

THE ORIGINS OF MINANGKABAU SOCIETY AND THE PROCESS OF ISLAMIZATION FROM A CULTURAL HISTORY PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This study examines the origins of Minangkabau society and the process of Islamization from the perspective of cultural history. The purpose of this study is to analyze the historical development of Minangkabau identity, the interaction between local traditions and Islamic teachings, and the cultural transformation that shaped social life in West Sumatra. The study applies a qualitative method using historical and cultural approaches through literature review and document analysis. Data were collected from traditional manuscripts, historical records, scientific journals, books, and cultural narratives related to Minangkabau society and the spread of Islam. The findings indicate that Minangkabau society developed gradually through the influence of geographical conditions, trade networks, migration, and social interaction. The process of Islamization occurred peacefully through trade activities, educational institutions, and cultural adaptation conducted by Muslim traders and religious scholars. Islamic teachings were accepted because they were considered compatible with existing customary values such as social harmony, justice, and communal responsibility. The study also reveals that the integration between Islam and local traditions produced the philosophy “adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah,” which became the foundation of social and cultural life in Minangkabau society. Furthermore, the preservation of the matrilineal system demonstrates the ability of local culture to adapt to religious transformation while maintaining traditional identity. Overall, the study highlights the harmonious relationship between Islam and Minangkabau culture in shaping social identity and cultural continuity.

Keywords: Cultural History, Islamic Culture, Islamization, Local Tradition, Minangkabau Society



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INTRODUCTION

Minangkabau is one of the largest ethnic groups in Indonesia possessing a rich history culture and deeply rooted traditions. The life of the Minangkabau community developed through a long historical process influenced by geographical conditions, customs, social systems, and the arrival of Islam in the region of West Sumatra (Subchi et al., 2022). The cultural identity of the Minangkabau people is not only recognized through the traditional Rumah Gadang, regional language, and the tradition of migration known as *merantau*, but also through a philosophy of life that combines custom and religion into a harmonious unity (Jarrah et al., 2020). The relationship between tradition and Islam has even become the main characteristic of Minangkabau society, reflected in the famous expression “adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah.” This phrase indicates that customary law is based on Islamic teachings, while Islamic teachings are guided by the Qur’an as the foundation of life.

The discussion regarding the origins of the Minangkabau people has always been an interesting topic in the study of cultural history. Various opinions concerning the origins of Minangkabau society emerge from *tambo* manuscripts, historical records, and scientific research (Hanif et al., 2025). The *Tambo Minangkabau*, as a traditional literary heritage, explains that the ancestors of the Minangkabau people descended from Iskandar Zulkarnain, who came to the island of Sumatra and settled in the mountainous areas. Although the stories contained in the *tambo* are often mixed with legendary elements, their existence still holds important value in shaping the cultural identity of Minangkabau society (Nasution et al., 2023). In addition to the *tambo*, several historical studies also indicate a connection between the Minangkabau people and the migration of Austronesian groups that spread throughout the archipelago thousands of years ago (Onrizal & Mansor, 2020). The combination of traditional narratives and scientific studies demonstrates that the formation of Minangkabau society occurred gradually through cultural interaction, trade, and political developments in the region of Sumatra.

Geographically the Minangkabau region is located within the Bukit Barisan mountain range, an area characterized by fertile land and strategic trade routes. These natural conditions supported the growth of social and economic life since ancient times (Simon, 2012). Agricultural activities developed strongly, particularly in farming and plantation sectors. In addition, the existence of trade routes connecting inland areas with coastal regions made Minangkabau an open society that was highly receptive to external influences (Jannah et al., 2023). Trade relations with various nations also brought significant changes to the cultural life of the people, including the influence of Hindu-Buddhist beliefs before Islam became widely established.

