

Islamization in *Haminjon*: A Study of Business Morality in Batak Entrepreneurial Networks

Syahrial Arif Hutagalung*, Gatot Teguh Arifyanto, Fauzan Ghafur, Rika Githamala Ginting, Yessi Kurnia Arjani Manik

Politeknik Negeri Medan, Indonesia

*Correspondence: ✉ syahrialarif@polmed.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the interaction between Islamic values and Batak traditions in the business practices of Muslim entrepreneurs in North Sumatra, focusing on haminjon (frankincense), which holds both spiritual and economic significance for Batak society. Unlike previous research that rarely explores the integration of religion and custom in trade, this study employs a qualitative ethnographic approach. Fieldwork was conducted over three months (April–June 2025) in Doloksanggul and Balige, involving seven participants: three Batak Muslim entrepreneurs, two haminjon traders, one customary leader, and one local ustaz. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis, and examined using thematic coding to identify negotiation patterns between adat and Islam. The findings indicate that Islamization in this context does not occur through doctrinal enforcement but rather through moral diplomacy, ethical conduct, and everyday commercial practices. Muslim entrepreneurs continue to uphold kinship ties and customary obligations, while reinterpreting them through Islamic principles such as honesty, justice, rejection of usury, and social responsibility. Within this process, haminjon serves as both a cultural and economic bridge, shifting from a ritual object into a symbol of halal trade and moral integrity. Theoretically, this study proposes a contextual model of Islamic business ethics rooted in local values yet adaptable to cultural pluralism. Practically, it underscores trade as a medium of Islamization, showing that the integration of religion and tradition occurs through productive reinterpretation that strengthens collective identity and supports sustainable development.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini membahas interaksi antara nilai-nilai Islam dan tradisi Batak dalam praktik bisnis pengusaha Muslim di Sumatera Utara, dengan menyoroti komoditas *haminjon* (kemenyan) yang memiliki nilai spiritual sekaligus ekonomi bagi masyarakat Batak. Berbeda dari kajian sebelumnya yang jarang menelaah integrasi agama dan adat dalam perdagangan, studi ini menggunakan pendekatan etnografi kualitatif. Penelitian dilakukan selama tiga bulan (April–Juni 2025) di Doloksanggul dan Balige, melibatkan tujuh partisipan: tiga pengusaha Muslim Batak, dua pedagang *haminjon*, seorang pemimpin adat, dan seorang ustaz lokal. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan analisis dokumen, kemudian dianalisis dengan pengkodean tematik untuk mengungkap pola negosiasi antara adat dan Islam. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa Islamisasi tidak terjadi melalui pemaksaan doktrinal, melainkan melalui diplomasi moral, etika, dan praktik perdagangan sehari-hari. Para pengusaha tetap menjaga ikatan kekerabatan dan kewajiban adat, namun menafsirkannya ulang dengan prinsip Islam seperti kejujuran, keadilan, penolakan riba, dan tanggung jawab sosial. Dalam konteks ini, *haminjon* berperan sebagai jembatan budaya dan ekonomi, bergeser dari fungsi ritual menjadi simbol perdagangan halal dan integritas moral. Secara teoretis, studi ini menawarkan model etika bisnis Islam yang kontekstual dan adaptif terhadap pluralitas budaya. Secara praktis, ia menegaskan perdagangan sebagai sarana Islamisasi yang memungkinkan integrasi agama dan adat berlangsung melalui reinterpretasi produktif demi identitas kolektif dan pembangunan berkelanjutan.

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A. INTRODUCTION

The examination of the interplay between Islam and local economic norms is receiving heightened focus in current social science and Islamic economics discussions.¹ Over the past decade, there has been a significant effort to analyze the application of Islamic values across various socio-cultural contexts. Such studies have arisen in reaction to the difficulties of implementing Islamic business principles, which are frequently normative and fail to consider the intricacies of local circumstances.² The evolution of the Islamic Business Ethics (IBE) framework is transitioning from a legalistic paradigm to an ethnographic and moral economy³ (moral economy, as understood here, refers to Scott's concept that economic behavior in traditional societies is shaped not only by profit but also by communal norms and obligations) perspective, highlighting the significance of comprehending economic processes within social networks and prevailing cultural norms.⁴ Nevertheless, research integrating Islamic business ethics, regional norms, and cultural economic history remains scarce, particularly within the setting of Indonesia's significant ethnic and cultural diversity.

An intriguing topic that remains insufficiently examined academically is the correlation between the trade of *haminjon* (benzoin), the process of Islamization, and the economic ethics of the Muslim Batak community in the Toba and Mandailing regions of North Sumatra. *Haminjon*, once a valuable product in the Indian Ocean trade network⁵, served a dual purpose: it was integral to Batak customary rites and facilitated the introduction of Islamic doctrines through Muslim commercial networks from Barus and the western coast of Sumatra. According to BPS statistics from 2020, the Muslim population in Toba Regency is anticipated to comprise only 8–10%, although they significantly contribute to the trade of agricultural products, notably haminjon. Preliminary research via interviews with Batak Muslim entrepreneurs in Doloksanggul District revealed that principles such as honesty, blessings, and social responsibility in their business practices originate not only from religious texts but also from customary values that they perceive as harmonious with Islam. These findings disclose a mixed and dynamic moral business reality that frequently diverges from the idealization of official sharia law.

