

Reconstructing Global Civilization: Perspectives on Power and Knowledge in the Implementation of Sharia in Aceh

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Abstract

The implementation of Islamic law in Aceh presents a unique phenomenon, showcasing the integration of religious norms and customary law in fostering social stability and an ethical, justice-based civilization. Although Aceh has an established Islamic legal framework governed by qanun (Islamic by-laws), this study finds that customary law continues to play a vital role in contextualizing the implementation of sharia in accordance with local social conditions. This research aims to analyze the synergy between religious norms and local wisdom and their impact on social stability, cultural identity, and societal tolerance in Aceh. Using a qualitative approach with a critical phenomenological method, the study was conducted in three key regions Banda Aceh, Aceh Besar, and Lhokseumawe through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis. The findings reveal that the interaction between sharia and customary law in Aceh creates a flexible legal system in which dispute resolution mechanisms prioritize customary deliberation before resorting to formal legal processes. Social stability is also maintained through religious practices and the role of ulama in fostering communal harmony. This study highlights that Aceh's ethical and justice-based civilization is shaped by a balance between religious values and local culture, resulting in an adaptive and sustainable social system.

Keywords: *Sharia, customary law, social stability, ethics, justice, Aceh.*

Abstrak

Penerapan syariat Islam di Aceh merupakan fenomena unik yang menunjukkan integrasi antara norma agama dan hukum adat dalam membangun stabilitas sosial serta peradaban berbasis etika dan keadilan. Meskipun Aceh memiliki sistem hukum

Islam yang diatur dalam qanun syariah, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa hukum adat tetap memainkan peran penting dalam menyesuaikan implementasi syariah agar lebih kontekstual dengan kondisi sosial masyarakat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana sinergi antara norma agama dan kearifan lokal terbentuk serta dampaknya terhadap stabilitas sosial, identitas budaya, dan toleransi masyarakat Aceh. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode fenomenologi kritis, penelitian ini dilakukan di tiga wilayah utama, yaitu Banda Aceh, Aceh Besar, dan Lhokseumawe, melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, serta analisis dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa interaksi antara syariah dan adat di Aceh menciptakan sistem hukum yang fleksibel, di mana mekanisme penyelesaian sengketa masih mengutamakan musyawarah adat sebelum melibatkan hukum formal. Stabilitas sosial juga dipertahankan melalui praktik keagamaan dan peran ulama dalam membangun harmoni sosial. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa peradaban berbasis etika dan keadilan di Aceh terbentuk melalui keseimbangan antara nilai agama dan budaya lokal, menciptakan sistem sosial yang adaptif dan berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: Syariah, Hukum Adat, Stabilitas Sosial, Etika, Keadilan, Aceh.

INTRODUCTION

Aceh, a province in Indonesia, is a unique in its implementation of sharia law, which is integrated with local customs and traditions. Since the signing of the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding in 2005, Aceh has been granted special autonomy, allowing for the broader application of Islamic law, including in economic and social domains¹. The interaction between religious norms and customary law in Aceh has become a crucial topic in understanding the region's social and cultural dynamics².

The implementation of sharia in Aceh extends beyond legal aspects, incorporating long-standing local cultural values that have shaped community life³. This integration is evident in various religious and customary traditions, such as *kenduri adat* (customary feasts) and *pengajian dayah* (Islamic boarding school teachings), where Islamic principles are blended with local

¹ Hasnil Basri Siregar, 'Islamic Law in a National Legal System: A Study on the Implementation of *Shari'ah* in Aceh, Indonesia', *Asian Journal of Comparative Law* 3 (2008): 1–26, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S2194607800000156>.

² Fajri M. Kasim and Abidin Nurdin, 'Study of Sociological Law on Conflict Resolution Through Adat in Aceh Community According to Islamic Law', *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 4, no. 2 (December 2020): 375, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v4i2.8231>.

³ Ria Delta and Erina Pane, 'The Implementation of Islamic Qanun Law in the Modern Aceh Society', paper presented at 1st Raden Intan International Conference on Muslim Societies and Social Sciences (RIICMuSSS 2019), 2020, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.201113.037>; Hasnil Basri Siregar, 'Lessons Learned from the Implementation of Islamic Shari'ah Criminal Law in Aceh, Indonesia', *Journal of Law and Religion* 24, no. 1 (2008): 143–76, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S074808140000196X>.

custom⁴. Furthermore, the concept of the Islamic Smart City in Banda Aceh exemplifies the synergy between modern technology and traditional wisdom, demonstrating that technological advancements can coexist with cultural and religious values⁵.

