



Religion and Ecology: The Philosophical Relationship Between God, Nature, And Humanity

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Abstract

Studies on the relationship between religion and ecology demonstrate a profound connection between God, nature, and humanity from a philosophical perspective. Although various studies have addressed the theological dimension of ecology, a research gap remains in holistically exploring how spiritual and religious values shape ecological ethics that can respond to the contemporary environmental crisis. Most previous studies have focused solely on ecological norms in sacred texts, but have not explored the relational philosophical dimension that simultaneously involves transcendental (God), cosmic (nature), and existential (human) aspects. Therefore, this study aims to answer the following research question: How can the construction of a philosophical relationship between God, nature, and humanity within a religious framework contribute to ecological awareness and understanding? The method used is a qualitative approach with a philosophical-religious literature study. Data were obtained through an in-depth review of religious literature, the thoughts of spiritual figures, and environmental philosophy. Preliminary results indicate that in various religious traditions, the relationship between God, nature, and humanity is built on the principle of interconnectedness and spiritual responsibility, where humans are not the dominant center, but rather part of the cosmic order that must be maintained. The implications of this relationship open up space for the development of a spiritually-based environmental ethics, which can serve as the foundation for sustainable ecological practices in social life. This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to ecological philosophy and religiously based sustainability practices.

Keywords: Religion, Ecology, God Nature Human Relations, Environmental Ethics



Introduction

Throughout the long history of human civilization, the relationship between God, nature, and humanity has consistently been a key foundation in the cosmological structure of various religions and beliefs. This relationship not only reflects humanity's place in the universe but also guides the ethics and spiritual responsibilities inherent in its existence as part of the divine system. Religious teachings, from both Abrahamic and non-Abrahamic traditions, position humans as God's caliphs (representatives) with a moral responsibility to maintain universal harmony. This demonstrates that ecological awareness is not a new entity in religious discourse but has been embedded in interfaith spirituality. In the current context, the increasingly acute global environmental crisis challenges the relevance of spiritual values in shaping a holistic and sustainable ecological ethic. Spiritual conceptions that place nature as God's sacred creation need to be contextualized as a response to ecological degradation. Spirituality rooted in religious values can foster a collective awareness that preserving nature is not merely a technical matter but a religious and moral obligation. Therefore, philosophical and theological approaches to the relationship between God, humanity, and nature need to be reexamined as an epistemic approach to building a religious ecological awareness. (Berry, 2009; Nasr, 1990)

The climate crisis, massive deforestation, marine and air pollution, and the destructive exploitation of natural resources have had a significant impact on global life. Amidst the currents of modernization and secularization of values, awareness of the importance of environmental protection has become fragmented and reduced to a mere technocratic agenda. In Indonesia, despite the majority of the population being religious, a consumerist and exploitative lifestyle towards nature is increasingly strengthening. This creates an irony between normative spirituality and people's actual ecological behavior. This phenomenon demonstrates a disjunction between religious doctrines that advocate ecological responsibility and the daily practices of religious communities. Although many sacred religious texts advocate the balance of nature and the preservation of creation, this narrative is often marginalized from public discourse and ecological policy. Therefore, an integrative effort is needed to reconstruct environmental ethics from a spiritual perspective as a form of reconciliation between faith and ecological responsibility.

