Contemporary Fiqh Studies
Vol. 1, No. 1, 2026, pp. 62–86
https://doi.org/10.66277/cfs.v1i1.337

Elkuator Research & Publication
E-ISSN: 3163-9364
https://e-journal.elkuator.com

Why Fiqh-Leftism? Rethinking Mainstream Islamic Eco-Theology in the Age of Extractivism

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Abstract

The increasing development of Islamic eco-theology, environmental fatwas, and advocacy campaigns by religious institutions promoting ecological responsibility has not succeeded in mitigating the escalating ecological crisis in Indonesia. This paradox necessitates a more fundamental inquiry into the ways in which the ecological crisis is conceptualized within mainstream Islamic legal thought. Utilizing Foucault's concept of governmentality in conjunction with the method of conceptual amelioration, this article critically examines the limitations of mainstream Islamic eco-theology and proposes an alternative conceptual framework grounded in fiqh-leftism (*al-fiqh al-yasārī*). The findings reveal that mainstream Islamic eco-theology predominantly frames ecological degradation as an issue of morality and individual responsibility, while inadequately addressing issues of power relations, resource control, and the unequal distribution of ecological benefits and harms. In response, the article advances fiqh-leftism as an approach rooted in *al-wāqi' al-bī'ī* (ecological reality), which is attentive to the collective experiences of affected communities and oriented toward the analysis of actors, interests, and the distribution of ecological benefits. This framework underpins the identification of *ḍarar* (harm), *mafsadah* (public detriment), and *ẓulm* (injustice) within the normative structure of Islamic legal reasoning. The article argues that the primary contribution of fiqh-leftism lies in shifting the normative horizon of Islamic environmental thought from stewardship to ecological justice by centering critical socio-legal evaluations on questions of power, distribution, and the protection of the oppressed.

Keywords
fiqh-leftism; Islamic eco-theology; extractivism; ecological crisis; environmental governance

Article History
Received:
17 January 2026
Revised:
19 April 2026
Accepted:
21 April 2026

Introduction

The political left has historically expressed skepticism when structural issues are reframed as moral problems. Specifically, the more frequently the ecological crisis is interpreted primarily as a matter of morality, the more challenging it becomes to recognize its underlying material causes. This hypothesis is advanced in light of contemporary Islamic eco-theological discourse—including Islamic environmental law—where environmental degradation is commonly attributed to humanity's deviation from its role as *khalīfah* (God's vicegerent on earth).[1] Consequently,

[1] See: Muzzamel Hussain Imran, *Seyyed Hossein Nasr's Ecological Ethics: Bridging Science, Religion, and the Environment*, 1st ed (Bradford: Ethics International Press Limited, 2023), 44-47; Othman Abd-ar-Rahman Llewellyn, "The Basis for a Discipline of Islamic Enviromental Law," in *Islam and Ecology: A*

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proposed solutions predominantly emphasize fostering ecological consciousness and individual moral responsibility.[2] While this perspective has contributed a rich lexicon of environmental accountability,[3] Zainal Bagir contends that it inadequately accounts for the persistence of ecological degradation within societies increasingly acquainted with such moral discourses.[4]

This phenomenon is particularly observable in Indonesia, where despite the proliferation of environmental fatwas,[5] "Green Islam" campaigns,[6] extensive discussions on ecological fiqh (*fiqh al-bī'ah*),[7] and eco-theology policies implemented by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia,[8] extractive industries continue to expand through mining, deforestation, and the dispossession of local communities.[9] This paradox raises a more fundamental inquiry: Is the ecological crisis attributable to humanity's failure to fulfill its role as *khalīfah*, or is it instead a consequence of political-economic structures that systematically engender ecological destruction? This question arises because Islamic eco-theology in Indonesia tends to frame the ecological crisis primarily as an ethical issue, while the

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Bestowed Trust, ed. Richard C. Foltz (Cambridge: Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School, 1998), 1–44; Arzam and Kusnadi, "Maqasid Al-Shari'ah and Ecotheology: A Philosophical Analysis of the Normative Foundations of Islamic Law in Ecological Issues," *Jurnal Mediasas: Media Ilmu Syari'ah dan Ahwal Al-Syakhsiyyah* 8, no. 4 (2025): 902–16; Mohammad Fazlhashemi, "Islamic Ecotheology," in *Intersections of Religion, Education, and a Sustainable World*, ed. Sally Windsor and Olof Franck (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2025), 25–40; Maulana Bagus Rahmat, Masruchin, and Fauzan, "The Idea of Islamic Ecotheology in Responding to the Global Environmental Crisis: An Analysis of the Concepts of Khalifah, Mīzān, and Maṣlaḥah," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Theology and Philosophy* 7, no. 1 (2025): 93–110.

[2] İbrahim Özdemir, "Islamic Ecotheology: Foundations and Challenges," in *Handbook on Religion and the Environment*, ed. Susan Power Bratton, Stephanie Clintonia Boddie, and İbrahim Özdemir (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2026), 10–23.

[3] See: Afrizal Nur et al., "Qur'anic Ecotheology and the Ethics of Forest Protection in Indonesia," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 26, no. 2 (2025): 351–82; Aulia Rakhmat, "Islamic Ecotheology: Understanding the Concept of Khalifah and the Ethical Responsibility of The Environment," *Academic Journal of Islamic Principles and Philosophy* 3, no. 1 (2022): 1–24.

[4] Zainal Abidin Bagir, "Beyond Instrumentalization: Lived Religion, Politics, and Justice in Indonesian Muslim Environmentalisms," *Studia Islamika* 32, no. 3 (2025): 439–66.

[5] See: Fatwa MUI Nomor 22 Tahun 2011 Tentang Pertambangan Ramah Lingkungan, Pub. L. No. 2011, 22; Fatwa MUI No. 41 Tahun 2014 Tentang Pengelolaan Sampah Untuk Mencegah Kerusakan Lingkungan, Pub. L. No. 14 (2014); Fatwa Nomor 86 Tahun 2023 Tentang Pengendalian Perubahan Iklim, Pub. L. No. 86 (2023); Fatwa Nomor 6 Tahun 2025 Tentang Pedoman Pengelolaan Sampah di Sungai, Danau, dan Laut untuk Mewujudkan Kelestarian Lingkungan, Pub. L. No. 6 (2025); See also: Moh. Mufid, "Green Fatwas in Bahtsul Masāil: Nahdlatul Ulama's Response to the Discourse on the Environmental Crisis in Indonesia," *Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial* 15, no. 2 (December 2020): 173–200; Anna M. Gade, "Islamic Law and the Environment in Indonesia," *Worldviews* 19, no. 2 (2015): 161–83.

[6] Testriono Testriono et al., "The Green Islam Movement in Indonesia: Actors, Strategies, and Networks," *Studia Islamika* 32, no. 2 (2025): 397–404; Ibnu Fikri and Freek Colombijn, "Is Green Islam Going to Support Environmentalism in Indonesia?," *Anthropology Today* 37, no. 2 (2021): 15–18.

[7] Fahmi Hamdi et al., "Integrating Maqashid Al-Sharia, Fiqh al-Bi'ah, and Islamic Ethics for Sustainable Water Management: A Case Study of Indonesia," *Al-Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syari'ah Dan Hukum* 10, no. 1 (2025): 1–19.

[8] Keputusan Menteri Agama Republik Indonesia Nomor 244 Tahun 2025 Tentang Program Prioritas Menteri Agama Tahun 2025-2029, 244 (2025).

[9] See: Indonesia Environment & Energy Center (IEC), "Data Kerusakan Lingkungan: Fakta, Dampak, dan Upaya Pemulihan," Indonesia Environment & Energy Center (IEC), 2025; Climate Rights International, "Indonesia: Huge Nickel Project Driving Climate, Rights, Environmental Harms," Report, Climate Rights International, 2024.

production relations that underpin the exploitation of nature receive comparatively limited attention. Accordingly, environmental degradation is more readily interpreted as a moral failing of humanity rather than as an outcome of the power relations that mediate interactions among humans, nature, and capital.

