

## Qur'anic Narratives on Nature and Ecological Activism in Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

Departing from the ecological crisis that reveals the paradox between ritual piety and massive environmental destruction, this study positions the Qur'anic narrative about nature not as a frozen normative text, but as a living ethical-political horizon with the potential to convert Indonesian Muslim religiosity into transformative ecological activism. This study uses a qualitative approach with an interpretive-critical design, combined with a multiple-case study strategy, to examine in depth how the Qur'anic narrative about nature is produced, articulated, and mobilised in ecological activism as a social practice rich in context, values, and power relations. The results indicate that the reconstruction of Qur'anic narratives about the cosmos, *mizān*, *fasād*, *rahmah*, and *amānah* of the caliphate encourages the conversion of religiosity from ritualistic to ecological religiosity, which positions nature as an ethical-political subject, while also providing a framing device for Muslim activists, Islamic boarding schools, and grassroots movements to build awareness, environmentally friendly practices, and advocacy for ecological justice in agrarian conflicts, climate crises, and resource management. These findings strengthen and expand the study of Islam and the environment by showing that Qur'anic narratives function as symbolic resources that frame awareness, build solidarity, and drive community-based ecological activism, especially when they engage creatively with local wisdom and respond to the dynamics of environmental politics in Indonesia.

## INTRODUCTION

Various ecological crises occurring simultaneously in the 21st century, ranging from climate change, deforestation, soil degradation, water crises, to the loss of biodiversity, have placed environmental issues among the most pressing issues in global discourse (Miao & Nduneseokwu, 2025; Rodrigues do Nascimento, 2023). Indonesia, as the country with the second-highest level of biodiversity in the world and at the same time one of the most significant contributors to carbon emissions from land conversion and the exploitation of natural resources, faces complex and multidimensional ecological challenges (Ekananda, 2022). Amid this reality, there is a growing awareness that technocratic approaches and policies alone are insufficient to address environmental crises rooted in human perspectives on nature. Therefore, ethical, spiritual, and religious dimensions are increasingly recognised as a normative basis for building sustainable ecological awareness and praxis.

In Indonesia's predominantly Muslim society, the Qur'an, as the primary source of Islamic teachings, has excellent potential to shape ecological perspectives and encourage environmental activism rooted in religious values (Karman et al., 2023). The Qur'an extensively contains narratives about the universe, creation, cosmic order, and the relationship between humans and the environment (Ruhullah & Ushama, 2024). Nature in the Qur'anic perspective is not positioned as a passive object that is free to be exploited, but as verses of *kauniah* that signify the presence and wisdom of God. Narratives about the earth, sky, water, plants, animals, and natural cycles not only serve as theological illustrations but also convey ethical messages about trust (*amānah*), balance (*mīzān*), the prohibition of destruction (*fasād*), and human responsibility as caliphs on earth. However, even though the Qur'anic texts are full of ecological messages, translating these values into social awareness and concrete action in the Indonesian context still faces various challenges, both at the level of interpretation, institutionalisation, and social praxis.

In recent decades, studies on Islam and the environment have grown rapidly worldwide. Several studies highlight key concepts in the Qur'an, such as *khalīfah*, *amānah*, *mīzān*, and *islāh*, as the theological foundations of Islamic environmental ethics (Nur et al., 2025; Rahmat, 2025). These studies generally emphasise that Islam has a strong normative framework to support nature conservation and sustainable development. In Indonesia, similar studies have begun to emerge, focusing on environmental fiqh, religious fatwās on nature conservation, and the role of Islamic organisations in ecological issues. Several studies explore how Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah developed the discourse of 'environmental fiqh' and '*al-Ma'un theology*' oriented towards social and ecological justice (Alamri et al., 2025; Setiawan et al., 2022; Zuhdi et al., 2023).

