

MIGRATION TRADITION AND FAMILY ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE MINANGKABAU COMMUNITY FROM AN ISLAMIC ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The migration tradition is an integral part of Minangkabau identity, intertwining customary values, religious principles, and family economic strategies. This study aims to analyze the role of the migration tradition in strengthening family economics from an Islamic economic perspective. Using a qualitative case study approach with six migrant informants, data were collected through in-depth interviews and participatory observation, and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The findings reveal that migration is driven by religious motivation, family responsibility, and an Islamic work ethic grounded in the principles of *kasb* (lawful earning), *masalah*, and *tawazun*. Migrant activities—including remittance sending and involvement in social organizations—significantly enhance family welfare, reinforce social solidarity, and preserve customary and religious values. The synthesis of findings indicates that the Minangkabau migration tradition forms a community-based moral economic model that is harmonious, sustainable, and rooted in Islamic economic principles

Keywords: *Migration tradition; Islamic economics; Minangkabau; Family welfare; Work ethic*

INTRODUCTION

The tradition of *merantau* (outmigration) has long been a defining feature of Minangkabau identity, persisting for centuries. In Minangkabau custom, the saying “*karatau madang di hulu, babuah babungo balun; marantau bujang dahulu, di rumah baguno balun*” reflects the belief that *merantau* is not merely a choice but a moral and social obligation for young Minangkabau men to seek experience, knowledge, and better livelihood opportunities. This phenomenon continues in the modern era, with thousands of young Minangkabau people dispersed across major cities in Indonesia and abroad to work, trade, and pursue education. The tradition generates complex social and economic dynamics, particularly regarding how migrants support the families they leave behind in their hometowns. Socio-culturally, the Minangkabau people adhere to a matrilineal social system in which lineage and inheritance follow the female line. In this system, ancestral land and traditional houses are passed down through the maternal line, while Minangkabau men do not possess ownership rights over inherited property. Nevertheless, men retain vital roles as protectors and economic providers of the family. This structural imbalance has become one of the primary drivers of the *merantau* tradition. By migrating, Minangkabau men seek economic independence and social honor while fulfilling their moral responsibilities toward their families and clans back home. Thus, *merantau* is not simply a matter of migration; it is a life journey rich with religious, social, and economic meaning.

As explained by Mochtar Naim (2013), *merantau* is a traditional form of mobility practiced by the Minangkabau people since the 7th century, when young men and traders left their villages to seek livelihood and experience. Over time, this tradition developed into a social education mechanism that instills values of self-reliance, courage, and responsibility toward family and community. This aligns with another customary proverb: “*karatau madang di hulu...*”, which morally urges young men to leave home in order to sharpen their maturity and prepare themselves to become useful members of their families and their *nagari*. This philosophy demonstrates the close integration of customary values and religious teachings, which place hard work and family responsibility as forms of worship.

In the modern context, data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS, 2023) indicates that approximately 38.7% of households in West Sumatra have at least one family member who has migrated. Of these, more than half send remittances regularly to support family needs and nagari development. Bank Indonesia (2023) also reports that remittances from Minangkabau migrants significantly contribute to the circulation of the local economy, especially in the trade and education sectors. These findings show that merantau is not only a cultural tradition but also a strategic economic instrument that sustains household resilience and regional development. However, alongside these economic contributions, there are social and spiritual challenges that cannot be overlooked. Many migrants face economic pressure, social stress, and in some cases, a gradual weakening of religious and cultural values while living away from home. Meanwhile, families left behind often have to adapt to new economic roles, with women frequently assuming both domestic and financial responsibilities. This situation reveals a tension between customary values, modern economic demands, and Islamic teachings that emphasize balance between lawful earnings (*kasb halal*), family responsibility, and distributive justice.

Within the framework of Islamic economic theory, merantau can be understood as *kasb*, or the effort to seek lawful sustenance, which contains elements of *maslahah* (benefit) and *tawazun al-maliyah* (economic balance). Islam regards hard work as a form of worship, as reflected in the Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ saying: "No one eats food better than that which he earns from his own labor" (Sahih al-Bukhari, No. 2072). Therefore, merantau is not merely an economic act but a spiritual endeavor toward achieving well-being in both worldly and religious dimensions. Yet, in practice, this religious meaning does not always serve as the behavioral foundation for migrants, resulting in a gap between Islamic ideals and socio-economic realities. Previous studies, such as those by Hakim (2021) and Fadhillah (2022), have highlighted how the merantau tradition fosters work ethic, solidarity, and social mobility. However, much of this scholarship remains descriptive and has yet to explore in depth how Islamic economic values are internalized in the economic experiences of migrants and the families they leave behind. This gap motivates the present study, allowing for a more grounded understanding of social realities and religious values directly from the perspectives of those who live them.