Attention to the structural dimensions of the ecological crisis is not a novel concern. Within the tradition of leftist thought, environmental degradation is commonly interpreted as a consequence of capitalist expansion, manifested through extractivism, agrarian conflicts, the dispossession of natural resources, and various mechanisms of accumulation that primarily benefit a small elite group.[10] This situation has been explained by several prominent scholars, including David Harvey through the concept of spatial fix,[11] Rosa Luxemburg through the economization of nature,[12] John Bellamy Foster through metabolic rift,[13] Jason W. Moore through the concepts of the Capitalocene and cheap nature,[14] Nancy Fraser through expropriation,[15] and Andreas Malm through fossil capital or carbon capitalism.[16] Despite their differences, they share the view that the ecological crisis is a consequence of political-economic relations that sustain capital accumulation, rather than merely the result of individual moral failure. Resistance to capitalism has also been extensively discussed within the tradition of critical Islamic thought. From the concept of *al-mustaḍ'afūn* (the oppressed or marginalized), whom Ali Shariati identified as revolutionary subjects of social change,[17] to the liberation theology advanced by

[10] See: Jingzhong Ye et al., "The Incursions of Extractivism: Moving from Dispersed Places to Global Capitalism," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 47, no. 1 (2020): 155–83; Henry Bernstein, "Agrarian Political Economy and Modern World Capitalism: The Contributions of Food Regime Analysis," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 43, no. 3 (2016): 611–47; Tim Boekhout van Solinge, "The Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources," in *The Oxford Handbook of Organized Crime*, ed. Letizia Paoli (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 500–528; Kevin MacKay, *Radical Transformation: Oligarchy, Collapse, and the Crisis of Civilization* (Toronto, Ontario: Between the Lines, 2017).

[11] Spatial fix refers to capital's tendency to resolve crises of overaccumulation through geographical expansion and the production of new spaces for investment and accumulation. In the Indonesian context, this dynamic can be observed in the expansion of mining projects, food estates, deforestation, land reclamation, and National Strategic Projects (Proyek Strategis Nasional). See: David Harvey, "The Geography of Capitalist Accumulation: A Reconstruction of the Marxian Theory," *Antipode* 7, no. 2 (1975): 9–21; David Harvey, "The Spatial Fix–Hegel, Von Thunen, and Marx," *Antipode* 13, no. 3 (1981): 1–12.

[12] Rosa Luxemburg, "The Struggle against Natural Economy," in *The Accumulation of Capital* (1913; Routledge, 2015), 1–18.

[13] Metabolic rift denotes the ecological rupture between humans and nature generated by capitalist production and accumulation. See: John Bellamy Foster, "Marx's Theory of Metabolic Rift: Classical Foundations for Environmental Sociology," *American Journal of Sociology* 105, no. 2 (1999): 366–405.

[14] Jason W. Moore employs the term *cheap nature* to describe capitalism's tendency to transform nature into a source of low-cost inputs necessary for the ongoing reproduction of capital accumulation. See: Jason W. Moore, ed., *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*, with Eileen Crist et al. (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2016), 78-115.

[15] Expropriation refers to the ongoing dispossession of people, land, and nature that enables capitalist accumulation. See: Nancy Fraser, "Expropriation and Exploitation in Racialized Capitalism: A Reply to Michael Dawson," *Critical Historical Studies* 3, no. 1 (2016): 163–78.

[16] Andreas Malm, *Fossil Capital: The Rise of Steam Power and the Roots of Global Warming* (London Brooklyn, New York: Verso, 2016), 1–12.

[17] Teo Lee Ken, "Ali Shariati and Ethical Humanism: Conceiving a Perspective of Liberative Social Ethics," in *Ali Shariati and the Future of Social Theory: Religion, Revolution, and the Role of the Intellectual*, ed. Dustin J. Byrd and Seyed Javad Miri (Brill, 2017), 128–56; Ali Shariati, *Religion vs. Religion*, trans. Laleh Bakhtiar, with Andrew J. Burgess (1988; 15th edition, Erscheinungsort nicht ermittelbar: ABC International Group, 2010), 89–90.

Asghar Ali Engineer and later developed by Hamid Dabashi through the notion of liberation theodicy,[18] from the term the Islamic left (*al-yasār al-islāmī*), popularized by Hassan Hanafi,[19] to the prophetic transformation proposed by Kuntowijoyo through Sura Āli ʿImrān 3: 110,[20] and finally to Moeslim Abdurrahman's discussion of Islam as an idea of revolution.[21] Their concerns consistently focused on forms of structural injustice that generate poverty, marginalization, and social inequality; however, they did not explicitly link these critiques to the issues of extractivism and the ecological crisis.

Conversely, concern for the environmental crisis in Indonesia has also emerged within the framework of Islamic law through *fiqh al-bī'ah*. Several studies have aimed to facilitate a dialogue between this legal framework, state law, customary law, and the principles of Islamic eco-theology.[22] These efforts have attempted to reconstruct concepts such as *khalīfah*, *amānah ilāhiyyah* (divine trust), *ḥimā* (protected reserve), *iḥyā' al-mawāt* (reclamation of dead land), *maṣlaḥah* (public interest), *lā ḍarar wa lā ḍirār* (no harm and no reciprocal harm), and maqasid sharia as normative foundations for environmental protection. Although these studies have significantly contributed to the advancement of Islamic environmental ethics, the majority remain situated within the prevailing framework of mainstream Islamic eco-theology. Specifically, Islamic eco-theology, including *fiqh al-bī'ah* in Indonesia, tends to exhibit a form of intellectual ghettoization: it is largely restricted to themes of conservation and moral responsibility, whereas critical analyses of extractive regimes tend to emerge outside the domain of Islamic legal tradition. As Indonesia confronts the expanding scale of mining activities, resulting in the dispossession of living spaces, agrarian conflicts, and the emergence of resource oligarchies, existing analytical frameworks tend to focus more on evaluating human behavior toward the environment rather than elucidating the political-economic structures that drive ecological degradation. This issue is further exacerbated by the increasing role of

[18] Asghar Ali Engineer, *Islam and Liberation Theology: Essays on Liberative Elements in Islam* (New Delhi: Sterling Publ, 1990); Hamid Dabashi, *Islamic Liberation Theology: Resisting the Empire* (London; New York: Routledge, 2008), 196-200.

[19] See: Hassan Hanafi, *Al-Yasār al-Islāmī: Kitābāt Fī al-Nahḍah al-Islāmiyyah* (Cairo: Maktabat Madbūlī, 1981), 31-32; Hassan Hanafi, *Mādhā Yaʿnī Al-Yasār al-Islāmī?* (Cairo: Maktabat Madbūlī, 1985); See also: Kazuo Shimogaki, *Kiri Islam–Antara Modernisme dan Postmodernisme: Telaah Kritis atas Pemikiran Hassan Hanafi*, ed. Fuad Mustafid (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1993); Ervand Abrahamian, "The Islamic Left: From Radicalism to Liberalism," in *Reformers and Revolutionaries in Modern Iran*, ed. Stephanie Cronin (Routledge, 2013), 12–21.

[20] See the prophetic social science paradigm (ISP), in which *nahi munkar* is interpreted by Kuntowijoyo as liberation (resistance against injustice); for further reading, see: Kuntowijoyo, *Islam Sebagai Ilmu: Epistemologi, Metodologi, dan Etika* (Jakarta: Teraju, 2004), 1-25.

[21] Moeslim Abdurrahman, *Islam Sebagai Kritik Sosial, Islam & Modernitas* (Jakarta: Erlangga, 2003), 94-101.

[22] Muhammad Harfin Zuhdi, "Paradigma Fiqh Al-Bi'ah Berbasis Kecerdasan Naturalis: Tawaran Hukum Islam Terhadap Krisis Ekologi," *Al-'Adalah* 12, no. 2 (2015): 771–84; Absori et al., "The Integration of Positive and Islamic Law in Contemporary Forest Conservation Policies Based on Sustainable Development: A Comparative Study of Indonesia and Malaysia," *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review* 5, no. 1 (2026): 458–91; Islamul Haq, Sudirman L, and Muhammad Majdy Amiruddin, "Eco-Theological Insights on The Sasi Tradition: Analyzing Environmental Ethics and Sanctions Through Fiqh al-Bi'ah and Islamic Criminal Law," *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 10, no. 1 (2025): 58–80.

religion as a "moral canopy" legitimizing extractive practices.[23] Furthermore, the authorization of religious mass organizations to manage mining operations following the enactment of Law No. 2 of 2025 highlights the limitations inherent in mainstream Islamic eco-theological concepts within the Indonesian context.