Other studies examine eco-pesantren, environmental da'wah, and the integration of ecological issues in Islamic education (Alam et al., 2024; Rohman et al., 2024; Wijaya Mulya & Salvi, 2025). However, most previous studies tend to treat the Qur'an as a normative source read textually or thematically, without deeply linking it to the dynamics of contemporary grassroots ecological activism (Fannani et al., 2025; Fuad et al., 2025; Karman et al., 2023). These studies often stop at mapping the concepts or principles of environmental ethics in Islam, but fail to explore how the Qur'anic narrative about nature is interpreted, negotiated, and articulated by social actors in the context of the environmental movement in Indonesia. On the other hand, studies on ecological activism in Indonesia are mainly approached from the perspectives of environmental sociology, ecological politics, or development studies, emphasising the role of NGOs, indigenous communities, and state policies (Mukhlis et al.,

2025; Ramdhani et al., 2025; Telhalia & Munte, 2025). At the same time, the religious dimension, especially Qur'anic narratives, is often treated marginally or instrumentally.

Recent international studies have begun to show a shift in approach by linking religion and the environment through the perspectives of lived religion and the environmental humanities (Mohidem & Hashim, 2023; Öhlmann & Swart, 2022; Omoyajowo et al., 2024). Such studies emphasise that religious texts do not work deterministically, but are mediated by social, cultural, and political contexts. Within this framework, Qur'anic narratives about nature are understood not only as normative texts, but as sources of meaning that can inspire, frame, and legitimise collective action. However, this approach is still relatively rare in the Indonesian context, particularly in examining how Islam-based ecological activism utilises and interprets Qur'anic narratives in their praxis.

The main problem identified across various literature reviews lies in the lack of integrative studies that simultaneously examine the Qur'an's text, the process of its contextual interpretation, and its relationship with ecological activism in Indonesia. There have been few studies that explore how Qur'anic narratives about nature function as a discursive and ethical framework in environmental movements and how these narratives interact with local social, economic, and political factors. Furthermore, there is a knowledge gap regarding the variation in ecological interpretations and practices among Muslim actors, both individuals and communities, which are influenced by different ideological, institutional, and geographical backgrounds.

In light of this gap, this study proposes integrating the analysis of Qur'anic narratives about nature with ecological activism. The novelty of this study lies in its attempt to bridge textual studies and social practices through an interdisciplinary approach that combines Qur'anic studies, the sociology of religion, and environmental studies. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of an analytical framework on how religious texts function as symbolic resources in social movements. Conceptually, this study offers a new understanding of 'Qur'anic ecology' not merely as a normative doctrine, but as a living narrative negotiated in social spaces.

The focus of this study is on how Qur'anic narratives about nature are understood, interpreted, and used by actors of ecological activism in responding to environmental crises. The scope of the study includes an analysis of Qur'anic verses related to nature and the environment, as well as a survey of the practices and discourse of ecological activism involving Muslim communities, both those affiliated with religious organisations and those acting independently. This study does not intend to generalise all forms of Islamic activism, but rather to highlight representative patterns that can illustrate the dynamics of the relationship between sacred texts and ecological practices.

The main objective of this study is to reveal the role and potential of Qur'anic narratives about nature in shaping and strengthening ecological activism. Specifically, this study aims to enrich the study of Islam and the environment, provide an understanding of religion-based ecological practices, and offer alternative perspectives in efforts to tackle the environmental crisis. The significance of this study lies in its contribution to building an argumentative basis for the claim that a religious approach, when understood and implemented critically and contextually, can be an essential force in ecological transformation.

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with an interpretive-critical design, combined with a multiple case study strategy, to examine in depth how Qur'anic narratives about nature are produced, articulated, and mobilised in ecological activism as a social practice rich in context, values, and power relations. This design was chosen to trace the process of contextual meaning formation, including how texts, interpretations, and practices intertwine in institutional, community, and public spaces, without reducing them to quantitative measures (Abusaada & Elshater, 2025). The study focuses on two mutually reinforcing domains, namely Qur'anic narratives about nature and Islam-based ecological activism in practice.