Despite the successful integration of religious norms and local wisdom, challenges remain in maintaining this balance. One of the key issues is ensuring that the implementation of sharia does not overshadow the deeply rooted local wisdom that forms an integral part of Acehese cultural identity⁶. A common solution proposed is to strengthen the role of traditional institutions and religious leaders in decision-making processes to foster harmony between religious norms and local traditions⁷.

Previous studies have highlighted the critical role of traditional institutions in Aceh, such as keuchik (village heads)⁸, tuha peut (village council members)⁹, and imeum meunasah (community religious leaders)¹⁰, in resolving conflicts based on local wisdom. These institutions employ a deliberative approach that emphasizes consensus and communal decision-making, enabling conflict resolution without the need for formal legal channels¹¹. This underscores the idea that integrating religious norms with local wisdom can serve as an effective mechanism for maintaining social harmony¹².

⁴ Abdul Manan and Muhammad Arifin, 'CULTURAL TRADITIONS IN DEATH RITUALS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY OF PIDIE, ACEH, INDONESIA', *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 43, no. 1 (December 2019): 130, <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v43i1.670>.

⁵ Muhammad Fazil, Asrul Fahmi, and Afia Riski, 'Digital Literacy in Building a Smart City at Banda Aceh', *International Journal of Engineering, Science and Information Technology* 2, no. 4 (November 2022): 55–60, <https://doi.org/10.52088/ijesty.v2i4.324>; Istiqamah and Herlily, 'Islamic Representation and Urban Space in Banda Aceh: Linking the Social and Spatial', *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* 126 (March 2018): 012205, <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/126/1/012205>; Putri Ghina Marla, Said Musnadi, and M. Shabri, 'The Role of Financial Technology in Mediating the Influence of Islamic Financial Literacy on Islamic Financial Inclusion in Banda Aceh City', *International Journal of Scientific and Management Research* 06, no. 07 (2023): 231–38, <https://doi.org/10.37502/IJSMR.2023.6714>.

⁶ *miah Peuradeun* 12, no. 3 (September 2024): 1263, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v12i3.1363>; Syamsuar Syamsuar et al., 'Settlement of Islamic Sharia Violations in the Perspective of Teungku Dayah and Local Wisdom Values on the West Coast of Aceh', *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 11, no. 3 (September 2023): 985–1004, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v11i3.995>.

⁷ akoty, 'Ecology, Sustainability and Traditional Wisdom', *Journal of Cleaner Production* 172 (January 2018): 3215–24, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2017.11.036>.

⁸ Hazar Kusmayanti and Efa Laela Fakhriah, 'The Practice of Dispute Resolution in Aceh's Traditional Justice', *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change* 10, no. 3 (2019): 154–68.

⁹ Aulia Rahman et al., 'Inheritance of the Value of Peace in Post-Conflict Areas Based on Indigenous Knowledge', *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 15 (2023): 6402–15, <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v15i4.4260>.

¹⁰ Nurdin et al., 'The Implementation of Meunasah-Based Sharia in Aceh: A Social Capital and Islamic Law Perspective', *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 5, no. 2 (December 2021): 760, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v5i2.10710>.

¹¹ blics: Deliberative Designs and Their Consequences', in *Deliberation, Participation and Democracy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2007), 159–83, https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230591080_8.

¹² Agung Gede Agung et al., 'Local Wisdom as a Model of Interfaith Communication in Creating Religious Harmony in Indonesia', *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 9 (2024): 100827, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.100827>.

While existing research has explored the integration of religious norms and local wisdom in Aceh, gaps remain in understanding how this integration operates in daily practice. Most studies have focused on normative and institutional aspects, with less attention given to the dynamics at the community and individual levels¹³. Additionally, modernization and technological advancements pose new challenges in preserving the synergy between religion and tradition. Few studies have examined how Acehnese society adapts to these changes and how traditional and religious values are integrated into the modern context¹⁴.