Building upon the preceding problem mapping and continuing the evolving tradition of Left Islam, this article introduces an alternative concept termed "fiqh-leftism." This concept aims to integrate critiques of the relations of production with the tradition of Islamic law to interpret the ecological crisis in the era of extractivism. I propose this concept as an effort to reclaim the meaning of the term "left," which has been significantly distorted by the dominance of capitalism as both an economic system and an ideological framework presumed to be without alternatives. Consequently, the term "left" is not employed here in a partisan sense or as an indicator of any specific political affiliation. Instead, it is understood as an intellectual tradition that centers on the critique of exploitation, domination, inequality, and various forms of structural injustice as foundational to social analysis. Within the context of the ecological crisis, this perspective seeks to transcend the notion that environmental problems stem solely from environmentally irresponsible human behavior, instead framing them as outcomes of power relations that govern the extraction of natural resources, the distribution of economic benefits, and the unequal allocation of ecological risks. By critically examining the moral problematization of the ecological crisis within mainstream Islamic eco-theology, the formation of the ecological subject through the rationality of environmental responsibility, and the limitations of these approaches in accounting for Indonesia's status as an extractive society, this article proposes fiqh-leftism as a framework for reconstructing ecological justice beyond the prevailing stewardship paradigm. Accordingly, this study aims to contribute to broadening the scope of Islamic eco-theology, shifting it from an ethics of conservation toward a critical analysis of the social, economic, and political structures that engender ecological injustice in contemporary Indonesia.

Previous Studies

Is it true that no studies have developed the fiqh tradition to interpret environmental issues as questions of structural injustice? This question is important to raise so that critiques of mainstream Islamic eco-theology do not fall into excessive generalization. In fact, a number of studies over the last two decades have sought to expand the horizon of *fiqh al-bi'ah* from preventive concerns toward broader advocacy-oriented issues such as environmental justice, natural resource governance, Indigenous rights, agrarian conflicts, and sustainable development.[24]

[23] Katherine Marshall, "Religion and Extractive Industries: Ethics, Practice, and Engagement," in *Catholic Peacebuilding and Mining: Integral Peace, Development, and Ecology*, 1st ed., ed. Caesar A. Montevecchio and Katherine Marshall, (London: Routledge, 2022), 1–14.

[24] See: Willis Jenkins, "Islamic Law and Environmental Ethics: How Jurisprudence (Usul al-Fiqh) Mobilizes Practical Reform," *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology* 9, no. 3 (2005): 338–64; Zainab Amin, "Sharīʿah and Climate Justice: Exploring Islamic Legal Foundations for Environmental Protection in Pakistan," *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights* 22, no. 1 (2025): 53–79; Elle Turnbull, "What Islamic Contributions Have Been Made to Climate Change Action and How Useful Are They

Others have attempted to bring maqasid sharia into dialogue with issues of climate change, resource distribution, and the constitutional responsibilities of the state in environmental governance.[25] Thus, the problem does not lie in the absence of a structural dimension within contemporary fiqh studies. However, as Wijsen has shown, the growth of Green Islam in Indonesia has not always produced a corresponding ecological transformation.[26] Destructive mining activities continue to flourish and are tolerated in the name of development, while religious mass organizations have increasingly become participants in such activities. This ambivalence suggests that the central problem lies in how the ecological crisis is understood. Although fiqh studies have expanded their attention to environmental justice and natural resource governance, extractivism remains a blind spot within much of contemporary Islamic environmental discourse. As a result, this condition produces a depoliticization of the ecological crisis,[27] in which ecological destruction is condemned normatively, while the structures that continually reproduce it are relatively rarely subjected to systematic critique.

On the other hand, the concept of leftist fiqh (*fiqh kiri*) developed by Anjar Nugroho represents one of the most explicit attempts to bring critiques of structural injustice into the tradition of Islamic law.[28] Drawing on al-Ṭufi, al-Shatibi, Masdar F. Mas'udi, and Hassan Hanafi, Nugroho defines *fiqh kiri* as a Sharia-based orientation that takes the side of the oppressed, the poor (or those made poor), and as a normative framework for criticizing despotic and hegemonic forms of power.[29] In addition, several studies have specifically examined the methodology of usul fiqh developed by Hassan Hanafi, which is closely associated with his tradition of Left

in Promoting Environmental Justice?," *Journal of Financial Crime* 28, no. 4 (2021): 1032–43; Muhammad al-Marakeby, "Could Women Own Agricultural Land? Rethinking the Relationship of Islamic Law and Contextual Reality (Wāqi')," *Die Welt Des Islams*, 2021, 1–29; Hani Sholihah et al., "Islamic Ecofeminism and The Future of Social Justice: Pathways to Sustainable Community Development," *Ijtimaiyya: Jurnal Pengembangan Masyarakat Islam* 18, no. 2 (2025): 245–72; Ahmad Syafi'i Sj et al., "Reclaiming Agrarian Justice: The Reformative Potential of Islamic Land Law through Maqāṣid al-Sharia," *Al-Daulah : Jurnal Hukum Pidana dan Ketatanegaraan* 14, no. 1 (2025): 62–76; Souad Ezzerouali et al., "Rivers Rights in Islamic Law: Between Implicit Recognition of Legal Personality and Sustainable Use Regulation," *Journal of Property, Planning and Environmental Law* 18, no. 2 (2026): 180–95; Absori et al., "The Integration of Positive and Islamic Law in Contemporary Forest Conservation Policies Based on Sustainable Development"; Firman Muntaqo et al., "The Transformation of Land Law in Indonesia: From Commodification to Maqāṣid and Social Justice," *Al-Ahkam* 35, no. 2 (2025): 287–312.

[25] See: Mustafa Lutfi et al., "Legal Policy of Green Investment: A Study of the Green Constitution and Fiqh Bi'ah towards Net Zero Emissions in Indonesia," *Journal of Indonesian Legal Studies* 10, no. 1 (2025): 517–54; Hojjat Salimi Turkamani, "The Role of Islam in Realizing the Goals of Climate Change Law: From Theory to Practice?," *Journal for European Environmental & Planning Law* 20, no. 1 (2023): 24–50; Safei El-Deen Hamed, "Seeing the Environment through Islamic Eyes: Application of Shariah to Natural Resources Planning and Management," *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 6, no. 2 (1993): 145–64; Nasrullah et al., "Reconstructing Mining Governance through Maqasid Al-Sharia: Towards Natural Resource Management Public Welfare Oriented," *Syariah: Jurnal Hukum dan Pemikiran* 25, no. 1 (2025): 97–116.

[26] Frans Wijsen, "How Green Is Green Islam? Religious Environmentalism and Public Policy in Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* 32, no. 3 (2025): 421–37.

[27] Erik Swyngedouw, "Depoliticized Environments: The End of Nature, Climate Change and the Post-Political Condition," *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 69 (October 2011): 253–74.

[28] Anjar Nugroho, "Fikih Kiri: Revitalisasi Usul al-Fiqh Untuk Revolusi Sosial," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 43, no. 2 (2005): 425–54.

[29] Nugroho.

Islam.[30] More specifically, concern for *al-mustaḍ'afūn* had long been a familiar theme in social fiqh (*fiqh sosial*), as introduced by K.H. Sahal Mahfudh and K.H. Ali Yafie, and has inspired numerous contemporary fiqh studies in Indonesia.[31] All of this literature has undoubtedly made important contributions. However, thus far, it's critical orientation has been directed more toward socio-economic issues than toward politico-ecological ones. As a result, extractivism, the dispossession of living spaces, and ecological injustice have not yet become fields of reflection that are systematically developed within this body of scholarship. Accordingly, this article proposes fiqh-leftism as an extension of the critique advanced by *fiqh kiri* into the context of the ecological crisis in Indonesia's age of extractivism.