The research instruments are document- and observation-based, namely document analysis sheets, narrative categorisation matrices, and participatory/non-participatory observation guides designed to capture the thematic, rhetorical, and practical dimensions of Qur'anic narratives in ecological activism. The instruments were developed in stages through preliminary studies, the formulation of analytical indicators, conceptual readability tests, and category calibration to distinguish between symbolic, normative, and operational Qur'anic references in the programme. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation (various types of documents and discourse production sites) and method triangulation (document analysis and observation), and through audit trails documenting analytical decisions to increase dependability.

The data collection procedure was carried out in stages, starting with mapping actors and document corpora (thematic interpretations, *fatwās*, eco-pesantren modules, written sermons/lectures, social media content, organisational releases, activity reports), followed by the collection of observational data on relevant campaign, education, conservation, or public forum activities, as well as the compilation of a corpus database that allows for tracing the relationship between text, context, and action. Data analysis applies critical thematic analysis enriched by discourse analysis, through the stages of reduction, pattern mapping, and interpretive synthesis to assess how Qur'anic narratives frame ecological issues, construct moral subjects, establish the legitimacy of actions, and interact with discourses on development, policy, and environmental political economy. This technique is considered most appropriate for the study's objectives because it allows for a reading that is not only descriptive but also reflective and explanatory of the mechanisms of meaning production, legitimation strategies, and the social conditions that determine whether Qur'anic narratives function as transformative ethics or merely religious ornamentation in ecological activism.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Reconstructing the Qur'anic Narrative of Nature as an Ethical and Political Subject

In the classical interpretive tradition, verses of the Qur'an concerning the cosmos, living creatures, and the relationship between humans and nature are often read in cosmological-theological or moral-individual terms, that is, as signs of God's power that lead humans to acknowledge their faith and submit to ritual practices. Nature is understood as a *kauniyah* verse that reinforces *tawhid*, but its socio-political implications are rarely systematically developed (Muhammad, 2025). In the modern context, this reading risks reducing nature to a mere spiritual backdrop for humans, rather than an entity with intrinsic value and the right to be treated fairly.

The Qur'an consistently describes the cosmos as an orderly, balanced, and interconnected system, created with precise measurements and with a purpose. The concept of *mīzān*, which refers to cosmic balance, is not only metaphorical but also normative, as humans are

commanded not to disrupt this balance. In this perspective, nature is not an unlimited resource to be freely exploited, but rather an order with moral integrity. The reconstruction of the Qur'anic narrative requires a rereading of cosmological verses, with an emphasis on the relational dimension of human existence, which cannot be separated from the sustainability of nature.

The verses about living creatures in the Qur'an further strengthen the position of nature as an ethical subject. The Qur'an asserts that all living creatures are creatures like humans, who praise and submit to God in their own ways (Pourghasemian, 2023). This statement has the radical implication that non-humans have moral value that is not entirely dependent on human interests. The reconstruction of the Qur'anic narrative with an ecological orientation places animals, plants, and ecosystems on a par with humans as dignified creations, thereby requiring that the relationship between humans and nature be based on the principle of respect rather than domination (Arauf, 2021). Within this framework, exploitative practices that cause suffering to living beings and the destruction of habitats cannot be justified on the grounds of economic progress or development needs alone, as they contradict the basic principle of respect for God's creation.

The concept of human stewardship is often a crucial point in debates over Islam and the environment. In the dominant anthropocentric reading, *khalifah* is understood as legitimising humans to control and exploit nature for their own interests (Karimullah, 2023). However, the reconstruction of the Qur'anic narrative demands a more ethical and responsible interpretation, emphasising that the *khalifah* is not a privilege but a mandate that carries moral responsibility. This trust requires the protection, preservation, and fair, sustainable management of nature.