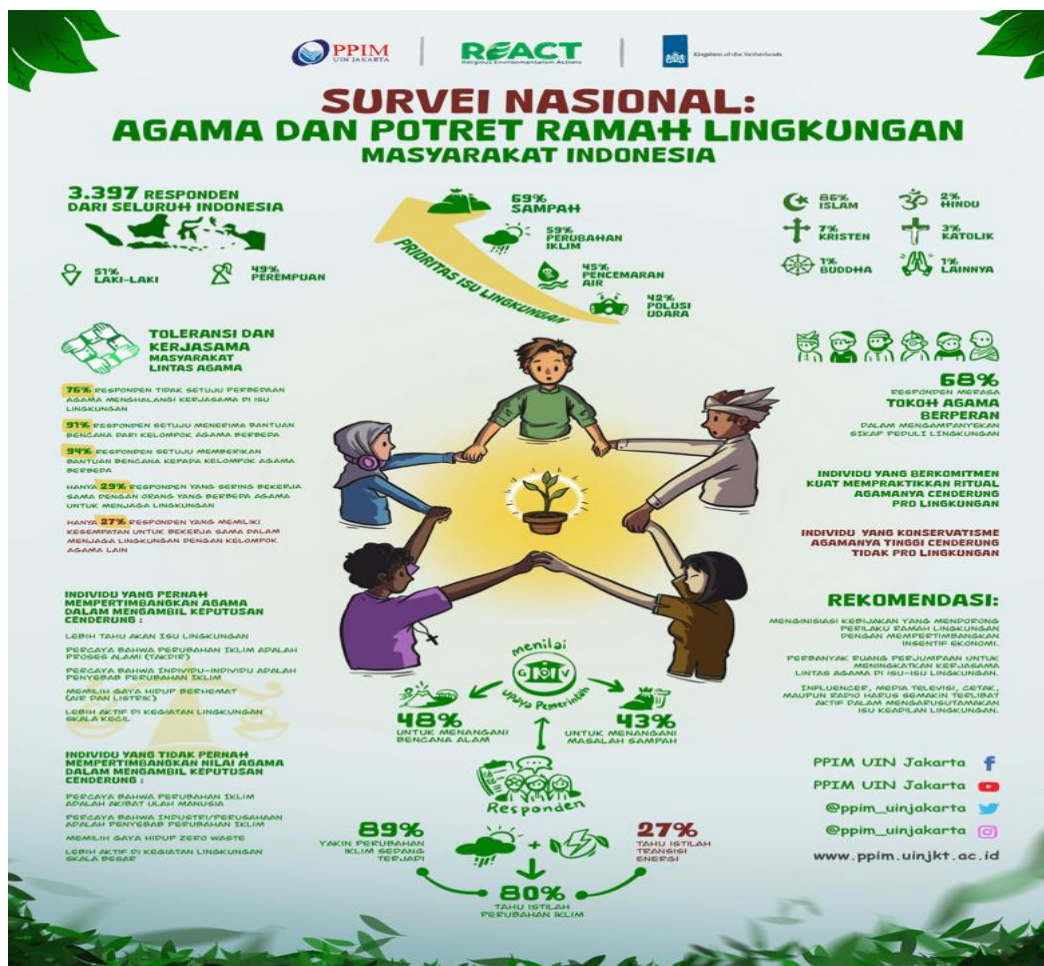


Figure 1: Ecotheology in Indonesia(Apriesta, 2024)

Many previous studies have highlighted the environmental crisis from an ecological-technical perspective, but few have comprehensively explored the contribution of spiritual values to shaping ecological awareness and ethics. Religious studies also tend to be normative-theological, without delving into the practical aspects of spirituality in everyday ecological life. Yet, the roots of ecospiritual values in religion can provide a solid philosophical and ethical basis for developing sustainable behavior. On the other hand, research examining the relationship between God, humans, and nature from a religious perspective is generally limited to symbolic or cosmological analysis. Little research has explored how this philosophical relationship can be operationalized into concrete ecological awareness and environmental ethics. This gap serves as an important entry point for this research, connecting



theological perspectives and ecological practices based on religious spirituality. This research offers a new approach by reconstructing the relationship between God, humans, and nature within the framework of interfaith ecological spirituality. This novelty lies in an integral perspective that positions nature not merely as an object of care but as a spiritual subject closely related to theological and existential aspects of humankind. This approach combines religious cosmology with practical ethics as a response to the environmental crisis. Furthermore, the novelty of this research lies in the integration of religious texts and contemporary ecological phenomena through a philosophical and sociotheological approach. By drawing on the idea of cosmic interconnection in religion, this research...(*Ekologi dan Tinjauan Filsafat Sains Pendidikan Islam* | Baharuddin | *Jurnal Pendidikan: Teori, Penelitian, dan Pengembangan*, t.t.; Sihombing dkk., 2025; White, 1967; Widiarto & Wilaela, 2022)

