

The Family Institution Within the Framework of Islamic Ecotheology: A Legal Analysis of Malay-Islamic Cultural Resilience

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Abstract: This study examines the expansion of, and relationship between, the concept of Islamic ecotheology, social ecology, and the family institution as a fundamental unit for value formation and identity construction in responding to contemporary challenges. It also examines the philosophy of Islamic law and its manifestation through codified laws as a foundation for cultural resilience in addressing the challenges of the multipolar era in Southeast Asia, particularly in Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, and Thailand. This study adopts a qualitative approach through a literature review of Islamic ecotheology, social ecology, the family institution, and relevant laws. The data collected were subsequently analysed and presented thematically. Through the themes developed, this study finds that Islamic ecotheology is closely related to social ecology and the family institution. The challenges confronting the contemporary era clearly affect the well-being and stability of the family institution. The findings also show that Islamic law and existing legislation serve as important frameworks for strengthening the family institution and sustaining cultural resilience in the face of current challenges. The findings of this study contribute to the fields of Islamic family law, family policy development, Islamic education, ecotheology, and cultural resilience studies. They may also be utilised by religious institutions, policymakers, and government agencies in devising strategies to empower the family institution as a foundation for social stability and cultural sustainability in Muslim societies in Southeast Asia. This study enriches the discourse on Islamic ecotheology by extending its focus to social ecology through the family institution. It integrates ecotheology, law, and cultural resilience within a unified analytical framework, thereby offering a new perspective on how the empowerment of the family institution contributes to the sustainability of Malay-Islamic culture in the multipolar era.

Keywords: Family institution, social ecology, Islamic ecotheology, Islamic law, cultural resilience.

Introduction

Islamic ecotheology has gained increasing attention among scholars in response to the growing environmental crises occurring at various levels worldwide. Discussions of Islamic ecotheology commonly focus on the relationship between human beings and the environment through the concepts of *khalifah*, *amanah*, and the responsibility to prosper the earth, as outlined by Islam (Rakhmat, 2022; Jaafar @ Ramli et al., 2026). Within this framework, human beings are not merely users of natural resources; rather, they are trustees of Allah SWT, responsible for ensuring that balance (*mīzān*) and environmental sustainability are preserved. The Qur'an clearly reminds human beings not to cause corruption on earth after Allah SWT created it in a balanced and orderly state (al-A'raf 7:56), while some of the damage that occurs is attributable to human actions themselves, as stated in Surah al-Rum, verse 41.

In contemporary scholarship, scholars have begun to extend the discussion of ecotheology from the dimension of natural ecology to that of social ecology, which concerns human relationships and the social institutions that shape a society. This perspective is based on the understanding that damage within social systems is significantly related to damage within environmental systems. Human beings, society, and nature cannot be viewed separately because all three form an ecosystem that mutually influences one another (Febriyani Tue et al., 2024). In the Islamic context, social balance is part of the manifestation of the balance in Allah SWT's creation and must be preserved to ensure the continued harmony of human life.

From this perspective, the family institution may be regarded as the most fundamental unit of social ecology because the family is the principal vehicle for value formation, character development, cultural transmission, and the construction of generational identity. The family serves as the first social institution that introduces individuals to religious values, social norms, and social responsibilities before they engage with the wider community. In the Malay-Islamic tradition, the family is not merely an institution that regulates relationships between husbands, wives, and children; it is also the principal medium for preserving religion, custom, language, culture, and the system of values inherited from one generation to the next. Therefore, the stability of the family institution is closely related to social stability and the cultural resilience of a nation (Khosim, 2023).

Nevertheless, the family institution today faces a range of increasingly complex challenges in a multipolar era characterised by globalisation, technological advancement, social change, and heightened disaster risks arising from climate change. These challenges include rising divorce rates, domestic conflict, the erosion of family values, and the influence of new ideologies that conflict with the values of Malay-Islamic society. At the same time, climate change and natural disasters affect family well-being, including by undermining safety, economic security, and the stability of families' social functions (Nadhifah et al., 2023). This situation indicates that family

resilience must be understood within a more comprehensive framework encompassing the relationship among human beings, society, and the environment.

