

An Islamic Ecotheological Critique of Land Reclamation Practices in Manado City's Regional Development Agenda

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ABSTRACT

The Karangria coastal reclamation project in Manado Bay illustrates how regional development driven by spatial expansion and economic growth can conflict with environmental sustainability and social justice. This study examines the ecological, social, and governance implications of reclamation through the perspective of Islamic ecotheology. A qualitative case study design with critical analysis was employed. Primary data were collected through field observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving coastal residents, fishermen, religious leaders, academics, and relevant policymakers. Secondary data were obtained from policy documents, official reports, reputable academic publications, online news sources, and digital media. The findings show that reclamation has altered coastal landscapes, damaged marine habitats, reduced biodiversity, disrupted fishing grounds, and threatened the livelihoods of coastal communities. Limited public participation has also intensified inequality because local residents bear substantial environmental, social, and economic costs while development benefits remain concentrated among investors and politically influential groups. From an Islamic ecotheological perspective, these conditions indicate a departure from the principles of khalifah, amanah, mizan, maslahah, and the prevention of fasad. The study argues that regional development should not be assessed solely through investment, infrastructure, and economic indicators, but must also incorporate ecological responsibility, participatory governance, intergenerational justice, and protection for vulnerable coastal groups. Reclamation policy therefore requires stronger environmental assessment, transparent decision-making, meaningful community involvement, and continuous ecological monitoring. A participatory, inclusive, ethically grounded, and environmentally responsible development model is essential to reconcile regional progress with coastal sustainability and justice in Manado City. Safeguarding cultural continuity and community resilience for future generations.

Keyword: Islamic Ecotheology, Land Reclamation, Environmental Justice, Coastal Communities, Regional Development



INTRODUCTION

Coastal land reclamation has become an increasingly prominent component of contemporary urban development, particularly in cities experiencing limitations in available land, rapid population growth, expanding infrastructure requirements, and intensified competition for investment. Governments commonly present reclamation as a strategic instrument for creating new commercial areas, tourism facilities, transportation infrastructure, residential districts, and other spaces intended to strengthen urban competitiveness. Nevertheless, transforming marine and coastal spaces into economically valuable land is not a technically neutral process because it alters the relationship between cities, ecosystems, communities, and capital. Reclaimed waterfronts may consequently become arenas in which economic expansion, real-estate accumulation, environmental sustainability, and public access are negotiated unequally. The global expansion of reclamation therefore requires analysis that moves beyond physical engineering and economic calculations to examine the political, ecological, social, and ethical consequences embedded in the production of new urban land (Webber et al., 2026; Usher, 2025; Evans et al., 2025; Poon, 2025).

This broader problem is evident in Manado City, North Sulawesi, where the Karangria coastal reclamation project has been incorporated into a regional development agenda oriented toward spatial expansion, infrastructure construction, investment, and economic modernisation. The project covers coastal areas within Sindulang Satu, Sindulang Dua, Bitung Karangria, Maasing, and Tumumpa Dua and has substantially transformed the physical configuration of Manado Bay. Although reclamation is promoted as evidence of regional progress, its implementation raises concerns regarding changes in coastal morphology, declining seawater quality, sedimentation, disruption of ocean currents, and the degradation of habitats supporting marine biodiversity. These concerns are particularly important because the reclamation area is connected to a wider coastal ecosystem located near Bunaken National Park, one of North Sulawesi's most significant marine conservation and tourism areas. Studies of intensively developed coastal zones demonstrate that land conversion, urban expansion, infrastructure development, and environmental pressure may reduce ecosystem services, damage aquatic habitats, and increase the vulnerability of coastal environments when ecological limits are inadequately incorporated into planning (Xu et al., 2025; Yan et al., 2026; Lin et al., 2026; Trotter et al., 2022).

