostrom's principles of community-based management, stressing internal norms and cooperation (Coria & Calfucura, 2012).

Institutional complementarity forms another component. Islamic institutions such as mosques and pesantren can reinforce Baduy ecological norms, but Baduy traditional systems may gain something from the teaching excellence of religious education. This synergism helps to establish social legitimacy for environmental action (Hajar, 2024). The integrated approach enables the formation of situated ecological curricula. Foundational values such as khalīfah, fasād, pikukuh karuhun, and huma farming can be added to project-based learning to raise awareness among younger generations about ecology (Muizudin, 2026).

The model, which is designed for the policy arena, promotes the decentralization of environmental governance to the community level. Islamic values provide legitimacy, while Baduy experience shows it is possible to conserve under extreme social control (Abumoghli, 2025; WRI Indonesia, 2020). "This synthesis legitimizes village regulation and participatory conservation based on local wisdom". In policy contexts, the model encourages community-based environmental governance. Islamic ethics offer moral legitimacy, whereas Baduy practice provides empirical evidence of effective conservation under strong social regulation. This integration supports village regulations and participatory conservation approaches grounded in local wisdom (Abumoghli, 2025; Kismawadi, 2024; WRI Indonesia, 2020).

By following the conservation solution, the model is an integration of Baduy land-rotation agriculture with resource- efficient and soil stewardship precepts of Islam, embedded within restorative land-use approaches (Senoaji, 2010). The model integrates immense socio-ecological resilience–combining the Baduy's centuries-old ecosystem preservation and Islamic environmental movements such as green pesantren and environmental fatwas consolidating both spiritual and customary legitimacy (Izmuddin et al., 2022; Muizudin, 2026).

Within the context of climate crisis, the model enables a value-driven environmental ethic. Numerous environmental policies fail in internalization values; hence, the dual legitimacy of revelation and tradition of indigenous further enhances societal embrace of conservation norms (Halim et al., 2023). The framework also serves as a foundation for community based sustainable economies. The Principles of Simplicity and Resourcefulness are the fundamental principles in organic farming, eco-cultural tourism and eco-conscious small business that symbolize local culture (Kismawadi, 2024).

In terms of knowledge, the model advances by cohering the Islamic values of khalīfah (stewardship), amanah (trust), and mīzān (balance) with Baduy conservation practice and Extended Ecology (Naess, 1973; Nasr, 1968; Susana et al., 2025). Contemplative philosophical this gets to how religious and indigenous ecological approaches are alignments, not contradictions. Finally, implementation requires participatory mechanisms such as localized education modules, community demonstration projects, culturally grounded village regulations, and multi-stakeholder ecological forums. Contextual adaptation is essential to avoid reducing Baduy wisdom to mere symbolic imitation (Permana, 2006; Susana et al., 2025).

Socio-Cultural Implications of Integrating Islamic Ecotheology and Baduy Ecological Wisdom

The integration of Islamic ecotheology and the ecological wisdom of the Baduy community has implications not only for the formation of normative environmental ethics, but also for producing profound socio-cultural impacts within Indonesia's plural, religious, and multicultural society. This integrative model contributes to the strengthening of social cohesion by affirming local values as a legitimate part of a religion-based environmental ethics discourse. In this way, Islamic ecotheology is not positioned as a hegemonic value system, but rather as an ethical framework that is dialogical and open to indigenous knowledge.

In the Indonesian context, where religion and local culture play central roles in shaping social identity, this integrative approach creates a space of encounter between Islamic values and local traditions without placing either in a subordinate position. This perspective is consistent with Berger and Luckmann's (1967) view on the social construction of reality, in which religious and cultural values are produced and reproduced through continuous social interaction (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). The integration of Islamic ecotheology and Baduy wisdom enables the construction of environmental ethics rooted in lived social experience, rather than merely derived from normative imports of global discourse.

Furthermore, this integration functions as a mechanism of cultural resistance against the homogenization of modern development values, which tend to prioritize economic growth, natural resource exploitation, and technocratic rationality. Numerous studies have shown that modern development paradigms often neglect the socio-cultural and spiritual dimensions of indigenous communities, leading to marginalization and ecological degradation (Escobar, 2011; Shiva, 2016). In this context, Baduy ecological wisdom grounded in pikukuh karuhun with its principles of simplicity, prohibition of exploitation, and obedience to the cosmic order constitutes a form of practical critique of exploitative development logic.