In addressing these challenges, Islamic law serves as a fundamental framework for safeguarding the well-being of individuals, families, society, and the environment based on the principles of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah. These objectives of the Sharī'ah encompass the preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property; they not only secure human welfare but also contribute to the development of cultural resilience through the preservation of value systems, identity, and the family institution.

In the Malay world, countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam, and Thailand have their own experiences of institutionalising the principles of Islamic law to regulate family affairs while confronting increasingly complex social and environmental challenges. Although the form and structure of the legal arrangements differ according to each country's legal system, their principal aim remains the preservation of family and societal well-being.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine the relationship among Islamic ecotheology, social ecology, and the family institution. It elaborates on these concepts while analysing the challenges faced by the family institution in the multipolar era and examining existing legislation as a mechanism capable of strengthening Malay-Islamic cultural resilience. By integrating the dimensions of Islamic ecotheology, social ecology, family, and law within a unified analytical framework, this study is expected to contribute to the development of a more holistic discourse on Islamic ecotheology that is relevant to contemporary social realities.

Results and Discussion

Islamic Ecotheology and The Family as a Social Ecological Unit

1. Islamic Ecotheology

Islamic ecotheology is a conceptual framework that explains the relationship among human beings, nature, and God based on the principles set out in Islamic law. The term ecotheology combines the words ecology and theology and refers to discussions of the relationship between religious belief and human responsibility towards the environment (Widiastuty & Anwar, 2025). From an Islamic perspective, nature is not merely a physical entity that serves human needs; rather, it is part of the signs of Allah SWT's greatness, possessing intrinsic value and requiring responsible preservation and management (Saputra & Hilmi, 2023).

The foundations of Islamic ecotheology may be found in the concepts of tawhīd, khalīfah, and amānah (Arsyad & Hasanah, 2025). The concept of tawhīd affirms that the whole universe is under the sovereignty of Allah SWT and interconnected within an orderly and balanced system. Therefore, human beings do not possess absolute rights over nature; instead, they are responsible for managing and using it within the limits prescribed by the Sharī'ah. This responsibility is clarified through the concept of khalīfah, as Allah SWT states:

“And [remember] when your Lord said to the angels: Indeed, I will place a khalīfah on earth ...” (al-Baqarah 2:30)

As khalīfahs, human beings are entrusted with the responsibility of prospering the earth and avoiding all forms of damage that may disturb the balance of Allah SWT's creation. This principle is further strengthened through the concept of amānah, which places human beings as bearers of moral responsibility for all aspects of life, including relationships among human beings and relationships with the environment (Qolbi & Sassi, 2026).

Within the framework of Islamic ecotheology, balance (mīzān) is a fundamental principle connecting human beings with nature and society (Wulan, 2025). The Qur'an explains that Allah SWT created the universe in a balanced and orderly state; therefore, human beings are commanded not to disrupt that balance (al-Rahman 55:7–9). Damage to the environment or to social systems ultimately arises from human failure to fulfil the trust that has been entrusted to them. This is clearly stated in the following verse:

“Various forms of corruption and calamity have appeared on land and at sea because of what human hands have done.” (al-Rum 30:41)

Although this verse is often interpreted in the context of environmental degradation, its meaning also encompasses social damage occurring in human life (Sutrisno & Azmi, 2025). In reality, social problems such as family conflict, moral decay, crime, and societal instability are manifestations of imbalance within the system of human life.

2. Social Ecology

Recent developments in ecological studies have also shown a shift from an exclusive focus on the environment to an examination of the social factors that influence the balance of a society (Sarie et al., 2023). This perspective is known as social ecology, an approach that views society as an ecosystem formed through networks of relationships among individuals, families, communities, and social institutions. According to Boström (2024), environmental problems are closely related to problems in human social structures. Although Western theories of social ecology were developed in a context different from Islam, similarities can be observed, particularly in the understanding that social well-being and environmental sustainability mutually influence one another.

In the Islamic context, the concept of social ecology may be understood through a three-dimensional framework of relationships that forms the basis of human life: the relationship with Allah SWT (*ḥabl min Allāh*), the relationship among human beings (*ḥabl min al-nās*), and the relationship with the environment (Sarie et al., 2023). These three relationships form an interconnected and inseparable system. Failure to preserve any one of these relationships affects the balance of the whole system of life. Therefore, the preservation of social institutions, whether within the family or through education, is regarded as part of the effort to maintain the balance that is the primary objective of Islamic ecotheology (Aini & Effendy, 2026).