In earlier periods the life of Minangkabau society was influenced by animistic and dynamistic beliefs that developed within local traditions. Hindu-Buddhist influences later entered through trade relations and the political power of kingdoms in Sumatra (Fakhyadi & Samsudin, 2024). Such influences can be observed through historical remains such as inscriptions, systems of governance, and the use of particular titles within the social structure of the community. Nevertheless, local culture remained the dominant element in Minangkabau society. Values such as deliberation, kinship, and respect for customary traditions had already developed long before the arrival of Islam in the region.

The arrival of Islam in Minangkabau became one of the most important events in the historical and cultural journey of the community. The process of Islamization did not occur suddenly but took place gradually and peacefully over a long period (Nurdin, 2022). Trade routes became the primary medium for the spread of Islam throughout West Sumatra. Muslim traders from Arabia, Gujarat, Persia, and Aceh brought Islamic teachings alongside their commercial activities in coastal areas (Yamashita, 2022). Intensive trade relations created cultural interactions that gradually introduced Islamic teachings to local communities. In addition to trade, the spread of Islam was also carried out by religious scholars and Islamic figures who delivered their teachings through cultural and educational approaches.

The development of Islam in Minangkabau became stronger when *surau* institutions began functioning as centers of education and community development. The *surau* was not only used as a place of worship but also served as a center for religious learning, discussions about customary law, and the moral formation of younger generations (Jafar et al., 2024). The presence of the *surau* greatly influenced changes in the social life of Minangkabau society. Islamic values gradually became integrated into various aspects of life, including customary law, education, and social relations. The peaceful process of Islamization enabled Islamic teachings to be accepted without eliminating the local cultural identity that had existed beforehand.

The integration of tradition and Islam eventually became the defining characteristic of Minangkabau society. Customs that had previously developed based on local traditions were adjusted to align with Islamic values, creating a unique social system (Agustina, 2024). The matrilineal kinship system, inherited through the female lineage, continued to be maintained, although its implementation was adapted to Islamic teachings. The harmony between custom and religion created balance in the social life of Minangkabau society (Ma'arif et al., 2023). Values such as mutual cooperation, deliberation, respect for elders, and religious education became essential parts of everyday life.

However, the relationship between tradition and Islam within Minangkabau society did not always proceed without conflict. During the nineteenth century, an important historical event known as the Padri War took place. This conflict emerged because of differences in perspective between traditional leaders and Islamic reformists concerning the implementation of Islamic teachings within society (Sulaeman et al., 2025). The Padri group sought a purer application of Islamic principles, while several customary leaders attempted to preserve long-established traditions. Although the conflict created social tensions, a process of reconciliation eventually produced an agreement that strengthened the relationship between custom and Islam in Minangkabau society. This agreement later gave rise to the philosophy “adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah,” which continues to serve as a guiding principle to the present day.

The study of the origins of the Minangkabau people and the process of Islamization holds significant value in understanding the development of cultural history in Indonesia. Minangkabau society represents an example of how local culture can adapt to religious teachings without losing its original identity. The process of Islamization, carried out through cultural and educational approaches, reflects the ability of society to accept change peacefully. Furthermore, Minangkabau history demonstrates that the interaction between custom and religion can create a harmonious social system that remains relevant in modern life.

The development of modern times and the influence of globalization currently present new challenges to the preservation of Minangkabau culture. Modernization affects ways of thinking, lifestyles, and social relationships, particularly among younger generations. Therefore, understanding the historical origins of Minangkabau society and the process of Islamization becomes increasingly important in preserving cultural identity and the noble values inherited from ancestors. The study of cultural history does not merely function as knowledge of the past but also serves as a means of understanding social identity and strengthening cultural values in contemporary life.

Based on these explanations the discussion concerning the origins of the Minangkabau people and the process of Islamization from the perspective of cultural history becomes an interesting subject for deeper study. This discussion provides an understanding of how the identity of Minangkabau society was formed through the integration of local traditions and Islamic teachings. In addition, the discussion also demonstrates that cultural history plays an important role in shaping social life and maintaining the continuity of cultural values that continue to survive today.