Accordingly, this research is important for deepening the understanding of how Islamic values are embodied in family economic practices through the merantau tradition. The empirical cases presented in this study are expected to enrich Islamic economic scholarship from a micro-social perspective, particularly the relationships among individuals, families, and communities in managing an economy rooted in spiritual and customary values. This research also contributes to developing an Islamic economic paradigm that is contextual, humanistic, and grounded in the local culture of the Minangkabau people.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The tradition of *merantau* among the Minangkabau people has been widely discussed in sociological, cultural, and economic studies. Existing literature generally addresses three major domains: (1) the socio-cultural foundations of *merantau*, (2) its economic implications for migrants and their families, and (3) the integration of Islamic ethical principles into migrant behavior. However, despite extensive documentation, several conceptual and empirical gaps remain, particularly concerning how Islamic economic values are internalized within the lived economic practices of Minangkabau migrants. This review synthesizes and critiques these bodies of literature to provide a foundation for the present study.

Socio-Cultural Foundations of Merantau

The foundational works of Naim (1984) and Navis (1986) emphasize that *merantau* is deeply rooted in the Minangkabau matrilineal social system. Since men do not inherit ancestral property (*harta pusaka*), migration becomes a structural mechanism through which young men gain economic independence and social recognition. Studies such as Ilyas (2017) and Siregar (2018) reinforce this view, noting that *merantau* serves as a rite of passage that cultivates values of courage, resilience, and responsibility. A strength of these earlier studies is their rich ethnographic detail and clear articulation of Minangkabau philosophical principles, especially the integration of customary law (*adat*) with Islamic teachings embodied in the maxim "*adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah.*" However, these works largely focus on descriptive accounts of cultural norms. They offer limited engagement with how these norms evolve in response to modern economic pressures and transregional mobility. Their descriptive nature leaves unanswered questions about how migrants negotiate and reinterpret traditional values in contemporary socioeconomic contexts.

Economic Dimensions of Merantau

A second stream of literature examines the economic functions of *merantau*. Empirical studies, including Fahmi (2015) and Syahrul (2020), highlight the role of migrants in supporting family welfare through remittances, entrepreneurial activities, and knowledge transfer. BPS (2023) and Bank Indonesia (2023) provide quantitative evidence that remittance flows from Minangkabau migrants significantly contribute to the economic dynamism of their home regions. While these studies demonstrate the clear economic benefits of migration, they often overlook the micro-level decision-making processes within migrant households—how economic contributions are prioritized, negotiated, or constrained by social and religious obligations. Moreover, the literature tends to portray migrants as economically rational actors, without sufficiently exploring how moral values, religious identity, and emotional attachments shape their economic behavior. This creates a conceptual gap that warrants deeper qualitative inquiry.

Islamic Economic Ethics in Migrant Practice

A growing body of literature explores Islamic work ethics and its relevance to Muslim economic actors. Classical works by Chapra (1992), Mannan (1986), and al-Qaradawi (1995) articulate core principles such as *kasb* (lawful earning), *maslahah* (benefit), and *tawazun* (balance). More contemporary analyses by Anshori (2019), Yusof (2016), and Nasution (2001) demonstrate how Islamic work ethics influence productivity, social responsibility, and economic decision-making. Despite these advancements, most Islamic economics literature remains theoretical and universal in scope. It rarely examines how Islamic ethical principles are localized and expressed within specific cultural contexts particularly within communities whose economic practices are shaped simultaneously by strong customary norms and Islamic teachings. Studies directly linking Islamic economic values to Minangkabau migration behavior remain scarce, forming an important conceptual gap.