When pikukuh karuhun is positioned ethically on par with Islamic ecotheological principles such as khalīfah (human beings as God's vicegerents on earth) and amanah (divine trust and responsibility), the Baduy community is no longer viewed as a "traditional" or backward society, but rather as a moral and epistemic subject possessing authoritative ecological knowledge. This approach resonates with de Sousa Santos's (2014) argument on the importance of epistemologies of the South, which calls for the recognition of local and indigenous knowledge as legitimate sources of knowledge in addressing global crises, including environmental crises (Santos, 2014).

Another socio-cultural implication lies in the strengthening of the Baduy community's collective identity in relation to the wider Indonesian Muslim society. Religious legitimacy for Baduy ecological practices creates a symbolic bridge between Islam and adat (customary tradition), thereby reducing the potential stigma that often portrays indigenous communities as "outside" or "contrary to" religious values. Studies by Iskandar (2017) and Permana (2010) demonstrate that the sustainability of Baduy ecological practices is highly dependent on strong collective identity and adherence to customary law. Recognition from the perspective of Islamic ecotheology not only preserves this identity internally but also enhances its broader external recognition (Iskandar & Iskandar, 2017; Permana, 2006).

From the perspective of the sociology of religion, this integration reflects the function of religion as a social integrative force. Durkheim (1912) emphasized that religion plays a crucial role in building social solidarity through shared systems of symbols and values. In this case, Islamic ecotheology serves as a shared moral language capable of bridging cultural differences, while Baduy wisdom provides concrete, grounded, and contextual practices. The combination of the two produces an environmental ethic that is not merely normative, but also operational in everyday life (Durkheim, 1912).

Moreover, this integration has implications for transforming power relations among the state, religion, and indigenous communities. In many cases, state environmental policies tend to be top-down and insufficiently sensitive to local contexts (Li, 2007). The integrative model of Islamic ecotheology–Baduy wisdom offers an alternative bottom-up approach based on community values. By positioning indigenous communities as moral and cultural partners rather than mere policy objects, this approach has the potential to enhance the social legitimacy of environmental policies and encourage more meaningful community participation.

Additional socio-cultural implications can be seen in the realm of education and intergenerational value transmission. The integration of Islamic ecotheological values with Baduy local wisdom can serve as a foundation for developing contextual, culturally rooted environmental education. This is particularly important given that many environmental education programs fail due to their lack of alignment with local values and lived experiences (Muizudin, 2026; Tilbury, 1995). By linking concepts such as khalīfah, amanah, and mīzān with concrete practices such as forest zoning and huma agriculture, ecological values can be transmitted more effectively and sustainably across generations.

Thus, the socio-cultural implications of integrating Islamic ecotheology and Baduy wisdom are multidimensional: strengthening social cohesion, recognizing indigenous knowledge, building collective identity, and challenging exploitative development paradigms. This model underscores that ecological sustainability cannot be separated from cultural justice and the recognition of value-system pluralism. In the Indonesian context, such an approach is highly relevant as a foundation for inclusive, contextual, and socially grounded environmental ethics.

Relevance of the Integrative Model to Contemporary Climate Crisis Challenges

The contemporary climate crisis is a multidimensional phenomenon that cannot be resolved solely through technocratic approaches, green economy strategies, or technological innovation. The IPCC reports (2021), explicitly emphasize that a major failure of global climate policy lies in the weak transformation of values, lifestyles, and ethical systems underlying human–nature relationships. In this context, the integrative model of Islamic ecotheology and Baduy ecological wisdom holds strategic relevance as a value-based climate ethics approach that places moral, spiritual, and cultural dimensions as the primary foundation for responding to the climate crisis (IPCC, 2021c, 2021b).

Islamic ecotheology offers an ethical framework that emphasizes ecological limits and human responsibility as *khalīfah* (vicegerents) on Earth. The principle of *mīzān* (cosmic balance) affirms that nature was created in a proportional and measurable order, and therefore any form of excessive exploitation is considered a violation of divine will (Nasr, 1968; Wulan, 2025). The prohibition of *fasād* (corruption or destruction) in the Qur'an (Qur'an 7:56; 30:41) further strengthens the normative framework that environmental degradation including deforestation, pollution, and excessive carbon emissions, constitutes a form of moral and spiritual deviation (Agita & Harun, 2025; Al-Qur'an, 2022).