These preliminary findings contest the dichotomous presumption that Islamization invariably supplants tradition with homogeneous Islamic standards. In contrast, Batak Muslim entrepreneurs typically integrate and harmonize these two sources of value inside their commercial endeavors. This corresponds with anthropological literature on vernacular Islam,⁶ highlighting local modifications of Islamic standards, and with anthropological

¹ Hisam Ahyani, *Membumikan Syariah : Pendekatan Fiqh Keluarga Dan Ekonomi Menuju Kesejahteraan Sosial* (Bandung: Widina Media Utama, 2025).

² Fazlur Rahman and Syarif Imam Hidayat, *Agribisnis Syariah* (Gresik: Thalibil Ilmi Publishing, 2024).

³ Maman Wahyudi, "The Concept of Business Ethics in Islamic Perspective," *Jurnal Pendidikan Ips* 14, no. 2 (December 31, 2024): 478–84, <https://doi.org/10.37630/jpi.v14i2.2166>.

⁴ syifa Ayyada Jannati, Dani Ramadhan, And Cindy Nadya Dewi Pertiwi, "Modal Sosial Dalam Revitalisasi Kearifan Lokal (Studi Kasus Desa Wisata Kandri Kecamatan Gunung Pati Kota Semarang)," *Jurnal Analisa Sosiologi* 9 (February 24, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.20961/jas.v9i0.39813>.

⁵ Singgih Tri Sulistiyono, "Peran Pantai Utara Jawa Dalam Jaringan Perdagangan Rempah," *Universitas Diponogero*, 2018, 1–19.

⁶ R. Michael Feener et al., "Islamisation and the Formation of Vernacular Muslim Material Culture in 15th-Century Northern Sumatra," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 49, no. 143 (January 2, 2021): 1–41, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2021.1873564>.

economic studies on markets integrated within social networks.⁷ Despite existing studies on Islamization in Mandailing and the influence of adat on Batak commerce, there is a paucity of research that directly associates cultural resistance to normative Islamization with tangible economic activities. Research on cultural opposition to the uniform application of Sharia in Indonesia cautions that neglecting the local moral economy may lead to policies that are normative yet socially unproductive.

The selection of *haminjon* as the subject of investigation is predicated not only on its historical importance but also on its business characteristics, which depend on enduring networks of trust. This commodity occupies the nexus of ritual and market spheres, facilitating a comprehensive examination of the integration of religious ideals into economic behaviors while preserving traditional values. This research is pertinent not only for local studies but also enhances the worldwide discourse on the moral economy of commerce.⁸ *Haminjon* also has been a highly coveted commodity among Arab nations since the period of Indian Ocean trade. The Arab quest for this product led them to the Batak region, specifically Tapanuli and its vicinity, facilitating trading channels with cultural and religious exchanges. The commerce of *haminjon* functioned not just as an economic endeavor but also as a conduit for cultural Islamization.⁹ This interaction established a framework of business ethics that integrated the ideals of honesty, trust, and social responsibility derived from Islamic teachings with Batak customary values, including clan unity, shame, and communal obligation. These ethics have been down through generations and are still rigorously observed by the local community today, forming an unwritten heritage of historical commercial interactions that continues to shape the economic conduct of both Batak Muslim and non-Muslim populations.

This research seeks to address the gap by providing a contextual and empirical knowledge of how Batak Muslim¹⁰ entrepreneurs reconcile Islamic beliefs with Batak practices in the formation of their business ethics. This research positions *haminjon* as the focus, illustrating that Islamization in Batak Land transpires not through textual or doctrinal means, but through socio-economic relationships that foster trust, ethics, and enduring interactions. This project aims to enhance the knowledge base in Islamic economics, trade anthropology, and local Islamic studies, while also fostering the advancement of a more inclusive and contextual framework for Islamic business ethics. The aim of this research is to investigate how *haminjon* trade functions as a vehicle for cultural Islamization in the Batak Toba region. Secondly, to elucidate the patterns of business ethics employed by Batak Muslim entrepreneurs within the context of adat and Islam. Third, to examine how Batak Muslim entrepreneurs reconcile adat principles and sharia within their economic operations. Fourth, providing a contextual Islamic business ethics framework rooted on local norms and beliefs.

This research is new in its emphasis on the connection between local goods (*haminjon*), the process of Islamization, and economic ethics within the framework of Batak customs. This

⁷ Mark Granovetter, "Economic Institutions as Social Constructions: A Framework for Analysis," *Acta Sociologica* 35, no. 1 (January 1, 1992): 3–11, <https://doi.org/10.1177/000169939203500101>.

⁸ Khurram Sharif et al., "Evolution of Trust in Hawala Networks – Business Relationships Analysis from Inception to Maturity," *International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management* 16, no. 1 (January 25, 2023): 34–58, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IMEFM-05-2021-0181>.

⁹ Ichwan Azhari, "'Politik Historiografi' Sejarah Lokal: Kisah Kemenyan Dan Kapur Dari Barus, Sumatera Utara," *Sejarah Dan Budaya: Jurnal Sejarah, Budaya, Dan Pengajarannya* 11, no. 1 (2017): 9–23, <https://doi.org/10.17977/um020v11i12017p009>.

¹⁰ Syahrial Arif Hutagalung et al., "Contestation Between Islamic Law and Patrilineal Traditions: Insights from the Toba Batak Community" 26, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.22373/jms.v26i2.28789>.

study integrates the formerly distinct areas of customs, Islamization, and economics into a cohesive framework. The study by Daulat investigates Islamization in Mandailing but omits economic considerations,¹¹ whereas Harahap's research addresses the dynamics of customs in business without connecting them to Islamic ethics. This research will offer an integrative perspective that is little pursued in local Islamic studies in Indonesia.¹² This research employs a qualitative and ethnographic methodology, refraining from formulating statistical hypotheses. Instead, it posits a working hypothesis that the business ethics of Batak Muslim entrepreneurs are shaped by the interplay between customary values (clan, solidarity, social obligation) and Islamic principles (justice, honesty, trustworthiness), resulting in a unique model of business morality that is contextual and attuned to local conditions.