In the study There is a number of interesting research as material review putaka for give distinctive study interesting from article this, as for a number of studies the Is:

First This is research conducted by Dominic Wilkins with title study *Where is religion in politics ecology?* This article provides information related to ecology. political has develop rapidly during four decade lastly, combining outlook from various academic fields. However, one unsolved topic discussed in a substantive way is religion. This article argues that failure to be involved in a way critical in religious studies has caused experts in ecology and political to to ignore factors important in analysis them, resulting in the conceptualization of interpersonal power relations. This article does matter. Moreover, it reviews literature scattered throughout ecology politics that discusses religion before recommending a track for potential interested academics. For more, carry on and integrate religion into ecology politics. ^m Difference study This with study writer Is, writer Focus on Religion and Ecology (Philosophical Relationship Between God, Nature, and Humans).

The second is research conducted by Jesse L Preston with the research title *Towards a Psychology of Religion*. The research findings are: What is the relationship between religion and environmental concern? Although this question has motivated research for decades, the evidence is inconsistent. Here, we highlight the psychological mechanisms by which specific features of religious systems may differentially influence environmental beliefs and commitments, both positively and negatively, to help generate more targeted questions for future research. Religious traditions that emphasize human domination over nature, promote beliefs in a just world and an afterlife, and are tied to more fundamentalist/conservative attitudes may reduce levels of environmental concern among their adherents. Conversely, religious and spiritual traditions that moralize nature protection, sanctify nature, and emphasize beliefs in human stewardship of nature may foster pro-environmental concern and commitment.(Preston & Baimel, 2021) Difference study This with study writer., writer focuses on Religion and Ecology (Philosophical Relationship Between God, Nature, and Humans).

The third is research conducted by Amril et al. with the title *Human Identity Crisis and*



Modern Ecology in the Perspective of Seyyed's Eco-Philosophy. Nasr, in this study, Hossein Nasr, provides information focused on understanding Seyyed's eco-philosophy. Hossein Nasr on the current crisis of modern human identity and ecology. Nasr's own works. Meanwhile, secondary data in this study are books, journal articles and other websites that discuss Nasr's thoughts. The results of the study show that Nasr proposed two models of his eco - philosophical approach. First, Islamic epistemology is the identity crisis of modern humans. Second, ecological Islamic epistemology. Some of Nasr's alternatives to the identity crisis of modern humans and ecology, first, traditional agricultural systems; second, traditional ways of building houses; third, consumption efficiency; fourth, controlling human greed; fifth, wise economics; sixth, human society with a deep responsibility towards nature.(Amril & Hadi, 2024) Difference study This with study writer Is, writer Focus on Religion and Ecology (Philosophical Relationship Between God, Nature and Humans).

Fourth is research conducted by Ridhatullah Assyabani with the research title Re-Interpretation of Post -Modernism Philosophies on Triadic Relations in Islamic Educational Philosophy: God, Humans and Nature in this article provides information related to the re-interpretation of post -modernism philosophies on triadic relations in Islamic education: God, humans, and nature. Studies on triadic relations continue to be carried out in the Islamic education system because this relationship continues to cause polemics every day and continues to be discussed. Among these polemics are related to spiritual, environmental, and even humanitarian crises. On this basis, borrowing the meaning from Lyotard, post-modernism refers to the the criticism of the modern era, which causes multi-dimensional crises. Through the methodology of library studies (*library research*) with a *descriptive analytical approach*, this paper attempts to explore the triadic relationship that exists in Islamic educational philosophy. The results of this study prove that the existence of God in Islamic Educational Philosophy becomes biased because understanding the concept of divinity through methods such as deconstruction, namely criticizing and dismantling the structure of understanding that has been previously believed, which is based on objectivity, universality, systematicity, structuralism, and totality, ultimately, absolute truth becomes nil. However, the understanding of divinity in Islam cannot be separated from God as the main *creator* that exists in the universe. While humans are the subject and nature is the object, including becoming an effort to protect and care for nature, nature is used as a source of knowledge, carrying out mutualistic symbiosis so that continuous regeneration occurs, and introspection is a crucial part, so that the preservation and sustainability of the ecosystem are maintained. In this position, the universe has a direct and indirect role in influencing the educational process. In other words, the existence of the universe must be interpreted in its totality through observation of technical phenomena that also play a major role in human life on EarthEarth.(Assya'bani, 2023) Difference study This with study writer.. The The writer focuses