When these ecotheological principles are contextualized within the environmental management system of the Baduy community, particularly forest zoning consisting of *leuweung kolot* (old forest), *leuweung tutupan* (protected forest), and *leuweung garapan* (cultivated forest), an ethical climate model emerges that emphasizes ecological limits and intergenerational responsibility. Empirically, the Baduy zoning system has maintained forest ecosystem stability for centuries, prevented massive deforestation, and preserved the ecological function of forests as carbon sinks and microclimate regulators (Permana, 2006; Senoaji, 2011). In the context of the global climate crisis, this practice aligns with the principles of nature-based solutions increasingly recommended in international climate policy (UNEP, 2022).

The relevance of this integrative model is also evident in climate change adaptation and mitigation. The Baduy *huma* agricultural system based on land rotation, absence of synthetic chemicals, and reliance on local seeds, demonstrates very low carbon emissions while enhancing soil ecosystem resilience (Habiyaremye & Korina, 2021; Senoaji, 2010). Agroecological studies indicate that such traditional agricultural systems possess high adaptive capacity to climate variability because they do not depend on external inputs vulnerable to global supply chain disruptions (Altieri & Nicholls, 2017).

Moreover, the prohibition of exploiting old forests (*leuweung kolot*) within the Baduy customary system functions as a long-term climate mitigation mechanism. Primary forests have significantly greater carbon storage capacity compared to secondary forests or monoculture land (IPCC, 2021c). By framing forest protection as a customary and spiritual obligation, the Baduy community indirectly implements climate mitigation principles that are now part of the global agenda. When this practice is combined with Islamic theological legitimacy which views environmental conservation as an act of worship and fulfillment of divine trust (*amanah*), mitigation efforts are no longer dependent solely on economic incentives but are also grounded in moral and spiritual consciousness.

The low-consumption lifestyle of the Baduy community is also highly relevant to the discourse on degrowth and low-carbon societies in contemporary climate studies. Degrowth theory critiques the paradigm of unlimited economic growth as a root cause of the climate crisis and calls for reduced consumption, simplicity of life, and ecological justice redistribution (Kallis, 2018). Islamic values of moderation (*wasathiyah*) and the prohibition of wastefulness (*isrāf*) are normatively aligned with degrowth ethics (Al-Jayyousi et al., 2022). Thus, the Islam–Baduy integration offers an alternative low-carbon lifestyle rooted in religious and customary values, rather than merely individual choices based on modern ecological awareness.

The main strength of this integrative model lies in its potential for normative replication within other Muslim communities through contextual adaptation. While Baduy ecological practices are local and cannot be transferred mechanically, their core values limiting exploitation, respecting natural boundaries, and emphasizing collective responsibility, can be translated into a more universal Islamic ecotheological framework (Sakdiah et al., 2026; Susana et al., 2025). In this way, Muslim communities in different regions can develop climate mitigation and adaptation practices suited to their respective socio-ecological contexts without losing theological legitimacy.

From a climate policy perspective, this model offers an answer to the problem of weak value internalization in environmental policy implementation. Many climate policies fail because they are perceived as technical or elite global agendas disconnected from the values and identities of local communities (Li, 2007). The integration of Islamic ecotheology and Baduy wisdom instead frames climate action as a moral and spiritual obligation, thereby increasing social acceptance and sustainability of community-based policy implementation (Abumoghli, 2025).

Therefore, the relevance of the integrative model of Islamic ecotheology and Baduy wisdom to contemporary climate crisis challenges lies in its ability to bridge global and local dimensions, normative and empirical aspects, and spiritual and ecological perspectives. This model emphasizes that effective responses to the climate crisis require not only technological innovation and economic policy but also ethical and cultural transformation rooted in religious values and local wisdom that have been historically tested

Conclusion

This article demonstrates that the fusion between Islamic ecotheology and Baduy traditional ecological knowledge is possible and provides an Islamic-Baduy ecotheological environmental ethics for the context of Indonesia. Islamic concepts such as *khalīfah, amanah, mīzān,* and non-fasād also offer significant theological support for care for the environment, while the empirically demonstrated best practices of Baduy indigenous ways of life based on pikukuh karuhun through the use of zonation, ritual agriculture, ecological taboos, and communal governance, are models of conservation.

While based on different epistemological foundations, both systems share core values such as responsibility, moderation, opposition to exploitation, social cohesion, and a love for nature that embody a mutually reinforcing ethic of care. The synthesized model developed in this study advances our understanding theoretically by connecting religious and indigenous ecological knowledge, and it extends our practice by providing a template for community-centric conservation, environmental education, and value-based climatic resilience. And in the end the integration of these traditions reinforces that sustainable ecological management is not merely a matter of having the technical know-how, but also of maintaining culturally meaningful and spiritually grounded ethical systems.

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