B. METHODS

This research is a qualitative field study that aims to thoroughly comprehend the social and cultural realities of the Batak Muslim community in relation to their business activities. The qualitative approach was selected as it enables the researcher to investigate the significance, values, and formulation of business morality shaped by the interplay between Batak customs and Islamic principles. This research is anthropological, seeking to comprehend the dynamics of economic culture from the actors' perspective (emic perspective) through the researcher's direct engagement in the field. Data sources comprise primary and secondary data.¹³ Primary data were acquired through comprehensive interviews and participant observation of the economic activities of Batak Muslim entrepreneurs, including those engaged in the trading of forest products like *haminjon*. Secondary data were sourced from archives, local history texts, scholarly publications, traditional manuscripts, and pertinent prior research on Islamization, Batak customs, and commercial ethics.

The study will be place from April to Juni 2025 at two primary sites: Doloksanggul District (Humbang Hasundutan Regency) and Balige District (Toba Regency), North Sumatra Province. This region was selected due to its extensive history of haminjon trading and a vibrant Batak Muslim community. The research participants comprise seven individuals: three Batak Muslim businesspeople, two haminjon traders, one traditional leader, and one local ustaz. This figure was established according to the idea of data saturation¹⁴, wherein information acquired from further interviews ceased to produce substantial new insights.

Data gathering was conducted utilizing three primary methodologies. Initially, comprehensive interviews with a semi-structured framework allowed both researchers and informants to examine the topic of business ethics and the interplay between tradition and Islam. This method is chosen in accordance with Spradley's ethnographic recommendations, which highlight the necessity of flexibility to uncover the cultural significance embedded in

¹¹ Daulat Saragi, "Pengaruh Islamisasi Terhadap Bentuk Visual Seni Ornamen Bagas Godang Mandailing," *Jurnal Bahas Unimed* 26, no. 1 (2015).

¹² Maisaroh Harahap, "Tradisi Upacara Adat Pernikahan Batak Angkola (Pergeseran Agama Dan Adat Dalam Konteks Modernitas)," *Universitas Islam Negeri (Uin) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta* 3, no. 2 (2021): 6.

¹³ Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson, *Ethnography* (4 Edition. | New York : Routledge, 2019. | Revised edition of the authors' *Ethnography*, 2007.: Routledge, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315146027>.

¹⁴ Greg Guest, Arwen Bunce, and Laura Johnson, "How Many Interviews Are Enough?," *Field Methods* 18, no. 1 (February 1, 2006): 59–82, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05279903>.

informant narratives.¹⁵ Secondly, participant observation was undertaken in diverse social and economic activities, including market transactions, customary consultations, and informal religious assemblies, to provide firsthand insight into daily routines. Third, field documentation was conducted through observational notes, photographs, and audio recordings to assure data authenticity.

Thematic data analysis was performed through coding and categorization.¹⁶ The analytical phases encompass transcribing interviews, discerning major topics including conceptions of Islamic ethics, the influence of clans in commerce, value conflicts, and the integration of Islamic teachings into local economic activities. These issues are further analyzed via the lenses of moral economy, Islamic business ethics, and social network theory. The investigation was performed cyclically, with data being repeatedly scrutinized and contrasted to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the development of business ethics among Batak Muslim entrepreneurs.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. *Haminjon* as an Entity of a Belief System

Haminjon, or incense, serves not merely as a commercial product for the Batak Toba community, but also possesses profound spiritual significance.¹⁷ Prior to the advent of Islam and Christianity, the Batak people regarded *haminjon* as an integral component of their old animistic and dynamistic religious systems.¹⁸ In the *Parmalim* religious framework, which emerged among the Batak Toba, *haminjon* has a significant ritualistic purpose.¹⁹ It serves as a vehicle for offerings to *debata mula jadi nabolon*, the deity in Batak belief, and as a conduit for spiritual communication with ancestors. The incorporation of *haminjon* in traditional rites, such *mangongkal holi* (ancestor bone excavation ritual), *tunggal panaluan* (holy dance with a magic staff), and *pesta horja*, demonstrates how *haminjon* united spirituality, customary law, and communal identity.²⁰

The conviction in the mystical and sacred potency of *haminjon* renders it a cosmic emblem that links the human domain with the spiritual realm.²¹ In this viewpoint, *haminjon* transcends a mere material thing and embodies a spiritual essence. The presence of *haminjon*

¹⁵ Hengki Wijaya, Sekolah Tinggi, and Filsafat Jaffray, "Analisis Data Kualitatif Model Spradley," no. March (2018): 0–9.

¹⁶ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "What Can 'Thematic Analysis' Offer Health and Wellbeing Researchers?," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being* 9, no. 1 (January 15, 2014): 26152, <https://doi.org/10.3402/qhw.v9.26152>.

¹⁷ Bungaran Antonius Simanjuntak, *Konflik Status Dan Kekuasaan Orang Batak Toba* (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2001).

¹⁸ Adi Gopas Sitompul, Astri Nilawati Sormin, and Boni Fosius Sihombing, *Batas-Batas Pandangan Iman Dan Perjumpaan Mandat* (Indramayu: Adab Indonesia Grup, 2024).

