

***Mawah* as a Religiously Embedded Economic Institution in Aceh: A Durkheimian Account of Selective Adaptation**

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Abstract

Traditional religious-economic institutions face increasing pressure from modernization and globalization, yet their persistence continues to complicate classical secularization theories. *Mawah*, a centuries-old Islamic profit-sharing system in Aceh, provides an important case for examining how religion remains embedded in economic life. This study analyzes *mawah* as both a religious and economic institution through Durkheim's functionalist theory, focusing on its persistence, transformation, and contemporary relevance as an Islamic economic alternative. This study employed a qualitative case study design with ethnographic elements, conducted in Pidie Jaya and Aceh Besar districts. Data were collected through focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, and direct observations, complemented by recent scholarly literature. Analysis combined inductive coding with Durkheim's concepts of solidarity, ritual, and collective effervescence, alongside Islamic jurisprudential principles such as *al-'adah muhakkamah* (custom as a source of law). This study found that *mawah* persists as a post-secular institution through selective adaptation. Agricultural practices demonstrate rationalization tendencies, often resembling contractual arrangements, yet still operate within Islamic ethical frameworks of justice, trust, and collective welfare. By contrast, livestock-based *mawah* retains strong ritual dimensions through communal prayers, shared meals, and religious mediation, exemplifying collective effervescence. Trust networks rooted in religious authority and community membership remain central, providing moral legitimacy that purely instrumental arrangements cannot offer. This study contributes to sociology of religion by showing that religious institutions adapt through differential secularization rather than uniform decline. For policymakers, *mawah* illustrates how culturally grounded Islamic economic institutions can strengthen local development strategies while preserving social solidarity and religious authenticity.

Keywords: *Durkheim, functionalism, Islamic economics, mawah, profit-sharing, Aceh*

A. Introduction

Religion functions beyond a system of spiritual beliefs, operating as a fundamental social institution that profoundly influences human behavior, collective identity, and community solidarity. Emile Durkheim (1912), a

foundational figure in sociology, emphasized that religion serves as the moral foundation of society, binding individuals through rituals, sacred values, and shared practices. In this framework, the study of religion cannot be divorced from the socio-economic practices embedded within specific communities. Aceh, with its deeply rooted Islamic identity, presents a compelling case where religion operates not merely as a belief system but as a comprehensive cultural and economic framework, particularly through the practice of *mawah*, a traditional profit-sharing system in agriculture and livestock.

Mawah represents more than a simple economic transaction; it constitutes a religiously infused institution grounded in Islamic values such as justice (*'adl*), trust (*amanah*), and collective welfare (*maslahah*). This system has been practiced in Aceh since the 16th century, functioning as a community-based mechanism for resource distribution and economic inequality reduction (Maghfirah, 2020). Previous research has identified *mawah* as a local adaptation of Islamic contractual forms such as *mudharabah* or *musaqah*, characterized by risk-sharing between capital owners (*saweu*) and managers (*peuteumeung* or *peuteumuen*) (Abdurrahman, 2015). This integration of religion into economic practices aligns with Durkheim's proposition that social institutions exist to maintain solidarity and regulate collective life.

Despite its historical continuity, *mawah* practice has undergone significant transformation. Recent studies indicate that in agricultural contexts, *mawah* is increasingly conflated with the *gala* or charter system, reducing its religious dimensions and framing it as a purely contractual arrangement (Mukhtasar & Syahputra, 2020). Conversely, in livestock management, religious and traditional elements remain more strongly preserved (Nouval et al., 2021). This divergence reveals tension between traditional religious-economic systems and forces of modernization, globalization, and capitalist penetration, which often marginalize communal practices in favor of individualistic or market-driven logics.

Scholarly interest in *mawah* has intensified over the past five years, with emerging literature highlighting its relevance as an Islamic economic alternative. Hasan et al. (2020) demonstrate the alignment between *mawah* practices and sharia accounting principles, reinforcing its legitimacy as an Islamic economic practice. Similarly, studies have emphasized how *mawah* empowers rural communities and contributes significantly to local economic resilience. This growing body of work suggests a positive trend in framing *mawah* not merely as cultural tradition but as a viable socio-economic model integrating religious ethics into everyday economic life.

