



## Faith based Caring Practice for the Enviroment: Muslim Women's Movement Against Andesite Mining in Wadas

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### ABSTRACT

This article examines the role of Muslim women in Wadas Village, Central Java, who established the Wadon Wadas movement to oppose andesite mining associated with the Bener Dam construction project. The study traces how faith-based caring practices shape resilience, social cohesion, and environmental advocacy in the face of state-backed extractivism. Employing a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with women activist, participatory observation of community life, and documentation of protest actions from local archives and social media campaigns. Thematic analysis was applied to identify key patterns of resilience and faith-driven collective action. The findings reveal that the women of Wadas frame their resistance as a form of social dakwah, blending Islamic spirituality, local traditions, and environmental ethics. Spiritual practices such as mujahadah (collective prayer) provide psychosocial strength, while the principle of ngugemi (upholding ancestral land) represents place attachment as well as collective moral legitimacy. Women's solidarity is expressed through caring practices, including food logistics organization, reciprocal support, and communal rituals that sustain social cohesion amid intimidation. Furthermore, the movement reformulates the meaning of sustainable development from a grassroots perspective, emphasizing food security, water preservation, and intergenerational justice over extractive economic interests. This article contributes to the scholarship on caring society and faith-based environmental movements within Muslim communities by introducing the concept eco-dakwah an integration of Islamic values, local wisdom, and ecological care as a strategy to resist extractivism while advancing sustainable development.

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## Introduction

Agrarian conflicts and environmental crises in Indonesia increasingly reveal urgent complexities, particularly when large-scale infrastructure development intersects with the living spaces of rural communities. National strategic projects such as dams, toll roads, and industrial zones often generate structural problems, including land dispossession, ecological degradation, and social injustice (Herwati & Wungkana, 2023; Oong Supono & Muhamad Hasan Sebyar, 2023). One of the most prominent cases is the proposed andesite mining in Wadas Village, Bener Sub-district, Purworejo Regency, Central Java, which is linked to the construction of the Bener Dam. This project not only raises debates over national development priorities but also triggers local resistance, as villagers perceive mining as a threat to food security, water resources, and the sustainability of future generations (Farha et al., 2022; Humaidi, 2023).

Agrarian conflicts and environmental crises in Indonesia increasingly reveal urgent complexities, particularly when large-scale infrastructure development intersects with the living spaces of rural communities. National strategic projects such as dams, toll roads, and industrial zones often generate structural problems, including land dispossession, ecological degradation, and social injustice (Herwati & Wungkana, 2023; Oong Supono & Muhamad Hasan Sebyar, 2023). One of the most prominent cases is the proposed andesite mining in Wadas Village, Bener Sub-district, Purworejo Regency, Central Java, which is linked to the construction of the Bener Dam. This project not only raises debates over national development priorities but also triggers local resistance, as villagers perceive mining as a threat to food security, water resources, and the sustainability of future generations (Farha et al., 2022; Humaidi, 2023).

Amid these dynamics, the women of Wadas have emerged as central actors through a movement known as *Wadon Wadas*. In contrast to dominant narratives that often portray women merely as victims, *Wadon Wadas* demonstrates women's capacity as drivers of collective resistance (Jumaynah & Subekti, 2023; Robingah & Firmansyah, 2025). Their courage is rooted not only in material concerns but also in Islamic spirituality, local traditions, and social solidarity. Practices such as *mujahadah* (collective prayers), religious study circles, and collective care work serve as vital means of maintaining psychosocial strength and reinforcing community cohesion (Erlangga et al., 2024; Jumaynah & Subekti, 2023). Moreover, the principle of *ngugemi* (holding firmly to ancestral land) symbolizes both emotional attachment and moral legitimacy, providing profound meaning to their opposition to mining.

From a *dakwah* perspective, the *Wadon Wadas* movement reflects an important transformation. *Dakwah* is not confined to verbal preaching but is manifested in social actions oriented toward environmental care and the sustainability of life (Najib, 2020; Ramadhan et al., 2024). The principle of *hifz al-bi'ah* (preserving the earth) within the framework of *maqasid al-shari'ah* provides a theological foundation, framing resistance to mining as both an act of worship and a collective responsibility toward God (Khuluq & Asmuni, 2025; UIN Salatiga Indonesia & Adhania, 2023). In this sense, the movement introduces a model of social *dakwah* grounded in environmental concern, integrating Islamic values, local wisdom, and ecological advocacy.

While studies on agrarian conflict in Indonesia are extensive, most have primarily focused on legal, political, or economic aspects (Sari et al., 2025; Wicaksono et al., 2024). Likewise, Indonesian ecofeminist scholarship highlights women's relationship with the

environment, but has rarely connected it with Islamic dakwah practices in the context of rural Muslim community resistance (Sulistyati, 2023). Meanwhile, literature on community resilience (Adger, 2000; Norris et al., 2008) has largely been applied to natural disasters rather than agrarian conflicts caused by extractivism. In other words, there remains a gap in linking resilience, Islamic ecofeminism, caring society, and social dakwah within the context of environmental conflicts (Datta & Mete, 2024).