¹⁹ Dapot Siregar and Yurulina Gulo, "Eksistensi Parmalim Mempertahankan Adat Dan Budaya Batak Toba Di Era Modern," *Anthropos: Jurnal Antropologi Sosial Dan Budaya (Journal of Social and Cultural Anthropology)* 6, no. 1 (April 29, 2020): 41, <https://doi.org/10.24114/antro.v6i1.16632>.

²⁰ Mevitama Shindi Baringbing, "Konflik Agraria Atas Penguasaan Hutan Kemenyan Adat (Tombak Haminjon) Antara Masyarakat Pandumaan- Sipituhuta Dengan Pt. Toba Pulp Lestari Di Kecamatan Pollung, Kabupaten Humbang Hasundutan, Tapanuli Utara," *Universitas Katolik Soegijapranata* (2017).

²¹ ratih Karim Astuti, "Unsur Magis Dalam Jatilan Dan Relevansinya Terhadap Pemahaman Akidah (Studi Kasus Di Desa Wonorejo Kec. Pringapus Kab. Semarang)," *Walisongo Repository*, 2015.

in local belief is considered a direct gift from nature, bestowed by ancestors.²² In numerous villages within the Humbang Hasundutan and Toba regions, oral traditions assert that *haminjon* exclusively flourishes in locations deemed "sanctioned" by ancestor spirits.²³ This phenomena demonstrates that *haminjon* occupies an epistemological stance inside the Batak community's local knowledge system, linking itself to both nature and transcendence.²⁴ With the advent of Islam in the Batak territories, particularly via trade routes, cultural exchanges became inevitable. Numerous Muslim merchants from Aceh and Minangkabau engaged with *haminjon* artisans and agriculturists. During the da'wah and Islamization process, local academics and Muslim traders did not categorically dismiss the existence of *haminjon*; instead, they transformed it into a mechanism for disseminating Islamic ideals in a more nuanced manner. One acculturative strategy involves transforming the use of *haminjon* from an animistic ritual medium into a symbol of sincerity and fragrance within Islamic social-spiritual life.²⁵ In many ancient pesantren in Mandailing and Padang Lawas, *haminjon* is utilized as essential oil to fragrance study rooms or prayer spaces. This application connects local cultural heritage with Islamic ideals.

Harahap's ethnographic study revealed that numerous elderly educators in Mandailing pesantren impart the principles of physical and spiritual purity, metaphorically enacted through the utilization of *haminjon* scent during the khatam Al-Qur'an ceremony.²⁶ The evolution of the term *haminjon* indicates that Islamization in Batak territory is not a coercive process, but a cultural reconstruction that incorporates native values. *Haminjon* has been a significant commodity in world trade since the 10th century, particularly exported from Barus on the west coast of Sumatra to the Middle East and India. The entrance of Arab merchants in the Batak region to acquire this item not only facilitated trading activities but also disseminated the beliefs of Islam. This process transpired incrementally through established trade networks trusted by the local community, so Islamization emerged not through compulsion, but as an integral aspect of the organic economic and cultural exchanges surrounding the *haminjon* commodity.

According to Clifford Geertz, local belief systems like Parmalim or the belief in *haminjon* can be classified as religious idioms that elucidate how societies perceive cosmic symbols in their existence.²⁷ From this viewpoint, *haminjon* might be perceived as a cultural signifier that facilitates the shift from indigenous beliefs to a novel value system such as Islam. Nonetheless,

²² arbi Mulya Sirait et al., "Posisi Dan Reposisi Kepercayaan Lokal Di Indonesia," *Kuriositas: Media Komunikasi Sosial Dan Keagamaan* 8, no. 1 SE-Articles (November 15, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.35905/kur.v8i1.144>.

²³ Drs R Yando Zakaria et al., "Etnografi Tanah Adat Di Kabupaten Humbang Hasundutan , Sumatera Utara," 2018, 1–115.

²⁴ Martina Rosmaulina Marbun and Eventus Ombri Kaho, "Refleksi Kritis Atas Imajinasi Ekologi Masyarakat Tapanuli Tengah Dalam Tradisi 'Maragat Tuak Bagot,'" *Sepakat : Jurnal Pastoral Kateketik* 11, no. 1 (2025): 83–108, <https://doi.org/10.58374/sepakat.v11i1.307>.

²⁵ rahmat A. Abdina, "Kontekstualisasi Islam Dalam Memaknai Mantra Ritual Taji Besi Di Halmahera Utara," *Aleph* (2023).

²⁶ Muhammad Taqwa Hasibuan, Fakultas Ekonomi, and D A N Bisnis, "Universitas Islam Negeri Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidimpuan 2023," 2023.

²⁷ Elena Simatupang and Flansius Tampubolon, "Kearifan Lokal Ritual Marari Sabtu Pada Kepercayaan Parmalim Di Desa Kampung Mudik Kecamatan Barus Kabupaten Tapanuli Tengah," *Jurnal Basataka (JBT) Universitas Balikpapan* 5, no. 1 (2022): 124–36.

this process is accompanied by societal conflicts. Certain traditionalist societies perceive the alteration in the interpretation of *haminjon* as a violation of ancestral history.²⁸

In the economic domain, this negotiation is reflected in the trade of *haminjon* itself. Some farmer collectives prefer to sell their product to non-Muslim buyers, arguing that the incense retains its sacred aura when used for ritual purposes. In contrast, Batak Muslim traders attempt to incorporate Islamic business ethics into *haminjon* commerce, emphasizing transparency in pricing, fairness toward farmers, and the avoidance of usury. While the exact scale of this phenomenon is difficult to quantify, preliminary field interviews suggest that an increasing number of Batak Muslim entrepreneurs adopt such principles, aligning their economic practices with both adat obligations and Islamic ethics.²⁹ An informant, Ustadz Tarmizi, declared in an interview:

We are constructing a bridge. We are Batak people, inseparable from our culture. Conversely, as Muslims, we are obligated to demonstrate obedience. Our approach is to seek a compromise rather than to reject one option. In the context of debt, we favor a profit-sharing model. We incorporate an Islamic perspective in the village discussions. Consequently, individuals acclimate to it over time.