The ecological consequences of reclamation cannot be separated from the socioeconomic conditions of communities whose livelihoods depend directly on coastal resources. The Karangria coast has long functioned as a living and working space for fishermen, small-scale traders, and other residents who rely on access to fishing grounds, marine resources, shoreline transportation, and informal coastal economic activities. Changes in coastal landscapes can restrict access to traditional fishing areas, disturb fish migration routes, reduce fisheries productivity, and increase the operational costs borne by small-scale fishermen. The loss of mangroves, coral reefs, shellfish habitats, and other coastal resources also affects household income, food security, cultural continuity, and community relationships with the sea.

Accordingly, reclamation may redistribute environmental benefits and burdens unequally: investors and property developers obtain new economically valuable spaces, while coastal residents face ecological degradation and declining livelihood security. Comparable studies demonstrate that environmental transformation, pollution, coastal development, and the loss of fishing spaces can undermine the resilience, identity, and

socioeconomic sustainability of fishing communities (Kumar et al., 2026; Jönsson et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2024; Cai et al., 2025).

The controversy surrounding the Karangria project also reflects a governance problem concerning the position of coastal communities within regional development decision-making. Community resistance indicates that affected residents do not merely reject physical development but question the procedures through which development priorities, environmental risks, and the distribution of benefits have been determined. Public participation that is limited to formal consultation or one-way dissemination does not necessarily provide communities with meaningful opportunities to influence project design, environmental assessment, licensing, implementation, or monitoring.

When fishermen and other affected groups are involved only after major decisions have been made, participation risks becoming an administrative mechanism for legitimising predetermined policies. Meaningful participation should instead provide transparent information, recognise local ecological knowledge, accommodate competing interests, and enable affected communities to influence final decisions. Research on environmental impact assessment consistently shows that weak institutional capacity, socioeconomic inequality, political barriers, inaccessible information, and instrumental consultation can restrict substantive public influence over environmentally consequential development projects (Maphanga et al., 2023; Kantamaturapoj et al., 2018; Zuhair & Kurian, 2016; Cuppen, 2012).

Previous studies have produced important knowledge regarding the environmental, legal, social, and economic consequences of coastal development and reclamation. Environmental research has examined habitat loss, water-quality changes, sedimentation, coastal erosion, and threats to biodiversity, while legal and policy studies have focused on licensing, spatial planning, environmental impact assessment, and regulatory compliance. Other scholarship has addressed community displacement, declining income, unequal access to coastal resources, and conflicts between developers and local populations.

Although these perspectives are essential, the existing literature often treats environmental assessment primarily as a regulatory or technical instrument and examines social injustice mainly through material distribution and formal participation. Consequently, less attention has been given to the moral assumptions underlying regional development and to the ethical question of whether governments may transform shared coastal ecosystems into economic assets without adequately recognising ecological limits and community rights. Contemporary research therefore increasingly calls for environmental assessment and planning approaches that are transparent, participatory, context-sensitive, and capable of influencing substantive development decisions rather than merely validating projects administratively (González et al., 2025; Aliyu et al., 2025; Huang et al., 2022; Chanchitpricha et al., 2022).

Islamic ecotheology provides a relevant analytical approach for addressing this moral and conceptual dimension. This perspective understands the natural environment not solely as a collection of resources available for human exploitation but as part of a divinely created order possessing balance, meaning, and intrinsic value. The principle of *khalifah* positions humanity as a responsible steward rather than an unrestricted owner of nature, while *amanah* emphasises that environmental management constitutes a trust for which human beings are morally accountable. The concept of *mizan* requires the preservation of ecological balance, whereas the prohibition of *fasad* condemns conduct that produces destruction, disorder, and harm on land or at sea. Applied to regional

development, these concepts require economic activities to be evaluated according to their effects on ecological continuity, public welfare, vulnerable communities, and future generations. Scholarship concerning religion and sustainability confirms that Islamic ideas of trusteeship, balance, ethical responsibility, and the sacred significance of nature can contribute to contemporary environmental education, ecological awareness, and sustainability discourse (Marshall, 2025; Hillman, 2026; Aldrin, 2024; Ezeh, 2025).