However, a critical theoretical gap persists. Existing studies on *mawah* predominantly adopt economic, legal, or anthropological perspectives, often neglecting its theoretical significance within the sociology of religion,

particularly in relation to classical sociological theories. While communal solidarity reinforcement is acknowledged, few analyses explicitly situate this practice within Durkheim's functionalism or connect it to broader sociological debates on religion's function in modern society. The functionalist perspective provides a crucial lens, illuminating how religion operates not only as belief systems but as institutional forces that structure economic practices, sustain trust, and strengthen collective identity (Durkheim, 1912).

Contemporary sociology of religion increasingly grapples with modernization and secularization implications, which often erode religion's role in public life (Lehmann, 2014). *Mawah* provides an empirical site to examine whether and how religiously based institutions can survive, adapt, and remain functional amid globalization pressures. This raises critical questions about tradition-modernity relationships: Does *mawah* retain relevance in urban Acehnese contexts, or has it been relegated to rural peripheries? Do younger generations perceive *mawah* as outdated, or can it be revitalized as an Islamic social economy model? These questions highlight the urgency of situating *mawah* within theoretical debates while responding to empirical practice shifts.

Against this backdrop, this study integrates Durkheim's functionalism with Islamic socio-economic thought to analyze *mawah* as both religious and economic institution. Two theoretical anchors guide this integration. First, Durkheim's notion of the sacred and profane provides a framework for understanding how rituals associated with *mawah*—such as communal prayers or feasts at agreement initiation—imbue economic practices with religious meaning, transforming them into sacred acts of solidarity (Durkheim, 1912). Second, Durkheim's emphasis on social cohesion allows interpreting *mawah* as a mechanism that binds individuals together, reduces inequalities, and nurtures trust-based cooperation. Simultaneously, Islamic legal maxims such as *al-'adah muhakkamah* (custom as legal source) demonstrate *mawah*'s continuity within sharia-based jurisprudence, underscoring its legitimacy in both classical and contemporary contexts (Arrosid & Kholis, 2021).

This research positions *mawah* at the intersection of classical sociology and Islamic economics, addressing a critical theoretical and empirical gap. By combining field evidence from focus group discussions and interviews in Pidie Jaya and Aceh Besar with recent literature (2020-2024), the study seeks to demonstrate that *mawah* remains a living institution capable of sustaining social solidarity amid socio-economic transformation. Specifically, the research addresses three key questions: (1) How does Durkheim's functionalism explain *mawah*'s persistence and transformation? (2) In what ways do Acehnese communities today understand and practice *mawah* across agricultural and livestock sectors? (3) How can *mawah* serve as a resilient Islamic economic alternative amid capitalist globalization penetration?

B. Method

This study adopted a qualitative case study approach within the sociology of religion framework, applying Durkheim's functionalist theory to examine *mawah* as both a religious and economic institution. The qualitative design was chosen to capture the symbolic meanings, ritual practices, and trust-based relationships that extend beyond economic exchange and cannot be adequately explored through quantitative methods. Fieldwork was conducted in Pidie Jaya and Aceh Besar, two districts purposively selected because of their active practice of *mawah* in both agriculture and livestock. Data collection combined two focus group discussions with practitioners, twelve semi-structured interviews with farmers, livestock owners, community leaders, religious scholars, and younger participants, as well as direct observations of initiation rituals, harvest-sharing events, and dispute resolution processes. These primary data were complemented by secondary sources from recent studies to situate findings within broader scholarly debates.

Data analysis employed a thematic approach, beginning with inductive coding of transcripts and notes, followed by interpretation through Durkheim's concepts of solidarity, ritual, and collective effervescence. Islamic jurisprudential principles, particularly *al-'adah muhakkamah* (custom as a source of law), were also incorporated to assess the continuing legitimacy of *mawah* within sharia-based frameworks. Triangulation across interviews, FGDs, observations, and literature enhanced the study's validity and reliability, ensuring that both emic perspectives from participants and theoretical insights from sociology and Islamic economics were integrated in a balanced manner. Ethical safeguards were observed throughout the research. All participants provided informed consent, confidentiality was maintained, and local cultural norms were respected during fieldwork. Nonetheless, the study acknowledges certain limitations: the scope was restricted to two districts, which may not capture the diversity of *mawah* practices across Aceh, and the cross-sectional design documented practices at a single historical moment rather than tracing their longitudinal transformation.