This study aims to provide an in-depth analysis of how religious norms and local wisdom interact in Acehnese society, particularly in everyday community practices. It seeks to explore how Acehnese people maintain and adapt their traditional and religious values in response to modernization and technological advancements.

The novelty of this study lies in its holistic approach, combining normative analysis with empirical field observations. By doing so, this research hopes to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamic integration between religious norms and local wisdom in Aceh. Furthermore, it aims to contribute new perspectives on preserving cultural and religious identity amidst the pressures of globalization. The study will examine the role of traditional institutions and religious leaders, the influence of cultural and religious practices, and community responses to modernization challenges.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a critical phenomenological method, as outlined by Creswell,¹⁵ to explore the interaction between religious norms and customary law in shaping social stability, ethical values, and a justice-based civilization in Aceh. The research was conducted in three key regions Banda Aceh, Aceh Besar, and Lhokseumawe selected for their representativeness in sharia implementation, over a four-month period from September to December 2024.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted with religious scholars (ulama), traditional leaders, academics, policymakers, and community representatives to understand how Islamic

¹³ Khairul Amin, 'Pengaruh Konflik Terhadap Pembangunan Pendidikan Di Aceh', *Nazḥruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 2 (August 2018): 159–76, <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v1i2.45>

¹⁴ Mardan Umar et al., 'Transforming of Moderate Character Education in Islamic Educational Institutions', *Nazḥruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 1 (March 2024): 171–88, <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v7i1.4168>.

¹⁵ J. W. Creswell and J. D. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (SAGE Publications, 2017).

law and local customs interact in daily life. Observations were carried out to document religious and customary activities, such as the implementation of qanun (Islamic regulations), traditional dispute resolution processes, and religious rituals that contribute to social stability. Additionally, relevant documents including qanun regulations, local government policies, academic literature, and research reports were analyzed to provide further context.

The collected data were analyzed following the framework of Miles and Huberman,¹⁶ consisting of four stages: data collection, condensation, display, and conclusion drawing. First, information was systematically gathered through interviews, observations, and document reviews. Then, the data were refined by filtering, focusing, and simplifying them to align with the research objectives. Next, the data were organized into descriptive narratives that illustrate the patterns and relationships between Islamic law and customary practices in Aceh. Finally, conclusions were drawn by identifying recurring themes, interpreting patterns, and cross-referencing findings with existing theories and previous research. To ensure data validity and reliability, this study employed triangulation by comparing findings from multiple sources, including interviews, observations, and document analysis. This methodological approach provides a comprehensive understanding of how sharia and local wisdom coexist, influencing Aceh's legal and social systems while ensuring their adaptability to contemporary challenges.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The Synergy Between Islamic Law and Customary Law in Aceh

The implementation of sharia law in Aceh is not solely based on religious norms but is also deeply rooted in local wisdom. Customary legal traditions, such as deliberation (musyawarah) in conflict resolution, have blended with Islamic legal principles, creating a legal system that is more adaptive to the social values of the community. This integration allows sharia to be applied in a way that aligns with Acehnese traditions while maintaining its core religious principles.

The interaction between sharia and customary law is particularly evident in the handling of disputes, where community members often prioritize traditional mediation before resorting to formal legal procedures. Customary institutions, such as village leaders (keuchik) and religious figures (ulama), play an essential role in resolving conflicts through consensus-based decision-

¹⁶ M. B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook* (2015).

making. This approach not only reinforces the legitimacy of sharia but also strengthens social cohesion by fostering a sense of collective responsibility.

A striking example of this integration can be observed in the enforcement of qanun (Islamic regulations), such as corporal punishment for certain offenses. While the legal execution of such punishments follows sharia, community involvement in the process reflects the influence of customary law in legitimizing these practices. Public participation in legal proceedings serves as a form of social control, reinforcing communal support for the implementation of Islamic law.

The enforcement of sharia in Aceh is often conducted in public settings, reflecting both legal and social dimensions of religious law. The image below illustrates a corporal punishment session carried out in accordance with qanun regulations.



Figure 1 Public Caning as a Form of Sharia Law Enforcement in Aceh. Caning as a Form of Sharia Law Enforcement in Aceh. (Source: CNN Indonesia).

