

Reconstruction of Women's Marginalization in The Tradition of *Khatam Qur'an*

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Abstract

The focus of this paper is to explore how the tradition of khatam Qur'an for women is the entry point for empowerment. The research was conducted using a qualitative approach, collecting data through in-depth interviews with four female research participants and observing their family life. The results of the research show that the tradition of khatam Qur'an has opened up opportunities for women's freedom. In the first generation, women were still cooped up, illiterate and shy, in the second generation, opportunities for freedom were given with the excuse of leaving the house to learn the Qur'an reading. In the third generation, women are equal to men in education to obtain public roles. However, they cannot let go of their domestic role. In the end, women have a dual role. This study concludes that ongoing empowerment efforts have reconstructed the marginalization of women.

Keywords: The Tradition of *Khatam Qur'an*, Women's Empowerment, Marginalization of Women, Patriarchal Culture

Rekonstruksi Marjinalisasi Kaum Perempuan Pada Tradisi *Khatam Qur'an*

Abstrak

Fokus tulisan ini adalah mengeksplorasi bagaimana tradisi khatam Qur'an dikhususkan kepada kaum perempuan menjadi pintu masuk pemberdayaan dan pembebasan. Penelitian dilakukan dengan pendekatan kualitatif, pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam dengan empat perempuan partisipan penelitian, sekaligus mengamati kehidupan keluarga mereka. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tradisi khatam Qur'an telah membuka peluang kebebasan bagi kaum perempuan. Pada generasi pertama, kaum perempuan masih terkungkung, buta huruf dan pemalu, pada generasi kedua, peluang kebebasan diberikan dengan alasan keluar rumah untuk belajar mengaji. Pada generasi ketiga, kaum perempuan sudah setara dengan kaum laki-laki mengenyam pendidikan hingga memperoleh peran-peran publik. Meski demikian, mereka tidak bisa melepaskan peran domestiknya. Pada akhirnya kaum perempuan menanggung peran ganda. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa upaya pemberdayaan yang berlangsung telah merekonstruksi marjinalisasi kaum perempuan.

Kata kunci: Tradisi *Khatam Qur'an*, Pemberdayaan Perempuan, Marjinalisasi Perempuan, Budaya Patriarki

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Available online at <http://journal.iaingorontalo.ac.id/index.php/au/index>

A. Introduction

The tradition of *khatam Qur'an* as a creative effort to empower women reconstructs the marginalization of women. Women of the past who were confined, shy and illiterate, were given a weighting of skills and self-confidence through the tradition of *khatam Qur'an*. In the next generation, this empowerment has succeeded in raising the dignity of women in the public, but without realizing it, they are trapped in a new marginalization. Women get recognition in public but cannot let go of the domestication trap. This condition occurs as a result of the strongly patriarchal culture in family and community life.

The tradition of *Khatam Qur'an* in Gorontalo ethnic has been widely studied, but it is not seen in the context of the *khatam Qur'an* as a form of marginalization of women which is a local Islamic tradition that accompanies several socio-cultural and religious activities. Existing studies focus more on issues of completing the Qur'an as part of empowering women, death ritual culture and weddings. This culture is used by the Indonesian people as one of a series of marriage processes with the *khatam Qur'an* by the prospective husband and wife.¹ But in the people of Gorontalo, reading the *khatam Qur'an* is only done for the bride and groom². Before the marriage contract must be preceded by the completion of the Qur'an by the prospective wife in front of the prospective husband and his family. So from an early age women in Gorontalo have to learn the Qur'an reading until they finish 30 chapters. This is an important aspect of the stages and processes of traditional Gorontalo marriages. This habit has implications for the occurrence of a new marginalization of women which is reinforced by patriarchal culture.

As far as the author's research goes, studies on the tradition of *khatam Qur'an* in Muslim communities in Indonesia and Asia can be grouped into 3 clusters. The first study revolves around the *khatam Qur'an* at weddings. In certain communities, the *khatam Qur'an* is addressed to the bride and groom, starting from

¹ Rismadona Rismadona, "Proses Adat Perkawinan Masyarakat Di Kabupaten Mukomuko Propinsi Bengkulu," *Jurnal Penelitian Sejarah Dan Budaya* 3, no. 1 (2019): 669–690.

² Hariana, G R Lono Lastoro Simatupang, and Timbul Haryono, "Modifikasi Busana Pengantin Perempuan Masyarakat Gorontalo Yang Dikenakan Pada Malam Pertunangan," *Kajian Seni* 04, no. 01 (2017): 36–51.

surah aDh-Dhuha to surah an-Naas which is read by the bride and groom in turn³. Some are carried out jointly by guests.^{4,5,6} The *khatam Qur'an* at weddings can also be found in Malays ethnic,⁷ combined with Barjanzi readings.⁸ Second; studies that revolve around the *khatam Qur'an* at funerals,^{9,10} recited in the grave,¹¹ circumcisions¹² and performing arts.¹³ Third; a study of the *khatam Qur'an* aims to build character for both youth and children, From the three clusters, it can be seen that the *khatam Qur'an* is carried out in the congregation, both at weddings, death rituals, as well as circumcision¹⁴ and performing arts.¹⁵ Apart from having ritual value, this tradition also instils character values in the people who carry out this tradition. It appears that the *khatam Qur'an* specifically for women has not received much attention. In the Gorontalo ethnic, this tradition has been passed down from generation to generation. It is important to know the motive for carrying out the tradition of *khatam Qur'an*, and why it is devoted to women.