C. Result and Discussion

1. Results

***Mawah* as a Living Institution: Contemporary Practices and Meanings**

The findings reveal that *mawah* continues to function as a vibrant socio-economic institution across Pidie Jaya and Aceh Besar, though its manifestations vary significantly between agricultural and livestock sectors. Field observations and participant accounts demonstrate that *mawah* operates not merely as an economic arrangement but as a comprehensive system that integrates material transactions with religious rituals, social relationships, and community solidarity

mechanisms. This integration aligns with Durkheim's conceptualization of social institutions as multifunctional entities that serve both practical and symbolic purposes within collective life.

Participants consistently emphasized that *mawah* represents more than profit-sharing, describing it as a form of "gotong-royong with *barakah*" (mutual assistance with divine blessing). This characterization illustrates how economic cooperation becomes imbued with spiritual significance, transforming material transactions into sacred acts of community solidarity. As one elderly practitioner in Aceh Besar explained, "When we do *mawah*, we are not just sharing profits—we are sharing *rezeki* (divine provision) and strengthening the bonds that Allah has created between us." Such statements reflect Durkheim's notion that social institutions derive their power from the sacred meanings communities assign to them.

Sectoral Variations: Agriculture versus Livestock Practices

The research reveals pronounced differences in how *mawah* is understood and practiced across economic sectors, with implications for Durkheim's theory of institutional adaptation. In agricultural contexts, particularly in Pidie Jaya, participants increasingly frame *mawah* in contractual terms, often equating it with the *gala* (charter) system. This shift reflects what Durkheim might identify as institutional rationalization, where sacred practices become progressively more secular and efficiency-oriented. Younger farmers, especially those with formal education, tend to view agricultural *mawah* primarily through economic lenses, focusing on profit maximization and resource optimization rather than community solidarity.

However, even within this apparently secularized agricultural *mawah*, elements of traditional religious legitimacy persist. Agreements are still initiated with the phrase "*Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*" (In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful), and participants invoke concepts of *rezeki* and divine blessing when discussing outcomes. This suggests that while surface practices may modernize, deeper cultural-religious foundations remain relatively stable, supporting Durkheim's argument about the persistence of collective consciousness even amid social change.

Livestock-based *mawah*, by contrast, maintains stronger connections to traditional religious and ritual dimensions. In Aceh Besar, cattle and goat partnerships are consistently preceded by communal prayers (*du'a bersama*), shared meals, and formal community witnessing. Participants described these rituals as essential for ensuring *barakah* and divine blessing upon the partnership. One cattle owner explained, "If we skip the *du'a* and the *kenduri* (communal feast), the animals will not be blessed, and the partnership will face difficulties." Such beliefs demonstrate what Durkheim characterized as the sacred's capacity to imbue ordinary activities with transcendent meaning and social significance.

The livestock sector also maintains traditional dispute resolution mechanisms rooted in Islamic jurisprudence and customary law (*adat*). When conflicts arise, they are typically addressed through village councils (*gampong councils*) that apply both sharia principles and customary practices, reflecting the integration of religious law with local tradition that Durkheim identified as characteristic of traditional societies. This contrasts sharply with agricultural *mawah*, where disputes increasingly involve formal legal institutions or market-based arbitration mechanisms.

Trust Networks and Social Capital Formation

Across both sectors, participants identified trust (*amanah*) as the fundamental prerequisite for successful *mawah* relationships. However, the mechanisms for building and maintaining trust vary considerably. In traditional livestock *mawah*, trust is established through extended kinship networks, religious community membership, and reputation within Islamic social institutions such as mosque congregations and religious study groups (*pengajian*). This reflects what Durkheim described as mechanical solidarity, where social cohesion derives from shared beliefs, values, and social experiences.