The originality of this article lies in integrating Islamic ecotheology with an analysis of regional development governance, environmental justice, and coastal reclamation in the specific context of Karangria Beach. Rather than rejecting reclamation solely because it changes the physical coastline, the article critically examines the development paradigm, decision-making structures, and moral priorities that determine how reclamation is planned and implemented. It positions environmental damage, restricted community participation, and livelihood disruption as interconnected outcomes of a governance model that gives greater weight to investment and spatial expansion than to ecological responsibility and distributive justice.

This approach extends existing studies by treating *khalifah*, *amanah*, *mizan*, *masalah*, and the prevention of *fasad* as evaluative principles with practical implications for environmental assessment, spatial planning, public participation, and governmental accountability. Such an interdisciplinary perspective is scientifically significant because contemporary coastal governance increasingly requires the integration of recognitional justice, community knowledge, environmental accountability, participatory planning, and long-term socioecological sustainability (Tafon et al., 2024; Macpherson et al., 2023; Toomey et al., 2021; Yuan, 2025).

Based on these considerations, this article examines how land reclamation practices along the Karangria coast are positioned within Manado City's regional development agenda and how their ecological, social, and governance consequences can be evaluated from an Islamic ecotheological perspective. The analysis addresses two principal questions: first, how do the regulations and implementation of the Karangria reclamation project reflect the prevailing regional development paradigm; and second, how does Islamic ecotheology assess the project in relation to ecological sustainability, social justice, community participation, and moral responsibility? By answering these questions, the article seeks to contribute conceptually to studies of sustainable regional development by demonstrating that environmental governance must incorporate not only regulatory and economic considerations but also ethical accountability. It further aims to offer a critical framework for directing coastal development toward a model that is participatory, inclusive, ecologically responsible, attentive to affected communities, and committed to justice across present and future generations.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research approach in the form of a case study on land reclamation practices located along the Karangria Coast, Manado Bay, North Sulawesi Province, in relation to the challenges of coastal-based regional development. This approach was deliberately chosen so that the author could conduct an in-depth analysis of social-community and ecological (environmental) dynamics, as well as the impact of regional development policies implemented by the North Sulawesi government. This research is not limited to a descriptive framework but is accompanied by critical analysis to interpret how the integration of development processes interacts with the coastal environment. Furthermore, the Islamic theological discipline of eco-theology is

implemented as a prescriptive conceptual foundation to interpret reclamation projects in a morally sound and ideal manner.

The data in this study consists of two types: primary data and secondary data, both of which complement each other. The primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with the coastal community of Karangria, comprising fishermen, Islamic religious leaders, academics from state universities, and policymakers involved in the land reclamation project in Manado City, North Sulawesi. The primary data collection process was conducted not only through interviews involving multiple informants but also through field observations to understand the ecological and socio-cultural conditions in the Karangria Coast area. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from policy document studies, official reports published by local governments and online news outlets, as well as scientific articles from reputable national and international journals relevant to the research topic.

The data in this study were analyzed using an interactive approach consisting of the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing integrative conclusions regarding the relationship between Islamic eco-theology and coastal regional development. The analysis process began with data collection and concluded with final interpretation. The observational findings were then explained using concepts from Islamic eco-theology, such as the meanings of khalifah, al-amanah, al-mizan, and al-fasad as the moral foundations of religiosity. Finally, the validity of the research data was ensured through a process of triangulation of sources and methods, as well as by cross-checking the research data with informants to verify the authenticity of the data used in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Coastal Land Reclamation and the Regional Development Paradigm

Coastal reclamation refers to an activity intended to create new land or restore degraded areas within coastal zones, generally through the filling of marine areas, estuaries, and wetlands. Its implementation is intended to expand the availability of land for urban development, industrial activities, tourism, and infrastructure construction. Coastal reclamation is also closely associated with the construction of embankments, seawalls, large-scale irrigation systems, and environmental management interventions that may cause ecological damage to coastal and marine ecosystems (Syahrul et al., 2024).

Land reclamation projects in Indonesia are not merely perceived as physical development programmes but are also directly connected to legally established spatial-planning policies (Suganda, 2023). Law No. 27 of 2007 stipulates that reclamation projects must consider the sustainability of coastal ecosystems and avoid activities that may damage existing environmental systems (Sedubun, 2023). In addition to maintaining environmental sustainability, reclamation must protect the rights of coastal communities whose livelihoods depend on marine resources. Consequently, land reclamation remains a multidimensional issue that requires a balance among regional economic development, environmental sustainability, and justice for the broader community.