This article seeks to address that gap by analyzing the *Wadon Wadas* movement as an example of how faith-based caring practices sustain Muslim women's resilience, strengthen social cohesion, and redefine sustainable development from a grassroots perspective. In doing so, the study contributes to enriching the literature on caring society within Muslim communities while offering a conceptual model of *eco-dakwa* that integrates Islamic values, local traditions, and ecological advocacy as a strategy of resistance against extractivism.

## Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with an intrinsic case study design (Silverman & Patterson, 2022; Stake, 2010) to gain an in-depth understanding of faith-based social dakwah oriented toward environmental care within the *Wadon Wadas* movement. Wadas Village was selected as the case study because it represents the distinctive characteristics of contemporary agrarian conflicts in Indonesia: the intersection of national-scale development projects, customary values, and faith-based environmental dakwah. Through the case study approach, this research not only documents the dynamics of conflict but also unpacks how rural Muslim women develop resilience strategies rooted in faith, tradition, and solidarity.

Data collection was conducted through three primary strategies. First, a comprehensive document analysis was undertaken, examining relevant written sources including news archives, NGO reports, government documents, and academic publications related to the Bener Dam conflict in Wadas Village. This analysis was carried out over a three-month period (January–March 2025) to establish a foundation for understanding the socio-political context and to design the interview framework.

Second, in-depth interviews were conducted using purposive sampling, following an initial snowball sampling phase to identify the preliminary network of participants. A total of ten informants were interviewed: three female members actively engaged in *Wadon Wadas*, three community leaders (including a religious leader, a community elder, and a village official), and four villagers involved in advocacy efforts. Interviews were conducted over ten

working days between April and May 2025, with each session lasting between 30 minutes and three hours. All interviews were recorded with participants' consent, transcribed, and systematically coded.

Third, participatory observation was carried out by residing for three days in the home of one female activist (WW-1). This allowed the researcher to directly witness everyday practices such as collective prayers, food logistics organization, and post-conflict cohesion strategies. These observations provided deeper insights into the dynamics of social cohesion and gender roles within the movement. Detailed field notes were taken regarding interactions, rituals, and the psychosocial atmosphere of the community.

The research adhered to established principles of social research ethics. All participants were informed about the objectives of the study and provided verbal or written consent prior to the interviews. To protect their safety given the potential for post-conflict repression, informants' identities were anonymized using initials. The researcher also applied a trauma-informed approach, granting participants the freedom to pause or terminate interviews if they felt uncomfortable. Data validation was ensured through source triangulation and by verifying interpretations with participants (member checking).

The list of informants is summarized in the following table.

No.	Informant Code	Gender	Age	Employment Status	Stakeholder	Interview Duration
1.	WW-1	Female	42	Housewife, bamboo basket maker	Member of Wadon Wadas, recognized as a local figure	180 minutes
2.	WW-2	Female	45	Housewife, bamboo basket maker, farmer	Initiator of Mujahadah (collective prayer) activities in Wadon Wadas	100 minutes
3.	WW-3	Female	20	Young mother, bamboo basket maker	Young, active, and vocal member of Wadon Wadas, the only woman who has not sold her land	168 minutes
4.	PW-1	Female	47	Farmer	Not a member of Wadon Wadas, but provides space for various mevomnt gatherings	50 minutes
5.	PW-2	Female	42	Housewife	Not a member of Wadon Wadas, but active in Muslimat NU	148 minutes
6.	PW-3	Female	42	Housewife, Shopkeeper	Not a member of Wadon Wadas, but assisted the researcher	63 minutes

No.	Informant Code	Gender	Age	Employment Status	Stakeholder	Interview Duration
7.	PW-4	Female	70	Broom maker	Suistains livelihood through farming and handicrafts	30 minutes
8.	ED-1	Male	50	Traditional artist	Initiator of GEMPA DEWA, mobilizer of community, youth gen and cultural activism	180 minutes
9.	ED-2	Male	25	Farmer, goat breeder	One of six men who have not sold or released their land (refused to relinquish land), promotes alternative economy	47 minutes
10.	ED-3	Male	47	Village secretary	Village official with a strategic role in governance	150 minutes

Meanwhile, data analysis employed a thematic analysis approach conducted in three stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2017). Initial codes were developed from interview transcripts and observation notes, then clustered into three overarching themes: (1) spirituality as a source of resilience, (2) care work as a strategy of social dakwah, and (3) *ngugemi* (upholding ancestral land) as the moral legitimacy of resistance. The results of the analysis were then integrated with documentary data to construct a coherent narrative of *eco-dakwah* in Wadas.