3. The Family as a Unit of Social Ecology

Within the structure of social ecology, the family is the most fundamental unit because it serves as the first institution to shape an individual's personality, value system, and identity. The family provides the earliest setting for socialisation, introducing religious values, culture, and social norms to new generations (Sholikhah, 2020). Through the family institution, Islamic values such as responsibility, compassion, justice, mutual respect, and trustworthiness are transmitted from one generation to the next. Accordingly, the family may be regarded as the foundation of social balance because the stability of society depends on the stability of the family units that comprise it.

Islam also recognises the importance of the family in social development through various religious texts that place family formation as a foundation for building a prosperous society. Marriage, for example, is described as a bond intended to create tranquillity (*sakinah*), affection (*mawaddah*), and mercy (*rahmah*) between spouses, as well as an act of worship that demonstrates the divine order that human beings live in pairs, as stated in Surah al-Rūm (30:21), Surah al-Nūr (24:32), and Surah al-Nisā' (4:3). These values are important not only for ensuring individual and family well-being but also for forming a stable and harmonious society. Thus, the strength of the family institution directly contributes to the formation of robust social capital, improved community well-being, and stronger cultural resilience within a society.

In Malay-Islamic society, the family occupies an even more significant position because it functions not only as a social institution but also as a cultural institution (Athirah et al., 2024). Various elements of Malay-Islamic culture, such as language, custom, values of courtesy, respect for elders, practices of mutual cooperation (*gotong-royong*), and religious traditions, are learned and inherited through the family institution. The family acts as the primary agent ensuring that Malay-Islamic identity and cultural heritage are sustained in the face of changing times. Therefore, any disruption to family stability may undermine the process of value transmission and, in turn, weaken a society's cultural resilience.

In addition, the family institution plays an important role in developing awareness of environmental preservation. Studies show that individual attitudes and behaviours towards the environment are strongly influenced by early education within the family (Biber et al., 2023). Values such as thrift, avoidance of waste, cleanliness, and appreciation of natural resources are commonly instilled from early life through parental guidance. In this context, the family functions not only as an agent of social development but also as an agent of sustainable development, contributing to the formation of a society that is more responsible towards the environment.

Based on the foregoing discussion, the concept of Islamic ecotheology is not confined solely to environmental preservation; it also encompasses efforts to maintain the balance of the entire system of human life. As the most fundamental unit in social ecology, the family plays a highly significant role in individual formation, social development, and cultural preservation. Strong family institutions produce stable societies, while stable societies are able to contribute to cultural sustainability and environmental well-being. Therefore, empowering the family institution should be viewed as part of the Islamic ecotheological agenda for creating sustainable social balance and cultural resilience.

Nevertheless, rapid social change, cultural globalisation, the development of digital technology, and growing environmental challenges have placed considerable pressure on the family institution. These phenomena have generated various new challenges that may impair the family's function as the core unit of social ecology. Accordingly, the following section specifically discusses the challenges faced by the family institution in the multipolar era.

Challenges Facing the Family Institution in the Multipolar Era

The family institution is the basic unit that forms the social structure of a society. Within the social ecology framework discussed earlier, the family functions as the principal medium for transmitting values, forming identity, and preserving a society's culture. However, the development of a multipolar world characterised by globalisation, technological advancement, climate change, social mobility, and cross-border cultural exchange has created various new challenges for the family institution. These challenges affect not only family well-being but also the cultural resilience of Malay-Islamic society as a whole. Among them are cultural globalisation and the influence of new ideologies, as well as climate change and natural disasters.

1. Climate Change and Natural Disasters

Climate change is among the global challenges receiving increasing attention across various disciplines, including family studies and social well-being. The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (2025) reports that Southeast Asia is among the regions most exposed to the impacts of climate change, such as floods, tropical storms, landslides, heatwaves, and sea-level rise. These phenomena affect not only the environment but also economic stability, social well-being, and the continuity of family institutions.