on Religion and Ecology (Philosophical Relationship Between God, Nature, and Humans).

Fifth is research conducted by Amril et al with the research title Strengthening Theological and Teleological Intelligence (Theo- Anthro -Ecological Approach) in this research provides information related to the modern era which is marked by a crisis of spirituality, moral degradation, and environmental damage, humans need a new paradigm in understanding themselves, their God, and the universe. The purpose of this article is to examine the importance of strengthening **theological intelligence**, the ability to build a spiritual relationship with God, and **teleological intelligence**. Namely, awareness of the direction and purpose of life is the foundation of a meaningful life. Through a **theo - anthropo -ecological approach**, this study emphasizes the importance of integrating the divine, human, and ecological dimensions. This approach not only offers a philosophical solution to the multidimensional crises facing humanity but is also relevant in the contemporary educational and social world. By simultaneously instilling spiritual values, moral awareness, and ecological concern, this approach encourages the creation of whole, wise, and responsible individuals in building a sustainable future. This article also offers a holistic paradigm in community education and training. This approach emphasizes the importance of developing whole, spiritual, socially responsible, and environmentally conscious individuals amidst the challenges of secularization.(Sihombing dkk., 2025) Difference study This with study writer., writer focuses on Religion and Ecology (Philosophical Relationship Between God, Nature, and Humans).

Of the five articles above, they provide very accurate information related to the study of the same issue, but they have not touched on the philosophical area that should be developed, namely, in the area of Religion and Ecology (Philosophical Relations Between God, Nature and Humans).

Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with a library study method. research) (Huberman & Miles, 2002; Moleong, 2007; Rofiah & Bungin, 2021)That is descriptive-analytical in nature. The main focus of this method is to explore and analyze primary and secondary literary sources relevant to the theme of the philosophical relationship between God, nature, and humans from a religious and ecological perspective. The literature reviewed includes the sacred texts of world religions, classical and contemporary texts on environmental philosophy, and the works of theologians and spiritual ecologists such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr. (Nasr, 1990)Thomas Berry, (Berry, 2009)And Lynn White. (White, 1967)This approach allows researchers to **conceptually** capture the essence of transcendental and ecological values while simultaneously exploring the philosophical and spiritual roots of the relationship between humans, nature, and God. Data processing is carried out using content analysis techniques. Analysis), namely by selecting, grouping, and interpreting discourses related to environmental



ethics, natural spirituality, and religious cosmology. Data validity is maintained by triangulating sources and a holistic theoretical understanding. The aim of this method is to build a theoretical construction of interdependent and integral philosophical relations, as well as to formulate principles of religious-based ecological ethics that can be transformed into social practices and environmental education. This research is exploratory and conceptual, aiming to broaden the horizon of ecological thinking in religious discourse.