Social Capital, Community Networks, and Philanthropy

Several scholars highlight the importance of social networks and community organizations in supporting Minangkabau migrants. Suharto (2010), Payton & Moody (2008), and Zainuddin (2017) illustrate how voluntary associations, migrant unions, and clan-based organizations facilitate social integration, collective support, and philanthropic activities in the diaspora. These findings resonate with the roles of organizations such as PKDP, IKBAL, and K3R documented in empirical reports. Although these studies underline the strength of Minangkabau social capital, they do not investigate how religious motives—such as *ukhuwah*, *ta'awun*, and *amal jariyah*—intersect with cultural obligations to shape patterns of giving, leadership, and collective action. Thus, the moral economy underpinning migrant solidarity remains under-theorized.

METHOD (TNR, 12 BOLD)

This study employs a qualitative approach using a phenomenological case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of Minangkabau migrants' experiences in strengthening family economic resilience based on Islamic economic values. This approach is appropriate because the *merantau* tradition reflects not only economic activities, but also the social, cultural, and spiritual meanings embedded in Minangkabau society. The research was conducted across several migrant destinations where Minangkabau communities live and work, including Tanah Datar, Jambi, Bekasi, Jakarta, and Aceh. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with six informants representing diverse professions and places of origin: Hendri Yanto, Azriko, Nurmatias, Noviar Hendra, Fadhly, and Suardi. These participants were selected because they possess extensive experience as migrants, play an active role in supporting their families' economic well-being in their hometowns, and consistently uphold customary values and Islamic teachings in their daily lives.

Data collection was carried out through both face-to-face and online interviews using audio-recording devices, and the recordings were fully transcribed for analysis. The researcher also conducted limited observations of the informants' social and economic activities, including their involvement in migrant organizations such as IKBAL, K3R, and PKDP. Field data were complemented with observation notes and the researcher's reflections to preserve the integrity of the meanings conveyed by participants. Data analysis followed an iterative process involving reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing, each step continuously reviewed throughout the research stages. All interview findings were compared, validated, and reconfirmed with the informants to ensure accuracy and alignment with their actual lived experiences. Although the study faced constraints related to time and geographic distance, given the informants' dispersion across various regions, the researcher maintained data credibility through intensive communication and repeated transcript checks. This methodological approach enabled the researcher to

capture the religious motivations, economic responsibilities, and work ethics that shape the lives of Minangkabau migrants within the framework of both *adat* and Islamic principles

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Informant Profile

This section presents the research findings obtained through in-depth interviews with six main informants. All data were collected both directly and online, then analyzed through the stages of reduction, coding, and thematization based on qualitative analysis principles. The data exploration process focused on the experiences of Minangkabau migrants in strengthening family economic conditions and the Islamic values they uphold while living in the rantau (migration areas).

No	Informant Name	Age	Place of Origin	Migration Location	Occupation	Marital Status
1	Hendri Yanto	52 yrs	Pesisir Selatan	Tanah Datar	Private Employee	Married
2	Azriko	49 yrs	Agam	Jambi	Entrepreneur (printing & laundry)	Married
3	Nurmatias	47 yrs	Padang	Jakarta	Private Employee	Married
4	Noviar Hendra	50 yrs	Tanah Datar	Bekasi	Bank Employee	Married
5	Fadhly	74 yrs	Pariaman	Meulaboh	Clothing Trader	Married
6	Suardi	71 yrs	South Pariaman	Dumai	Tailor	Married

Informant 1: Hendri Yanto (HY)

The first informant, named Hendri Yanto, SE (HY), is 52 years old. He lives in Komplek Perumahan Pagaruyung Indah Permai (PIP), Nagari Saruaso, Tanjung Emas District, Tanah Datar Regency. Hendri comes from Nagari Surantiah, Sutera District, Pesisir Selatan Regency. He is married and works in a private company in Tanah Datar. Hendri first migrated to Padang to pursue higher education in one of the universities there. After completing his studies, he continued his migration to Tanah Datar in 1998 after being accepted to work in a private company. His primary reason for migrating was to improve his family’s economic condition. He views migration as part of Minangkabau customary teachings that emphasize male independence, and at the same time align with Islamic teachings to seek lawful sustenance on Allah’s earth.