## Results

Wadas Village is located in Bener Sub-district, Purworejo Regency, within the southern Serayu Mountain range, which forms part of the Menoreh Mountains. Geologically, the area consists of igneous volcanic rocks such as andesite and basalt, remnants of ancient volcanic activity (Humaidi, 2023; Nugroho et al., 2020). The topography is hilly, with an elevation of approximately 213–258 meters above sea level, covered by community forests and mixed gardens that render the soil fertile for agricultural activities. Wadas is recognized as an agrarian village with a strong agricultural landscape, supported by abundant water resources from natural springs and the Juweh River. However, its fragile geology also makes the area prone to erosion and landslides, meaning that ecological sustainability is highly dependent on protecting the living environment from excessive exploitation. For generations, villagers have relied on hardwood, coffee, spices, and smallholder farming as their primary sources of livelihood.

The people of Wadas generally live in small kinship-based settlements, which foster strong social bonds. Collective practices such as *gotong royong* (mutual assistance),

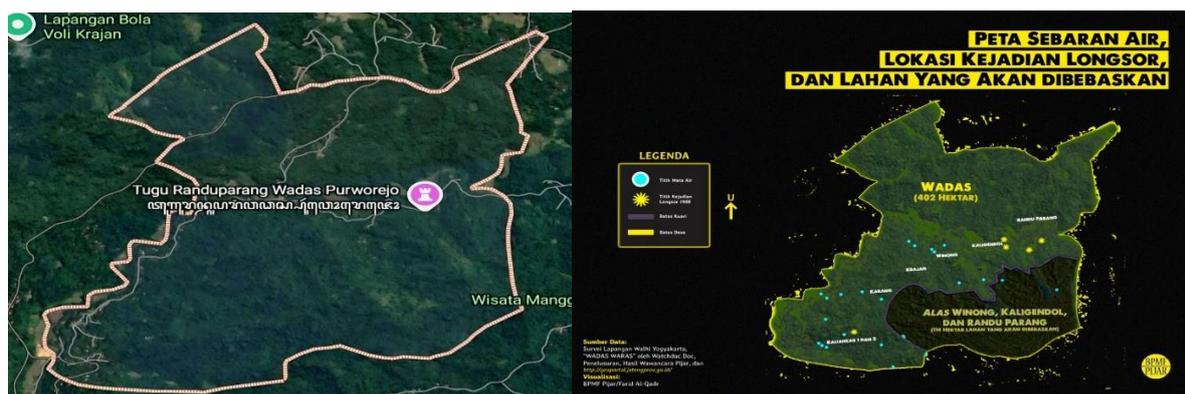
communal work, night patrols, and kenduri (ritual communal feasts) function not only as routines but also as symbols of solidarity that reinforce social cohesion. Extended family ties and kinship networks provide the community with high consolidation capacity, particularly when facing external threats such as the proposed andesite mining project.

The spiritual and social life of Wadas residents is rooted in the integration of Islamic teachings and local traditions. All villagers are Muslims, practicing collective rituals such as mujahadah (devotional prayers), yasinan (Quran recitation), and harvest feasts. The tradition of sedekah gunung (mountain offering) is also preserved as a form of respect toward nature, which is regarded as sacred. For the community, protecting land, water, and forests is not merely an economic matter but a spiritual obligation, understood as part of worship. This awareness is reinforced by the role of religious leaders, customary figures, and Quranic study groups, which serve as nodes of solidarity. Thus, Wadas is not only a geographic location but also a meaningful socio-ecological space, where attachment to land and spiritual values shape collective identity and provide strength in facing the threat of extractivism.

The community's attachment to the land encompasses both economic and spiritual dimensions. This is embodied in the local concept of ngugemi, meaning the steadfast commitment to safeguarding ancestral land. Consequently, the introduction of andesite mining for the Bener Dam project is perceived not only as a threat to livelihood sources but also as the dispossession of a spiritual heritage that must be preserved. This condition has triggered agrarian conflict between villagers, the state, security forces, and the company, with women being among the most directly affected.

In the context of resistance, Islamic religious traditions in Wadas extend beyond spiritual practice, functioning as mechanisms for building social resilience. Practices such as mujahadah, Qur'anic study circles, and other religious rituals serve dual purposes: strengthening faith while also providing spaces for social consolidation that foster collective solidarity. From these spaces, the community particularly women derives moral and social energy to face the pressures of development in ways that are meaningful and rooted in faith.

Women organized under Wadon Wadas play a pivotal role in maintaining community cohesion. They manage food logistics, support communal kitchens, and disseminate the narrative of social dakwah that protecting the earth is part of hifz al-bi'ah (the preservation of God's creation). Accordingly, this study positions Wadon Wadas as a unique case: a rural Muslim community that integrates spirituality, local values, and care work into a resistance movement against extractivism. The following map illustrates the research site.



Source: Watchdoc and WALHI documents

Within the dialectics of development, the dominant position lies with the state, which promotes large-scale infrastructure projects rooted in extractivism, such as the Bener Dam and andesite mining in Wadas Village. The government frames development as a symbol of progress, water provision, and a driver of national economic growth. This narrative aligns with the paradigm of modern development that emphasizes capital accumulation and the control of natural resources. However, such a framework often neglects the social, ecological, and spiritual values that form the foundation of local community life.