This research is intended to provide information about the tradition of *khatam Qur'an* in Gorontalo ethnic which is specifically for brides. Thus three questions are formulated to analyze the problem 1) why is the *khatam Qur'an*

³ Rafiq Hairiri, "Tradisi Khataman Al-Qur'an Pasangan Pengantin Pada Acara Pernikahan Di Desa Teluk Tigo Kecamatan Cermin Nan Gedang Kabupaten Sarolangun Provinsi Jambi (Kajian Studiliving Al-Qur'an)" ((Thesis) Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi, 2020).

⁴ Endah Supriani, "Tradisi Khatam Al-Qur'an Pada Pernikahan Suku Bugis Di Palembang (Studi Kasus Di 3 Ilir Palembang)" (UIN Raden Patah Palembang, 2019).

⁵ Wirdanengsih Wirdanengsih, "Tradisi 'Mandoa' Untuk Anak Khatam Quran Dalam Keluarga Luas Minangkabau (Studi Etnografi, Tradis Mandoa Anak Berkhatam Quran Di Tigo Baleh Bukit Tinggi Sumatera Barat)," *Jurnal Harkat : Media Komunikasi Gender* 12, no. 1 (2016): 83–88.

⁶ Rismadona, "Proses Adat Perkawinan Masyarakat Di Kabupaten Mukomuko Propinsi Bengkulu."

⁷ Juli Yani, "Leksikon Dalam Pernikahan Adat Melayu Riau: Kajian Etnolinguistik," *Jurnal Ilmu Budaya* 12, no. 2 (2016): 78–87.

⁸ Andi Syahrir P Sarpinah, Salimin, "Nilai-Nilai Yang Terkandung Dalam Budaya Mappacci Pada Rangkaian Pelaksanaan Perkawinan Orang Bugis," *SELAMI IPS* (2018).

⁹ M. S. Cherepanov, "«Khatam-Ash» Ritual: Research Experience and Perspectives in the Local Islamic Context of the Tyumen Region," *Vestnik Archeologii, Antropologii i Etnografii*, 2020.

¹⁰ Misbah Hudri and Muhammad Radya Yudiantasa, "Tradisi 'Makkuluhuwallah' Dalam Ritual Kematian Suku Bugis," *MAGHA: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 3, no. 2 (2018): 228–241.

¹¹ Akhyar Akhyar Ilham Ramadan Siregar, Syaripah Aini, "The Tradition of Khatam Qur'an at the Grave of the Padang Bolak Community," *JUSPI (Jurnal Sejarah Peradaban Islam)* 6, no. 1 (2022): 67–77.

¹² Zuriatin, Zuriatin, and Nurhasanah, "Kebudayaan Islam Yang Berkembang Di Kesultanan Bima Pada Abad Ke XVII M," *Jurnal Pendidikan IPS* 8, no. 2 (2018): 129–138.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Asril Gunawan, "Musik Pa'Rawana Dan Sayyang Pattuddu Dalam Prosesi Upacara Khatam Alquran Suku Mandar Di Provinsi Sulawesi Barat (Sebuah Pendekatan Etnomusikologis)," *Journal of Culture, Arts, Literature, and Linguistics (CaLLs)* 3, no. 2 (2017): 109.

devoted to women, 2) how is the tradition of *khatam Qur'an* an empowerment effort
3) how does patriarchal culture have implications for the dual roles of women?
These three questions are the starting point for guiding all discussions in this article
as well as explaining the reasons for patriarchal culture which contributes to the
reconstruction of women's marginalization.

This article is based on the argument that the tradition of completing the
Qur'an for the bride and groom have liberated women from cultural constraints. At
first, women were allowed to leave the house for the reason of learning to read
Qur'an, in the next generation women could continue formal education on par with
men. In the end, they get public roles to contribute to the family economy, however,
they cannot escape domestic roles. There has been an accumulation of roles played
by women. This condition shows that there is a reconstruction of the
marginalization of women in ongoing empowerment efforts.