Informant 2: Azriko (AZ)

The second informant, named Azriko (AZ), is 49 years old. He lives in Perumahan Pesona Kenali Blok 1, Jambi City, and comes from Nagari Batu Palano, Sungai Puar District, Agam Regency. Azriko is married and works as an entrepreneur in photocopying, printing, and laundry in Jambi. He began migrating to Jakarta in 2005 to find a job because he had many friends in the rantau who could help him. He explained that his primary reason for migrating was the lack of skills in agriculture or plantation work, even though his hometown still has farmland owned by his family. According to him, it is better to migrate than stay in the village, because migration allows him to improve his family’s economic well-being. He added that migrating is not driven by ambition, but by circumstances and the path of life already destined for him. For him, migration is lived sincerely according to fate, and when he grows old, he hopes to return to his hometown to spend his later years there.

Informant 3: Nurmatias (NS)

The third informant, named Nurmatias, S.Stat (NS), is 47 years old. He lives on Jalan Harun No. 9, Jati Rahayu District, Bekasi City, and comes from Surau Gadang Subdistrict, Nanggalo District, Padang City. He is married and works as a private employee as well as a research project team member in Jakarta. He first migrated to Bogor in 1997 to study at the Bogor Agricultural Institute (IPB). After completing his education, he was accepted to work in Jakarta in 2002 as a researcher in a research institution. His initial purpose for migrating was to further his education, and later to work in order to improve his family’s economic condition. He believes that migration provides greater opportunities for work and sustenance, even though competition is tougher than in the village. According to him, migration aligns with Islamic teachings, as it is a responsibility for sons to help their parents and siblings, and to seek lawful sustenance in places with better opportunities.

Informant 4: Noviar Hendra (NH)

The fourth informant, named Noviar Hendra, SE (NH), is 50 years old. He lives in Perumahan Harapan Indah Boulevard Hijau, Jalan Palem Kuning, Medan Satria District, Bekasi City, and comes from Nagari Belimbing, Rambatan District, Tanah Datar Regency. He is married and works as a Bank Danamon employee in Bekasi. Noviar has migrated several times. He first migrated in 1990 to pursue education in SMA Sijunjung, then studied at Andalas University Padang in 1993, worked in Padang City, and since 2021 has been stationed in Jakarta. His reason for migrating is to seek a better livelihood and improve his family's economic condition because job opportunities in the village are limited and there is little land to cultivate. He believes that migration is part of religious teachings, specifically the command to "spread across the earth" in search of lawful sustenance while maintaining balance between worldly and spiritual affairs. In his view, migrants contribute greatly to their hometowns not only financially but also through ideas, suggestions, and thought for the development of the *nagari*. Noviar is also active as Chairman of the Ikatan Keluarga Perantau Kenaagarian Balimbiang (IKBAL) and Secretary of the Kerukunan Keluarga Kecamatan Rambatan (K3R).

Informant 5: Fadhly (FD)

The fifth informant, named Fadhly, S (FD), is 74 years old. He lives on Jalan T. Di Runding No. 256, in front of Mushalla Gardu, Meulaboh, Aceh Province, with his parents' address in Alai Parak Kopi Subdistrict, North Padang District, Padang City, and his ancestral home in Punggung Ladiang Subdistrict, South Pariaman District, Pariaman City. He completed schooling up to the third year of STM in Padang but did not graduate. He is married and works as a clothing agent and retailer in Meulaboh, Aceh. He has migrated several times. First to Pekanbaru as a street vendor, then to Pangkalan Brandan working for a subsidiary of Pertamina for one year. After that, he worked as a street vendor in Medan (1978–1982), then sold clothing door-to-door until 2004, and since then has settled and operated his own shop in Meulaboh. His primary reason for migrating was to help improve his family's economic situation because his father's salary as a civil servant was insufficient. According to him, it was impossible to find a job in the village, so he chose to go to the city and never felt ashamed to do any work as long as it was lawful. Throughout his migration, he consistently sent money to his family and does not plan to return because his livelihood and life are already established in the rantau. He is also active in migrant organizations such as PKDP and IKM, although only as a member.

Informant 6: Suardi (SU)

The sixth informant, named Suardi (SU), is 71 years old. He lives on Jalan Ratusima, Kelakap 7, East Dumai District, and comes from Jorong Kampung Dalam, Nagari Kurai Taji. He first migrated after completing elementary school in 1971, at around 17 years old. He initially migrated to Dumai City to work as a tailor after learning the skill from his older brother for two years. He also migrated to Pesisir Selatan and Jakarta, but since 1986 he has returned to Dumai and opened his own tailoring business, where he continues to work today. The main reason for migrating for Suardi was to improve his family's economic condition, as job opportunities in the village were not promising. He believes that many people succeed after migrating, and this motivated him to persevere in the rantau. Suardi is also active in the activities of the Pariaman Regional Family Association (PKDP) and stated that he has never considered returning to live in his hometown because his life is already well established in the rantau.