In contrast, the Muslim women's movement Wadon Wadas emerged to resist andesite mining by offering an alternative interpretation of the meaning of development. For them, development is not merely infrastructure, but the interconnectedness of land, water, food, and generational continuity. Their resistance is rooted in ecological awareness as well as Islamic spirituality and local wisdom. Practices such as *mujahadah* (communal prayer) and the principle of *ngugemi* (holding firmly to ancestral land) constitute faith-based caring practices that cultivate community resilience and frame resistance as social *dakwah*. This perspective resonates with the literature on Islamic eco-theology, which emphasizes humanity's responsibility as *khalifah* (stewards) to safeguard ecological balance.

From the intersection of state development logic and local community defense emerges an alternative model that can be termed *eco-dakwah*: faith-based social *dakwah* grounded in ecological care. This model integrates Islamic values, community solidarity, and local wisdom into an environmental advocacy framework. Through *eco-dakwah*, the Wadon Wadas movement not only rejects extractivism but also reformulates sustainable development from a grassroots perspective, emphasizing food security, water preservation, and intergenerational justice. Thus, *dakwah* does not remain confined to the private moral sphere but evolves into a transformative religious praxis that engages with ecological advocacy.

A closer look at the roots of the Wadas conflict reveals several contributing factors. First, the dominance of a top-down development paradigm that prioritizes economic growth as the main indicator while marginalizing social, spiritual, and ecological aspects. Second, the hegemony of extractivism as a development model that privileges natural resource exploitation without regard to sustainability. Third, the marginalization of women and local communities in development decision-making processes, despite being the most directly affected. Fourth, the disconnection between Islamic values of ecological stewardship and development policy, where religion is often reduced to the private rather than the public sphere.

Several strands of critique emerge from this situation. First, a critique of the state, which continues to impose extractivist development despite the Islamic environmental ethics literature stressing the importance of ecological balance. Second, a critique of normative dakwah paradigms that prioritize individual moral concerns over structural issues such as environmental crises, thereby weakening the transformative potential of dakwah. Third, a critique of academia, where studies on dakwah and the environment frequently overlook the agency of Muslim women as key actors of change, even though their experiences offer new perspectives on faith-based ecological justice.

As possible pathways forward, several alternatives may be considered. First, strengthening the eco-dakwah model, which emphasizes the integration of faith, community solidarity, and ecological advocacy. Similar practices have proven effective, for instance, in green pesantren movements that develop environmental curricula. Second, fostering participatory development that places women and local communities as primary actors, as emphasized in the literature on gendered environmental governance. Third, reformulating the paradigm of Islamic development by highlighting maqasid al-shari'ah in terms of hifz al-bi'ah (environmental protection), not merely hifz al-mal (protection of wealth). Fourth, utilizing Islamic philanthropy as a tool for environmental conservation (green philanthropy) to support local advocacy. Fifth, expanding transnational networks of faith-based environmentalism so that local movements such as Wadon Wadas may be connected to global interfaith discourses on environmental justice.

This framework of critique and alternatives serves as an analytical lens to interpret the field data. Through the narratives of the informants, we can observe how spirituality, attachment to land, care practices, and the reinterpretation of sustainable development are manifested in everyday experiences. The following table presents selected excerpts from the informants' interviews:

Theme	Description	Direct Quotetation
Spirituality as a Source of Resilience	Mujahadah, prayers, and religious gatherings function as collective mechanisms to maintain inner peace, reduce fear, and build solidarity. Spirituality is understood as both a coping mechanism and a safe space for resistance strategies	WW-3: "The <i>mujahadah</i> (spiritual endeavor) is held every Wednesday night... The purpose is to ask for help from the Almighty and to strengthen each other." WW-2: "If it weren't for prayers, we might have been finished long ago. What keeps us strong is our belief that God will not remain silent." ED-3: "Thus far, religious and community leaders have played a significant role in helping to ease tensions. They are also the ones who gather the community, whether through religious studies or cultural activities. When these leaders speak, people are more receptive than when the government does
Ngugemi: Moral Legitimacy of Resistance	Land is conceived as a sacred ancestral heritage, a source of life, and a spiritual identity. Losing the land means losing their transcendental space, ancestral graves, and cosmological worldview. Resistance is thus understood as cosmological resistance	PW-4: "This land is an inheritance from my ancestors. As long as I am alive, I will never sell it. Here is where I plant, eat, and live." WW-1: "If the mining operations come in, everything will be devastated. The water springs could dry up, and the rice fields would be damaged. What will our children and grandchildren live on then?" ED-1: "That hill, Miss, holds a sacred spring... It's not just soil; it's the soul of our village. If it's lost, everything is lost."
Social Cohesion and Caring Practices	Women organize logistics, <i>bese</i> k (woven bamboo containers), and communal kitchens. Care work, initially confined to the domestic sphere, is transformed into the political infrastructure of the movement. Solidarity and mutual aid sustain collective resilience	WW-1: "In the beginning, we just helped with the cooking... but now we participate in meetings, discussions, create videos, and gather to weave <i>bese</i> k (traditional bamboo baskets) to show people that the community in Wadas can thrive without mining." WW-3: "At first, I just joined the gatherings to weave <i>bese</i> k and deliver meals... but over time, I felt the need to speak up as well." PW-1: "Women are usually the ones who take care of the home... but now we are the ones facing the security forces. At first, we were afraid, but we had to find our courage." PW-3: "...Life here is good as it is; the air is cool, and everyone knows each other. If the atmosphere changes, there's no guarantee we can live in peace again, you know." / "At this roadside stall, people often chat while buying cigarettes or coffee. Sometimes they just stop by briefly to ask how we're doing. ... Places like this are important for villagers, Miss. It helps us stay connected and see who's coming and going."