This narrative highlights how Islamization in the Batak region unfolds not as a rejection of tradition but as a value-bridging process. For many younger Batak Muslims, *haminjon* is no longer seen as a purely sacred item but as a cultural product with economic potential. It is increasingly marketed as aromatherapy in national and international markets, detached from its animistic symbolism. This reinterpretation is shaped by greater access to education, socio-economic mobility, and cultural engagement beyond Batak territories. Within Islamic scholarship, this process aligns with the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* framework, which legitimizes the adaptation of local customs as long as they do not contradict the principles of monotheism and public welfare. From this perspective, the transformation of *haminjon*'s meaning represents not a deviation but an example of adaptive cultural *ijtihād*.³⁰

2. *Haminjon*: Economic and *Da'wah* Space

The Islamization of the Batak Toba region transpired not through formal religious organizations in a revolutionary manner, but via established socio-economic channels.³¹ The commerce of *haminjon* or frankincense emerged as a significant conduit for facilitating interactions between the non-Muslim Batak community and Muslim traders from Barus, Mandailing, and Panyabungan.³² The export figures for frankincense from North Sumatra indicate an upward trend in 2024 and 2025. In 2024, the export value attained 58 million US dollars, and in early 2025, this commodity exhibited considerable export value as well. This approach represents a non-doctrinal method of Islamization, disseminating religious

²⁸ Salma Theofany et al., "Penguatan Konservatisme Dalam Perubahan Sosial Politik," 2019.

²⁹ Nikmatul Masrurroh and Ahmad Fadli, "Gerak Kuasa Negara Dalam Perdagangan Komoditas Bersertifikat Halal Di Indonesia," *The 1st Annual Conference on Islam, Education, and Humanities (ACIEH): Integrated Modelsof Knowledge and Religion in Contemporary Muslim World*, 2022, 151–66.

³⁰ Isnain La Harisi, Deni Irawan, and M Wahid Abdullah, "Pembaharuan Hukum Islam : Studi Komparatif Antara Teori Islam Progresif Dan Metode Ijtihad," *Al-Afkar: Journal for Islamic Studies* 7, no. 4 (2024): 732–47, <https://doi.org/10.31943/afkarjournal.v7i4.1672.Renewal>.

³¹ Ika Purnamasari et al., "Transformasi Sosial Dan Budaya Melalui Islamisasi Di Sumatera Utara," *Islam & Contemporary Issues* 4, no. 1 (June 14, 2024): 8–13, <https://doi.org/10.57251/ici.v4i1.1356>.

³² Askolani. Nasution and Robert. Sibarani, *Ensiklopedia Kebudayaan Kawasan Danau Toba*, 2021.

principles via ethical economic activities. Mr. Bahri Purba, a principal source in this study, indicated that he and his community were introduced to Islam not through religious lectures or educational institutions, but by Muslim businessmen who arrived to purchase *haminjon* during the time of his father and grandparents. He stated that the honest, courteous, and consistent demeanor in dealings is the primary "face" of Islam that they acknowledged. This underscores that business ethics can serve as a highly effective instrument of *da'wah*.

The introduction of Islam to Doloksanggul is inextricably linked to the influence of haminjon. Islamic traders who visited this city not only conducted commerce but also exhibited a distinct religious demeanor that captivated our ancestors.

This discovery corresponds with Ricklefs' Cultural Islamization theory, which posits that in Southeast Asia, Islam disseminated not by conquest or institutional coercion, but through nuanced cultural mechanisms, especially through economic and informal educational avenues.³³ However, compared to the Javanese case, there are notable differences. In Java, cultural accommodation largely took the form of artistic and courtly integration—for example, the adoption of wayang narratives, gamelan, and court rituals infused with Islamic symbols, facilitated by the wali and supported by royal patronage. By contrast, in Batak Toba, Islamization was less tied to royal authority and cultural performance, and more rooted in the economic-commercial sphere. The trade of *haminjon* served as the main channel of encounter, where economic trust preceded religious conversion. This indicates that while both regions illustrate Ricklefs' thesis of cultural Islamization, the modalities differ: in Java, accommodation was predominantly cultural-symbolic within kingdoms, whereas in Batak Toba it was economic-pragmatic, arising from grassroots interactions in markets and trading networks.

Haminjon possesses considerable significance in Batak Toba culture, serving both as an economic asset and as a spiritual component in traditional ceremonies. The existence of *haminjon* in both family environments and religious ceremonies renders it a commodity that links the realms of economics and local spirituality. Muslim traders, upon entering this commercial ecosystem, engage not only in the exchange of goods but also in the cultural significances associated with those goods.

In practice, Muslim traders do not contest the utilization of *haminjon* in Batak rituals, but rather value its significance. They instilled new values of monotheism, simplicity, and justice in commerce through ongoing trading partnerships. These ideals progressively permeated the awareness of the local society, fostering an ethical syncretism that became emblematic of Islamization in the region. Field findings indicate that in several traditional markets, the economic connections between Batak Muslim and non-Muslim entrepreneurs are dynamic and cordial. They debate not only costs and the quality of things but also share familial anecdotes, deliberate on children's education, and exchange perspectives on religion. These interactions exemplify the moral economy notion posited by Scott, indicating that the economy of the populace is inextricably linked to social ties and collective values.³⁴ Field

³³ Rika Sartika and Zulmuqim Zulmuqim, "Islamisasi Dan Pertumbuhan Institusi-Institusi Islam, Khususnya Institusi Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Furqan: Al-Qur'an Bahasa Dan Seni* 9, no. 1 (June 30, 2022): 156–77, <https://doi.org/10.69880/alfurqan.v9i1.55>.