Analysis of Interview Results This section presents the field research findings obtained from in-depth interviews with the six main informants: Hendri Yanto (HY), Azriko (AZ), Nurmatias (NS), Noviar Hendra (NH), Fadhly (FD), and Suardi (SU). The analysis process was conducted through several stages: data reduction, data presentation, and theme extraction based on qualitative analysis principles.

Data Reduction Stage

The reduction stage was carried out by selecting and simplifying information from the interviews to focus on the core meanings relevant to the research objective, namely the meaning of migration and its contribution to strengthening family economic conditions from an Islamic perspective.

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The following table presents a summary of the reduced data from the six informants:

No	Informant	Focus of Story	Main Purpose	View of Migration
1	HY	From Pesisir Selatan, living in Tanah Datar, private employee	Improve family economy	In line with customary and Islamic teachings to seek lawful sustenance
2	AZ	From Agam, living in Jambi, entrepreneur (printing & laundry)	Find work & improve economy	Migration lived according to destiny, return to hometown in old age
3	NS	From Padang, living in Bekasi, research project worker	Gain knowledge & improve family economy	Greater opportunities for sustenance; sons' obligation to help family
4	NH	From Tanah Datar, living in Bekasi, bank employee	Find stable work	Religious instruction to spread out and seek lawful sustenance
5	FD	From Pariaman, living in Meulaboh, clothing trader	Help family economy	Working in rantau is more promising; not ashamed of any lawful job
6	SU	From Pariaman, living in Dumai, tailor	Improve family economy	Lawful work in rantau is part of life struggle; no wish to return home

Data Grouping Stage (Initial Categorization)

After reduction, the data were grouped based on similarities in meaning. The initial categorization showed several main categories emerging from all informants.

Category	Key Indicators	Supporting Informants
Economic Motive	Desire to improve family economy	HY, AZ, NS, NH, FD, SU
Educational Motive	Migrating to pursue further education	NS, NH
Customary and Religious Motivation	Obligation for Minangkabau men to be independent and seek lawful sustenance	HY, NH, NS
Independence and Work Ethic	Not ashamed of any lawful work	AZ, FD, SU
Contribution to Family	Sending money, helping with expenses	HY, FD, SU
Social Role in Rantau	Active in migrant organizations	HY, NH, FD, SU

Thematic Data Presentation Stage

After categorizing the data, the researcher presented the findings in theme form to illustrate the relationships between categories. The results are as follows:

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Main Theme	Sub-Findings	Brief Description	Supporting Informants
A. Motivation for Migration	Economic needs, family responsibility, limited jobs in village	All informants mention economic factors as main reason; HY emphasizes custom, NH emphasizes religion	HY, AZ, NS, NH, FD, SU
B. Customary and Religious Values	Migration as moral and religious duty	Considered aligned with Minangkabau custom and Islamic commands to seek lawful income	HY, NH, NS
C. Independence and Work Ethic	Not selective about jobs, willing to start small	FD and SU exemplify rising from small traders to stable livelihoods	AZ, FD, SU
D. Economic and Social Contributions	Sending money, social support, participating in organizations	Contributions include economic and social, such as involvement in IKBAL, K3R, PKDP	HY, NH, FD, SU
E. Life Orientation in Rantau	Remaining in rantau while keeping emotional ties to hometown	Most informants do not plan to return because they are established in rantau	AZ, NH, FD, SU

Theme Extraction Stage

The next process was to identify dominant themes that describe the migration phenomenon within the context of family economics. The synthesis resulted in four major themes:

No	Main Theme	Key Explanation
1	Migration as a Family Economic Strategy	All informants see migration as a primary step to improve family welfare and create new economic opportunities.
2	Migration as Customary and Religious Responsibility	Migration is viewed as a moral obligation and religious teaching to work and seek lawful livelihood.
3	Independence and Work Ethic in Rantau	Informants demonstrate strong work ethic, not being selective about jobs, and perseverance despite challenges.
4	Migrant Contributions to Family and Nagari	Remittances, social support, and organizational involvement strengthen economic and social bonds between rantau and hometown.