Theme	Description	Direct Quotetation
Eco-Dakwah: Environmental Advocacy as Worship	The environment is understood as God's trust ( <i>amanah</i> ). Resisting mining is regarded as an act of worship to safeguard God's creation. Ecological da'wah is expressed through prayers, religious symbols, murals, and collective actions	ED-2: "We are all Muslims, but our way of protecting nature is also a form of worship. These mountains and springs are a legacy from our ancestors, so damaging them feels like an act of betrayal." Observation, 2025: "Father Sky, Mother Earth," and "Mother Earth gives life; it is our duty, her children and grandchildren, to protect her."
Reinterpreting Sustainable Development from the Grassroots	True development is understood in terms of sustaining water, food, and future generations. Criticism is directed at modern development that disregards local knowledge and ecology	WW-1: "If the mining operations come in, everything will be devastated. The water springs could dry up, and the rice fields would be damaged. What will our children and grandchildren live on then?" WW-3: "In the past, the durian trees always bore fruit every year, but now they want to cut them all down." ED-1: "If we were to relocate, where would we go to pay our respects at the family graves, Miss? Our ancestors' graves are here... This land isn't just a place to live; we were born here, we grew up here, and our entire family is here."

Apart from the narratives of the informants, observational notes reveal how residents' everyday interactions serve as an important medium for strengthening social cohesion. For instance, the habit of gathering at local stalls to converse and exchange news not only maintains closeness but also nurtures a sense of togetherness. The researcher also directly witnessed collective prayers (*mujahadah*), which functioned not merely as spiritual practice but as a collective space for fostering solidarity and courage. In addition, the women of Wadon Wadas worked together to organize communal kitchens and weave *besek* (bamboo containers), which became an integral part of their grounded resistance strategies.



Location in front of PW-3 shop after the cassava harvest, while conducting an interview Source: Personal Documentation	Women weaving <i>beseq</i> (bamboo containers) at security posts Source: Solidaritas Perempuan Kinasih Documentation	Carrying an earthen jar filled with 27 Wadas springs during a protest Source: Wadon Wadas Documentation
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Observational notes also captured details not always articulated in the interviews, such as religious symbols painted in murals, collective prayers in the fields, and the routines of *gotong royong* that safeguarded the community from social fragmentation

		
Mural in Front of the Mosque, featuring natural and Islamic nuances (Image of a man wearing a <i>kopyah</i> and turban, along with depictions of natural wealth) Source: Personal Documentation	Njogo Alam iku Podo Koyo Sholat, Wajib Hukume. (Protecting nature is like performing prayer, it is an obligation) Source: Personal Documentation	Mural at the Women's Guard Post depicting Mother Earth as the life-giver, with water flowing from her hands Source: Personal Documentation

### Spirituality as a Source of Community Resilience

Spirituality within the Wadon Wadas movement occupies a central position as a source of community resilience amid mining-related conflict. Religious practices such as *mujahadah* (communal prayer), *istighosah*, and *slametan* are not merely ritualistic acts but are understood as collective spaces to strengthen the community's psychosocial bonds. These practices generate emotional energy and solidarity that sustain courage in the face of police intimidation and structural pressures. The trust cultivated among villagers through collective faith fosters the conviction that their struggle possesses spiritual legitimacy, making it less vulnerable to the state's development narrative or promises of material compensation.

This spiritual strength does not emerge in a vacuum but is reinforced by several supporting factors. Javanese Islamic traditions, for instance, integrate religious rituals with local cosmology, merging religion and culture within collective consciousness (Wekke, 2017).

The presence of religious leaders with moral authority further strengthens the movement's legitimacy, rendering resistance not only socio-political but also religious in nature. Additionally, theological beliefs regarding the spiritual reward of protecting the earth formulated in Islam as *hifdzul bi'ah* (environmental protection) provide a normative framework that caring for land and the environment is part of jihad against ecological destruction (*fasad*) (Saputra et al., 2021; UIN Salatiga Indonesia & Adhania, 2023).

In terms of virtues, spirituality has proven to provide both emotional resilience and collective endurance. (Norris et al., 2008) emphasize that community resilience is built not only on material resources but also on trust, meaning, and shared identity. Spirituality in Wadas offers a moral foundation that is difficult to destabilize by the logic of extractive capitalism, which reduces land to mere commodity. More broadly, spirituality provides a theological framework for an inclusive social *dakwah*, since resistance is understood not only for the sake of one group but also for the survival of humanity, the environment, and future generations.