Development can generally be understood through two principal approaches: sustainable development, which emphasises environmental sustainability, and people-centred development, which prioritises the needs and interests of communities (Ruggerio, 2021). However, when development is dominated by capital owners or conglomerates, these ideal principles may lose their practical influence, thereby weakening the state's capacity to control development and potentially causing ecological

damage and neglecting civil-society rights (Rahma et al., 2019). Such conditions represent an important challenge in the implementation of development projects in Indonesia because their consequences extend to numerous aspects of national life, including politics. In this context, the land reclamation project at Karangria Beach in Manado City, North Sulawesi, has generated prolonged controversy. Similar reclamation programmes intended to expand terrestrial areas have also been implemented in the Gulf states of the Middle East and in Southeast Asian countries such as Singapore (Sengupta et al., 2023; Poon, 2025).

Although land reclamation is frequently criticised because of its effects on coastal ecosystems, international experiences demonstrate that its outcomes may differ according to the governance model employed. Singapore, for example, has applied a relatively integrated planning process involving rigorous environmental assessments, continuous monitoring, and science-based coastal management. Certain Gulf countries, including the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, have also accompanied reclamation projects with conservation policies intended to reduce their effects on marine habitats, although the effectiveness of such policies remains debated. These experiences demonstrate that reclamation does not inherently contradict sustainability principles. Its consequences depend substantially on the extent to which ecological considerations and public interests are incorporated into planning and implementation.

From the perspective of Islamic ecotheology, the principal issue in the Manado case is not limited to the physical implementation of reclamation. The problem also concerns the dominance of a bureaucratic-functional approach that treats coastal spaces primarily as economic assets supporting investment and growth agendas. Within this approach, ethical, ecological, and participatory considerations tend to occupy a secondary position compared with physical-development objectives. Consequently, principles associated with *khalifah*, including ecological responsibility, the protection of vulnerable groups, and intergenerational sustainability, do not receive adequate attention in decision-making. The Islamic ecotheological critique developed in this study is therefore not directed at reclamation merely as a development instrument. Instead, it criticises a governance model that reduces the environment to an object of economic exploitation and disregards ecological justice in coastal development planning.



Picture 1. The Reclamation Project Is Located in Five Neighborhoods and Covers an Area of 90 Hectares

Source: Author, 2026

The reclamation project, promoted as a regional development model supporting economic growth and urban spatial planning, has generated numerous problems. The Karangria Beach reclamation area extends across five neighbourhoods in Tuminting District, Manado City, namely Sindulang Satu, Sindulang Dua, Bitung Karangria, Maasing, and Tumumpa Dua, and covers approximately 90 hectares (Observation, February 20–25, 2026). The government and capital owners perceive the area as a strategic asset capable of generating considerable profits through investment, tourism development, and modern infrastructure construction (Admin, 2024). However, this capitalist development paradigm prioritises a bureaucratic-functional perspective that measures regional-development success predominantly through physical and economic indicators. Consequently, social interests, community welfare, and environmental sustainability tend to be overlooked from the initial stages of policy formulation and implementation.

2. Resistance and Low Participation Among Coastal Communities

Fishermen, members of the general public, and environmental activists have actively organised protests against the land reclamation project along Karangria Beach (Muzakki, 2025). The emergence of this resistance demonstrates a substantial gap between the reclamation policies implemented by the government and investors and the actual needs of communities residing along Karangria Beach and its surrounding areas (Kodoati, 2024). Coastal communities, predominantly comprising fishermen and small-scale traders, experience the continued reduction of their fishing grounds, disruption of maritime traffic, degradation of underwater ecosystems, and threats to the economic livelihoods on which they depend. These circumstances indicate that the affected communities were not adequately involved in the policymaking process and create the impression that the regional government prioritised investors' interests over those of local residents.