Research Methodology

Research Approach and Analytical Framework

To address the research problem, this study adopts a critical approach that combines the Foucauldian perspective of governmentality with Sally Haslanger's notion of conceptual amelioration to evaluate and reconstruct how the ecological crisis is understood in contemporary Islamic discourse. Rose, O'Malley, and Valverde explain that governmentality provides an analytical perspective for examining the rationalities, forms of knowledge, techniques, practices, and programs through which problems are constituted and governed. [32] Accordingly, this study employs governmentality to examine how mainstream Islamic eco-theology conceptualizes the ecological crisis and extractive practices in Indonesia. The analysis is guided by questions concerning who is governed, why and how they are governed, what forms of knowledge legitimize such governance, and what objectives it seeks to achieve. This approach enables the study to identify the rationalities, normative assumptions, and conceptual limitations that shape mainstream Islamic eco-theology's interpretation of the ecological crisis in the age of extractivism.

Data Sources and Analytical Procedures

The data consist of scholarly literature on Islamic eco-theology, extractivism, ecological justice, and fiqh-leftism, collected through documentary research involving books, journal articles, research reports, and other relevant academic publications. Data analysis follows the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing.[33] During data condensation and display, the governmentality perspective is used to identify and interpret the rationalities, forms of knowledge, and normative assumptions underlying mainstream Islamic eco-theology's understanding of the

[30] See: Muhammad Anis Mashduqi, "Kontribusi Hassan Hanafi dalam Kajian Ushul Fiqh," *Al-Mazaahib: Jurnal Perbandingan Hukum* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–18; Moh. Sholehuddin, "Metode Ushul Fiqh Hassan Hanafi," *De Jure: Jurnal Hukum dan Syar'iah* 3, no. 2 (2011): 165–77.
[31] See: Sahal Mahfudh, *Nuansa Fiqh Sosial* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1994); Ali Yafie, *Menggagas Fiqih Sosial* (Bandung: Mizan, 1994).
[32] Nikolas Rose, Pat O'Malley, and Mariana Valverde, "Governmentality," *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 2, no. 1 (2006): 83–104.
[33] Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, Edition 3 (Los Angeles London New Delhi Singapore Washington DC: Sage, 2014).

relationship between humans and nature. The subsequent stage involves normative conceptual reconstruction informed by Haslanger's notion of conceptual amelioration, which shifts the analytical question from what a concept currently means to what concept is needed to address a particular problem.[34] By identifying the limitations of mainstream Islamic eco-theology in explaining the ecological crisis under conditions of extractivism, this study reconstructs fiqh-leftism as an alternative analytical framework oriented towards ecological justice, power relations, and the critique of extractive structures that produce environmental degradation.

Results

Moralizing the Ecological Crisis and Governing Ecological Subjects

Within the Foucauldian tradition, the way a problem is problematized determines the form of intervention considered necessary to address it.[35] In this context, mainstream Islamic eco-theology in Indonesia has developed a set of rationalities, forms of knowledge, and practices that shape how the ecological crisis is understood and what responses are considered appropriate to it. To illustrate this, I have mapped this situation in Table 1. What is particularly striking from the mapping presented in Table 1 is that the entire conceptual and institutional apparatus is directed toward the transformation of the subject rather than the transformation of structures. Consequently, the success of mainstream Islamic eco-theology is measured more by its ability to cultivate ecological consciousness than by its capacity to explain the political-economic relations that produce the ecological crisis. This reading of *fasād* (corruption of the divinely ordained order) generally draws upon widely cited verses such as Sura al-Rūm 30:41, which speaks of corruption on land and sea caused by human actions, and Sura al-Aʿrāf 7:56, which prohibits *fasād* after order has been established on earth. Building upon these verses, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Fazlun Khalid, Mawil Izzi Dien, and Ibrahim Özdemir have developed various formulations of eco-theology that, despite differences in emphasis, similarly understand the ecological crisis as a consequence of the deterioration of humanity's ethical, spiritual, and moral relationship with nature.[36]

This interpretation positions *khilāfah*, *amānah ilāhiyyah*, *mīzān* (cosmic balance), and stewardship as the central rationalities of mainstream Islamic eco-theology. Because the root of the problem is located in human deviation, the solution considered most rational is the reconstitution of humanity's ecological responsibility.

[34] For Haslanger, conceptual amelioration shifts the focus of conceptual analysis from identifying the meaning of a concept as it is currently used to asking what concept would be most useful for achieving our legitimate purposes. This approach distinguishes between *the concept we have* and *the concept we need*, thereby opening the possibility of revising or reconstructing concepts when existing ones fail to adequately capture social reality or normative concerns. See: Sally Haslanger, "Going On, Not in the Same Way," in *Conceptual Engineering and Conceptual Ethics*, 1st ed., ed. Alexis Burgess, Herman Cappelen, and David Plunkett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 230–60.
[35] Rose, O'Malley, and Valverde, "Governmentality."
[36] See: Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Islam and the Environmental Crisis," *Islamic Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (1990): 217–34; Fazlun Khalid, "Islam and the Environment – Ethics and Practice an Assessment," *Religion Compass* 4, no. 11 (2010): 707–16; Mawil Izzi Dien, *The Environmental Dimensions of Islam* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2000); İbrahim Özdemir, *The Ethical Dimension of Human Attitude towards Nature: A Muslim Perspective* (Istanbul: Insan Publications, 2008), 170-71.

It is therefore not surprising that the Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change (2015), adopted in Istanbul and attended by religious leaders and policymakers, framed the transition toward a sustainable future as a matter of humanity's moral responsibility as *khalīfah* and steward of the earth.[37] In other words, the declaration focuses more on the impacts that have already occurred than on the actors responsible for producing those impacts.

Table 1. Governmentality of Mainstream Islamic Eco-Theology

Dimension	Discursive Configuration	Islamic Discourse
Problematization	Ecological degradation as a consequence of moral and spiritual decline	*Ḍarar, Fasād, Ẓulm*
Rationality	Environmental stewardship as moral responsibility	*Khilāfah, Amānah Ilāhiyyah, Mīzān*
Knowledge	Juristic frameworks for ethico-legal judgment	Usul Fiqh, *Fiqh al-Bī'ah*, Maqasid Sharia
Technologies	Religious and institutional mechanisms cultivating ecological responsibility	Green Fatwa, Eco-Pesantren, Eco-Mosque Movement
Subject formation	Environmentally responsible Muslim as an ecological subject	*Khalīfah fī al-Arḍ*
Telos	Ecological awareness and sustainable behavior	*'Imārāt al-Arḍ, Ḥifẓ al-Bī'ah, Maṣlaḥah*

Source: Author's elaboration, 2026.

In Indonesia, this rationality has been translated into various technologies of government, including several fatwas issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) addressing environmental issues, such as Fatwa No. 22 of 2011, No. 41 of 2014, No. 47 of 2014, No. 30 of 2016, No. 86 of 2023, and, most recently, No. 6 of 2025. In addition, a range of programs have been introduced, including eco-pesantren, the eco-mosque movement, and the mainstreaming of eco-theology through the Decrees of the Minister of Religious Affairs (KMA) No. 606 and No. 607 of 2026. Although these initiatives differ in form and institutional setting, they are all directed toward cultivating ecological consciousness and responsibility among Muslims. Through these various instruments, mainstream Islamic eco-theology seeks to produce environmentally conscious and ecologically responsible Muslim subjects. This situation indicates that religious institutions have become part of a configuration of multiple governmentalities,[38] operating through the production of ecological responsibility by mainstreaming eco-theology in Indonesia and encouraging individuals to act in accordance with that understanding. Consequently, the resolution of the ecological crisis is directed more toward shaping behavior than toward transforming the conditions that produce it.

[37] United Nations Climate Change, "Islamic Declaration on Climate Change," Istanbul: United Nations Climate Change, 2015.
[38] Robert Fletcher, "Environmentality Unbound: Multiple Governmentalities in Environmental Politics," *Geoforum* 85 (2017): 311–15.