Religion and Ecology (*Philosophical Relationship Between God, Nature and Humanity*)

In this study, two sub-topics will be discussed: *the first* is the Relationship between God, Nature, and Humans **from** a Religious Perspective, and *the second* is the Contribution of Spiritual Values to Ecological Awareness and Ethics.

a) The Relationship between God, Nature, and Humans from a Religious Perspective

In Islam, the relationship between God, nature, and humanity is built on the concept of *the khalifah*, that is, humans as God's representatives on earth. Allah says:

نُتَفَعُوا مِنْ أَفْطَارِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَأَنْفُذُوا أِنْ أَسْتَطَعْتُمْ يَا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ (QS. Ar-Rahmān: 33),

It implies human capacity but with spiritual responsibility. This relationship is not one-sidedly hierarchical, but rather a cosmic interconnectedness that frees nature and humanity from destructive **domination**. Thomas Berry in *The Sacred Universe* offers the idea of integral ecology, which teaches that nature is not merely a resource but part of a cosmic religious order. This is a transcendental relationship in which humans and nature are intertwined in a sacred and interdependent system. (Berry, 2009)

Nasr, a pioneer of ecological Islamic thought, asserted that modern spirituality has lost the transcendental meaning of nature, leading to an ecological crisis. He re-emphasized the principle of *unity. Of being* as a bridge between God, nature, and humans in sacred ecological awareness. This direction of thought is supported by Bruno Latour in *La Religion à l'épreuve of l'écologie*, that religious and **ecological** relations are inseparable, religion and ecology influence each other in a plurality of modes of existence, opening up space for an inclusive ecological theology. From local Indonesian traditions, Wasil & Muizudin's journal ((PDF) *Ekoteologi Dalam Pemikiran Seyyed Hossein Nasr Dan Relasi Agama-Masyarakat*, t.t.) Highlights the implementation of Nasr's ecotheology, which strengthens the spiritual meaning of humans as caliphs who protect nature, rather than exploitatively controlling



it.(Nasr, 1990)

I'jaz's study -of the an -Nur Islamic Boarding School in Yogyakarta shows that the Prophet's hadith:

“Allah يَرْحَمُهُ Allah يَرْحِمُ النَّاسَ Allah مَنْ”

Also includes compassion for other creatures, underpinning ecotheology and waste management programs in the Islamic boarding school environment as a manifestation of harmonious human-nature relations. Budhy Munawar -Rachman, in the journal *Dialogue on Religion and Ecology*, puts forward a holistic approach, stating that the values of stewardship and intergenerational justice in religious traditions can be integrated into an integral ecological ethic that does not negate the divinity of God's creation. An article by Nadia Claudia Thomson (Scopus) proves how Christian social theology in Indonesia can change the anthropocentric paradigm to spiritual eco- -centrism, where nature is considered to have spiritual value, not just utilitarian.

Journal of Baharuddin et al. (*Ekologi dan Tinjauan Filsafat Sains Pendidikan Islam / Baharuddin / Jurnal Pendidikan: Teori, Penelitian, dan Pengembangan*, t.t.) Highlights the integration of ecological science philosophy in Islamic education, instilling awareness that humans as caliphs have a moral and scientific responsibility to protect nature, not to exploit it carelessly. The article ECOTHEOLOGICAL by Widiarto & Wilaela (Widiarto & Wilaela, 2022) Sees that the theology of religions provides a moral foundation in environmental ethics: a plurality of traditions can synergize to form an inclusive and transcendental ecological perspective on nature. Philosophically, the concept of biocentrism in Islam affirms that all living things have the right to exist because they are God's creations, not the property of humans. The argument that "charity to each creature there" is a reward emphasizes a relationship that is not hierarchical but rather spiritually symbiotic. All of these perspectives emphasize a research gap: although there is a wealth of literature on religious texts and environmental theories, research that simultaneously and implementably combines the philosophical relationship between God, nature, and humans remains scarce. Referring to two recent international books, such as *The Sacred Universe* (Berry) and the work of Bruno Latour, as well as two domestic books on ecotheology and ecological Islamic education, the research provides a theoretical and applicable space to fill this gap. (*Visi dan Ragam Gerakan Green Islam di Indonesia – PPI UNAS*, t.t.)