Picture 2. Protest by the Alliance of Citizens Opposing the Land Reclamation Project at Karangria Beach, Manado
Source: Author, 2026

Weaknesses in local-government development governance can be identified through the limited participation of the public in policymaking and implementation (Putra, 2023). In the Manado City reclamation project, the involvement of the Karangria coastal communities and surrounding residents was largely restricted to formal and

unilateral public-information activities conducted by the North Sulawesi Provincial Government. Their participation did not take the form of Focus Group Discussions or dialogue forums in which all social groups could participate on an equal basis. Sustainable development can be considered inclusive when it provides substantial opportunities for direct community participation, which constitutes an essential pathway toward the formulation of just and responsive public policies (Ahmad & Islam, 2024). Accordingly, resistance expressed by Karangria coastal communities represents critical awareness and collective courage in confronting an exclusive development model that fails to involve the wider public.

3. The Impact of Ecological Damage on Coastal Areas

The Karangria Beach reclamation project has adversely affected the coastal and marine environment by altering ocean-current patterns and contributing to coastal erosion that threatens neighbouring communities. The project has also produced sedimentation because the seawall was constructed without a comprehensive assessment of underwater-current velocity, wave-breaking patterns, and tidal dynamics. These conditions have intensified sediment accumulation and contributed to the shallowing of the seabed (Observation and Interview with Mr. X, March 20, 2026). The reclamation project also threatens coral reefs that provide natural habitats for fish and other forms of marine life. Its cumulative effects include the degradation of Karangria's coastal area and the loss of biodiversity, including mangrove forests, fish, mangrove crabs, and shellfish traditionally relied upon by fishermen to sustain their livelihoods (Doaly, 2019).

The reclamation site along the Karangria Coast is located approximately 17 kilometres from Bunaken National Park, a marine conservation area internationally recognised for its underwater environment. The project may therefore threaten the Bunaken ecosystem through sedimentation, increasing seawater turbidity, and the degradation of coral-reef habitats. Reclamation along Manado's northern coast may also disrupt fish-migration routes and sea-turtle nesting areas while threatening the sustainability of marine tourism and the local fishing economy surrounding the conservation area. (Trismana, 2026).



Picture 3. Map Showing the Distance Between the Reclamation Site and Bunaken National Park

Source: Author, 2026

The Karangria reclamation project has seriously affected ecological sustainability, particularly aquatic life. Massive excavation, dredging, pile driving, and infrastructure construction have reduced populations of small and large marine organisms that coastal communities could easily access before reclamation began. The situation has been aggravated by damage to coral reefs, as filling materials have buried natural marine habitats, disrupted ecological relationships, and ultimately reduced fisheries productivity for local fishermen (Warsilah, 2021).

The effects of reclamation are not limited to marine ecosystems but also extend to terrestrial environments. The destruction of natural habitats has been associated with the increasing appearance of displaced wild animals and a decline in the diversity of vegetation, particularly coconut palms. Coconut palms possess strong fibrous roots that function as natural barriers against coastal erosion and contribute to the distinctive identity of North Sulawesi as the "Land of Waving Palms." The reclamation activities at Karangria Beach have therefore transformed coastal habitats and ecosystems by disrupting water sources, changing the landscape, and weakening the ecosystem's environmental-conservation functions. These changes have generated extensive consequences for the ecological, social, and economic cycles of surrounding communities (Mappatoba et al., 2023).

4. Land Reclamation from an Islamic Ecotheological Perspective

Islam maintains a theological understanding that the Creator established the universe and its ecological systems in an orderly condition. Every element within an ecological system performs a particular function according to its respective role. Living and non-living components influence one another, interact, and cooperate to form an integrated system known as an ecosystem. Such an ecosystem functions harmoniously and sustainably as long as its interactions are not disrupted (Feise-Nasr, 2023).

Disruptions to the interactions and interconnections among ecological elements may interrupt ecosystem functions and ultimately produce environmental damage. Ecological damage may originate from internal and external factors. Internal factors include natural disturbances such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and other natural disasters. External factors primarily result from human behaviour, including extensive deforestation, coal and nickel mining, groundwater contamination, air pollution, and coastal reclamation (Yeganeh, 2020).