Nevertheless, this spiritual dimension also carries limitations. Resistance that relies too heavily on religious symbols risks being perceived as merely symbolic if not accompanied by concrete structural actions. Moreover, spirituality may become exclusive if interpreted narrowly within the boundaries of a particular group, thus failing to engage actors outside the Muslim community. Hence, while spirituality constitutes a vital moral force, it requires bridges toward political strategies and policy advocacy so that it does not remain confined to the cultural domain (Hutchison, 2012; Zwissler, 2007).

Academically, these findings align with the literature on faith-based resilience, which demonstrates how faith functions as a psychological and social resource in facing crises. Similarly, the concept of Islamic eco-theology supports the argument that spirituality can serve as the foundation of a justice-oriented ecological movement. However, this approach diverges from secular perspectives that emphasize material resources as the primary basis of community resilience (Quddus, 2017). It is precisely the dialectic between the spiritual and material dimensions that highlights the uniqueness of the Wadon Wadas movement: their resistance is not merely rational-instrumental, but also cosmological and theological.

### *Ngugemi* as the Moral Legitimacy of Resistance

The concept of *ngugemi tanah* holding steadfast to ancestral land serves as a central moral foundation within the Wadon Wadas movement. For the villagers, land is not merely an economic asset but also a source of life, a spiritual space, and a symbol of collective identity.

When the women of Wadon Wadas resist mining, they are, in fact, affirming their emotional and spiritual bonds with ancestral land, which they regard both as God's trust and as a heritage to be safeguarded for future generations. Within the framework of place attachment theory (Adger, 2000), this emotional bond strengthens community resilience because land is understood not only as a physical space but also as a relational space that connects the past, present, and future.

Ngugemi tanah also embodies a deeper cosmological dimension. In Javanese agrarian tradition, land is perceived as the "mother of life" (*ibu bumi*), providing food, water, and living space. To reject mining, therefore, is to preserve ecological harmony while fulfilling a spiritual duty toward the earth. This finding resonates with the theory of cosmological resistance, which posits that resistance is driven not only by material interests but also by cosmologies and moral convictions rooted in human-nature relations (Walker et al., 2002). Thus, the legitimacy of Wadon Wadas' resistance extends beyond a claim to land rights, elevating it into an ecological ethic that frames environmental preservation as a collective *jihad*.

Nevertheless, the ngugemi narrative is not without challenges and critiques. On the one hand, strong attachment to land may be interpreted as a romanticization of locality, potentially overlooking broader political-economic realities. The state or corporations may dismiss ancestral land claims as "emotional claims" lacking formal legal weight, making them difficult to assert in legal or policy arenas. Moreover, there is a risk that the narrative remains confined to cultural attachment without articulating political strategies capable of challenging power structures. Such critiques highlight the need for ngugemi to move beyond cultural symbolism and to be linked with structural advocacy, such as land rights, ecological justice, and pro-community sustainable development policies.

Yet, when contrasted with the state's developmental narrative, which prioritizes extractive economic productivity, ngugemi offers an alternative vision of development. This perspective emphasizes food security, water conservation, and intergenerational justice as more substantive indicators of development than economic growth alone. Here lies the significance of the concept: it provides a counter-narrative that integrates spirituality, local wisdom, and ecological concern as the moral legitimacy of resistance (Subhilhar, 2022).

Accordingly, ngugemi can be interpreted as a form of eco-dakwah that connects faith with environmental advocacy. It functions as a bridge between local tradition and global discourses on ecological justice. However, to strengthen its transformative power, the concept must be advanced beyond the frame of romanticization toward concrete political strategies. It is precisely the dialectic between spiritual locality and political structures that renders

Wadon Wadas not merely a case of agrarian resistance but an alternative model of sustainable development rooted in faith, identity, and ecological solidarity.

#### Social Cohesion and Caring Practices

Care work constitutes a central dimension of the Wadon Wadas movement. Everyday activities such as organizing food logistics, preparing besek (bamboo containers), operating communal kitchens, and supporting one another among women may appear on the surface as traditional domestic labor. However, when examined more deeply, these practices represent the production of political and moral meaning. Care does not only sustain household survival but also maintains the community's capacity to endure repression. In the terms of care ethics theory, what was once considered "private care" has been redefined as public labor that nurtures social networks, absorbs trauma, and preserves the community's reproductive capacity (Tronto, 2020). Thus, care work in Wadas has transcended the domestic sphere and emerged as a strategy of social dakwah that safeguards everyday life.

The transformation of care work into political infrastructure occurs through two mechanisms. First, the functional mechanism: communal kitchens, weaving besek, and managing logistics fulfill material needs (food, warmth, mobility), enabling the masses to endure and collective action to persist. Contemporary literature categorizes such practices as forms of mutual aid or survival work solidarity-based labor that sustains politics when formal institutions fail or even become instruments of repression (Spade, 2020). Second, the symbolic-organizational mechanism: the routines of care generate safe social spaces, solidarity codes, and collective discipline, forming the infrastructure of the movement. The concept of care-as-infrastructure underscores that care functions like public infrastructure: supporting the daily operations of the movement while also building moral legitimacy and political cohesion (Alam & Houston, 2020).