The research documented numerous instances where *mawah* partnerships transcend immediate family networks to include community members connected through religious rather than kinship ties. Village imams and religious teachers (*ustadz*) often serve as mediators and guarantors, lending their religious authority to legitimize agreements and resolve disputes. This religious mediation transforms economic transactions into acts of collective religious devotion, illustrating Durkheim's insight that religious institutions extend their influence into apparently secular domains.

In agricultural contexts, trust networks show greater flexibility and instrumentality. While religious connections remain important, educational background, technical expertise, and market knowledge increasingly influence partner selection. Younger agricultural practitioners demonstrate what Durkheim might characterize as organic solidarity, where cooperation is based on complementary skills and mutual interdependence rather than shared worldviews. Nevertheless, even these modernized trust networks retain Islamic ethical frameworks, with participants emphasizing concepts such as fairness (*adil*), honesty (*jujur*), and mutual responsibility (*tanggung jawab bersama*).

Ritual Functions and Sacred Dimensions

The study identified elaborate ritual practices surrounding *mawah* initiation, particularly in livestock partnerships. These rituals typically include communal prayers seeking divine blessing, Quranic recitations emphasizing justice and fairness, and shared meals that symbolically unite partners in common purpose. Participants described these practices as essential for creating

"*ikatan batin*" (spiritual bonds) that transcend mere commercial relationships. From a Durkheimian perspective, these rituals generate collective effervescence—intense shared emotions that strengthen group solidarity and reinforce common values.

Ritual practices also serve practical functions in establishing clear expectations and accountability mechanisms. The public nature of initiation ceremonies creates community witnesses who can intervene if conflicts arise, while religious invocations establish moral frameworks for evaluating partner behavior. As one religious leader observed, "When people make *mawah* agreements before Allah and the community, they know that their reputation and spiritual standing depend on fulfilling their obligations faithfully."

Seasonal rituals surrounding harvest and animal sales provide additional opportunities for community solidarity. Livestock *mawah* partnerships typically culminate in communal celebrations when animals are sold, with profits distributed in ceremonies that emphasize gratitude to Allah and mutual appreciation between partners. These events strengthen not only bilateral partnerships but broader community networks, creating what Durkheim identified as the social solidarity essential for collective survival.

Responses to Modernization and Globalization Pressures

The research reveals complex adaptation strategies as *mawah* practitioners navigate modernization pressures while attempting to preserve traditional religious and social values. Urban proximity and market integration have introduced new challenges, including competition from formal financial institutions, changing generational attitudes, and integration with global commodity chains. However, rather than simple decline or preservation, the findings suggest dynamic adaptation processes that selectively incorporate modern elements while maintaining core religious and social functions.

Younger participants demonstrate sophisticated understanding of both traditional *mawah* principles and contemporary economic realities. They often frame traditional practices in modern terminology, describing trust-building as "social capital development" and profit-sharing as "risk management." This linguistic adaptation suggests that traditional institutions can maintain relevance by translating core values into contemporary frameworks, supporting Durkheim's argument about institutional evolution rather than replacement.

The integration of *mawah* with modern agricultural techniques and marketing systems demonstrates institutional flexibility. Farmers increasingly use *mawah* partnerships to access not only land and labor but also modern inputs such as certified seeds, fertilizers, and mechanized equipment. This expansion beyond traditional resource-sharing suggests that *mawah*'s fundamental logic of mutual cooperation and risk-sharing remains relevant even as specific applications evolve.

However, the research also identified tensions between traditional religious requirements and modern economic pressures. Time constraints in market-oriented agriculture limit opportunities for elaborate ritual practices, while geographic mobility reduces the effectiveness of traditional reputation-based trust mechanisms. Some participants expressed concern that younger generations view *mawah* as "old-fashioned" or "inefficient" compared to bank loans or formal business partnerships.

Integration with Islamic Legal Framework

The study found strong evidence for *mawah*'s continued legitimacy within Islamic jurisprudential frameworks, supporting the principle of *al-'adah muhakkamah* (custom as a source of Islamic law). Religious scholars interviewed consistently affirmed *mawah*'s compliance with sharia principles, particularly its alignment with profit-and-loss sharing (*mudharabah*) and its prohibition of interest-based transactions (*riba*). This religious endorsement provides institutional legitimacy that secular economic arrangements cannot match, explaining *mawah*'s persistence despite modernization pressures.