The Limits of Mainstream Islamic Eco-Theology

There is no ecological crisis that is free from politics. Yet ecological crises are often translated into a moral crisis of humanity in general. When ecological responsibility is universalized, questions regarding who produces ecological destruction and who benefits from it tend to be pushed to the margins of analysis. Erik Swyngedouw describes this condition as "post-politics," in which environmental issues are reduced to technical, managerial, and moral matters that demand changes in individual behavior, while the power relations, conflicts of interest, and political-economic structures that generate the ecological crisis are depoliticized.[39] In Indonesia, Bagir identifies a similar tendency in the development of Muslim environmentalism. According to him, most religiously based environmental studies and movements continue to focus on theological dimensions, fatwas, moral education, and changes in individual behavior, while issues of justice, politics, and power relations have yet to receive adequate attention.[40] Here, I do not intend to engage in a discursive debate with mainstream Islamic eco-theology or attempt to deconstruct it. Rather, I begin by mapping the various realities that constitute the ecological crisis in Indonesia, while simultaneously asking where Islamic eco-theology stands when confronted with such a distressing situation.

Table 2. The Ten Provinces in Indonesia with the Highest Rates of Deforestation

Rank	Province	Deforestation (ha)
1	East Kalimantan	44,483
2	West Kalimantan	39,598
3	Central Kalimantan	33,389
4	Riau	20,812
5	South Sumatra	20,184
6	Jambi	14,839
7	Aceh	8,962
8	North Kalimantan	8,767
9	Bangka Belitung Islands	7,956
10	North Sumatra	7,303
Other	Provinces (N=27)	55,282
Total	—	261,575

Source: Auriga Nusantara, Status Deforestation in Indonesia 2024.

Recent data indicate that ecological degradation in Indonesia is occurring on a scale that far exceeds the realm of individual ethics (see Table 2). The Status Deforestation in Indonesia 2024 report published by Auriga Nusantara records that Indonesia lost approximately 261,575 hectares of forest throughout 2024, an increase from the 257,384 hectares lost in the previous year. More importantly, around 97 percent of this deforestation occurred in areas possessing formal legal status, whether

[39] Swyngedouw, "Depoliticized Environments."
[40] Bagir, "Beyond Instrumentalization."

in the form of forestry, plantation, or mining concessions.[41] These findings demonstrate that deforestation can no longer be explained merely as the result of illegal activities or the misconduct of a few economic actors. Rather, forest loss has become increasingly integrated into development governance and derives legal legitimacy through the state's licensing system.

Table 3. Deforestation by Major Concession Sectors in Indonesia

Sector	Deforestation (ha)
Timber Plantation Concessions	41,332
Mining Concessions	38,615
Palm Oil Concessions	37,483
Logging Concessions	36,068

Source: Auriga Nusantara, Status Deforestation in Indonesia 2024.

As shown in Table 2, the geographical distribution of deforestation reveals a troubling pattern. East Kalimantan, West Kalimantan, and Central Kalimantan occupied the top three positions as the provinces experiencing the greatest forest loss in 2024. At the same time, Riau, South Sumatra, and Jambi also recorded significant levels of forest loss. These regions are not locations arbitrarily selected by statistical patterns. Rather, they constitute the centers of Indonesia's extractive expansion, ranging from coal and nickel mining to large-scale plantations and forestry concessions.

Table 4. The Ten Largest Mining Concessions Linked to Deforestation in Indonesia

Mining Concession	Commodity	Deforestation (ha)
PT Berau Coal	Coal	2,039
PT Cita Mineral Investindo Tbk	Bauxite	1,442
PT Timah Tbk	Tin	1,070
PT Sumber Sentosa Bersama	Quartz Sand	808
PT Vale Tbk	Nickel	689
PT Battoman Coal	Coal	651
PT Weda Bay Nickel	Nickel	650
PT Kayan Kaltara Coal	Coal	595
PT Ridatama Cahaya Abadi	Bauxite	540
PT Aneka Tambang Tbk	Multi-commodity	497
1,580 Other Mining Business Permits	Mineral & Coal	29,635
Total Mining Deforestation	—	38,615

Source: Auriga Nusantara, Status Deforestation in Indonesia 2024.

Consequently, Indonesia's map of deforestation is simultaneously a geographical map of Indonesian extractivism. This relationship becomes even more apparent

[41] Auriga Nusantara, *Status of Deforestation in Indonesia 2024*, Indonesia Land Cover and License Information System, 2025.

when deforestation is examined by concession sector (see Table 3). Forest loss is not dominated by a single sector; instead, it is produced simultaneously by multiple sectors that depend upon the extraction of natural resources. Table 4 shows that the mining sector was responsible for the loss of 38,615 hectares of forest throughout 2024, making it one of the largest contributors to national deforestation. This figure is nearly equivalent to the levels attributed to the palm oil plantation sector and forestry concessions. In other words, the ecological destruction taking place is not an anomaly occurring outside the development system; rather, it is an inherent consequence of a development model that relies on the extraction of natural resources. This pattern becomes even more evident when examining the contribution of individual companies and mining permits to forest loss.

Table 5. Agrarian Conflict Trends in Indonesia (2021–2025)

Year	Number of Agrarian Conflicts
2021	207
2022	212
2023	241
2024	295
2025	341

Source: Consortium for Agrarian Reform (KPA), 2025.

What is most significant about these data is not the magnitude of the contribution made by any single company. More troubling is the fact that the remaining 1,580 mining business permits collectively accounted for 29,635 hectares of forest loss, representing more than three-quarters of the total deforestation attributed to the mining sector. This finding indicates that ecological destruction cannot be understood merely as the result of the deviant behavior of a few corporations. Rather, it is a consequence of an extractivist regime that operates through networks of licensing, investment, infrastructure, and development policies that systematically transform forests, rivers, coastal areas, and community living spaces into objects of economic production. Moreover, the expansion of extractive industries and development projects has frequently gone hand in hand with the escalation of agrarian conflicts in Indonesia. Data from the Agrarian Reform Consortium (Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria) show that agrarian conflicts in Indonesia have continued to increase over the past five years.[42] Most of these conflicts have occurred in the plantation, infrastructure, mining, and forestry sectors, which have long served as the primary arenas for the expansion of land control and natural resource exploitation.

Tables 5 and 6 demonstrate that agrarian conflicts cannot be understood as sporadic disputes occurring in isolation from one another. Rather, they constitute a recurring feature of contemporary development dynamics that are grounded in land

[42] Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria, *Catatan Akhir Tahun 2025 Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria, Tancap Gas di Jalur yang Salah, Paradoks Kebijakan Agraria Prabowo-Gibran 2025* (Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria, 2025).

control and the extraction of natural resources. At the same time, Islamic institutions such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), through MUI Fatwa No. 86 of 2023—which is often presented as a representation of Islamic eco-theology—continue to moralize the climate crisis through the language of collective responsibility, mitigation, and behavioral change, while the political-economic structures that produce the ecological crisis—including corporations, extractivist regimes, unequal control over natural resources, and state policies—have yet to become adequate objects of critique.[43] Furthermore, the eco-theology agenda promoted as a priority program by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia through KMA No. 606 of 2026 for all Civil Servants (Aparatur Sipil Negara) appears largely instrumental and ceremonial. It remains focused on ethical and moral issues in everyday life, such as planting one million trees and similar activities,[44] even though the ecological crisis should not be confronted in such a simplified manner.

Table 6. Agrarian Conflicts by Sector in Indonesia

Sector	Number of Conflicts	Area (ha)	Affected Households
Plantation	135	352,156.41	8,734
Infrastructure	69	58,809.42	12,786
Mining	46	58,904.68	11,020
Property and Real Estate	36	2,370.17	10,807
Forestry	31	435,439.80	11,331
Military Facilities	24	5,894.48	68,934

Source: Consortium for Agrarian Reform (KPA), 2025.