In Figure 1, a masked executioner dressed in brown administers a caning sentence to an offender in compliance with Aceh's qanun. The individual receiving the punishment stands before the executioner while being closely monitored by security personnel and community representatives. The presence of onlookers, some of whom are capturing the event on mobile devices, highlights the role of public participation in upholding religious law. This scene underscores the complex relationship between religious law, customary practices, and societal expectations in Aceh.

From a cultural perspective, community involvement in legal enforcement reflects the role of customary norms in legitimizing sharia practices. Historically, Acehnese society has relied

on collective mechanisms to maintain legal and social order. By witnessing legal proceedings, the public serves as a form of social oversight, reinforcing the ethical and deterrent aspects of sharia law.

Social Stability, Cultural Identity, and Religious Tolerance in Aceh

Religious practices in Aceh serve not only as expressions of spirituality but also as crucial social mechanisms that reinforce community stability, cultural identity, and intergroup tolerance. Figure 2 illustrates a traditional *pengajian* (Islamic study session) held in a mosque and a traditional gathering hall (*balai adat*), where members of the community come together to deepen their understanding of Islamic teachings under the guidance of an ulama. This practice reflects the integration of religious education with communal values, fostering a sense of solidarity and respect for local traditions.



Figure 2 Traditional *Pengajian* in Aceh as a Medium for Social Interaction in Religious Learning.
(Source: Dayah Mudi Mesra).

From a social stability perspective, religious gatherings such as *pengajian* play a fundamental role in strengthening communal bonds by fostering a shared sense of belonging and instilling moral values that promote social harmony. The participation of students (*santri*) and congregants from diverse backgrounds underscores the role of religious education in bridging social divides and mitigating potential conflicts through the reinforcement of ethical and moral principles.

Culturally, *pengajian* sessions held in *balai adat* symbolize the interconnection between Islam and Acehnese heritage. The use of traditional attire, the oral-based teaching methods, and the central role of ulama as community leaders highlight how Islamic teachings have seamlessly

assimilated into local customs. The continuity of this practice across generations demonstrates how religious activities serve as a vital means of preserving Acehnese cultural identity.

From a tolerance perspective, the image illustrates how religious traditions in Aceh extend beyond the purification of Islamic teachings to promote openness and mutual respect within the community. The inclusive nature of *pengajian*, accessible to individuals from all social backgrounds, reflects how religious education functions not only as a moral guide but also as a platform for fostering dialogue and inclusivity among community members.

Civilization Based on Ethics and Justice in Aceh

This study finds that Aceh has developed a civilization rooted in ethics and justice across various social, legal, economic, and educational dimensions. The implementation of sharia law in Aceh is not merely a legal instrument but an integral part of a broader social system that prioritizes moral values and community well-being. The principle of justice is reflected not only in legal practices but also in economic distribution, character education, and governance structures that involve religious scholars (ulama) and traditional leaders.

In the legal system, the enforcement of qanun (Islamic regulations) emphasizes justice by balancing punitive measures with moral rehabilitation. While certain legal practices, such as caning, have drawn international attention, this study finds that Aceh's legal framework is not solely punitive but also incorporates educational and social reintegration programs for offenders.

From an economic perspective, Aceh has established a financial system based on social justice, primarily through zakat (almsgiving), infaq (voluntary charity), and waqf (endowments). These mechanisms aim to reduce economic disparities by ensuring a fairer distribution of wealth. In practice, Islamic social funds are allocated to support education, public welfare, and community-based economic empowerment initiatives.

In the field of education, ethical and justice-based values are integrated into the Islamic education system, which focuses not only on religious knowledge but also on social morality. Sharia-based schools in Aceh play a crucial role in shaping individuals who are not only knowledgeable in Islamic teachings but also deeply aware of justice in both personal and societal contexts.

Governance in Aceh also reflects the integration of religious and cultural values, with ulama and traditional leaders playing a vital role in maintaining social stability. Decision-making processes emphasize *musyawarah* (deliberation), ensuring that conflict resolution is approached

through peaceful negotiation rather than strictly legal channels. This mechanism demonstrates the synergy between religious norms and local traditions in upholding social justice. The findings of this study are summarized in the following table:

Table 1. Civilization Based on Ethics and Justice in Aceh

No.	Key Aspect	Research Findings
1.	Legal System	The implementation of Qanun (Islamic law) balances punitive measures with moral education.
2	Equitable Economy	The Sharia compliant financial system, based on zakat and waqf, promotes equitable wealth distribution and social welfare.
3	Ethics-Based Education	Islamic education fosters character development grounded in strong moral and social values.
4	Governance and Social Order	Religious scholars (ulama) and traditional leaders play a crucial role in maintaining social stability through consultative mechanisms (musyawarah).