The reconstruction of the Qur'anic narrative also implies a paradigm shift from a ritualistic, individualistic reading to one that directly impacts the social and political spheres. Until now, ecological values in the Qur'an have often been reduced to personal moral advice, such as exhortations not to be wasteful or to maintain cleanliness, without being linked to the economic and political structures that give rise to large-scale environmental damage. This new reading demands that Qur'anic principles of justice, balance, and prohibition of destruction be translated into criticism of exploitative public policies and development models. In this framework, environmental issues are no longer seen as private matters or individual ethics, but as structural injustices that demand political intervention and systemic change.

In the Indonesian context, the reconstruction of the Qur'anic narrative of nature as an ethical and political subject is highly relevant, given the severe environmental damage caused by deforestation, destructive mining, and unjust industrialisation (Irawan, 2016). The Qur'anic narrative can serve as a basis for the moral delegitimisation of these practices by emphasising that the destruction of forests, the pollution of rivers, and the seizure of local communities' living spaces constitute *fasād* expressly prohibited in the Qur'an. From this perspective, legal permission and economic benefits are insufficient to justify an activity if it actually harms the ecological balance and causes suffering to humans and other creatures (Nurizka et al., 2025; Rembulan et al., 2025).

This reconstruction opens up space for understanding nature as a political subject, in the sense that its existence must be represented and protected in public decision-making processes. Although the Qur'an does not explicitly address the rights of nature in the modern legal sense, its ethical principles can serve as a basis for advocating policies that promote ecological sustainability. In this case, the Qur'anic narrative can inspire the development of an ethical policy framework that places environmental sustainability as a public interest equal to

economic interests (Karimullah, 2024). However, this discussion also needs to be critical by questioning the extent to which the Muslim community in Indonesia has integrated the principles of tawhid and ecological stewardship into its social and political practices.

On the one hand, there are various positive initiatives, such as the eco-pesantren movement, environmental da'wah, and religious *fatwās* that support nature conservation (Maghfiroh et al., 2024). These initiatives demonstrate efforts to translate Qur'anic narratives into concrete ecological practices. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that religion is also often used symbolically to legitimise destructive development models, for example, through rhetoric about the welfare of the people that ignores long-term ecological impacts. In this context, tauhid is reduced to a spiritual slogan, while the term *khalīfah* is narrowly understood as a mandate to pursue economic growth.

The tension between normative ideals and practical realities shows that the reconstruction of Qur'anic narratives cannot stop at the level of theological discourse, but must be accompanied by critical reflection on the structures of power and economic interests that influence and shape interpretation (Afif et al., 2024; Nur et al., 2025). Interpretations that favour ecological sustainability often face resistance from actors who benefit from the exploitation of natural resources. Therefore, making nature an ethical and political subject within the Qur'anic framework requires moral courage and social commitment to challenge the status quo, including development practices legitimised by the state and corporations.

The reconstruction of the Qur'anic narrative of nature as an ethical and political subject can be understood as a transformative intellectual and practical project. This project seeks to shift the orientation of religiosity from individual piety to ecological and social piety, expressed through concrete commitment to environmental protection and intergenerational justice. Within this framework, nature is no longer positioned as a silent object waiting to be exploited, but rather as an integral part of a moral community that demands respect and protection.

### **The Encounter between Quranic Narratives, Local Wisdom, and Ecological Politics in Indonesia**

Indonesia, as a pluralistic social space, has never experienced Islamisation in a vacuum, but rather through a long process of encounter between Islamic teachings and the cosmology, knowledge systems, and customary practices that had already shaped human relations with nature. In this context, the Qur'anic narrative about nature does not present itself as a discourse that completely replaces local traditions, but rather interacts with, negotiates, and re-elaborates them through symbolic language and local ethics (Hassan, 2016). This encounter has produced distinctive forms of ecological religiosity, in which the values of tawhid, *mīzān*, *rahmah*, and *amānah* are intertwined with the concepts of the sacredness of forests, water, land, and living spaces as understood in customary traditions in various regions of Indonesia.