The Qur'an implicitly reminds human beings not to cause destruction on Earth and within its ecological systems. This message constitutes both a prohibition and a firm warning that humanity must preserve the natural balance established in an orderly and harmonious condition. Verses 11-12 of Surah al-Baqarah explicitly describe people who cause destruction while falsely claiming that their actions constitute improvement. These verses demonstrate the human tendency to employ manipulative arguments to justify environmentally destructive activities undertaken for material profit, including reclamation (Fitriani, 2024).

The term *fasad* refers to principles and behaviour that deviate from a balanced condition. Accordingly, every form of behaviour capable of disrupting balance, including the balance of nature, may be categorised as *fasad*. Verse 56 of Surah al-A'raf similarly emphasises that causing destruction on Earth is strictly prohibited. The prohibition against environmental destruction includes damaging water sources and cutting down trees and forests (Apriliana, 2025; Zehid, 2025). Within Islamic ecotheology, the relationship between humanity and nature is founded upon moral responsibility and

spiritual ethics. Human beings have been entrusted with the role of stewards who must manage the Earth and its resources while maintaining ecological balance and sustainability (Rakhmat, 2022). In this context, the Karangria reclamation project, which has the potential to cause extensive ecosystem damage, may be interpreted as a failure to fulfil the responsibility entrusted to humanity, particularly the responsibility of policymakers within the North Sulawesi Provincial Government. Islamic teachings also require balanced conduct in both theological understanding and social practice (Choudhury, 2024). In the present context, balance requires a harmonious relationship between efforts to advance the regional economy and the long-term ecological sustainability of North Sulawesi's coastline and coastal communities.

Islamic teachings also recognise *fasad* as destruction occurring on Earth in both ecological and social forms, as explained in Surah Ar-Rum. Environmental degradation constitutes a harmful condition that contradicts genuine human welfare. Damage occurring on land and at sea represents a logical consequence of exploitative activities undertaken by groups seeking substantial profits from natural resources. Damage on land may include the loss of environmental benefits, the expansion of harmful conditions, declining food supplies, and wildlife displacement. Damage to aquatic environments may involve the drying of rivers and the disappearance of water sources previously used by living organisms (Zehid, 2025).

Ecological interpretations of Qur'anic verses demonstrate that human-caused environmental damage can be understood in a global context. The destruction described in Surah Ar-Rum includes ecological crises reflected in the declining availability of plant- and animal-based food supplies (Apriliana, 2025). The environmental damage and social injustice generated by the Karangria reclamation project correspond with this understanding. Islamic ecotheology therefore provides not only normative criticism but also alternative solutions for developing an ethically and ecologically sustainable model of regional development. Such a model should direct regional-development benefits toward the collective welfare of coastal communities and lower-income groups rather than concentrating them among investors and capital owners.

Land reclamation in Indonesia, particularly in Manado, North Sulawesi, may thus be regarded as part of a broader phenomenon contributing to a long-term environmental crisis. Coastal reclamation may generate far-reaching consequences, including environmental instability, declining air and water quality, increasing temperatures, and reduced access to clean water. These problems are closely associated with the belief that nature may be exploited without limitation, while destructive activities are presented through manipulative narratives of development and modernisation. In reality, the Earth and its oceans constitute the fundamental spaces that sustain human life. Humanity cannot survive when its ecological environment is destroyed. Islamic values do not disregard ecological problems; instead, they encourage Muslims and humanity more broadly to become active agents in environmental conservation.

5. Environmental Justice and the Direction of Development in Karangria

The issue of environmental justice surrounding the Karangria reclamation project requires serious consideration. A development approach predominantly serving wealthy groups and direct investors has produced unequal access to natural resources. Fishing communities along the Karangria Coast bear substantial material and non-material losses. Fishermen and small-scale traders have lost living spaces and livelihood opportunities, whereas the principal benefits of reclamation are enjoyed by politically and

economically influential groups. This situation reflects an unjust distribution of regional-development benefits in North Sulawesi.