According to the latest report by the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (2026), 45 disaster incidents were reported across the ASEAN region during the nineteenth week of 2026. These involved floods, landslides, storms, volcanic activity, and wind-related disasters in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and neighbouring countries such as Cambodia and Vietnam. In Indonesia, the National Disaster Management Agency (Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana, BNPB) reported disasters in Aceh, Banten, Bengkulu, Jakarta, Jambi, West Java, West Kalimantan, North Maluku, South Sulawesi, Central Sulawesi, Southeast Sulawesi, West Sumatra, South Sumatra, and North Sumatra. In Malaysia, the National Disaster Management Agency (NADMA) reported floods in Johor, Kedah, and Melaka. At the time the report was issued, flooding was still reported in Larut, Matang and Selama in Perak, as well as in the Kulim district of Kedah. Meanwhile, in Thailand, the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) reported storms and wind-related disasters in Ang Thong, Bueng Kan, Chaiyaphum, Chanthaburi, Chiang Mai, Kamphaeng Phet, Lampang, Lamphun, Lopburi, Mae Hong Son, Nakhon Ratchasima, Nakhon Sawan, Nan, Pathum Thani, Phetchabun, Phichit, Phitsanulok, Phrae, Rayong, Saraburi, Sing Buri, Tak, Udon Thani, and Uttaradit.

According to the latest report on Indonesia by the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (2026), flooding occurred in North Musi Rawas Regency, South Sumatra, following moderate to heavy rainfall that affected the area on 7 May 2026. The flooding affected four districts: Karang Jaya, Rupit, Karang Dapo, and Rawas Ilir. According to BNPB, as of 10 May 2026, the disaster had claimed one life and affected approximately 14,200 households, involving 54,300 residents. A total of 14,200 houses were affected, including 35 that sustained severe damage, 11 that sustained moderate damage, and 101 that sustained minor damage. Damage also involved five bridges, 16 health facilities, 44 educational institutions, 35 places of worship, 11 office buildings inundated by floodwaters, 27 fish-farming ponds, 30 hectares of paddy fields, and 850 hectares of plantation land. This situation demonstrates that the impacts of climate change cause not only physical and economic damage but also directly affect family well-being, community safety, and the continuity of society's social functions.

In Malaysia, an estimated 5.7 million residents are exposed to flood risk, according to data from the Department of Irrigation and Drainage (DID) (Zaimi & Supaat, 2023). In addition, the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2025) reported that losses involving residences, vehicles, business premises, and the manufacturing sector reached RM636.9 million, while NADMA (2025) recorded 9,853 families affected by flood disasters.

Based on the data and facts above, it is evident that the effects of flooding are not limited to economic losses and physical destruction; they also threaten the stability of the family institution. Loss of housing, disruption of income sources, damage to basic facilities, and relocation to temporary evacuation centres alter family routines and undermine families' ability to perform basic functions such as care, protection, education, and emotional support for family members. In the longer term, this situation also increases the risk of physical health problems, psychological stress, and family conflict, particularly among families that have lost their livelihoods (Zaimi & Supaat, 2023). Vulnerable groups, such as children, older persons, women, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and low-income families, are most affected because they have more limited capacity to cope with, adapt to, and recover from disasters (Zaimi & Supaat, 2023). Thus, climate change and natural disasters can no longer be viewed solely as environmental issues; they are also challenges that threaten the sustainability of the family institution, the balance of social ecology, and the cultural resilience of society.

2. Cultural Globalisation and the Influence of New Ideologies

In addition to challenges arising from climate change and natural disasters, the family institution in the multipolar era also faces pressures generated by cultural globalisation and the rapid development of

communication technologies. Advances in digital technology have accelerated the spread of various ideologies, lifestyles, and value systems across national borders, thereby influencing how society interprets the family institution, marriage, and parenthood. Some of these new values are found to be inconsistent with the foundations of family formation from the Islamic perspective, which places marriage, offspring, and continuity of lineage among the principal objectives of the Sharī'ah. One phenomenon receiving growing attention is the childfree orientation, namely the voluntary decision of individuals or married couples not to have children.