Local religious authorities play crucial roles in adapting *mawah* practices to contemporary contexts while maintaining religious authenticity. They provide guidance on issues such as incorporating modern agricultural inputs into traditional sharing arrangements, resolving disputes that arise from market volatility, and maintaining Islamic ethical standards in increasingly commercialized relationships. This religious leadership demonstrates how traditional institutions can evolve without losing their essential character, supporting Durkheim's theoretical insights about institutional adaptation.

2. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that *mawah* operates as a sophisticated "post-secular" institution that maintains significant functional relevance in contemporary Acehnese society through dynamic adaptation processes. The research revealed pronounced sectoral variations: livestock partnerships preserve strong ritual dimensions with communal prayers and religious mediation, exemplifying Durkheim's collective effervescence, while agricultural practices show rationalization tendencies while retaining Islamic ethical frameworks. Trust networks based on religious community membership continue to structure economic relationships, with religious leaders serving as mediators and guarantors. The study documented elaborate ritual practices surrounding *mawah* initiation, seasonal celebrations, and dispute resolution mechanisms that transform economic transactions into acts of social solidarity. Responses to modernization pressures reveal complex adaptation strategies that selectively incorporate modern elements while maintaining core religious and

social functions, supported by religious legitimization through *al-'adah muhakkamah* (custom as Islamic law source).

These findings provide compelling empirical evidence for the persistence of religious-economic institutions in contexts previously assumed to be undergoing inevitable secularization. The research demonstrates that *mawah* functions not merely as an economic arrangement but as a comprehensive socio-religious system that maintains social solidarity, reinforces collective identity, and provides alternatives to purely market-driven economic models. The sectoral variations observed between agricultural and livestock *mawah* reveal previously undocumented differential secularization processes, where some dimensions (ritual practices) may diminish while others (ethical frameworks, trust mechanisms) remain robust. This challenges both classical secularization theory and assumptions about the uniform impact of globalization on traditional institutions, suggesting instead that religious institutions undergo selective adaptation rather than wholesale transformation or disappearance.

The integration of Durkheim's functionalist framework with Islamic jurisprudential concepts proved highly effective in illuminating how economic practices become imbued with religious meaning. The documented role of rituals in creating "ikatan batin" (spiritual bonds) and generating collective effervescence provides concrete evidence for Durkheim's theoretical insights about religion's capacity to structure social relationships and maintain collective consciousness. However, the research also revealed generational differences in *mawah* understanding and practice that suggest more complex processes of institutional change than Durkheim's relatively linear model of social evolution might predict, indicating the need for theoretical frameworks that account for multi-directional adaptation processes.

The persistence and adaptation of *mawah* can be understood through three interconnected theoretical lenses. First, from a Durkheimian functionalist perspective, *mawah* persists because it continues to fulfill essential social functions that purely secular institutions cannot adequately replace. The system's capacity to generate trust, accountability, and social solidarity while facilitating economic cooperation demonstrates what Berger (1999) identified as religion's continued functional significance in addressing both material needs and meaning-making requirements. The documented rituals and religious invocations serve not merely as symbolic expressions but as practical mechanisms for establishing moral frameworks, creating community accountability, and transforming individual partnerships into collective commitments to religious values. Second, from an institutional economics perspective, *mawah*'s persistence reflects its competitive advantages over formal financial institutions in specific contexts. The system's emphasis on relationship-based rather than collateral-based cooperation, its integration of risk-sharing

with social support mechanisms, and its alignment with local values and knowledge systems provide functionality that formal banking cannot match (UNESCO, 2019). Religious legitimization through Islamic jurisprudence provides institutional authority and cultural authenticity that secular economic arrangements lack, explaining *mawah*'s resilience despite modernization pressures. Third, from a post-secular theoretical framework, *mawah* exemplifies how religious traditions maintain institutional significance by adapting their practical applications while preserving essential values and worldview commitments (Taylor, 2007). The linguistic adaptation observed among younger participants—describing traditional practices in modern terminology while maintaining underlying Islamic ethical frameworks—illustrates sophisticated strategies for maintaining relevance across generational and cultural contexts. This supports Habermas's (2008) argument that post-secular societies are characterized not by religion's disappearance but by its transformation and continued public relevance.