RESEARCH METHOD

This article applies a qualitative approach using the method of historical and cultural study to examine the origins of the Minangkabau people and the process of Islamization in West Sumatra. A qualitative method was selected because the discussion focuses on understanding social phenomena, cultural values, historical developments, and the interaction between local traditions and Islamic teachings within Minangkabau society (Amin, 2025). Through this approach, the discussion is directed toward interpreting historical facts, cultural symbols, traditional narratives, and social transformations that developed over time. The qualitative method also enables a deeper understanding of the relationship between history, culture, religion, and social identity in Minangkabau society.

The historical approach used in this study emphasizes the process of tracing events related to the formation of Minangkabau society and the spread of Islam in the region. Historical analysis is carried out by examining various written and oral sources that explain the cultural and social development of Minangkabau society from ancient times until the strengthening of Islamic influence (Suwandi & Setyobudi, 2020). The study does not only focus on chronological events but also pays attention to the social and cultural conditions that influenced historical changes within society. Through this approach, the process of Islamization is understood not merely as the arrival of a religion but also as a transformation that affected social systems, educational institutions, customary law, and community values.

The cultural approach in this article is used to analyze the interaction between local traditions and Islamic teachings that shaped the identity of Minangkabau society. Cultural studies are important because Minangkabau society possesses unique characteristics, especially in maintaining customary traditions while simultaneously integrating Islamic values into everyday life (Hakim & Noviyanti, 2025). The analysis focuses on cultural elements such as kinship systems, traditional institutions, social norms, philosophical values, and religious practices that developed within the community. Through this perspective, the study explains how local culture adapted to Islamic teachings without eliminating the original identity of Minangkabau society.

The sources of data used in this article consist of primary and secondary sources related to Minangkabau history, cultural development, and the process of Islamization. Primary sources include traditional manuscripts, historical records, inscriptions, oral traditions, and local cultural narratives such as the *Tambo Minangkabau*. These sources provide information regarding the origins of Minangkabau society, social structure, traditional customs, and historical perspectives that have been preserved across generations. Secondary sources consist of books, scientific journals, academic articles, and previous research discussing Minangkabau history, cultural studies, and Islamic influence in West Sumatra. Secondary data are used to

support and compare information obtained from primary sources in order to strengthen the validity of the analysis.

Data collection techniques in this article are conducted through literature study and document analysis. Literature study is applied by collecting references from books, journals, historical documents, and scientific publications relevant to the topic of discussion. This technique allows the study to gather comprehensive information related to the origins of Minangkabau society and the historical development of Islam in the region. Document analysis is carried out by examining historical texts, cultural manuscripts, and records containing information about social changes and cultural transformations within Minangkabau society. Through these techniques, the discussion is based on reliable academic references and historical evidence.

The process of data analysis is conducted descriptively and interpretatively. Descriptive analysis is used to explain historical events, cultural developments, and the process of Islamization systematically and clearly. This analysis presents information regarding the social conditions of Minangkabau society before and after the arrival of Islam, including changes in customs, educational systems, and social values. Interpretative analysis is applied to understand the meaning of historical events and cultural transformations within Minangkabau society. Through interpretation, the study explains the relationship between local traditions and Islamic teachings as well as the formation of the philosophical principle “adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah.”

In conducting historical analysis the study also applies source criticism techniques to evaluate the credibility and relevance of the data used. Source criticism is divided into external criticism and internal criticism. External criticism focuses on examining the authenticity of historical sources, including the origin, author, and historical background of documents or manuscripts. Internal criticism is conducted to analyze the content of sources and evaluate the accuracy of information contained within them. This process is important to ensure that the data used in the study possess academic reliability and can support objective analysis.