The term childfree began to be used officially around 1972 by the National Organization for Non-Parents, later known as the National Alliance for Optional Parenthood. This movement advocated reproductive rights and the freedom of individuals to determine their life choices without social pressure to have children. By the middle of the twentieth century, especially in Western Europe and North America, increased female participation in higher education and the labour market, changes in the structure of the nuclear family, and the development of modern individualist values contributed to a growing inclination towards living without children (Utamidewi et al., 2022). In the global context, this phenomenon is closely associated with Demographic Transition Theory, which explains that urbanisation, rising living costs, and changing aspirations among younger generations have contributed to declining fertility rates in most countries.

These developments show that the decision not to have children can no longer be viewed solely as a personal choice; rather, it represents a changing social orientation towards the family institution. According to a Pew Research Center survey conducted in February 2024, 30% of individuals aged 18 to 34 without children had not yet decided whether they wished to have children, while another 18% explicitly stated that they did not intend to have children. These findings indicate that more young people are postponing or rejecting parenthood as part of a modern lifestyle.

Nevertheless, this tendency is influenced not only by changes in value systems but is also closely related to socioeconomic factors. According to the 2025 State of World Population report, 39% of respondents stated that financial constraints and inadequate income were the primary reasons they did not plan to have children. In addition, 22% of respondents stated that the lack of suitable housing for starting a family was an obstacle, while another 20% associated their decision with employment instability. Among women, 16% stated that inadequate sharing of responsibilities by partners in the care and upbringing of children also influenced their decision not to have children (Berita Harian Singapura, 2026). These findings show that the childfree phenomenon results from the interaction between cultural change and economic pressure, rising living costs, changes in employment structures, and changing divisions of roles within the family institution.

This tendency also affects demographic change in Southeast Asia. In Malaysia, the birth rate declined by 10.2%, from 112,197 births in the second quarter of the previous year to 100,732 births during the same period in the following year. Moreover, Malaysia's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has remained below replacement level since 2012 (Rahida Aini, 2025). In Thailand, the fertility rate in 2023 reached its lowest level in history, at only 1.16 children per woman, thereby accelerating population ageing (Panarat, 2024). A similar situation is occurring in Indonesia, where the TFR has continued to decline to approximately 2.13 to 2.17 children per woman due to lifestyle changes, rising living costs, and lower pregnancy rates among adolescents and young adults (Berita Harian Singapura, 2025). In Singapore, population growth recorded its lowest rate in a decade, increasing by only 1.3% over one year, partly because of reduced inflows of foreign workers (Berita Harian Singapura, 2025). These developments show that declining fertility rates and changing population structures are no longer merely national issues; they have become regional challenges that may affect economic development, labour supply, and demographic balance in the future.

From the perspective of Malay-Islamic society, the implications of this phenomenon extend beyond demographic issues. Although the decision not to have children is often associated with economic factors, individual freedom, and career development, it also reflects a paradigm shift concerning the family institution, which has long been the foundation of social formation. In Islam, offspring are not merely successors to lineage; they are also a means of preserving religion, transmitting values, forming cultural identity, and ensuring generational continuity. Therefore, the development of childfree thinking may challenge the function of the family institution as a medium for preserving lineage (*hifz al-nasl*), socialising values, and building Malay-Islamic cultural resilience. Accordingly, the family institution requires a normative framework capable of strengthening these functions through the principles of Islamic law grounded in *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, particularly in relation to the preservation of lineage, family well-being, and societal sustainability.

Beyond the childfree phenomenon, cultural globalisation has also strengthened the spread of individualism, materialism, and hedonism, which increasingly influence the patterns of life in modern society. Excessive emphasis on individual freedom often causes responsibilities towards spouses, parents, and children to be marginalised. This situation is further exacerbated by the rise of various social problems, such as drug abuse, pornography addiction, social-media addiction, sex outside marriage, and moral decline, which directly affect the stability of the family institution. These phenomena show that the challenges facing the family institution in the multipolar era arise not only from physical factors such as climate change and natural disasters but are also driven by changes in value systems that erode the foundations of family formation. Unless addressed through education,

public policy, and legal approaches grounded in Islamic values, these developments may weaken the family's function as a vehicle for transmitting religion, culture, and identity, thereby undermining Malay-Islamic cultural resilience in Southeast Asia.