³⁴ Mochd. Saad, "Relasi Etik Dan Masalah Integritas," *JIP (Jurnal Industri Dan Perkotaan)* 13, no. 24 (2009): 195–213.

observations also suggest that these relations cannot be reduced solely to subsistence morality. The dependence of local Batak farmers on Muslim traders for access to broader markets indicates the presence of patron–client dynamics, where traders functioned as patrons who provided credit, price stability, and market access, while farmers offered loyalty and regular supply. Unlike exploitative patronage, this relationship often integrated Islamic values of fairness and transparency, which softened hierarchical asymmetries. Thus, Batak–Muslim relations reveal a hybrid system: they partially reflect Scott’s notion of subsistence ethics—anchored in communal trust and survival needs—yet also exhibit patron–client characteristics shaped by structural dependence within trade networks. In a subsequent interview, Mr. Rahman Manullang, a Batak customary leader, asserted that the community’s shift in attitude towards Islam was not a result of coercion, but rather stemmed from their observation of “a more peaceful and harmonious way of life” exhibited by the Muslim traders residing and conducting business in their village.

We originated from tradition; however, upon gaining a deeper understanding of Islam, we also discerned its regulations on transactions and the principles of ethical business conduct.” However, this does not imply that we abandon all of our traditions. For instance, we continue to honor the clan structure in commercial collaboration. However, we eschew usury and deception. The merchants’ presence promotes the positive practices of the Islamic ideals they embody in their daily lives. For instance, concerning trust, integrity in assessment, and refraining from exploiting advantages unfairly.

In conventional economic practice, integrity holds greater value than bargaining tactics.³⁵ Khalil Sihite, a *haminjon* trader with over twenty years of collaboration with Muslim merchants, stated that: *although Muslims rarely engage in negotiation, they consistently uphold honesty in weighing.*

This substantiates the idea that moral trust underpins the value conversion process, as elucidated by Granovetter in Social Network Theory. Observations indicate that the economic process of Islamization cultivates a new habitus within the Muslim Batak population. They persist in preserving their clan and traditional identity, however they have begun to embrace concepts such as gratitude for nourishment, lawful practices, and the prohibition of usury as their business principles. This exemplifies cultural negotiation rather than cultural replacement.

This trade connection also affects the social network structure of the Batak society. As Muslim entrepreneurs gained credibility in overseeing the distribution of forest products like *haminjon*, they also became engaged in customary forums or village talks. Their presence has transitioned from that of outsiders to integral members of the local social network. This example demonstrates that the economy can function as a social conduit within the dynamics of pluralism. The philosophy of Islamic Business Ethics, as articulated by Beekun, is particularly pertinent in this situation. Islamic business ethics regulate not just the interactions between producers and consumers but also the relationship between individuals

³⁵ Damanhuri et al., “Korelasi Integritas Akhlak Pelaku Ekonomi Dengan Kesuksesan Bisnis,” *Journal of Law and Economics* 2, no. 2 (November 30, 2023): 97–102, <https://doi.org/10.56347/jle.v2i2.183>.

and their deity (*ḥablun min Allāh*), in addition to societal relationships (*ḥablun min al-nās*).³⁶ Muslim merchants with this ethical ethos serve as moral agents within the marketplace.

A female informant noted that following her husband's conversion to Islam, prompted by frequent interactions with *haminjon* traders from Barus, their family altered their business practices, including the cessation of using faulty scales and refraining from exorbitant profits. This alteration signifies that Islamic ideals can progressively and significantly impact economic conduct. Nonetheless, this process encounters opposition. In several places, the community continues to scrutinize the intentions underlying the entry of Muslim traders. Nonetheless, this reluctance typically diminishes if commercial contacts have been sustained for an extended duration. In many instances, inter-ethnic and inter-religious unions act as a conduit for Islamization, while still influenced by economic considerations. The Islamization via economic strategies demonstrates that the efficacy of da'wah is not solely contingent upon the robustness of theological discourse, but rather on the enactment of ethical principles in everyday existence. When society recognizes the tangible advantages of integrity, diligence, and equity, it becomes more receptive to Islamic principles. This trajectory of Islamization also influences a more cooperative local economic framework. The establishment of small sharia cooperatives within the Batak Muslim community around Balige and Muara demonstrates that Islamic economic principles extend beyond the individual, initiating the formation of local institutions. This transformation process also exemplifies a locality-based Islamic economy that is attuned to regional norms and culture. This cultural approach prioritizes internal value transformation above external control, in contrast to the institutional perspective that focuses on the official application of Sharia. From the standpoint of moral economy, the efficacy of Islamization via *haminjon* trade demonstrates that religious and customary values are not invariably at odds. Both can indeed collaborate to create an ethical and sustainable business ecosystem.