The study also applies a contextual approach to understand the historical conditions surrounding the process of Islamization in Minangkabau society. Contextual analysis is necessary because social and cultural changes cannot be separated from political, economic, and geographical conditions during particular historical periods. Trade routes, migration, educational development, and interactions with Muslim traders from various regions became important factors influencing the spread of Islam in West Sumatra. By understanding the historical context, the study provides a broader explanation of how Islam was accepted and integrated into local culture peacefully and gradually.

Furthermore, the study uses a comparative perspective to examine the relationship between pre-Islamic traditions and Islamic cultural values within Minangkabau society. Comparative analysis is used to identify cultural elements that experienced change, adaptation, or continuity after the arrival of Islam (Taufiqurrahman et al., 2021). This approach helps explain how Islamic teachings influenced social systems while local traditions continued to be maintained. The study also highlights how the integration of Islam and custom created a distinctive cultural identity that differentiates Minangkabau society from other ethnic groups in Indonesia.

The validity of the data in this study is strengthened through source triangulation. Triangulation is conducted by comparing information from various historical records, scientific studies, oral traditions, and cultural documents related to Minangkabau society and the process of Islamization. The use of multiple sources aims to reduce subjectivity and increase the reliability of the findings. Through triangulation, the study seeks to present balanced and accurate information concerning the historical and cultural development of Minangkabau society.

The methodological framework used in this article is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the origins of Minangkabau society and the process of Islamization from a cultural historical perspective. The integration of historical and cultural approaches allows the discussion to examine social transformations not only from the perspective of political events but also from the perspective of cultural adaptation and social identity formation. This method also supports the objective of explaining how Islamic teachings became integrated into Minangkabau customs and how both elements continue to influence social life in contemporary society.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study of the origins of Minangkabau society and the process of Islamization from a cultural historical perspective reveals that the development of Minangkabau identity was shaped through a long interaction between local traditions, geographical conditions, migration, trade networks, and Islamic influences. The findings indicate that Minangkabau society did not emerge through a single historical event, but through gradual cultural and social processes that developed over centuries. Historical sources, traditional manuscripts, and cultural narratives demonstrate that Minangkabau civilization evolved in close connection with regional trade routes and social interactions in the western part of Sumatra.

The findings show that the geographical location of Minangkabau significantly influenced the formation of its society and culture. The mountainous region of Bukit Barisan provided fertile land suitable for agriculture, while the surrounding rivers and trade routes connected inland areas with coastal regions. These geographical advantages encouraged economic growth and cultural exchange. Agricultural activities became the foundation of social life, especially rice cultivation, which shaped communal cooperation and kinship relations within society. At the same time, trade connections with external regions facilitated interactions with foreign merchants and travelers who introduced new cultural and religious influences.

The analysis of historical records and traditional narratives reveals that Minangkabau society possessed a strong communal system before the arrival of Islam. Social organization was based on kinship and customary law that regulated daily life, inheritance, social responsibilities, and conflict resolution. The matrilineal kinship system became one of the most distinctive characteristics of Minangkabau culture. In this system, lineage and inheritance were passed through the female line, while male family members held responsibilities in leadership and social protection. This social structure reflected the importance of family unity and collective responsibility within the community.

The findings also indicate that the early belief systems within Minangkabau society were closely related to animistic and dynamistic traditions. Natural elements such as mountains, rivers, forests, and ancestral spirits were considered sacred and influential in everyday life. Rituals and ceremonies were performed to maintain harmony between human beings and nature. Historical evidence further demonstrates that Hindu-Buddhist influences entered Minangkabau through trade relations and political connections with kingdoms in Sumatra. These influences contributed to the development of governance systems, cultural symbols, and social hierarchies. However, local customs and traditions remained dominant despite external influences.