Thus far, advocacy-oriented actions undertaken by Islamic institutions to explicitly identify extractive industries—and the networks of interests surrounding them—as drivers of the ecological crisis have been virtually absent. Likewise, there has been little to no institutional defense of communities affected by agrarian conflicts. What has emerged instead is the participation of religious institutions and mass organizations in mining activities themselves, despite the fact that they should be at the forefront of resisting practices that undermine ecological life.[45] As a result, following the government's enactment of Law No. 2 of 2025, which grants mining concessions to religious organizations,[46] both Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah confidently accepted such concessions in the name of good

[43] Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI), "WALHI Sampaikan Apresiasi dan Kritik terhadap Fatwa MUI tentang Hukum Pengendalian Perubahan Iklim Global," Siaran Pers, Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI), 2024.
[44] M. Rusydi Sani, "Pimpin Gerakan Tanam Sejuta Pohon di Hari Bumi, Menag: Tokoh Agama Beri Teladan Pelestarian Alam," Berita Nasional, Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2025.
[45] Syafiq Hasim, "Indonesia's Islam-Based Mass Organisations and the Mining Industry Vortex," *Fulcrum: Analysis on Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Yusof Ishak Institute, 2024.
[46] Undang-Undang Nomor 2 Tahun 2025 Tentang Pertambangan Mineral dan Batubara (UU Minerba), Pub. L. No. 2 (2025).

governance and their responsibility as *khalīfah* on earth. It is in this context that the central limitation of mainstream Islamic eco-theology becomes fully apparent. This limitation does not stem from normative error, nor does it arise from a lack of conceptual resources as such. Rather, it lies in the fact that the conceptual apparatus it employs is not yet sufficiently adequate to explain an ecological crisis produced by extractivism in the era of contemporary capitalism.

Discussion

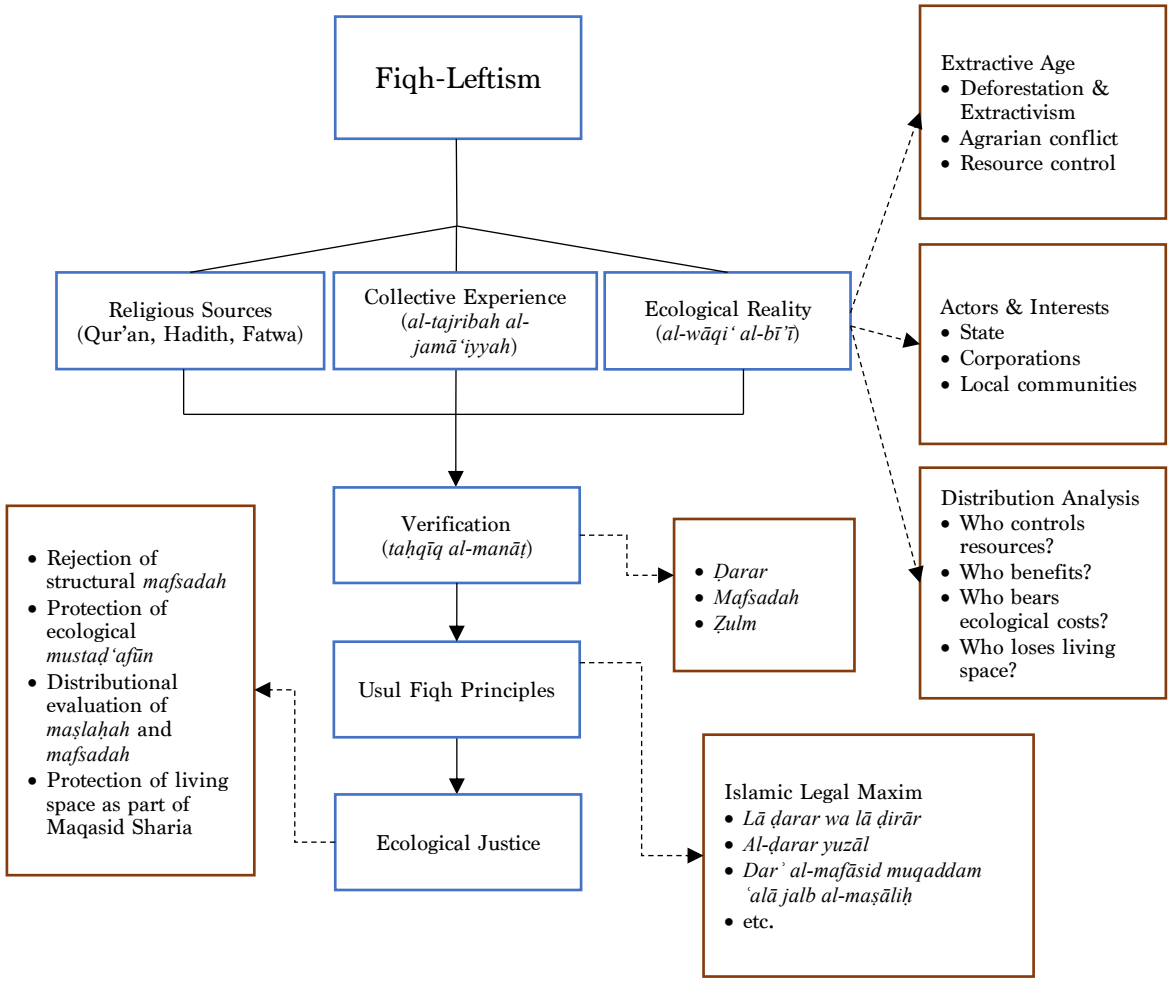
The Prophet said: "The best jihad is a word of justice spoken before a tyrannical ruler (*afḍal al-jihād kalimat ʿadl ʿinda sulṭān jāʾir*)." This hadith may be understood as containing an ethical imperative that demands the courage to expose the sources of injustice while also confronting the ecological crisis of contemporary Indonesia. As the history of Islamic law demonstrates, a number of Mālikī and Shāfiʿī jurists during the Ottoman period showed that ijtihad does not necessarily entail accommodating *al-wāqiʿ* (the prevailing order or status quo). On the contrary, when existing legal arrangements, state policies, and customary practices resulted in the marginalization of communities, these jurists reconstructed established legal views by questioning and challenging *al-wāqiʿ* insofar as it generated injustice.[47] A similar point is emphasized by Prihantoro, who argues that the historical formulation of usul fiqh has always interacted with power relations, theological contestations, and the political dynamics of its time.[48] The implication of this principle is that the task of Islamic law cannot end with moral appeals to protect nature. The problem at hand is not merely environmental degradation. There exists a configuration of power that enables the continued reproduction of deforestation, extractivism, agrarian conflicts, and ecological injustice. What is therefore needed is a fiqh capable of reading power relations, the distribution of resources, and the structures of injustice that underlie them. It is from this point that I propose the concept of fiqh-leftism.

In addition, fiqh-leftism is not intended as an attempt to Islamize Marxism or to transform fiqh into an instrument of any particular political ideology. Although Ernest Gellner argued that the triumph of "high Islam" in the Middle East enabled Muslim societies to resist secularization, it did not provide an adequate analytical framework for understanding capitalism, largely because modern Muslim politics operated through networks of patronage and personal loyalty.[49] This became evident during the Arab Spring, where the absence of sufficient analytical tools for understanding structures of power, together with the differing responses of religious scholars to various uprisings across the Middle East, reflected the complexity of the patronage networks, loyalties, and political interests that shaped social reality.[50] It is at this point that fiqh-leftism finds its relevance, namely when the interpretation of reality becomes as important as the interpretation of texts. The term "leftism" is

[47] al-Marakeby, "Could Women Own Agricultural Land?"
[48] Hijrian Angga Prihantoro, "Ulama dan Politik Pengetahuan dalam Ushul Fikih: Relasi Kuasa, Paham Teologis dan Geopolitik" (PhD diss., UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2023).
[49] Ernest Gellner, "Islam and Marxism: Some Comparisons," *International Affairs* 67, no. 1 (1991): 1–6.
[50] Muhammad Amasha, "Political Judgment, Fiqh al-Wāqiʿ, and the Egyptian ʿUlamāʾ's: Response to the Arab Spring (2011–2013)," *Journal of Islamic and Muslim Studies* 8, no. 2 (2023): 49–86.

employed here in a broader sense, referring to an intellectual tradition concerned with exploitation, domination, inequality, and various forms of structural injustice. In this sense, fiqh-leftism represents a reading of fiqh that takes ecological justice as the point of departure for its normative reflection. Methodologically, such an approach bears a close affinity to Hassan Hanafi's project in *Min al-Naṣṣ ilā al-Wāqi'*. For Hanafi, the task of usul fiqh does not end with textual interpretation; rather, it moves toward *al-wa'y al-'amalī* (practical consciousness), which constitutes the sphere in which Islamic law is actualized.[51] In the present context, that *al-wāqi'* is the ecological crisis characterized by extractivism, deforestation, and agrarian conflict.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Fiqh-Leftism for Ecological Justice



Source: Author's elaboration, 2026.