In many local cosmologies of the archipelago, nature is understood as a living entity that has sacred and relational dimensions (Hendra et al., 2025). Forests are not merely a collection of trees with economic value, but a living space protected by taboos, rituals, and customary rules; water is treated as a source of life that must be respected; and land is understood as a space of origin, identity, and community sustainability. When Islam developed in these regions, Qur'anic verses about the creation of the cosmos, the order of nature, and the prohibition of destruction were often read in resonance with local views on balance and harmony. This process shows that the Qur'anic narrative has a dialogical capacity that allows

it to integrate with local wisdom without losing its theological essence, thereby enriching the meaning of ecological ethics in the concrete context of community life.

This creative dialogue can be seen as a process of contextual hermeneutics, in which the text of the Qur'an is interpreted not only through the Arabic language and classical exegetical traditions, but also through the collective experience of communities that depend on nature for their livelihoods. Verses about *mīzān*, for example, find practical articulation in customary forest management systems that emphasise limits on exploitation and fair distribution. The prohibition of *fasād* is interpreted as a rejection of indiscriminate deforestation or water pollution that threatens the sustainability of communities. Meanwhile, the concept of *rahmah* is understood not only as compassion between humans but also as a principle of compassion towards all creatures and ecosystems.

The role of scholars, activists, and Islamic boarding school communities is very significant in this process of re-elaboration. Ulama who are close to local communities often act as epistemic mediators, bridging the language of sacred texts with that of adat. In the context of agrarian conflicts, for example, verses about justice, the prohibition of oppression, and the stewardship of the earth are used to strengthen the community's claims to customary land threatened by large-scale plantation, mining, or infrastructure projects. This kind of interpretation shows that Qur'anic narratives can serve as a source of moral legitimacy for the struggle for the right to living space, while expanding the religious horizon from ritual piety to socio-ecological piety.

Islam-based environmental activists also play an essential role in articulating the meeting between Qur'anic narratives and local wisdom (A et al., 2025). They do not merely quote Qur'anic verses normatively, but place them in dialogue with the ecological knowledge of local communities. In practice, this is evident in forest conservation campaigns that combine Qur'anic terms such as *khalīfah* and *amānah* with indigenous concepts of forest guardianship or sacred lands. This strategy not only strengthens the resonance of environmental messages among Muslim communities but also creates a common language that enables cross-identity collaboration among indigenous communities, Islamic boarding schools, and civil society organisations.

Islamic boarding schools, as Islamic educational institutions with strong local roots, are an essential space for this encounter. Many Islamic boarding schools in rural areas coexist directly with specific ecological landscapes, such as forests, rivers, or agricultural land (Hadi et al., 2024; Subaidi et al., 2023). In this context, religious learning cannot be separated from everyday environmental experiences. Several Islamic boarding schools have developed curricula and practices that integrate interpretations of verses about nature with local knowledge about sustainable agriculture, water conservation, and waste management. Through this approach, the Qur'anic narrative about nature is not only understood cognitively but also internalised through concrete practices of living. However, the discussion of the encounter between the Qur'anic narrative and local wisdom cannot be separated from an ecological political analysis that highlights the power relations behind natural resource management.

Political ecology shows that environmental degradation and agrarian conflicts are not merely the result of technical errors, but of unequal power structures in which the state and corporations often dominate access to and control over land, forests, and water (Ajl, 2023; Malik, 2024). In this context, religious claims about nature are not neutral but are involved in contests over interests. Quranic narratives can be used to defend the interests of local

communities, but they can also be reduced to symbolic legitimisation for destructive development projects.

A critical analysis is needed to unpack how certain religious authorities sometimes support state policies or corporate investments in the name of public interest while ignoring the ecological and social impacts borne by local communities (Rosyid et al., 2025). In situations like this, religious language is used to quell resistance and normalise the seizure of living space. Therefore, the encounter between Qur'anic narratives and local wisdom must be understood as an arena of discursive contestation, where the meaning of verses about nature is contested by various actors with different positions of power.