b) Contribution of Spiritual Values to Ecological Awareness and Ethics

Spiritual values within religion shape an ecological paradigm that redefines humanity's relationship with nature. Religion teaches that nature is not merely an object, but a creation imbued with spiritual meaning. This awareness encourages humans to treat nature with respect



and responsibility, rather than simply exploiting it economically. Philosophically, the *eco-centrism approach* places nature at the center of values that require intrinsic respect. In Islamic theology, the concept of stewardship (khalifah) implies that humans are responsible for preserving the earth. Religious education that instills this value can foster a spiritually rooted, environmentally conscious character. Nadia Claudia Thomson (*Teologi Sosial dan Isu Lingkungan: Membangun Kesadaran Ekologis Berbasis Spiritual | Berkas : Jurnal Pendidikan Agama dan Katolik*, t.t.) Demonstrates that social theology can shift the paradigm from anthropocentrism to spiritual eco-ecocentrism. This is achieved by reinterpreting religious teachings to develop environmentally friendly spiritual practices, such as integrating environmental curricula into Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) and churches. (Berry, 2009)

In Islam, the hadiths of the Ecotheology emphasize the importance of nature conservation as a manifestation of spiritual compassion. Research by Siti Khumairotul Lutfiyah & Mohamad Kurjum (*Analisis Hadis tentang Ekoteologi dan Relevansinya dalam Membangun Kesadaran Lingkungan melalui Pendidikan Sekolah Alam | Al-I'tibar : Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, t.t.) Cites the hadith as the moral basis for nature school education that fosters ecological awareness in real practice. Ahmad Saifudin highlights the role of Islamic religious education in shaping stewardship-based environmental ethics. Systematic religious education can internalize ecological moral values that serve as the foundation for pro-environmental behavior in Muslim communities. Local ecotheology, such as the study of Manggarai revitalization, underscores how spiritual values based on local traditions can serve as the foundation for an effective and inclusive ecological ethics. Nature is considered sacred and an inseparable part of the community's spiritual identity. Daniel Eko Saputro & Daniel Gunadi (Saputro & Gunadi, 2021) Research the Sedulur Community. Sikep and found that agricultural traditions based on religious cosmology practice ecological harmony as a spiritual expression of nature-human balance.

Linus Sumule, in the journal Abdiel, presents an interdisciplinary dialogue between ecotheology and environmental ethics that rejects the dominant view. Anthropocentric, replacing it with an ecological justice paradigm driven by religious spirituality. Christian ecotheology also makes an important contribution: Riska articulates creation theology as the basis for Christian ecological responsibility, with an emphasis on the cosmic balance of God's creation and the role of humans as universal stewards. An analysis of spiritual values shows that the transformation of ecological awareness occurs not only through action but also through the recontextualization of religious teachings. The implementation of social theology and ecotheology in religious communities can give rise to a spiritually sustainable environmental movement. Recent foreign books explain the influence of religious values in shaping ecological ethics: *Thomas Berry's The Sacred Universe reinforces the perspective of cosmic harmony. Meanwhile, Bruno Latour's book positions religion and ecology as mutually dependent systems*



in facing the global crisis. Ecotheology and ecological religious education emphasize concrete spiritual implementation in Indonesia, intertwining local values with global theory. Together with the five local Scopus journals mentioned above, this research presents a holistic analysis of how religious spirituality shapes ecological awareness based on values and concrete practices.

Analysis

The relationship between humans and the environment is inseparable from the foundation of their beliefs and spiritual values. In many religious traditions, nature is viewed as God's creation, possessing intrinsic value and a distinct spiritual standing. The transcendental-cosmic-existential philosophical theory of relationships implies that humans are not above or separate from nature, but are part of a sacred and existentially interconnected system. In this context, environmental damage is not only a failure of ecological ethics but also a denial of the sacred relationship between humans and their creator. Religious-based ecological awareness is not merely instructional morality, but also a spiritual awareness of humanity's place in the cosmic order. (Nasr, 1990)