Hanafi's *Min al-Naṣṣ ilā al-Wāqi'* project demonstrates that legal reasoning does not end with the identification of legal sources; rather, it proceeds through three layers of consciousness: *al-wa'y al-tārīkhī* (historical consciousness), *al-wa'y al-naẓarī* (reflective consciousness), and *al-wa'y al-'amalī* (practical consciousness). This

[51] Hassan Hanafi, *Min Al-Naṣṣ Ilā Al-Wāqi'*, vol. 1 (Cairo: Markaz al-Kitāb li al-Nashr, 2004); see also: Hijrian Angga Prihantoro, "Hassan Hanafi and Islamic Legal Theory: From Phenomenology to Critique of the Slogan 'Going Back to the Qur'an and Sunna,'" *Mazahib* 20, no. 2 (2022): 193–224.

reconstruction is also evident in the way Hanafi interprets the sources of Islamic law. The Qur'an is understood as *al-tajribah al-insāniyyah al-'āmmah* (universal human experience), the Sunnah as *al-tajribah al-namūdhajiyyah* (exemplary experience), *ijmā'* (consensus) as *al-tajribah al-jamā'iyyah* (collective experience), and *qiyās* (analogical reasoning) as *al-tajribah al-fardiyyah* (individual experience).[52] This interpretation opens a space for fiqh-leftism not only to treat the text as a source of normative reflection. More importantly, it allows the collective experiences of communities affected by the ecological crisis to become an integral part of the process of legal reasoning.

Certainly, such an interpretation is not entirely foreign to the tradition of Islamic law. Legal maxims such as *lā ḍarar wa lā ḍirār* (there shall be neither harm nor reciprocating harm), *al-ḍarar yuzāl* (harm must be removed), and *dar' al-mafāsid muqaddam 'alā jalb al-maṣāliḥ* (preventing harm takes precedence over securing benefit) demonstrate that the tradition of usul fiqh has, from its inception, been concerned with the prevention of harm and the protection of the public from injury. As illustrated in Figure 1, fiqh-leftism begins with a reading of *al-wāqi'*, namely the ecological reality characterized by deforestation, extractivism, agrarian conflict, and the control of natural resources. This reality is then analyzed by identifying the actors involved, the interests they pursue, and the distribution of benefits and harms that result from their actions. This step is essential for explaining who controls resources, who benefits from ecological exploitation, and who bears the social and environmental costs it generates. Based on this mapping, the process of *taḥqīq al-manāṭ* (the verification of the factual circumstances upon which legal judgment is based) is undertaken to assess whether the existing ecological configuration exhibits *ḍarar* and *mafsadah* (damage detrimental to the public interest) that, to a certain extent, reproduce forms of ecological *ẓulm* (injustice). Accordingly, the existence of *ḍarar*, *mafsadah*, and *ẓulm* is determined not merely by the presence of environmental degradation itself, but by the manner in which ecological benefits and burdens are distributed among the actors involved.

As emphasized by Hanafi in his *Min al-Naṣṣ ilā al-Wāqi'* project, reality should not be regarded solely as an object of observation. It is the space in which texts and law are actualized. Accordingly, these findings are subsequently brought into dialogue with the sources of Islamic law—the Qur'an, hadith, *ijmā'*, and *qiyās*. In this context, Hanafi's reinterpretation of *ijmā'* as collective experience opens a space for the experiences of communities affected by deforestation, agrarian conflicts, and the dispossession of living spaces to become one of the normative considerations in understanding social reality. Such collective experiences do not replace the authority of the sources of Islamic law. Rather, their function is to help clarify how the consequences of particular policies or economic activities are concretely experienced in the lives of affected communities.

Through the use of usul fiqh principles such as *lā ḍarar wa lā ḍirār*, *al-ḍarar yuzāl*, and *dar' al-mafāsid muqaddam 'alā jalb al-maṣāliḥ*, the process is then employed to

[52] See: Hanafi, *Min Al-Naṣṣ Ilā Al-Wāqi'*; Prihantoro, "Hassan Hanafi and Islamic Legal Theory"; Mashduqi, "Kontribusi Hassan Hanafi dalam Kajian Ushul Fiqh."

assess whether a given policy, economic activity, or system of natural resource governance produces public benefit (*maṣlaḥah*) or instead systematically reproduces harm. Accordingly, the concern of fiqh-leftism does not end with determining whether a particular activity is permissible or impermissible. Rather, it focuses on how benefits and harms are distributed, who receives the benefits and who bears the consequences, and the extent to which a given ecological configuration produces ecological justice. In this sense, ecological justice encompasses the rejection of structural *mafsadah*, solidarity with ecologically *mustaḍʿafūn* communities, the evaluation of the distribution of benefits and harms, and the protection of living spaces as an integral component of maqasid sharia.

Accordingly, when compared with mainstream Islamic eco-theology, the difference between the two does not lie in the Qur'an, hadith, or the tradition of Islamic law that serves as their normative foundation. Rather, the difference emerges at the level of problematization. Mainstream Islamic eco-theology begins with questions of environmental ethics and the formation of ecologically responsible subjects, whereas fiqh-leftism begins its analysis with the socio-ecological configurations that systematically produce *ḍarar*, *mafsadah*, and, as illustrated in Table 7. Read within this framework, fiqh-leftism ultimately does not propose new normative sources for Islamic law. Its contribution lies in reconstructing the object of normative evaluation, shifting it from stewardship toward ecological justice as the horizon through which the contemporary ecological crisis is interpreted.

Fiqh-leftism may be understood as an attempt to bring together two major traditions that have rarely been placed in conversation with one another: leftist ecological critique and the tradition of usul fiqh. If Foster,[53] Harvey,[54] Fraser,[55] and Moore,[56] demonstrate that the ecological crisis is fundamentally linked to power relations, the control of resources, and the unequal distribution of benefits and harms, fiqh-leftism brings these concerns into the horizon of normative evaluation within Islamic law. Within this framework, questions regarding who benefits, who bears the consequences, and how ecological destruction is reproduced do not end at the level of social diagnosis; rather, they become part of the process of identifying *ḍarar*, *mafsadah*, and *ẓulm* through the mechanism of *taḥqīq al-manāṭ*. In this sense, fiqh-leftism does not seek to Islamize leftist theories. Instead, it draws upon their critical sensibilities to expand the object of normative evaluation in Islamic law with respect to contemporary forms of ecological injustice. At the same time, these findings are consistent with Bagir's argument regarding the need to broaden the study of Muslim environmentalism through the perspectives of lived religion, environmental politics, and ecological justice, so that analysis is directed toward how communities affected by ecological degradation confront the state, corporations, and the structures of power that produce such destruction.[57]

[53] Foster, "Marx's Theory of Metabolic Rift."
[54] Harvey, "The Geography of Capitalist Accumulation."
[55] Fraser, "Expropriation and Exploitation in Racialized Capitalism."
[56] Moore, *Anthropocene or Capitalocene?*
[57] Bagir, "Beyond Instrumentalization."