Verification and Validation Stage

To maintain data credibility, source triangulation was conducted by comparing interview results across informants, along with member checks with three informants (HY, NH, and SU) through follow-up communication. Verification showed no substantial differences between the initial transcripts and informant clarifications.

The following table summarizes the validation process:

Validation Step	Informants Involved	Results
Source triangulation	All informants	Consistency of meaning and themes maintained
Member check	HY, NH, SU	All data confirmed according to informant experience
Peer debriefing	Discussions with two academic supervisors	Data considered valid and publication-worthy

Summary of Overall Thematic Patterns

From the entire process of reduction, categorization, and presentation, the following general patterns were found:

Dimension	Pattern Findings	Example Supporting Data
Economic	Migration as a solution to limited jobs and as main income source for family	“In the village, Minangkabau men do not have ancestral property...” (HY)
Customary and Religion	Migration aligned with Minangkabau customs and Islamic teachings to seek lawful sustenance	“Spread across the earth in search of better livelihood.” (NH)
Social and Organizational	Migrants actively help the village through organizational activities	Involvement in IKBAL, K3R, and PKDP (NH, FD, SU)
Life Orientation	Most do not wish to return to village because they have settled in rantau	AZ, FD, SU settled and developed their businesses in rantau

DISCUSSION

Variations of Migration Types in the Lives of Minangkabau Migrants

The research findings show that the migration tradition among the Minangkabau people has various forms and diverse motivations. Although each informant has different backgrounds and experiences, all display a similar orientation: the desire to improve their families’ economic conditions. This pattern can be understood through the classification of migration types proposed by Mochtar Naim (1984), who divides Minangkabau migration into three main categories:

1. Seasonal Migration, namely temporary migration during certain periods or seasons, usually undertaken by farming communities who work outside their village after the farming season ends.
2. Non-Seasonal Migration, namely migration carried out without a specific time limit, typically to big cities for employment or higher education.
3. Permanent Migration, namely long-term migration in which migrants settle permanently in the destination area, often bringing their families and rarely returning to their hometown.

This classification provides a relevant conceptual framework for understanding the migration patterns of the six informants in this study. Based on the in-depth interviews, none of the informants fall under the seasonal migration category, as all demonstrate medium- to long-term mobility patterns. The mapping of informants according to Mochtar Naim’s theory can be seen in the table below:

Table 1. Classification of Migration Types According to Mochtar Naim (1984) and Field Research Findings

Migration Type	Main Characteristics	Matching Informants
Seasonal Migration	Temporary migration, done only during certain seasons, returning home after work ends	–
Non-Seasonal Migration	Migration without specific time limits, usually to big cities for work or education	NS, NH, AZ
Permanent Migration	Long-term migration, bringing family, rarely returning to hometown	HY, FD, SU

Based on the mapping above, it is evident that Minangkabau migration patterns have shifted from non-seasonal to permanent migration. This shift aligns with the socio-economic transformations experienced by modern Minangkabau society. Migrants are no longer merely seeking temporary livelihoods but are building new lives and identities in the rantau (migration areas). Interviews with HY, FD, and SU indicate that they have lived more than two decades in the rantau, have stable jobs or businesses, and have brought their families to live with them. Meanwhile, NS, NH, and AZ still display characteristics of non-seasonal migrants, as they migrated for education and career purposes, but still maintain emotional ties to their hometowns and the possibility of returning later in life.

This phenomenon reinforces that migration is not only part of the Minangkabau social system but also a flexible economic adaptation mechanism in response to changing times. The rantau is no longer merely a “temporary place to earn a living” but has become a new living space shaping family economic patterns and expanding social networks among migrants. Therefore, this study shows that Minangkabau migration cannot be separated from the cultural and religious values that underpin it. The migration process is oriented not only toward economic goals but also toward fulfilling moral responsibilities as Minangkabau men who “must be able to stand on their own feet.”

Cultural and Religious Values in Migration Motivation

The findings reveal that the decision to migrate among the Minangkabau people is not solely driven by economic motives but also by customary values and Islamic teachings that guide their way of life. In Minangkabau culture, migration is not merely economic mobility but a moral and social obligation attached to the identity of Minangkabau men. This foundational principle aligns with the adat philosophy “*Adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah*”, which asserts that every social practice must be grounded in Islamic values.