One of the major findings of this study concerns the gradual process of Islamization in Minangkabau society. The spread of Islam in West Sumatra occurred peacefully through commercial interactions, educational activities, and cultural adaptation. Muslim traders from Arabia, Gujarat, Persia, and Aceh played important roles in introducing Islamic teachings to local communities. Trade centers along coastal regions became early locations for Islamic influence before the religion gradually expanded into inland areas. The process of Islamization

was not based on military conquest or forced conversion but developed through social interaction and cultural assimilation.

The findings reveal that Islamic teachings were accepted more easily because local values within Minangkabau society already emphasized morality, communal harmony, and mutual respect. Islamic principles concerning justice, social solidarity, and ethical behavior were considered compatible with existing customary values. Religious scholars and Islamic teachers used cultural approaches in spreading Islam, allowing local traditions to coexist with religious teachings. This strategy reduced resistance and enabled Islamic values to become integrated into daily life.

The role of educational institutions especially the surau, became another important result of this study. The surau functioned not only as a place of worship but also as a center of religious education, cultural discussion, and social development. Young people gathered in the surau to study Islamic teachings, ethics, customary law, and leadership values. Through these educational activities, Islamic knowledge spread widely across Minangkabau society. The surau also strengthened social cohesion by encouraging communal participation and moral discipline.

Another significant finding concerns the relationship between Islam and customary law. The study shows that Minangkabau society successfully integrated Islamic teachings into traditional customs without completely eliminating earlier cultural structures. This integration produced the philosophy “adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah,” which emphasizes that customary law should be based on Islamic principles. The philosophy became a fundamental guideline in regulating social relationships, leadership, inheritance, education, and dispute resolution.

The findings indicate that the adaptation between Islam and local traditions created a unique cultural identity. The matrilineal system continued to exist even after the spread of Islam, although certain practices were adjusted according to Islamic teachings. Religious ceremonies and cultural traditions were combined in various social events such as marriages, community gatherings, and traditional celebrations. This cultural adaptation demonstrates the flexibility of Minangkabau society in preserving local identity while accepting religious transformation.

The study also identifies the emergence of social tensions during the nineteenth century, particularly during the Padri movement. Islamic reformists sought to purify religious practices and eliminate customs considered inconsistent with Islamic teachings. In contrast, traditional leaders attempted to preserve long-established cultural practices. The conflict eventually developed into the Padri War, which became one of the most important historical events in West Sumatra. Despite the tensions, the conflict later produced reconciliation between religious and customary leaders.

The findings demonstrate that the reconciliation process strengthened the integration between Islam and Minangkabau customs. Religious values became more deeply embedded in social life, while traditional institutions adapted to Islamic principles. This balance contributed to the continuity of Minangkabau cultural identity until the present time. The integration of religion and custom also influenced political leadership, educational development, and social organization in the region.

Another important result of this study is the role of migration traditions known as merantau in spreading Minangkabau culture and Islamic values beyond West Sumatra. Economic factors, educational opportunities, and social expectations encouraged many Minangkabau individuals to migrate to other regions. Through migration, Minangkabau traditions and Islamic cultural practices spread to different parts of Indonesia and Southeast Asia. Migrant communities maintained strong connections with their homeland while adapting to new social environments.

The findings further reveal that Minangkabau society developed a strong intellectual and religious tradition. Islamic educational institutions contributed to the emergence of scholars, writers, and reformists who played important roles in Indonesian history. Religious learning became closely connected with social responsibility and community leadership. This intellectual tradition strengthened the position of Islam as an important element within Minangkabau identity.

The study also shows that globalization and modernization have created new challenges for the preservation of Minangkabau culture. Changes in lifestyle, urbanization, and technological development influence younger generations in understanding traditional values. Nevertheless, customary institutions and religious communities continue to promote cultural preservation through education, traditional ceremonies, and community activities.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the origins of Minangkabau society and the process of Islamization cannot be separated from historical interactions between culture, religion, trade, education, and social adaptation. Minangkabau society represents a successful example of cultural transformation in which local traditions and Islamic teachings coexist harmoniously. The integration between custom and religion continues to shape the identity and social life of Minangkabau society in contemporary times.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the formation of Minangkabau society cannot be understood solely through political history or migration narratives. The development of Minangkabau identity was strongly influenced by cultural adaptation, environmental conditions, economic interactions, and religious transformation (Simon, 2009). The interaction between local traditions and Islamic teachings created a distinctive social system that continues to shape Minangkabau society in contemporary times. The geographical condition of Minangkabau played a major role in shaping the character of society.