The Philosophy of Islamic Law as a Foundation for Cultural Resilience

Islamic law is a normative system based on the revelation of Allah SWT, namely the Qur'an and the Sunnah, which functions to regulate human life comprehensively. Unlike conventional legal systems, which commonly focus on relationships among human beings, Islamic law is developed on a more holistic philosophy that integrates the relationship of human beings with Allah SWT (*ḥabl min Allāh*), relationships among human beings (*ḥabl min al-nās*), and the relationship of human beings with the environment. These three dimensions are interrelated in shaping individual well-being, the stability of the family institution, social harmony, and environmental sustainability. Thus, Islamic law functions not merely as an instrument of social control but also as a mechanism for realising *maṣlaḥah*, preventing *mafsadah*, and maintaining balance (*mīzān*) in human life (Auda, 2008; Kamali, 2010).

From the perspective of legal philosophy, the function of the *Sharī'ah* is not limited to dispute resolution or the enforcement of legal rules. It also plays a role in shaping social structures that support the continuity of civilisation. In this context, law functions as an institutional mechanism that translates Islamic values into rules regulating social conduct. Through this process of institutionalisation, religious values, cultural identity, and social norms can be preserved continuously even as society confronts social change, technological development, and the influences of globalisation in the multipolar era.

Within the framework of Islamic ecotheology, the concept of balance (*mīzān*), which underpins the human relationship with nature, is also translated through the Islamic legal system. The implementation of *Sharī'ah* rules is intended to ensure that every individual fulfils rights and responsibilities towards Allah SWT, the family, society, and the environment in a balanced manner. Therefore, cultural resilience cannot be separated from the role of law, because a culture can be preserved only when a system of values and rules exists to ensure the continuity of identity, social well-being, and the sustainability of community life from one generation to the next (Wulan, 2025; Widiastuty & Anwar, 2025).

1. Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah as a Foundation for Cultural Resilience

The main philosophy of Islamic law may be understood through the concept of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, which refers to the objectives and wisdom underlying the prescription of Islamic rulings. According to al-Shatibi, the whole of Islamic law was revealed to realise *maṣlaḥah* and avert *mafsadah* in human life (Milhan, 2021). Islamic scholars generally agree that *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* seeks to preserve five essential interests (*al-ḍarūriyyāt al-khams*): religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*) (Auda, 2008; al-Ghazali, 2010).

Although *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* is often discussed in the context of protecting individual rights, these five objectives also form the foundation for building a society's cultural resilience. The preservation of religion ensures the continuity of the belief system and values that constitute the identity of Malay-Islamic society. The preservation of life, in turn, guarantees social stability and societal well-being, while the preservation of intellect supports education, knowledge development, and the formation of competitive generations. At the same time, the preservation of lineage ensures the continuity of the family institution as the principal medium for the inheritance of religion, culture, and identity, while the preservation of property ensures the economic stability of families and society. All these objectives complement one another in shaping a society that is balanced and resilient in the face of social change. This demonstrates that *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* is not merely a basis for the formulation of legal rules; it also functions as a framework for social development that maintains a balance among individual rights, family interests, societal well-being, and environmental sustainability. Within the framework of Islamic ecotheology, these five *maqāṣid* objectives interact to form a system that supports cultural resilience comprehensively. Therefore, any weakness in preserving the family institution or any deterioration in environmental quality will ultimately affect the overall achievement of the *maqāṣid*.

Accordingly, contemporary scholars take the view that *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* not only protects individual interests but also serves as a foundation for the continuity of Islamic civilisation and culture (Auda, 2008). In this context, the family institution occupies a highly important position because the family is the first sphere in which the *maqāṣid* are implemented, particularly in relation to preserving religion, lineage, education, and morality. Through the family institution, socialisation, value transmission, identity formation, and cultural inheritance occur continuously. Therefore, strengthening the family institution through legal mechanisms is one means of realising *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* while simultaneously reinforcing Malay-Islamic cultural resilience.

2. The Codification of Islamic Family Law in Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, and Thailand

The manifestation of the philosophy of Islamic law can be seen in the codification of Islamic family law in these countries. Although the legal structures of each country differ according to their respective constitutional and administrative systems, all pursue similar aims: preserving the family institution, protecting the rights of spouses and children, and ensuring that social well-being is maintained in accordance with the principles of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah.