On the other hand, Qur'anic narratives also have strong potential as a tool of resistance against the hegemony of the state and corporations (Benmessaoud et al., 2024). When verses on the prohibition of *fasād* and the command to uphold justice are read in the context of environmental destruction, they can serve as a theological basis for rejecting projects that harm ecosystems and communities. In some cases, Qur'anic language is used to frame ecological struggles as part of religious obligations, thereby providing moral legitimacy that is difficult for political authorities to ignore. This strategy shows that religion is not always on the side of power but can be a symbolic resource for social movements challenging dominant structures.

The convergence of Qur'anic narratives and local wisdom also opens up opportunities for coalitions between faith-based movements and critical ecological movements (El-Sherbini et al., 2023). Such coalitions are essential because the environmental crisis is multidimensional and requires cross-sector alliances. By integrating religious language that resonates with Muslim communities and structural analysis from ecological politics, environmental movements can broaden their support base and strengthen their public legitimacy. In the Indonesian context, where religion has a significant influence in the public sphere, this coalition has the potential to be an essential force in driving policy change and natural resource management practices (Smith et al., 2024). However, the opportunity for such a coalition also faces epistemic and political challenges.

Critical ecological movements often depart from materialist and structural analyses that are sceptical of the role of religion, while some religious actors tend to be cautious of confrontational political language. The convergence of Qur'anic narratives with local wisdom can serve as a bridge, enabling dialogue between the two approaches and emphasising shared values such as justice, sustainability, and respect for life (Insani & Karimullah, 2023). Within this framework, religion is not a substitute for political analysis but a source of ethics and motivation that enriches the ecological struggle.

The encounter between Qur'anic narratives, local wisdom, and ecological politics in Indonesia is a complex, dynamic process, marked by negotiations of meaning (Saad & Faruq, 2024). It involves not only translating texts into practice, but also a struggle with the power structures that determine who has the right to speak on behalf of religion and nature. The reconstruction and articulation of Qur'anic narratives in dialogue with local traditions open the possibility of the birth of a contextual and transformative ecological ethic, while challenging the use of religion as a symbolic legitimisation tool for environmental exploitation.

The meeting underlined that the future of ecological politics in Indonesia cannot be separated from society's, mainly Muslim communities', ability to develop a reading of the Qur'an that favours sustainability and environmental justice. When Qur'anic narratives about *mīzān*, *fasād*, and *raḥmah* are elaborated through local wisdom and directed to challenge structural inequalities, religion can become an emancipatory force supporting the struggle for land rights, ecosystem protection, and sustainable coexistence. Thus, the encounter between

sacred texts, local traditions, and ecological politics is not merely a meeting of discourses, but a praxis arena that determines the direction of human-nature relations in Indonesia.

### **Qur'anic Narrative-based Ecological Activism as a Conventional Movement and Social Transformation**

Qur'anic narrative-based ecological activism, as a conventional movement and social transformation, positions religion not merely as a private belief system but as a moral, symbolic, and practical resource capable of driving change in perspectives, lifestyles, and social structures. In the Indonesian context, where Islam serves as the primary framework for public ethics, the Qur'anic narrative on nature, justice, and human responsibility has great potential to reframe society's response to the increasingly acute ecological crisis. Islam-based ecological activism did not arise in a vacuum. Still, it emerged from the tension between a model of religiosity that has tended to be ritualistic and individualistic, and the reality of environmental damage that demands a collective, structural response.

The Qur'anic narrative plays a central role in this conversion process because it provides a theological framework that allows Muslims to interpret the environmental crisis as a matter of faith and trust, rather than merely a technical or policy issue (Hidayat, 2023). Verses about the creation of the cosmos, the balance of nature, the prohibition of *fasād*, and the command to uphold justice become entry points for building ecological awareness rooted in tawhid. In this framework, tawhid is no longer understood merely as a theoretical acknowledgement of the oneness of God, but as an integrative principle that rejects fragmentation between human relationships with God, fellow human beings, and nature. Qur'anic-based ecological activism thus seeks to restore this interconnectedness, emphasising that environmental destruction is a form of denial of tawhid because it severs the harmonious relationship between creation.