Table 7. Mainstream Islamic Eco-Theology and Fiqh-Leftism in Comparative Perspective

Dimension	Mainstream Islamic Eco-Theology	Fiqh-Leftism
Starting point	Moral degradation and environmental irresponsibility	Ecological injustice and structural inequality
Problematization	Crisis of ethics and human stewardship	Crisis of power, resource control, and unequal ecological distribution
Primary analytical focus	Individual responsibility toward nature	Actors, interests, power relations, and distribution of ecological benefits and burdens
Key concepts	*Khalīfah*, *amānah ilāhiyyah*, environmental ethics	*Ḍarar*, *mafsadah*, *ẓulm*, ecological justice
Object	Human behavior toward the environment	Policies, extractive activities, resource governance, and their distributive consequences
Understanding of harm	Environmental damage as moral failure	Environmental damage as potentially structured and socially distributed harm
Position of affected communities	Object of ethical concern	Source of *al-tajribah al-jamā'iyyah* and normative consideration
Orientation of Islamic law	Stewardship and environmental responsibility	Ecological justice and protection of ecological *mustaḍ'afūn*
Central question	How should Muslims care for nature?	Who benefits, who bears the costs, and is ecological justice achieved?
Normative horizon	Environmental stewardship	Ecological justice beyond stewardship

Source: Author's elaboration, 2026.

The direction of these findings is consistent with a growing body of literature that increasingly expands the discourse on Islam and the environment from stewardship toward ecological justice. While Nasr, through his critique of the spiritual crisis of modernity,[58] Khalid through stewardship,[59] Özdemir through environmental ethics,[60] Johnston through Sharia as environmental values,[61] and Gade through Muslim environmentalisms have sought to establish theological and ethical foundations for Muslim ecological responsibility,[62] a number of more recent studies have begun to move in a different direction. Bagir critiques the normative limitations of Green Islam,[63] Amin develops the concept of climate justice within the framework of

[58] Nasr, "Islam and the Environmental Crisis"; Imran, *Seyyed Hossein Nasr's Ecological Ethics*.
[59] Khalid, "Islam and the Environment – Ethics and Practice an Assessment."
[60] Özdemir, *The Ethical Dimension of Human Attitude towards Nature*.
[61] David L. Johnston, "Intra-Muslim Debates on Ecology: Is Shari'a Still Relevant?," *Worldviews* 16, no. 3 (2012): 218–38.
[62] Gade, "Islamic Law and the Environment in Indonesia."
[63] Bagir, "Beyond Instrumentalization."

Islamic law,[64] while Wahdini et al.,[65] Jibril,[66] Anang et al.,[67] and Kurniawan and Fadlillah, [68] have expanded the discussion toward agrarian fiqh, Islamic environmental jurisprudence, ecological rights, and intergenerational justice. At the same time, Wilkins, through religion and political ecology, and Kidwell, through religious environmental politics, have demonstrated that religion cannot be understood merely as a source of environmental ethics, but must also be seen as part of resource governance and ecological politics.[69] This shift resonates strongly with the tradition of political ecology developed by Peluso and Watts through their attention to power relations, resource conflicts, and environmental access,[70] by Le Billon through his studies of extractivism and resource governance,[71] and by Sultana through environmental justice and decolonial political ecology.[72] Accordingly, in this context, fiqh-leftism may be understood as an effort to bring contemporary Islamic law into dialogue with political ecology through the evaluation of *ḍarar*, *mafsadah*, and *ẓulm*, thereby shifting the focus of Islamic law from the formation of ecological subjects toward an analysis of the socio-ecological configurations that determine who benefits, who bears the burdens, and the extent to which ecological justice is realized.

Conclusion

This article argues that the interpretation of a crisis fundamentally shapes the legal responses it elicits. When the ecological crisis is primarily framed as an issue of environmental ethics, the focus tends to be on cultivating subjects who bear responsibility toward nature. In contrast, when the crisis is understood in terms of the distribution of associated benefits and harms, legal analysis shifts to examining who gains, who suffers, and how ecological injustice is perpetuated within social structures. Building on this perspective, the article introduces fiqh-leftism as a conceptual framework that centers the interpretation of *al-wāqiʿ al-bīʾī* (ecological reality), the identification of relevant actors and interests, and the collective experiences of affected communities in the normative assessment of Islamic

[64] Amin, "Sharīʿah and Climate Justice."
[65] Muhammad Wahdini, Hasse Jubba, and Kamsi, "Ecological Legal Politics in Indonesia: The Critique within Muhammadiyah's Fiqh during the Reformation Era," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 9, no. 1 (2025): 454–74.
[66] Abubakar Muhammad Jibril, "Decolonizing Sustainability: Integrating Islamic Legal Pluralism into Post-2030 Agendas," *Reformasi Hukum* 29, no. 2 (2025): 154–67.
[67] Arif Al Anang et al., "Re-Islamization of Land Law in Global Context: An Approach to Fight Ecological Scarcity," *Jurnal Hukum Islam* 20, no. 1 (2022): 1–24.
[68] Achmad Alfan Kurniawan and Istiqomah Fadlillah, "From Anthropocentric to Ecocentric Jurisprudence: A Maqasid-Based Reconstruction of Islamic Environmental Ethics toward Intergenerational Equity," *Al'Adalah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 28, no. 2 (2025): 105–26.
[69] Dominic Wilkins, "Where Is Religion in Political Ecology?," *Progress in Human Geography* 45, no. 2 (2021): 276–97; Jeremy Kidwell, "Mapping the Field of Religious Environmental Politics," *International Affairs* 96, no. 2 (2020): 343–63.
[70] Nancy Lee Peluso and Michael W. Watts, eds., *Violent Environments*, Workshop on Violence and the Environment (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 2001).
[71] Philippe Le Billon, *Wars of Plunder: Conflicts, Profits and the Politics of Resources* (Oxford University Press, 2014).
[72] Farhana Sultana, "The Unbearable Heaviness of Climate Coloniality," *Political Geography* 99, no. 8 (2022): 1026–38.

environmental law. Its principal contribution lies in foregrounding issues of distribution, power, and the protection of living environments within Islamic eco-legal discourse, thereby reconceptualizing *ḍarar*, *mafsadah*, and *ẓulm* not only as consequences of environmental degradation but also as manifestations of social arrangements that systematically generate ecological inequality.

The implication of these findings underscores the necessity to broaden the scope of evaluation within Islamic environmental law in Indonesia. While environmental fatwas and green Islamic movements—such as eco-pesantren, eco-mosques, and various articulations of the Islamic eco-theology agenda—have predominantly focused on conservation, environmental management, and communal responsibility, fiqh-leftism reveals that addressing the contemporary ecological crisis also demands critical assessment of extractive policies, natural resource governance, agrarian conflicts, and the distribution of ecological impacts. Within this conceptual framework, the process of *taḥqīq al-manāṭ* should not be confined solely to identifying environmental degradation; rather, it must include an examination of resource control, the allocation of economic benefits, and the distribution of ecological burdens. Accordingly, the categories of *ḍarar*, *mafsadah*, and *ẓulm* ought to be interpreted in relation to mining concessions, large-scale development projects, natural resource licensing regimes, and diverse forms of environmental governance that may perpetuate ecological injustice. Thus, the primary contribution of fiqh-leftism to the development of Islamic environmental law lies in expanding the focus of legal inquiry from regulating ecological behavior to the normative evaluation of socio-ecological structures that shape the distribution of benefits within society.

This study is constrained by its exclusive focus on conceptual reconstruction through a literature-based methodology and has not yet investigated the application of fiqh-leftism to specific empirical contexts. Future research could advance this framework by examining agrarian conflicts, mining, deforestation, energy transitions, and other extractive activities to evaluate how the categories of *ḍarar*, *mafsadah*, and *ẓulm* function in practice. Furthermore, subsequent studies might consider the institutionalization of fiqh-leftism within environmental fatwas, natural resource fiqh, and the development of maqasid sharia that more effectively address issues of ecological justice. Thus, fiqh-leftism has the potential to evolve beyond a purely theoretical reconstruction into a practical normative framework for addressing the contemporary ecological crisis.

Acknowledgments

The author wishes to express sincere gratitude to colleagues and fellow scholars whose discussions, critiques, feedback, and exchange of ideas have significantly contributed to the development of the arguments presented in this article.

Disclosure Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest and affirms that no external parties were involved in a manner that could have compromised the objectivity of this research.

Ethical Approval

This study relies exclusively on publicly available documentary sources and does not involve human participants. Accordingly, formal ethical approval was not required for this study.

Financial Support

This article received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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