In Malaysia, these principles are implemented through Islamic Family Law Enactments enacted by each state to regulate matters of marriage, divorce, maintenance, custody (ḥaḍānah), polygamy, and family rights. In Brunei Darussalam, the family affairs of Muslims are provided for under the Islamic Family Law Act, which serves as the principal framework for administering Islamic family law. In Indonesia, Muslim family affairs are governed through Law Number 1 of 1974 on Marriage (as amended by Law Number 16 of 2019) and the Compilation of Islamic Law (Presidential Instruction Number 1 of 1991). Meanwhile, in the southern Thai provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Satun, Muslims are subject to the Islamic Family and Inheritance Law, which is recognised within the national legal system to regulate family and inheritance matters. These laws are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Islamic Family Legislation in Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, and Thailand

Country	Legislation
Malaysia	State Islamic Family Law Enactments
Brunei	Islamic Family Law Act
Indonesia	Law Number 1 of 1974 on Marriage (as amended by Law Number 16 of 2019) and the Compilation of Islamic Law (Presidential Instruction Number 1 of 1991).
Thailand	Islamic Family and Inheritance Law 1946

Differences in the forms of codification are influenced by the historical development of legal systems, constitutional structures, and the position of Islam in the administration of each country. Nevertheless, a notable similarity is that all these systems institutionalise Sharī'ah principles in family matters through legal mechanisms recognised by the state. This demonstrates that the philosophy of Islamic law remains relevant within contemporary legal systems and functions as a basis for preserving the family institution as the core unit of society. In this context, Islamic family law does not merely regulate marital relationships; it also serves as an instrument for preserving the continuity of religion, culture, and the identity of Muslim society. Strengthening the family institution through law indirectly contributes to the formation of a society that is more resilient in facing social change and the challenges of the multipolar era. In other words, the principal function of the codification of Islamic family law is not merely to provide legal certainty, but also to institutionalise Sharī'ah values in social life. The recognition of the rights and responsibilities of spouses, protection of children, regulation of divorce, and maintenance obligations are among the mechanisms that ensure the family institution continues to function as a medium for the inheritance of religion, culture, and identity. Therefore, the strength of a family-law system is directly related to the level of cultural resilience within a society.

3. Environmental Legislation as a Manifestation of the Responsibilities of the Khalīfah

In addition to the family institution, the philosophy of Islamic law is also expressed through various forms of legislation concerning environmental preservation. Although most environmental laws in Southeast Asian countries are established within modern legal frameworks, the principles underlying them are consistent with Islamic teachings that recognise human beings as khalīfahs and prohibit all forms of corruption (fasād) on earth (Widiastuty & Anwar, 2025).

In Malaysia, environmental protection is implemented through the Environmental Quality Act 1974, while Indonesia strengthens this area through Law No. 32 of 2009 on Environmental Protection and Management. Brunei Darussalam implements the Environmental Protection and Management Order, while Thailand enforces the Enhancement and Conservation of National Environmental Quality Act 1992 as its principal instrument for preserving natural resources and controlling pollution.

Table 2: Environmental Legislation in Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, and Thailand

Country	Legislation
Malaysia	Environmental Quality Act 1974
Indonesia	Law No. 32 of 2009 on Environmental Protection and Management
Thailand	Enhancement and Conservation of National Environmental Quality Act, B.E. 2535 (1992).

Country	Legislation
Brunei	Environmental Protection and Management Order, 2016

Although the approaches to environmental legislation in Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, and Thailand are framed within modern legal systems, all recognise that environmental sustainability is a public interest requiring protection through legal instruments. These laws contain regulatory mechanisms relating to pollution, natural-resource management, environmental impact assessment, law enforcement, and the liability of parties responsible for environmental damage. From a legal perspective, this approach demonstrates that environmental protection is no longer regarded merely as a moral responsibility; it has become a legal obligation binding on individuals, organisations, and authorities. This shows that Southeast Asian countries have also institutionalised sustainability principles through legal mechanisms to ensure societal well-being and sustainable development.