3. *Marga* Customs and Islamic Ethics in Business Practices

The integration of Batak cultures and Islam in business operations transpires not antagonistically, but through a dynamic and situational negotiation process. Batak Muslim entrepreneurs establish unique business ethical standards by integrating traditional norms, especially those originating from the clan kinship system, with Islamic values such as integrity, fairness, and reliability.³⁷ Interviews with three Batak Muslim businesspeople in the Doloksanggul and Balige areas reveal that clan affiliations are a primary factor in selecting business partners. The intra-clan bond fosters a sense of security due to the moral obligation instilled from childhood inside their social framework. Statement from informant Deliana Limbong:

Ideally, the business partner should belong to the same clan." However, if such is not the case, we will nonetheless select an individual who is reliable. When associated with an individual from the same clan, there exists a sense of moral obligation akin to familial ties. From a young age, we have been instructed that the clan is an extensive family, hence we refrain from acting recklessly in financial or collaborative matters. In Islam, we are instructed to uphold honesty and fairness, hence these principles are mutually reinforcing.

³⁶ Nihayatul Muskaroh, *Etika Bisnis Islam, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, vol. 3 (Banten: Pusat Penelitian dan Penerbitan Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian Masyarakat IAIN Banten, 2013).

³⁷ Suhaimy Pasaribu, "Etika Dalihan Na Tolu Dalam Masyarakat Batak Muslim," 2020, 1–67.

This indicates that the principles of religion and Islamic ethics do not contradict traditional values; instead, they complement each other. In this instance, the principle of "amanah" is regarded as equivalent, or perhaps superior, to familial connections when trust has been empirically demonstrated. Granovetter elucidates that the notion of trust in economic sociology indicates that economic decisions are influenced not alone by material rationality but also by the intricate framework of social relationships. Within the Batak setting, clan affiliation underpins moral validity, whilst Islamic principles bolster the internalization of that morality. The clan structure in Batak civilization serves not only as a genealogical identity but also as a robust mechanism of social control. In the Muslim Batak community, marga persists as a mechanism for governing the allocation of labor, business capital, and decision-making in enterprises. Nonetheless, Islamic tenets like *shura* (consultation) have been integrated as a novel technique within the established customary framework. Islamic ethics do not serve as a substitute but rather broaden the framework of established norms. For instance, the concepts of *ṣidq* (honesty) and *amānah* (trust) have local counterparts in Batak traditions, such as *marsirang sude* (transparency with everybody) and *tumpak na jujur* (an individual characterized by honesty). This integration provides a mixed yet coherent kind of morality.

This integration corresponds with the moral economy theory, which posits that economic processes in traditional societies are inherently infused with the social standards prevalent within the community. The business ethics of Batak Muslims are founded on the amalgamation of customary norms and sharia principles, yielding a system that is both flexible and participatory. During interviews, several business stakeholders indicated that the trust bestowed by fellow clans is frequently accompanied by a spirit of mutual assistance, exemplified by the delivery of goods or the giving of modest loans. This indicates that local business ethics continue to depend on intimate social connections. Nonetheless, with the advent of Islam, these customs became to align with more universal principles, like justice and accountability to Allah. Mr. Martuani Sihombing, an informant, remarked:

Historically, integrity was upheld to preserve the family's reputation. We now experience a greater sense of completeness, as Islam instructs us on trustworthiness and halal principles. When trading haminjon, I ensure precise weight, transparent pricing, and respect for others' rights. I acquired this knowledge not only from my parents but also from the religious courses I participated in. I believe this is a compromise: we maintain our traditions, while Islam enriches them.

This signifies a transition in from tradition to religion, but the two are not mutually exclusive. This bargaining process constitutes a sort of internal Islamization, representing the progressive ethical transformation of individuals and societies. Islam does not forcibly dismantle existing systems; instead, it integrates into them and introduces an element deemed pertinent by the local society. Observations of the traditional market in the Doloksanggul area revealed that certain transactions were executed verbally, lacking written documentation. Nonetheless, the transactions proceeded seamlessly owing to the confidence established through their heritage and their reputation for integrity as Muslims. Reputation serves as a form of currency inside the local moral framework. Furthermore, Batak Muslim entrepreneurs include Islamic principles in the education of their employees or children on business practices. Some individuals intentionally instruct their children to refrain from

cheating on scales, to avoid excessive earnings, and to honor clients, as these principles are regarded as integral to Islamic teachings and customs. Conflicts between tradition and Islam are emerging in the corporate inheritance system, particularly as Batak culture generally excludes girls from inheritance rights. Nevertheless, certain Muslim Batak families are beginning to embrace the tenets of Islamic inheritance distribution, while continuing to emphasize familial consultation to mitigate disputes.

This adaption demonstrates that Islamic values are applied selectively and culturally. In the hypothesis of cultural Islamization, the local adaption to Islamic norms serves as a survival strategy, resulting in a culturally entrenched form of Islam.³⁸ An intriguing discovery is the presence of a community of Batak Muslim merchants who established a sharia cooperative with individuals from various clans. This cooperative integrates Sharia principles, including the prohibition of usury and distributive justice, with conventional structures, such as the *parbaringin*³⁹, who acts as the moral advisor of the cooperative. In the cooperative, all significant decisions are reached by deliberation between management and members, a technique that embodies shura in Islam and marga deliberation in Batak traditions. This partnership establishes a distinctive and inclusive economic governance framework. The Islamic Business Ethics theory, articulated by Beekun and further substantiated by Hasan & Nasution, posits that Islamic principles in commerce, including honesty, social responsibility, and justice, can be universally implemented, provided they are communicated in a culturally comprehensible value language. Accomplished Batak Muslim merchants typically serve as ethical exemplars within the community. They are perceived not only as affluent folks but also as "individuals favored in their enterprises" due to their reputation for being neither avaricious nor duplicitous, and for their assistance to the impoverished. This establishes a moral economy of reputation within the local trading network.