This social cohesion is reinforced by cultural and religious values. Javanese traditions such as gotong royong (soyo/rewang) provide a normative framework that facilitates collective coordination, strengthens mutual trust, and accelerates crisis response (S & Maretha Ika Prajawati, 2021). These local values converge with Islamic spirituality emphasizing ukhuwah (brotherhood) and ta'awun (mutual assistance). Practices such as mujahadah (collective prayer), Qur'anic recitations, and communal meals are not only religious rituals but also spaces to reinforce emotional bonds while sustaining the spirit of resistance. This illustrates how care work integrates Islamic teachings, local traditions, and ecological awareness into a grounded and transformative practice of dakwah (Gilligan, 2009; Tronto, 2020).

However, the ambivalence within this transformation must also be noted. On the one hand, care work empowers women as social dakwah actors with the capacity to safeguard the community under repression. Their presence strengthens the movement's moral legitimacy, lowers the costs of participation, and enhances the public image of non-violent protest (S & Maretha Ika Prajawati, 2021). On the other hand, there is the risk of reproducing gendered burdens: care work continues to fall on women without formal recognition or compensation, rendering it unpaid and undervalued labor ("APSA Awards," 2018). Furthermore, if care practices are politicized merely as "temporary relief," their moral power risks being reduced to symbolic gestures rather than sustained structural demands (Spade, 2020).

A synthesis of these dynamics demonstrates that care work in Wadon Wadas holds a dual value: practical (meeting the community's basic needs) and political (building moral legitimacy, solidarity, and organizational infrastructure). From a social dakwah perspective, this represents a pragmatic model of eco-dakwah one in which dakwah is no longer limited to verbal preaching but manifests as the act of caring for life, defending environmental rights, and organizing community solidarity. Policy implications include: (1) the need for formal recognition of women's logistical and care labor; (2) advocacy strategies that link communal kitchens to structural issues such as food security and the redistribution of care work; and (3) the formation of cross-sector alliances to ensure that care practices serve as the basis for structural change rather than merely reproducing gender roles (Alam & Houston, 2020).

In this way, the Wadon Wadas experience expands the horizons of care ethics literature by situating it within the context of rural Muslim communities in agrarian conflict, while also enriching Islamic dakwah discourse as a transformative praxis rooted in care.

### Eco-Dakwah

The eco-dakwah framework developed by Wadon Wadas represents a significant shift from the conventional paradigm of Islamic dakwah. Traditionally, dakwah has been understood as the dissemination of religious messages through sermons, Friday khutbah, or study circles—activities that are primarily verbal and normative. Such a model tends to emphasize the theological dimension, focusing on the human–God relationship, while often neglecting ecological, social, and political concerns. In other words, conventional dakwah is predominantly theocentric and tends to overlook material and ecological contexts.

In contrast, eco-dakwah in Wadon Wadas asserts that dakwah does not end with speech but is embodied in concrete socio-ecological practices (Zulfikar, 2022). Spirituality (mujahadah, slametan, istighosah) is not merely ritualistic but functions as a moral resource

that energizes the community. Care work (logistics, communal kitchens, gender solidarity) transcends the domestic sphere to become a political instrument of resistance. Meanwhile, *ngugemi tanah* (upholding ancestral land) introduces an ecological foundation that links agrarian struggle with Islamic theology of humans as *khalifah fil-ardh* (stewards of the earth). Within this perspective, *dakwah* is understood as an act of worship integrated with the struggle to preserve the environment (*ḥifẓ al-bi'ah*).

The proposed eco-*dakwah* framework conceptualizes *dakwah* as a simultaneous practice: theological (spirituality), social praxis (care work), and legitimative-ecological (*ngugemi tanah*). These three pillars interact synergistically, transforming *dakwah* into a collective mobilization tool that not only conveys religious messages but also generates material capacities and moral legitimacy to resist extractivism. Conceptually, eco-*dakwah* situates faith as a source of meaning, care work as the social infrastructure enabling sustained action, and place attachment to land as the ethical foundation that binds local struggles to ecological justice.

When compared with the literature on eco-theology, this framework demonstrates both affinities and distinctiveness. Christian eco-theology, for instance, emphasizes the belief that nature is God's creation and must be preserved as an expression of spirituality (Siwy & Hutagalung, 2024). In Islam, a similar discourse has developed through *fiqh al-bi'ah*, which asserts that environmental preservation is part of the *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* (Falah, 2019). Eco-*dakwah* in Wadon Wadas affirms this perspective while adding a praxis dimension through social solidarity and women's care work. This is what distinguishes Wadon Wadas from eco-theological models that are more reflective: they transform it into a political infrastructure and a mode of community resistance.