(Source: Interview Tgk. Hadie Subulana, S.Pd, 17 November 2024)

The table highlights key aspects of Aceh’s ethical and justice-based civilization. The legal system is not solely repressive but incorporates moral development. Economic justice is achieved through zakat and waqf distribution, reducing social inequalities. Islamic education serves as a foundation for nurturing morally upright and principled individuals. Additionally, governance in Aceh continues to rely on *musyawarah* as the primary conflict resolution mechanism, reinforcing the idea that religious law and local traditions can work together to create a balanced and harmonious society.

Analysis

The implementation of sharia law in Aceh is not merely a legal framework but a deeply embedded socio-cultural phenomenon. Rather than operating as a rigid system, sharia in Aceh

has evolved through its integration with local traditions, creating a distinctive legal model that balances religious principles with customary practices. This study reinforces the idea that Islamic law is not monolithic; instead, it adapts to the social and cultural realities of the communities in which it is applied.

Findings from this research align with the argument that sharia law, when implemented in diverse cultural settings, does not exist in isolation but interacts with pre-existing social structures. A previous study¹⁷ has highlighted that the application of sharia varies significantly across different regions, shaped by the historical, cultural, and political landscapes of each society. The case of Aceh demonstrates how religious and customary laws can be harmonized to form a legal system that is both legitimate and adaptable.

One of the most evident manifestations of this integration is the role of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. Unlike formal legal systems that emphasize punitive measures, Aceh's legal landscape prioritizes reconciliation through *musyawarah* (deliberation) and the involvement of customary leaders. This aligns with the broader concept of "adaptive sharia," where Islamic law evolves in response to local customs while maintaining its core ethical and theological principles.

Another significant finding of this study is the crucial role played by religious leaders (ulama) and traditional institutions in sustaining social harmony. These figures do not merely function as moral guides but also act as mediators in legal and communal disputes. Their authority, rooted in both religious doctrine and local customs, enables them to bridge the gap between formal sharia law and community-based conflict resolution methods.

This study builds on existing research,¹⁸ which suggests that societies with strong traditional leadership structures are more resilient to social fragmentation. The effectiveness of Aceh's sharia implementation can be partially attributed to the active engagement of ulama and community leaders, who ensure that legal decisions remain contextually appropriate and culturally sensitive.

Beyond legal enforcement, sharia in Aceh also plays a role in promoting social justice, particularly through its economic principles. Islamic financial mechanisms such as zakat (almsgiving), infaq (voluntary charity), and waqf (endowments) serve as tools for redistributing

¹⁷ A. H. Asari Taufiqurrohman et al., 'The Role of Islamic Law, Constitution, and Culture in Democracy in the UAE and Indonesia', *AHKAM: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 24, no. 1 (June 2024), <https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v24i1.33155>.

¹⁸ Dewa Agung Gede Agung et al., 'Local Wisdom as a Model of Interfaith Communication in Creating Religious Harmony in Indonesia', *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 9 (2024): 100827, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.100827>.

wealth and addressing socio-economic inequalities. These systems align with the principles of Islamic finance, which emphasize ethical economic practices and social responsibility.¹⁹

Earlier studies Ali,²⁰ have shown that regions implementing Islamic economic models tend to exhibit lower income inequality and greater financial inclusivity. This research supports such claims, as Aceh's zakat and waqf institutions have been effective in funding social welfare programs, including education, healthcare, and poverty alleviation initiatives. However, challenges remain in ensuring efficient distribution and management of these financial resources, which requires ongoing institutional reforms.

While the integration of sharia and local traditions has proven to be a stabilizing force, Aceh is not immune to the challenges posed by modernization and globalization. The increasing influence of digital technology and global economic shifts raises questions about how Acehese society can preserve its religious and cultural values in a rapidly changing world.

Unlike more rigid implementations of sharia seen in some other regions, Aceh has demonstrated adaptability in responding to contemporary challenges. The emergence of initiatives such as the Islamic Smart City concept in Banda Aceh²¹ reflects an effort to integrate modern governance with Islamic values. However, further research is needed to assess how technological advancements will impact the socio-religious dynamics of Acehese society.