Muslim activists play an essential role in transforming the Qur'anic narrative from a normative text into a source of inspiration for social praxis. They utilise the language of the Qur'an to frame environmental issues such as deforestation, pollution, and the climate crisis as moral issues that demand collective responsibility. Through thematic studies, public campaigns, and discourse production in the digital space, these activists reinterpret verses about *mīzān* and *amānah* in the context of contemporary ecological destruction. This strategy fosters emotional and religious resonance among Muslim communities, as environmental issues are no longer perceived as a foreign or secular agenda but as an integral part of religious obligations.

Pesantren communities have become an important locus for the development of this ecological religiosity (Khoirurrijal et al., 2025). As institutions of education and character building, pesantren have moral authority and strong social proximity to grassroots communities. In recent decades, pesantrens have initiated initiatives to integrate ecological values into their curricula, environmental management, and daily practices. Qur'anic verses about nature are not only taught as material to be memorised or interpreted, but are also linked to sustainable agricultural practices, waste management, water conservation, and renewable energy. This process creates an embodied religious experience in which worship and environmental concern reinforce one another. Students learn that keeping rivers clean, caring for the soil, and planting trees are part of obedience to God, not additional activities separate from spiritual life.

The grassroots movement rooted in local communities also demonstrates how Qur'anic narratives can serve as a tool for socio-ecological transformation. In many cases, Muslim communities directly affected by environmental damage, such as industrial pollution or land

grabbing, utilise religious language to articulate their experiences of injustice (Karimullah, 2025). Verses prohibiting oppression and commanding aid to the oppressed are used to frame ecological struggles as part of a social jihad oriented towards justice. This strategy not only strengthens internal community solidarity but also provides moral legitimacy in policy advocacy at the local and national levels. The Qur'anic narrative thus functions as a medium for the politicisation of ecological awareness, where faith becomes a source of courage to challenge destructive power structures.

The process of religious conversion resulting from Qur'anic-based ecological activism is not instantaneous, but unfolds through stages of reflection, internalisation, and collective praxis. In the initial stage, individuals and communities are introduced to a new reading of the sacred text that emphasises its ecological dimension (Ives et al., 2023). This stage often involves deconstructing old understandings that separate religion from environmental issues. Subsequently, these values are internalised through discussion, education, and shared experiences, thereby forming a new ethical disposition (Pertamawati et al., 2025; Wahyudi et al., 2025). At the praxis stage, ecological religiosity is manifested in concrete actions, such as changes in consumption patterns, involvement in environmental movements, and participation in policy advocacy.

Discourse strategies are crucial to the success of this movement. Activists and communities use various Qur'anic symbols and metaphors to bridge sacred texts with contemporary issues such as the climate crisis and climate justice. Terms such as *khalifah*, *amānah*, and *rahmah* are rearticulated to explain human responsibility towards future generations and the most vulnerable groups affected by climate change. In this way, the climate crisis is no longer seen as an abstract global phenomenon but as an ethical issue with direct implications for people's lives. This discourse strategy enables the translation of values, whereby theological concepts are translated into the language of policy and advocacy acceptable in the public sphere.

Religious symbols are also utilised to reinforce ecological messages. Practices such as tree planting as *sadaqah jāriyah* (charity), environmental management as a form of social worship, and mosque-based environmental campaigns demonstrate how religious symbols are used to build emotional and spiritual attachment to the ecological movement (Qonitah, 2025). These symbols serve as a bridge between ritual piety and social responsibility, thereby reducing resistance to behavioural change. In this context, religious symbols are not merely ornamental but practical pedagogical instruments in shaping new ecological habits.