Within Islamic ecotheology, natural resources must be managed wisely, justly, and for the benefit of all citizens rather than a small number of individuals or groups. Natural-resource management should create public value and broadly distributed welfare without damaging ecological systems (Ferdiansyah, 2025). Islam explicitly condemns monopolistic, oligopolistic, and mafia-like practices in natural-resource governance because they violate Islamic principles and undermine justice (Fauzanto, 2020). The Manado reclamation project may therefore be interpreted as a form of natural-resource exploitation undertaken without sufficient regard for justice, thereby causing ecological damage and depriving ordinary citizens of their rights. In this sense, reclamation conducted for oligarchic interests constitutes an ecological injustice that may threaten the future of North Sulawesi.

The Islamic ecotheological critique of reclamation in Manado demonstrates that the primary issue concerns not only ecological damage but also a decision-making framework that treats economic growth as the principal indicator of development success. Within such a framework, Environmental Impact Assessment may function as an administrative mechanism for legitimising development rather than as a substantive instrument for preventing ecological degradation. Islamic ecotheology offers an alternative approach by grounding reclamation assessment in the principles of balance or *mizan*, public welfare or *maslahah*, and the prevention of harm or *dar' al-mafasid*. Accordingly, the feasibility of reclamation should not be assessed solely on the basis of investment and economic benefits. It must also consider coastal-ecosystem sustainability, local-community rights, and the long-term ecological consequences inherited by future generations. This approach may be institutionalised by strengthening socioecological indicators within Environmental Impact Assessments and revising spatial-planning policies that disregard the environmental carrying capacity of coastal areas.

The concept of *khalifah* must also be understood as a governance principle possessing political and administrative implications rather than merely as a theological ideal concerning humanity's relationship with nature. In urban-development practices, this principle requires local governments to manage natural resources responsibly, transparently, and sustainably. Reclamation policies should therefore not be determined exclusively by investment interests or economic expansion but must emerge from deliberative processes involving affected residents, coastal communities, and groups concerned with environmental sustainability. From this perspective, *khalifah* provides a normative foundation for strengthening environmental accountability in the formulation of Regional Spatial Plans, the supervision of reclamation projects, and the evaluation of development policies. Islamic ecotheology consequently functions not only as a critique of exploitative development paradigms but also as an ethical framework capable of guiding regional governance toward a participatory, ecologically just, and sustainable development model.

CONCLUSION

The reclamation project along Karangria Beach in Manado City demonstrates that regional development centred primarily on spatial expansion, infrastructure construction, investment, and economic growth can generate serious ecological and social consequences when environmental sustainability and community interests are not

adequately incorporated into planning. The project has altered the coastal landscape, intensified sedimentation, threatened coral reefs and marine biodiversity, disrupted fishing grounds, and reduced the availability of natural resources on which fishermen and small-scale traders depend. Its location near Bunaken National Park also raises broader concerns regarding the sustainability of marine conservation, fisheries, and tourism in North Sulawesi.

The findings further reveal that the problems associated with reclamation are not limited to physical environmental degradation. Limited public participation, unequal access to development benefits, and the marginalisation of affected coastal communities indicate weaknesses in regional development governance. Formal consultation that does not provide meaningful influence over planning and implementation has contributed to resistance among fishermen, residents, and environmental activists. While investors and politically influential groups potentially obtain substantial economic advantages, local communities bear the ecological, social, and livelihood-related burdens. This unequal distribution of benefits and risks demonstrates that the project has not fully reflected the principles of participatory governance and environmental justice.

From an Islamic ecotheological perspective, the Karangria reclamation project reflects a departure from the principles of khalifah, amanah, mizan, maslahah, and the prohibition of fasad. Regional development should therefore be reoriented toward a model that integrates economic objectives with ecological responsibility, community participation, social justice, and intergenerational sustainability. Environmental Impact Assessments must function as substantive preventive instruments rather than administrative formalities, while reclamation policies should be formulated transparently through deliberative processes involving affected communities. Islamic ecotheology consequently provides both a critical framework for evaluating exploitative development and an ethical foundation for directing coastal governance toward a more inclusive, accountable, ecologically just, and sustainable development model.

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