Internally, spirituality functions as the moral foundation and a source of collective resilience. Its elements include communal religious practices (*mujahadah*, *istighosah*, *slametan*), shared faith that provides psychosocial energy, and belief norms that reinforce solidarity among villagers. Supporting factors include Javanese Islamic traditions that integrate ritual and local cosmology, the authority of religious leaders who provide moral legitimacy, and theological concepts such as *ḥifẓ al-bi'ah* and *khalifah fil-ardh* (Falah, 2019). The mechanism operates through collective rituals that produce shared meaning and reduce anxiety, thereby imbuing political participation with dual significance: as a secular demand and as the fulfillment of religious duty. The outcome is enhanced psychosocial endurance and sustained long-term participation (faith-based resilience).

Care work functions as the bridge that translates values into action; it is the “infrastructure” of the movement’s operations. Its elements include organizing food logistics (communal kitchens, *beseq*), reciprocal support networks among women, practices of caring for family and the environment as forms of social worship, and communal rituals that nurture togetherness. Supporting factors encompass Islamic values of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) and *ta’awun* (mutual assistance), rural *gotong royong* culture, and local experience in land stewardship fostering ecological care. Its mechanism operates by meeting material needs of participants (reducing participation barriers), building social capital (trust, norms of task distribution), and reinforcing the movement’s moral legitimacy in the public eye—rendering *dakwah* a socially relevant and practical action. However, this transformation also entails risks: the unrecognized burden of care may reproduce gender inequality if not accompanied by formal acknowledgment or compensation.

Meanwhile, *ngugemi tanah* serves as the legitimative pillar that connects political claims to ethical and epistemic claims rooted in local knowledge. Its elements include emotional attachment to ancestral land, understanding land as the source of life (water, food), and narratives of dignity and intergenerational responsibility that construct land as a sacred trust. Supporting factors encompass agrarian traditions, local genealogical narratives, and principles of intergenerational justice. Its mechanism works through place attachment and local cosmology, reconstructing land from an economic object into a moral subject; claims directed at the state or corporations thus demand not only economic compensation but also recognition of moral rights and ecological sustainability. The challenge arises when these moral claims confront legal and economic arenas that prioritize formal ownership or utilitarian values—therefore, *ngugemi* must be linked with land rights advocacy and robust ecological evidence.

Nevertheless, a critical dialectic emerges. On one side, *eco-dakwah* grounded in spirituality and care work strengthens social cohesion and community resilience. On the other, it risks being perceived as symbolic resistance if not accompanied by broader structural advocacy. Moreover, the disproportionate burden of care on women exposes an ambiguity: while the movement amplifies women’s political roles, it simultaneously reproduces existing gendered labor. This dialectic demonstrates that *eco-dakwah* is a contested space where spirituality, care, and agrarian politics are constantly negotiated.

Thus, *eco-dakwah* in Wadon Wadas expands the horizon of contemporary Islamic *dakwah*. It challenges the conventional, top-down model by offering a participatory, praxis-oriented, and contextual approach (Mughtar & Rijalul Alam, 2019). The interaction among its

three pillars produces a distinctive dynamic: spirituality provides normative legitimacy that motivates resilience; care work translates this motivation into logistical capacity and networks; *ngugemi tanah* ensures that demands remain anchored in material environmental concerns and intergenerational justice. Positive feedback loops reinforce these relations: collective rituals strengthen cohesion, enabling care work; effective care practices elevate the moral narrative of *ngugemi*; and ethical recognition of land amplifies the spiritual resonance of the movement.

In terms of theoretical and practical contributions, the eco-dakwah framework enriches literature on caring societies, faith-based resilience, and community-based environmental movements by presenting an integrative model: faith → care → place attachment → ecological advocacy (Affandi et al., 2022). Normatively, it reformulates the indicators of sustainable development not merely GDP or production, but local food security, water resource preservation, and intergenerational justice as measures of success. Policy implications include: (1) formal recognition of community care work (e.g., subsidies or compensation or supportive programs), (2) strengthening land rights through cultural-ecological evidence, and (3) involving local religious organizations in environmental policymaking.

Finally, this framework also leaves empirical boundaries and future research agendas. Empirically, its transferability must be tested in non-Javanese Islamic contexts or non-Muslim communities; longitudinal studies are required to assess the sustainability of care infrastructure; and intersectional analysis must be conducted to incorporate class, age, and internal political positions to understand who bears the highest cost of care. Methodologically, it recommends triangulation (in-depth interviews, participant observation, document or archival analysis), layered thematic analysis (open → axial → selective), and cross-community comparative studies to assess the enabling and limiting conditions of eco-dakwah.

In sum, the eco-dakwah framework illustrates how three components complement each other: spirituality provides moral legitimacy, care work serves as social infrastructure, and *ngugemi tanah* introduces an ecological foundation. Their integration generates a model of dakwah that is not merely verbal but deeply socio-ecological in practice. Unlike conventional dakwah models that are often theocentric and symbolic, eco-dakwah in Wadon Wadas emphasizes the interconnectedness of faith, care, and ecology as the basis of struggle.

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