This study differs significantly from previous research on *mawah* and similar traditional economic institutions in several crucial respects. Most existing studies have approached *mawah* from purely economic, legal, or anthropological perspectives, focusing on its contractual arrangements, profit-sharing mechanisms, or cultural significance without adequately theorizing its religious and social functions (Maghfirah, 2020; Mukhtasar & Syahputra, 2020). This research explicitly situates *mawah* within classical sociological theory, demonstrating the continued relevance of Durkheimian functionalism in contemporary Muslim societies and contributing to sociology of religion debates about secularization and religious institutional adaptation.

Unlike previous studies that tend to treat traditional economic institutions as either declining relics or static cultural practices, this research documents dynamic processes of selective adaptation that challenge simple persistence-versus-modernization narratives. The discovery of differential secularization across economic sectors within the same traditional institution represents a novel empirical finding that extends theoretical understanding of how religious institutions adapt to modernization pressures. Previous research on Islamic economic institutions has often remained theoretical (Zaman, 2020), while this study provides detailed ethnographic evidence of how Islamic economic principles function in practice and adapt to contemporary contexts.

The study also differs from broader literature on secularization theory by focusing on a non-Western, Muslim context where religious institutions maintain strong public relevance. While much secularization research has concentrated on European and North American contexts (Bruce, 2002; Norris & Inglehart, 2004), this research demonstrates that secularization processes may operate differently in societies where religious worldviews remain culturally dominant. The

findings contribute to emerging scholarship on "multiple modernities" that recognizes diverse pathways of institutional change rather than assuming universal secularization patterns (Eisenstadt, 2000).

Furthermore, this research differs from development studies literature by highlighting how traditional institutions can serve contemporary development needs while preserving cultural authenticity. Most development research either ignores traditional institutions or treats them as obstacles to modernization (Sen, 1999). This study demonstrates how traditional religious-economic institutions like *mawah* can provide competitive advantages for sustainable development strategies that emphasize social capital, cultural sustainability, and community-based approaches (UNESCO, 2015).

The findings of this study have significant implications for development policy and practice, particularly in Muslim-majority countries seeking to balance modernization with cultural authenticity and social cohesion. The demonstrated capacity of *mawah* to provide financial access, risk management, and social safety nets while maintaining community relationships suggests that traditional institutions represent crucial but underutilized resources for development strategies.

For policymakers, the research indicates the importance of recognizing and supporting traditional institutions that align with Islamic values while serving contemporary development needs. Rather than viewing traditional practices as obstacles to modernization, policies should focus on facilitating their adaptation and integration with modern economic systems while preserving essential social functions. The successful integration of *mawah* with modern agricultural techniques and marketing systems provides models for policy approaches that build upon existing institutional strengths rather than attempting wholesale replacement with imported frameworks.

Specific policy recommendations include: (1) developing regulatory frameworks that accommodate traditional profit-sharing systems within modern financial systems; (2) providing technical support for traditional institutions to adopt modern management and accounting practices while maintaining cultural authenticity; (3) integrating traditional economic institutions into rural development programs and poverty alleviation strategies; (4) supporting capacity building for religious and community leaders to mediate between traditional and modern requirements; and (5) promoting research and documentation of traditional economic practices to inform policy development.

For international development organizations, the findings suggest the need for more culturally sensitive approaches that recognize the continued relevance of religious institutions in contemporary Muslim societies. Development programs should engage with religious leaders and traditional institutions as legitimate partners rather than obstacles to overcome. The

emphasis on relationship-based trust and community accountability in *mawah* offers insights for designing development interventions that build upon existing social capital rather than undermining it (United Nations, 2021).