In the context of migration, this philosophy is reflected in the proverb “*Karatau madang di hulu, babuah babungo balun; marantau bujang dahulu, di rumah paguno balun.*” This proverb means that a Minangkabau man must undergo a process of independence through migration before being considered mature and beneficial to his family and village. Based on the interviews, HY, NH, and NS explicitly stated that migration is a form of responsibility for Minangkabau men to seek lawful income and improve their families’ standard of living. For them, working in the rantau is not only for themselves but also a form of social worship with spiritual value. For example, HY emphasized that migrating is in accordance with the religious command to “spread across the earth in search of sustenance from Allah’s bounty,” as explained in QS. Al-Mulk: 15 and QS. Al-Jumu’ah: 10.

Similarly, NH views migration as a form of fulfilling religious duty: working hard for worldly affairs without neglecting the afterlife. This perspective reflects harmony between Islamic teachings and Minangkabau customary values, in which economic responsibility is always accompanied by spiritual awareness. Furthermore, the findings show that religious values function as moral filters for migrants in carrying out economic activities. FD, SU, and AZ emphasize the importance of seeking lawful income, not being ashamed of any form of work, and adhering to the principle of hard work. In Islamic economics, these values correspond to the concept of *kasb*, meaning lawful effort to earn a livelihood. Overall, three main values form the foundation of Minangkabau migrants’ work ethic from an Islamic economic perspective: *kasb* (lawful effort), *maslahah* (social benefit), and *tawazun* (balance between worldly and spiritual responsibilities).

These values can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. Integration of Islamic Economic Values with Migrants' Experiences

Islamic Economic Value	Meaning in Migration Context	Field Indicators	Supporting Informants
Kasb (lawful effort)	Spirit of lawful and persistent work	Not picky about jobs; diligent effort from the bottom	FD, SU, AZ
Maslahah (social benefit)	Work outcomes used to support family and community	Sending money home, supporting social and migrant activities	HY, NH, FD, SU
Tawazun (life balance)	Maintaining balance between worldly work and spiritual responsibilities	Viewing work as worship, upholding religious ethics	NH, HY

These findings demonstrate that the economic activities of Minangkabau migrants are not solely aimed at material gain but also contain spiritual and social values. Migration becomes a pathway to fulfilling economic responsibilities and a form of service to family and community. In other words, the Minangkabau migrant work ethic is an embodiment of Islamic values that teach balance between worldly effort and spiritual orientation.

Thematic Analysis: Contribution as a Form of Social Maslahah

Field findings suggest that migrant economic and social contributions are a real manifestation of the *maslahah* concept in Islamic economics generating benefits for oneself, family, and the broader community.

Contribution Dimension	Activity Forms	Socio-Economic Meaning	Islamic Values Reflected	Supporting Informants
Family Economy	Regular remittance sending, funding family education	Improved family welfare	Maslahah, kasb	HY, FD, SU, NH
Social-Organizational	Participation in IKBAL, K3R, PKDP, and social initiatives	Strengthened solidarity and support for village development	Ukhuwah Islamiyah, ta’awun	HY, NH, FD, SU
Cultural-Identity	Participation in adat events and <i>nagari</i> activities in the rantau	Preservation of Minangkabau culture outside homeland	Tawazun	All informants

These results show that migration performs dual functions: an economic tool and a socio-cultural mechanism that reinforce one another. In Islamic economic thought, such contributions are not merely material transfers but moral and spiritual obligations toward family and community. Migrants are therefore not only seen as income seekers but as social actors who strengthen economic networks and Minangkabau communal solidarity. This aligns with *masalahah 'ammah* (public welfare), a central purpose of Islamic economic systems. Thus, the economic and social contributions of Minangkabau migrants represent Islamic values of work, solidarity, and social responsibility. Their involvement in supporting families and developing their *nagari* demonstrates that migration is not only an individual economic strategy but also a community empowerment instrument grounded in justice and collective welfare.