Fertile agricultural land supported communal cooperation and economic stability, while trade routes connected inland communities with external regions. These conditions encouraged cultural openness and facilitated interaction with foreign influences. Unlike isolated societies, Minangkabau communities developed within an environment that encouraged exchange and adaptation. This openness later became an important factor in the peaceful acceptance of Islamic teachings.

The persistence of the matrilineal kinship system demonstrates the strength of local traditions within Minangkabau society (Anwar, 2021). Although Islam generally emphasizes patrilineal inheritance systems in several Muslim societies, Minangkabau culture maintained its matrilineal structure through cultural adaptation and reinterpretation of religious values (Abdelwahed et al., 2025). The continuation of this system indicates that Islamization in Minangkabau was not intended to eliminate local traditions completely (Jusubaidi et al., 2024). Instead, religious teachings were integrated into existing social structures through negotiation and gradual adjustment.

The integration between Islam and custom reflects an important pattern of cultural accommodation. Islamic teachings were introduced through persuasive methods rather than coercive approaches (Reda, 2014). Religious scholars recognized the importance of respecting local customs while gradually introducing Islamic principles into social life. This strategy enabled Islam to become accepted as part of cultural identity instead of being perceived as an external force (Robottom & Norhaidah, 2008). The philosophy “adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah” symbolizes the successful integration between religion and tradition.

The role of trade networks in the spread of Islam highlights the connection between economic interaction and cultural transformation (Rahman, 2022). Muslim traders not only introduced commercial goods but also transmitted religious values, ethical principles, and social practices. Trade centers became important spaces for intercultural communication and religious exchange (Handoko et al., 2025). The spread of Islam through trade demonstrates that economic relationships often function as channels for broader cultural and ideological changes.

Educational institutions such as the surau played a significant role in strengthening Islamic influence in Minangkabau society (Siregar et al., 2022). The surau became centers for intellectual development, moral education, and leadership formation.

Religious education was not limited to ritual practices but also included discussions about ethics, customary law, and community responsibilities. Through these institutions, Islamic teachings became deeply connected with social organization and cultural identity. The emergence of the Padri movement reflects tensions that often occur during periods of social and religious transformation. Reformist groups attempted to purify religious practices according to Islamic principles, while traditional leaders sought to preserve cultural continuity. The conflict illustrates the challenges faced by societies undergoing ideological and cultural change. However, the reconciliation process following the Padri War demonstrates the capacity of Minangkabau society to resolve conflict through adaptation and compromise.

The reconciliation between religious reformists and customary leaders produced long-term social stability. Instead of creating permanent division, the conflict encouraged dialogue regarding the relationship between religion and culture. The resulting balance strengthened the position of Islam within Minangkabau society while preserving essential cultural traditions. This historical experience demonstrates that cultural transformation does not always require the elimination of older traditions.

The migration tradition of merantau also contributed significantly to the spread of Minangkabau identity and Islamic culture. Migration allowed Minangkabau communities to establish social and economic networks across Indonesia and Southeast Asia. Through migration, cultural practices, language, religious traditions, and social values spread beyond West Sumatra. Migrant communities maintained emotional and cultural connections with their homeland while adapting to diverse environments.

The intellectual tradition within Minangkabau society further strengthened the influence of Islam in social life. Islamic educational institutions produced scholars and reformists who contributed to religious thought, education, and political development in Indonesia. The connection between education and social responsibility encouraged active participation in community development. This intellectual culture became one of the foundations of Minangkabau social resilience.