The research also has implications for Islamic finance institutions seeking to develop products and services that serve marginalized populations while maintaining authenticity to Islamic principles. The community-based accountability mechanisms documented in *mawah* offer potential solutions to governance challenges that have limited the effectiveness of formal Islamic banking institutions. The successful integration of religious values with practical economic needs demonstrates pathways for developing Islamic financial products that address social equity goals while achieving commercial viability.

The conceptual implications of this research extend across multiple theoretical domains and suggest several directions for future scholarly development. First, the findings contribute to post-secularization theory by providing empirical evidence for the continued institutional significance of religious traditions in contemporary contexts. The documented differential secularization processes suggest the need for more nuanced theoretical frameworks that account for selective adaptation rather than uniform religious decline (Gorski, 2000). Future research should develop conceptual models that capture the complex, multi-directional processes through which religious institutions navigate modernization pressures.

Second, the successful integration of Durkheimian functionalism with Islamic jurisprudential concepts demonstrates the potential for theoretical synthesis across Western sociological tradition and Islamic intellectual frameworks. This integration challenges the assumed incompatibility between classical sociological theory and religious worldviews, suggesting opportunities for developing more inclusive theoretical approaches that engage seriously with non-Western intellectual traditions. Future theoretical development might explore how other classical sociological concepts—such as Weber's analysis of religious rationalization or Marx's insights into economic relationships—might be productively integrated with Islamic social thought.

Third, the research contributes to institutional economics by highlighting the competitive advantages that traditional institutions may possess over formal economic arrangements in specific contexts. The documented emphasis on relationship-based trust, community accountability, and values alignment suggests the need for institutional theories that account for cultural and religious factors in economic behavior. Future research should develop frameworks for analyzing the economic efficiency of traditional institutions that integrate social and cultural benefits rather than focusing solely on monetary measures.

Fourth, the findings have implications for development theory by demonstrating how traditional institutions can serve as resources for sustainable

development strategies. The capacity of *mawah* to integrate economic cooperation with social solidarity and environmental sustainability challenges development models based solely on formal institutions and market mechanisms. Future development theory should explore how traditional institutions can be scaled up or integrated with formal development programs while maintaining their essential characteristics and community embeddedness (Labadi et al., 2021).

Finally, the research suggests the need for methodological innovations in studying religious-economic institutions. The successful combination of ethnographic observation with Durkheimian theoretical analysis demonstrates the value of approaches that integrate interpretive understanding with theoretical systematization. Future research should develop methodological frameworks that capture both the subjective meanings that participants assign to traditional practices and the objective social functions that these practices serve within broader institutional systems. This might include longitudinal mixed-methods approaches that track institutional change over time, comparative studies examining similar traditional institutions across different cultural contexts, and participatory research methods that engage community members as co-researchers rather than subjects of study.

D. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that *mawah* continues to operate as a religiously embedded economic institution in contemporary Aceh, maintaining functional significance through selective adaptation. Sectoral variations illustrate this resilience: agricultural *mawah* increasingly reflects contractual rationalization, while livestock-based *mawah* preserves ritual dimensions, communal prayers, and religious mediation. Across both sectors, trust networks rooted in Islamic ethics and community solidarity remain central, showing that religious institutions can sustain social and economic relevance in the face of modernization.

Theoretically, these findings suggest that classical secularization perspectives are insufficient to explain the dynamics of religion in economic life. Rather than declining uniformly, religious institutions adapt selectively through what may be termed differential secularization, where some ritual elements weaken while ethical frameworks and communal trust remain strong. By interpreting these practices through Durkheim's concepts of solidarity, ritual, and collective effervescence, alongside Islamic jurisprudential principles such as *al-'adah muhakkamah*, the study highlights how *mawah* retains legitimacy and functional importance in ways that secular arrangements alone may not provide.

Practically, *mawah* offers a model for culturally grounded development strategies in Muslim-majority societies. Its emphasis on cooperation, trust, and collective welfare demonstrates how traditional institutions can be adapted to

modern challenges without losing their religious and cultural integrity. Future research should expand beyond two districts and employ longitudinal approaches to capture the evolving dynamics of *mawah*, while comparative studies across regions could further illuminate how Islamic economic traditions adapt under globalization.

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