At the policy level, Qur'anic narrative-based ecological activism seeks to shape development by offering an alternative ethical framework. Muslim activists and Islamic organisations engage in dialogue with policymakers, proposing recommendations grounded in the principles of ecological justice and sustainability (Yasmeen et al., 2024). Quranic narratives are used to challenge the legitimacy of development projects that damage the environment, emphasising that true prosperity cannot be achieved through the exploitation of nature at the expense of the future. These efforts demonstrate that ecological religiosity does not stop at individual change but is directed towards structural transformation through policy advocacy.

One of the main challenges is the risk of reducing religion to a rhetorical tool without substantive change. In some cases, Qur'anic verses are selectively quoted to support an environmental agenda, but this is not accompanied by criticism of the economic and political structures that give rise to ecological destruction (Arauf, 2021; Helfaya et al., 2018). In addition, there is a risk of co-optation by states or corporations that use religious symbols to legitimise

green projects that remain exploitative at heart. These challenges demand critical reflection so that Qur'anic narratives truly function as a force for transformation, not merely symbolic legitimisation.

From a social movement theory perspective, Qur'anic narrative-based ecological activism can be understood as a form of religious framing that is effective in mobilising support and building collective identity. Qur'anic narratives provide a coherent, resonant, and morally charged framework of meaning, capable of connecting individual experiences with collective goals. In the context of Indonesian Muslim society, this framing has high mobilising power because it relies on a widely recognised source of authority. However, its effectiveness depends heavily on the movement actors' ability to maintain ethical integrity and consistency between discourse and action.

Qur'anic narrative-based ecological activism, as a conventional and social transformation movement, demonstrates that religion can be a progressive force in addressing environmental crises. Through a process-oriented, integrated approach to worship and social ethics, and contextual discourse strategies, Qur'anic narratives can drive behavioural change, build solidarity, and encourage more equitable and sustainable policy advocacy. This discussion emphasises that when sacred texts are brought to life in reflective and critical social practices, they are not only quoted as normative legitimisation, but truly function as a motor for ecological social change. In the context of Indonesia, which faces significant environmental challenges, this kind of activism offers hope for the emergence of a more equitable, sustainable development model in harmony with the religious values alive in society.

## CONCLUSION

The Qur'anic narrative about nature in Indonesia cannot be understood solely as a normative theological construct, but rather as a living field of meaning that is negotiated and mobilised in concrete socio-ecological practices. The reconstruction of verses about the cosmos, living creatures, and human stewardship reveals a significant shift from ritualistic religiosity to ecological religiosity, placing nature as an ethical and political subject while connecting faith with environmental and social justice. These findings strengthen and expand the study of Islam and the environment by showing that Qur'anic narratives function as symbolic resources that frame consciousness, build solidarity, and mobilise community-based ecological activism, especially when they engage creatively with local wisdom and respond to the dynamics of environmental politics. The novelty of this research lies in its integrative approach, which does not separate text, interpretation, and practice but rather places them within a single analytical framework that reveals power relations, discourse strategies, and the potential for social transformation.

The implications of these findings confirm that mainstreaming Qur'anic narratives in the environmental agenda has the potential to enrich religion-based environmental ethics theory, strengthen ecologically oriented Islamic preaching and educational practices, and provide an alternative normative basis for the formulation of more equitable and sustainable development policies. However, this study is limited by the scope of the case and the contextual nature of the qualitative data, so caution is needed in drawing generalisations. Further studies need to develop comparative analyses across regions and religious traditions, and empirically test the impact of Qur'anic narrative-based ecological activism on behavioural change and public policy. For practical application, the results of this study encourage the need for consistency between discourse and action, the strengthening of ecological interpretation literacy, and the formation of strategic coalitions between religious actors, local

communities, and critical environmental movements, so that Qur'anic narratives do not stop at symbolic legitimacy but function as a transformative force in facing Indonesia's ecological crisis.

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