Moreover, while sharia remains widely accepted within Aceh, there are ongoing debates regarding its application, particularly in relation to human rights and gender equality. Scholars such as Ilyas et al.²² have argued that localized implementations of Islamic law require continuous evaluation to ensure they align with principles of justice and inclusivity. This study supports the notion that sharia must remain flexible and open to reinterpretation in response to evolving societal needs.

This research contributes to the broader academic discourse on Islamic law by offering a case study of sharia contextualization in a multicultural society. The findings reinforce the idea

¹⁹ Mabid Ali Al-Jarhi, 'An Economic Theory of Islamic Finance', *ISRA International Journal of Islamic Finance* 9, no. 2 (2017): 117–32, <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijif-07-2017-0007>.

²⁰ Khalifah Muhamad Ali et al., 'Enhancing The Role of Zakat and Waqf on Social Forestry Program in Indonesia', *Economica: Jurnal Ekonomi Islam* 12, no. 1 (July 2021): 1–26, <https://doi.org/10.21580/economica.2021.12.1.6657>.

²¹ Muhammad Fazil, Asrul Fahmi, and Aflia Riski, 'Digital Literacy in Building a Smart City at Banda Aceh', *International Journal of Engineering, Science and Information Technology* 2, no. 4 (November 2022): 55–60, <https://doi.org/10.52088/ijesty.v2i4.324>.

²² Ilyas Ilyas et al., 'The Accommodation of Customary Law to Islamic Law: Distribution of Inheritance in Aceh from a Pluralism Perspectives', *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 7, no. 2 (May 2023): 897, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v7i2.15650>.

that sharia is not a static legal system but rather a dynamic framework capable of adapting to local traditions and contemporary challenges.

One theoretical implication of this study is the development of the "Adaptive Sharia Model," which suggests that successful implementation of Islamic law depends on its ability to engage with and incorporate indigenous legal traditions. This model builds upon previous research Hasan²³ that emphasizes the importance of cultural flexibility in Islamic jurisprudence. Additionally, this study introduces the concept of "Religious-Based Social Capital," expanding on the Social Capital Theory.²⁴ It argues that religious institutions in Aceh function not only as spiritual centers but also as networks of trust and conflict resolution, reinforcing social cohesion and legal legitimacy.

The integration of sharia and customary law in Aceh has resulted in a legal and social system that is uniquely adaptive, balancing religious principles with cultural traditions. This study highlights how Acehnese society has successfully maintained social stability, economic justice, and legal legitimacy through the collaborative efforts of religious scholars, traditional leaders, and policymakers.

However, as Aceh continues to navigate modernization, new challenges will emerge. Future research should explore how digitalization, economic globalization, and evolving societal values influence the long-term sustainability of sharia governance. Additionally, comparative studies with other regions that implement Islamic law could provide deeper insights into the factors that contribute to the success or failure of localized sharia models.

Overall, this study underscores the importance of a flexible and context-sensitive approach to Islamic law one that remains true to its ethical foundations while adapting to contemporary realities. The Aceh experience serves as a valuable case study for understanding how sharia can coexist with cultural traditions and modern governance, providing lessons for other Muslim-majority societies seeking to balance religion, law, and social progress.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of sharia law in Aceh is a dynamic process that integrates religious principles with local customs, ensuring legal adaptability while preserving social harmony. This

²³ Samiul Hasan, 'Islamic Jurisprudence: Sources and Traditions Creating Diversity in Human Relationships', in *The Muslim World in the 21st Century* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2012), 23–42, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-2633-8_2.

²⁴ Julia Häuberer, *Social Capital Theory* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-92646-9>.

study highlights how customary law actively shapes sharia application, particularly through community-based dispute resolution and the influential role of ulama and traditional leaders. Beyond legal enforcement, sharia in Aceh fosters social stability, cultural identity, and economic equity through mechanisms like zakat, infaq, and waqf. However, challenges remain in optimizing resource distribution and balancing religious governance with modernization. Future research should explore the broader socio-economic impacts and sustainability of this integration. Aceh's model demonstrates that sharia can coexist with cultural traditions while adapting to contemporary realities, emphasizing the need for flexibility and inclusivity in its ongoing implementation.

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