In cross-community commerce interactions between Muslim and non-Muslim Batak, Islamic precepts function as a mechanism for social diplomacy. An informant, Mrs. Risnawati, stated:

There was a prevailing belief that excessive religious involvement would hinder cooperation." However, I perceive the contrary. Being candid about our principles facilitates the establishment of confidence. For instance, regarding loans, I favor the *mudharabah* or *musyarakah* system. Some comprehend, while others are in the process of acquiring knowledge, although they are progressively grasping the concept. It is essential that we maintain openness and fairness.

This disposition not only circumvents transgression but also augments social trust among non-Muslim counterparts. This phenomenon reinforces the assertion that Islam is not an external imposition, but rather a moral system that can be articulated in the local vernacular. This represents a variant of vernacular Islam, wherein religious tenets are modified to align with the culture context of the society. In the examination of decision-making processes inside family businesses, it was observed that certain families are increasingly prioritizing sharia

³⁸ Hawa Hidayah et al., "Transformasi Budaya Nusantara Dalam Proses Islamisasi Di Indonesia," *Khazanah: Jurnal Sejarah Dan Kebudayaan Islam* 13, no. 2 (December 28, 2023): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.15548/khazanah.v13i2.1078>.

³⁹ "Parbaringin is a term that refers to a concept or spiritual belief that emphasizes divinity, wisdom, peace, and perfection, where god is believed to be present and emanating in the human self and the entire universe, including celestial bodies, mountains."

principles in the allocation of labor and earnings. A youngster who exerts greater effort will obtain a higher portion of the profits, grounded in "Islamic justice," rather than solely relying on traditional seniority. This demonstrates that Islamic principles can offer adaptability within inflexible customary frameworks and facilitate the rise of meritocracy in the economic sector. Nonetheless, the rules of debate and the consensus of the extended family remain established ethical boundaries that must not be transgressed. Several young Muslim entrepreneurs are beginning to articulate their desire for both economic and spiritual success. For them, business transcends mere profit, encompassing blessings and social responsibility as well. This fosters a burgeoning moral entrepreneurship in the Batak region. Islamic principles in business practices also affect the manner in which they cultivate relationships with clients. For instance, offering additional services to loyal consumers is regarded as a manifestation of *ihsān* (benevolence), rather than merely a marketing tactic. In certain instances, the principle of *maṣlaḥah* (public welfare) is taken into account in commercial decisions.⁴⁰ For instance, refraining from increasing the pricing of essential commodities prior to the holiday, or providing discounts to economically disadvantaged individuals. This demonstrates that Islamic ethics are implemented in practice rather than merely spoken. These behaviors demonstrate that the amalgamation of Batak rituals and Islamic ideals within the business realm can transpire smoothly, potentially reinforcing one another. Islam emerges as a novel source of ethics, whereas customs persist as the cohesive social fabric. This approach exemplifies how a hybrid value system can influence economic behaviors that are equitable, humane, and sustainable, within the context of moral economy theory and Islamic business ethics. In the realm of Islamization, initiatives grounded in ethics and values are significantly more efficacious than structural or juridical methods. Muslim Batak entrepreneurs with great ethics serve as the most effective ambassadors of da'wah, eclipsing lectures or official religious teachings.⁴¹ This research indicates that the interplay between tradition and Islam in the economic realm should be perceived not as a clash of values, but as an opportunity to develop a novel ethical framework that is more inclusive and responsive to the local situation.

D. CONCLUSION

This study discovered that the Islamization process inside the *haminjon* business network in Batak transpires through cultural disputes between Islamic business ethics and the traditional values of clans. The primary findings reveal that the ethical principles governing business practices in the Batak entrepreneurial community are grounded in Islamic textual teachings and are also intertwined with local customs that evolve within the context of belief and social interactions, notably influenced by entities such as *Haminjon*. In this context, the process of Islamization manifests as a sort of cultural *ijtihad*, wherein religious norms are recreated through interactions with local cultural identities, encompassing trade contacts, social patronage, and moral manifestations in quotidian economic operations. This research

⁴⁰ Hamdan Fathurrahman and Muhajirin, "Analisis Masalah Mursalah Imam Malik Dalam Penetapan Harga Yang Adil Pada Pasar Syariah Perspektif Keseimbangan Ekonomi Dan Keadilan Sosial," *Syntax Literate ; Jurnal Ilmiah Indonesia* 9, no. 12 (December 24, 2024): 7230–38, <https://doi.org/10.36418/syntax-literate.v9i12.52272>.

⁴¹ Mohd. Hatta et al., *Peta Dakwah, Dinamika Dakwah Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Keberagaman Masyarakat Musim Sumatra Utara*, 2021.

indicates that *Haminjon*, sometimes seen as a syncretic spiritual figure, possesses social and moral functions that influence the collective consciousness of business participants in delineating the parameters of halal-haram, integrity, and accountability. This is the point at which Islamic principles and local spirituality converge, fostering a mutually productive relationship rather than antagonism. The Islamization within the Batak business network transpires not through a complete repudiation of local wisdom, but through symbolic negotiation and reinterpretation of traditional values.

This research asserts that the Islamization of the economy in heterogeneous countries does not invariably equate to normative purification; instead, it achieves its optimal expression through engagement with the local socio-cultural context. This article emphasizes *Haminjon*'s role in the Islamization of business ethics, hence creating new opportunities in Islamic studies and the anthropology of religion, especially in analyzing the interplay between local economics and spirituality in the formation of social ethics. This research facilitates comparative studies of Islamization via economic avenues in various Southeast Asian nations and promotes the formulation of empowering techniques rooted in Islamic ethics that are adaptable to local cultures.

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