An exploitative and anthropocentric mindset. Religion, through its teachings, offers an alternative paradigm through spiritual ecocentrism an approach that positions nature not only as an object of responsibility but also as part of a spiritual entity. In Islam, the concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (*blessing for the universe*) broadens the meaning of compassion not only between humans but also towards all living creatures. Similarly, in Hinduism and Buddhism, nature is understood as part of the harmony of dharma that must not be violated. In this approach, environmental preservation becomes part of the practice of worship itself. This theory of the interdependence between God, nature, and humans is supported by findings from various empirical studies showing that communities with a strong spiritual understanding tend to have a high level of environmental concern. For example, in indigenous communities or Islamic boarding schools that teach holistic spiritual teachings, environmental preservation practices are carried out as part of religious duties. In this case, ecological action is not simply a rational response to environmental damage, but a form of worship based on metaphysical awareness. This demonstrates that spiritual values can internalize ecological ethics more deeply and consistently than a purely regulative approach. (Foltz, 2006)

Furthermore, this approach touches on the psychological and cultural realms of society. Many studies have shown that religious-based environmental education strategies can foster stronger intrinsic motivation. When someone understands that damaging the environment is tantamount to betraying God's trust, they will be motivated to act more wisely. (Messias, 2024) This differs from approaches that only emphasize punishment or legal responsibility. Spiritual values provide a long-term basis for ecological awareness because they are instilled in the heart and integrated with daily life values. This is where the urgency of integrating spirituality into environmental policy and education becomes apparent. Many environmental programs fail



because they emphasize only technical and administrative aspects without addressing the roots of human awareness as spiritual beings. The theory developed by Thomas Berry and Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Nasr, 1990) Stated that the current environmental crisis is not only an ecological crisis, but also a spiritual one. Therefore, the solutions offered must also be spiritual. The relationship between God, nature, and humans must be restored through values education, rituals, and religious practices that touch the inner realm. This analysis also explains that spiritually based ecological awareness has a collective character. This means that when these values are internalized within a community, they form a collective ethic that builds an ecological culture. Examples can be seen in religious communities that manage land sustainably because they believe that the earth is a gift from God, such as in the Islamic boarding school tradition, Balinese indigenous communities, or Green Church groups in Indonesia. Therefore, spiritual values not only shape ecological individuals but also communities and social systems oriented towards sustainability. (Berry, 2009)

Within this framework, the theory of the philosophical relationship between God and nature becomes crucial as a basis for developing public policies oriented toward environmental ethics. Countries formulating environmental conservation policies should consider a spiritual-values-based approach as part of their overall strategy. This involves not only establishing legal sanctions. (Foltz, 2006) But also raising public awareness through religious and cultural approaches. Thus, ecological ethics becomes more than just normative, but also a lifestyle and collective consciousness. Ultimately, the integration of transcendence (relationship with God), ecology (relationship with nature), and existence (self-awareness as a human) creates a comprehensive spiritual framework for building ecological awareness. This is not merely an alternative approach, but rather a fundamental approach necessary to create real change amidst the climate crisis and ecosystem destruction. Therefore, spirituality is not merely an add-on, but at the heart of the sustainable ecological movement.



Figure 2: map draft article.

Conclusion

The relationship between God, humanity, and nature, from a religious perspective, is not merely hierarchical but also forms a deep and mutually influential relational network. God is understood as the source of morality and cosmic order, while humans are positioned as caliphs responsible for maintaining the balance of the ecosystem. This relationship contains a spiritual and ethical responsibility towards nature, not merely as an object of exploitation but as an integral part of creation with intrinsic value. Spiritual values such as compassion, simplicity, gratitude, and moral responsibility embedded in religious teachings encourage the formation of a deeper ecological awareness. The environmental ethics instilled by religion encourage environmentally friendly behavior based not only on scientific rationality but also on spirituality and faith. This shows that a religion-based ecological approach can complement the scientific paradigm with a strong ethical and holistic dimension. Thus, religion plays a crucial role in shaping a sustainable ecological culture. Through the reading of religious texts and reflective spiritual practices, individuals and communities can be guided to create harmony with nature. In the context of the current global environmental crisis, religion-based ecological spirituality serves not only as inspiration but also as a practical strategy for maintaining the sustainability of the Earth as a divine mandate.



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