Final Synthesis: Migration Tradition as a Model of Economy and Spirituality

The migration tradition of the Minangkabau people is a socio-economic phenomenon with deep cultural, moral, and spiritual dimensions. According to the findings, migration is not only an effort to earn a living but also a process of self-formation and the realization of social responsibility. In the Minangkabau adat system, men are expected to “*membangik batang tarandam*”—to strive and uplift their family’s dignity through hard work in the rantau. This aligns with the proverb “*Karatau madang di hulu, babuah babungo balun; marantau bujang dahulu, di rumah paguno balun,*” emphasizing that a man is not considered mature until he has left his comfort zone to seek experiences and livelihood away from home. From an adat perspective, migration forms part of a value system known as *adat nan sabana adat*, derived from human nature and in harmony with universal Islamic values. Migration teaches that an individual carries not only their own name but also the honor of their family and *nagari*. Thus, a migrant’s success is regarded as a collective success. The findings also align with Islamic economic principles, which view work as worship and a means toward *falah* (well-being). Chapra (1992) asserts that the Islamic economic system is built upon three pillars: distributive justice, social responsibility, and spiritual balance—all of which strongly appear in Minangkabau migrant practices. This concept is reinforced by al-Qaradawi (1995), who states that seeking lawful livelihood is part of *jihād fi sabilillah*, provided it is carried out with sincere intentions and good ethics. The Qur’an gives spiritual legitimacy to migration practices. QS. Al-Mulk: 15 and QS. Al-Jumu’ah: 10 explicitly command humans to spread across the earth and seek Allah’s bounty. Thus, migration is not only economic activity but also obedience in fulfilling the divine mandate of stewardship on earth.

The findings support earlier works by Naim (1984) and Navis (1986), which view migration as a long-standing socio-economic mechanism in Minangkabau society. This study, however, identifies a shift toward permanent migration, reflecting adaptation to modern economic dynamics while maintaining core cultural and religious values. Hadith also reinforces this balance. Informants NH and HY referred to the Prophet’s guidance: “Work for your worldly life as if you will live forever, and work for your hereafter as if you will die tomorrow.” (HR. Ibn Asakir) Migration for Minangkabau men thus becomes an act of worship providing for families, helping parents, and sharing blessings with others. Socially, migrants’ involvement in organizations such as PKDP, K3R, and IKBAL strengthens solidarity, reflecting *ukhuwah Islamiyah* and *ta’awun*. These activities show that migration functions as a socio-economic network rooted in Islamic values and communal adat. In conclusion, the synthesis of Minangkabau adat, Islamic teachings, and migrant economic practices produces a unique model: an economy grounded in spiritual and social values. Migration promotes hard work, independence, family responsibility, and social contribution proving that the principle *adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah* remains relevant today. Migration is not merely a physical journey in search of livelihood; it is also a spiritual journey toward maturity and social responsibility. From an Islamic economic perspective, this tradition demonstrates that a value-based economic system can operate harmoniously and sustainably making Minangkabau migrants living embodiments of Islamic economics, not just theoretical adherents.

CONCLUSION

The Minangkabau migration tradition represents a form of socio-economic adaptation grounded in customary values and Islamic teachings, where migration is understood not only as an effort to earn a livelihood but also as a moral, spiritual, and social responsibility to enhance family welfare and contribute to the home *nagari*. The findings indicate that migration functions as an effective family economic strategy and has transformed from non-seasonal to permanent migration, characterized by a strong work ethic, independence, and deep religious consciousness. The migrants’ activities including lawful work, remittance sending, and involvement in social organizations reflect the application of the Islamic economic values of *kasb*, *masalahah*, and *tawazun*. Thus, the Minangkabau migration tradition is not only a cultural identity but also a concrete model of Islamic economic practice that harmoniously balances worldly achievement with *ukhrawi* responsibilities.

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- Qur'an Surah Al-Jumu'ah Ayat 10. "Apabila Salat Telah Dilaksanakan, Maka Bertebaranlah Kamu Di Muka Bumi Dan Carilah Karunia Allah."
- Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah Ayat 267. "Hai Orang-Orang Yang Beriman, Nafkahkanlah Sebagian Dari Hasil Usahamu Yang Baik-Baik."
- Qur'an Surah At-Taubah Ayat 105. "Dan Katakanlah: Bekerjalah Kamu, Maka Allah Dan Rasul-Nya Serta Orang-Orang Mukmin Akan Melihat Pekerjaanmu Itu."
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