Modernization and globalization have created new challenges for the preservation of Minangkabau traditions. Urbanization, technological advancement, and changing lifestyles influence younger generations in understanding cultural identity. In some cases, traditional values experience weakening due to external cultural influences and modern social trends. However, customary institutions, religious organizations, and educational communities continue to promote cultural preservation through traditional ceremonies, educational programs, and social activities.

The coexistence between Islamic teachings and local traditions in Minangkabau society provides an important example of cultural harmony within plural societies. The Minangkabau experience demonstrates that religion and culture do not always exist in opposition. Instead, both elements can support and strengthen one another through dialogue and adaptation. This cultural harmony contributes to social stability and collective identity formation.

The findings of this study also contribute to broader discussions concerning Islamization in Southeast Asia. Unlike regions where religious expansion occurred through conquest, Islamization in Minangkabau developed gradually through peaceful interaction and cultural adaptation. This pattern reflects the importance of social acceptance and local participation in religious transformation. The Minangkabau case demonstrates that cultural flexibility and respect for local traditions can facilitate the spread of religious values. The integration of religion and custom within Minangkabau society remains relevant in contemporary social life. Customary values continue to influence family relationships, leadership systems, conflict resolution, and educational practices. Islamic teachings remain central to moral guidance and

social ethics. The coexistence of these elements contributes to the preservation of cultural identity despite social change and modernization.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that the origins of Minangkabau society and the process of Islamization represent a complex historical experience shaped by interaction, adaptation, and cultural negotiation. The Minangkabau case illustrates how local traditions and Islamic teachings can coexist harmoniously while maintaining social stability and cultural continuity. This historical and cultural experience remains an important example of the relationship between religion and local identity in Indonesian society.

CONCLUSION

The study of the origins of Minangkabau society and the process of Islamization from a cultural historical perspective demonstrates that the development of Minangkabau identity was shaped through a long process of interaction between local traditions, geographical conditions, trade activities, migration, and Islamic influences. The formation of Minangkabau society did not occur instantly but evolved gradually through social adaptation and cultural transformation across different historical periods. Historical records, traditional narratives, and cultural studies indicate that Minangkabau civilization developed within a dynamic environment that encouraged interaction with external cultures while maintaining strong local traditions.

The process of Islamization in Minangkabau took place peacefully through trade networks, educational institutions, and cultural approaches implemented by Muslim traders and religious scholars. Islamic teachings were accepted because many religious values were considered compatible with the existing principles of Minangkabau customs, including social harmony, mutual respect, justice, and communal responsibility. As a result, Islam became integrated into various aspects of social life without eliminating the original cultural identity of Minangkabau society.

One of the most significant outcomes of this cultural integration was the emergence of the philosophy “adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah,” which reflects the harmonious relationship between custom and Islamic teachings. This principle became the foundation for regulating social relationships, leadership systems, education, and customary law within Minangkabau society. The continuity of the matrilineal kinship system also illustrates the ability of local culture to adapt to religious transformation while preserving essential traditional values.

The study further reveals that educational institutions such as the surau played a central role in strengthening Islamic influence and shaping intellectual traditions within Minangkabau society. Religious education contributed not only to spiritual development but also to moral formation, social responsibility, and leadership values. In addition, the tradition of *merantau* expanded the influence of Minangkabau culture and Islamic identity beyond West Sumatra into other regions of Indonesia and Southeast Asia.

Despite the challenges brought by modernization and globalization Minangkabau society continues to preserve cultural traditions and religious values through customary institutions, educational activities, and community practices. The historical experience of Minangkabau demonstrates that religion and local culture can coexist harmoniously through adaptation, dialogue, and mutual respect. Therefore, the Minangkabau case provides an important example of cultural resilience and the successful integration of Islamic teachings within local traditions in Indonesian society.

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