From the Shari'ah perspective, this approach has clear points of similarity with the concept of human beings as khalifahs who are entrusted with prospering the earth (*isti'mār al-arḍ*) and avoiding all forms of corruption (*fasād*). This principle not only requires the preservation of natural resources but also recognises that the environment is part of a trust that must be safeguarded for the benefit of present and future generations. Therefore, the existence of environmental legislation may be viewed as a contemporary manifestation of Shari'ah values that emphasise justice, balance (*mīzān*), responsibility (*amānah*), and the public interest. In this context, although the source of authority for such laws differs from that of Shari'ah rulings, their intended objectives share significant common ground with Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah, particularly in preserving life (*hiḍḍ al-naḥs*), property (*hiḍḍ al-māl*), and the continuity of human life.

The relationship between environmental legislation and the family institution is also inseparable. As discussed earlier, climate change, pollution, and natural disasters have direct implications for family safety, health, economic security, and psychosocial well-being. Thus, the effectiveness of environmental legislation is intended not only to protect ecosystems but also to function as a preventive mechanism supporting the stability of the family institution. Within the framework of Islamic ecotheology, this relationship illustrates that environmental preservation and the empowerment of the family institution complement one another in realising Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah because both contribute to the formation of a prosperous, resilient society capable of sustaining the continuity of Malay-Islamic culture.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this analysis shows that the philosophy of Islamic law is not merely a foundation for formulating legal rules; it also forms an institutional framework that integrally connects individual well-being, the stability of the family institution, and environmental sustainability. Within the framework of Islamic ecotheology, the family institution and the environment cannot be understood as two separate components. The family is the first space for the formation of values, education, and environmental responsibility, while the environment provides the ecosystem that supports the survival, well-being, and development of the family. This reciprocal relationship shows that deterioration in one component has direct implications for the other. Therefore, legislation regulating the family institution and environmental preservation should be seen as two complementary mechanisms for realising Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah and maintaining the balance (*mīzān*) that forms the core of Islamic ecotheology.

In the multipolar era, Malay-Islamic cultural resilience no longer depends solely on preserving customs and heritage; it requires a legal framework capable of institutionalising Islamic values in social life. Through its normative function, Islamic law not only regulates social conduct but also strengthens the family institution as a medium for transmitting religion, values, and identity, while ensuring environmental sustainability as a living space conducive to social development. This demonstrates that cultural resilience is not formed solely through social practices but is also reinforced through a legal system that guarantees the continuity of values and societal well-being. Therefore, efforts to strengthen cultural resilience should be undertaken through a holistic approach that integrates the philosophy of Islamic law, empowerment of the family institution, environmental preservation, education, and public policy grounded in Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah. This approach is consistent with the principles of Islamic ecotheology, which regard the well-being of human beings, families, society, and the environment as an interconnected system and as the foundation for building a sustainable and resilient Malay-Islamic society capable of facing the challenges of the multipolar era.

Conclusion

This study shows that the concept of Islamic ecotheology should not be understood solely in terms of the relationship between human beings and the environment. Rather, it should be extended to the dimension of social ecology, which involves the family institution as the core of value formation, identity, and cultural resilience. As the most fundamental social unit, the family plays a role in preserving the continuity of the religion, culture, and values of Malay-Islamic society. Nevertheless, the family institution in the multipolar era faces various challenges, including climate change, natural disasters, cultural globalisation, the spread of new ideologies, rising divorce rates, and weakening family functions. These challenges may undermine family well-being and weaken cultural

resilience. In addressing them, Islamic law functions as a normative mechanism that strengthens the family institution and preserves the balance of relationships among human beings, society, and the environment. Grounded in the principles of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, Islamic law is expressed through the codification of Islamic family law and diverse environmental legislation in Southeast Asian countries to ensure societal well-being and the sustainability of life. Based on the analysis undertaken, this article argues that Malay-Islamic cultural resilience can be strengthened only through an approach that integrates the family institution, environmental sustainability, and Islamic law within a holistic ecotheological framework. As a scholarly contribution, this study extends the discourse on Islamic ecotheology by presenting the family institution as a principal component of social ecology that should receive attention equal to environmental preservation. Therefore, the empowerment of the family institution through education, public policy, and law based on Islamic values must continue to be strengthened to ensure the continuity of Malay-Islamic culture and to build a society that is more resilient in facing the challenges of the multipolar era.

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