B. Literature Review

Based on the results of a literature search related to research topics and
themes that have been conducted, the authors found three main concepts that can
be used as a basis for discussion and analysis of research results as follows:

1. Marginalization of Women

Studies on the marginalization of women have long attracted the attention
of researchers. Historically, researchers have been interested in systematically
analyzing women's marginalization. The stigma that has developed in the
community plays an active role in affirming the position and role of women by
presenting women both as mothers and as wives who are always related to domestic
work.¹⁶ The marginalization of women is a cultural practice that has long been
practised throughout the world. According to Foucault, power does not belong to a
group of capitalists alone. However, Foucault considers that all groups have the
potential to gain power. What is needed to gain power is strategy, not violence or
oppression.¹⁷ These means can be found everywhere containing a series of systems,
rules, and regulations. For Foucault, power will always exist as long as a relationship

¹⁶ Irwan Abdullah, *Konstruksi Dan Reproduksi Kebudayaan* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2006).

¹⁷ Michel Foucault, *Sejarah Seksualitas: Seks Dan Kekuasaan* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1997).

and interaction continue to develop. In this process, there are always those who dominate and are dominated. Even in every place that power is always there and waiting to be occupied. So that it can be said that the condition of cultural marginalization that occurs in Gorontalo women occurs as a result of a power structure resulting from social relations between men and women.

Although women are not a minority group, they are a marginalized group. They do not have the power to fight against restrictions on their freedom. The resistance by women did not occur frontally. At the very least, they can transcend cultural restrictions. These restrictions result in not being able to access resources, including rights due to fear of groups that marginalize them. Some of the factors behind this are social status, gender and education.¹⁸ The educational aspect opens up opportunities for women to be empowered along with the times that show partiality towards women.

Women's issues in Indonesia follow national developments and social changes. After the momentum of the youth oath that was announced on October 28, 1928, a Women's Congress was held which raised women's specific issues such as early marriage and polygamy. Institutionally, women have an organization that defends women using a Marxian approach to fight against a social system that is detrimental to women's existence. One of the pre-condition efforts is to increase women's knowledge so that they have a uniquely female perspective on the problems they face. An ordinary problem in the view of men.¹⁹

One important thing for women to struggle for their rights as human beings is to change traditional values and culture which are dominated by men. Patriarchal culture can be seen explicitly in Balinese customs which form the caste system. All matters relating to the livelihood of the masses must be centred on men, thus requiring women to follow men's decisions. This caste system forced Balinese women to be confined, and the female aristocrats and Sudras remained the ones who succumbed to men's decisions. Even though it has been seen that there is

¹⁸ Miranti Dwi Yuniarti, "Marjinalisasi Perempuan Kuli Panggul Di Pasar Pabean Surabaya," *Jurnal Masyarakat dan Budaya* 22, no. 1 (2020): 75–88.

¹⁹ Widjajanti M Santoso, "Problematika Kebijakan Pengarusutamaan Gender Dalam Mengatasi Marjinalisasi Perempuan," *Jurnal Masyarakat & Budaya* 16, no. 3 (2014): 411–426.

resistance from Balinese women against things that are the provisions of the caste system, in the end, they still have to obey the caste system.²⁰

In general, the condition of women is getting better from the aspect of education participation. This is supported by improvements in education infrastructure so that it is easily accessible to women. Even so, the women's problem that has not been resolved is the increasing number of violence against women. There have been many sectors that have shown improvement, but there are still many aspects that require attention.²¹

2. Patriarchal Culture

Societies that adhere to a patriarchal culture view that the roles of men and women are different because of gender differences. The consequence of this understanding is to place women in domestic affairs such as cooking, washing clothes, decorating for husbands, raising children and so on. The domestic task is then attached to women as long as they carry this gender identity. This misunderstanding stems from confusion in understanding gender differences and sex differences as two of the same thing. Even though both have differences, namely gender is the difference between men and women in the socio-cultural aspect while sex is the difference between men and women biologically and anatomically.²² This ambiguous understanding benefits one party and marginalizes the other.

Thus patriarchy is a social system that places men in power and marginalizes women. And this system does not only occur in public spaces but also private spaces. The family is the beginning of the reign of men formed and perpetuated.²³ The same thing was explained by other experts that the ideology of familial is the root of women's affirmation of their domestic role so that women only want to be good wives and mothers.²⁴ The good and bad indicators are seen from the perspective of a patriarchal society, which is to motivate the success of husbands

²⁰ Zahratul Umniyyah, "Marginalisasi Perempuan: Cara Pandang Masyarakat Penganut Sistem Patriarki Dalam Novel Kenanga Karya Oka Rusmini," *E-Prosiding Seminar Nasionalpekan Chairil Anwar* 1, no. 1 (2020): 314–319, <https://jurnal.unej.ac.id/index.php/prosiding/article/view/19977>.

²¹ Santoso, "Problematika Kebijakan Pengarusutamaan Gender Dalam Mengatasi Marjinalisasi Perempuan."

²² Lisa Little, *Encyclopedia of Feminism* (New York: Facts On File Publication, 1986).

²³ Wiyatmi, *Kritik Sastra Feminis: Teori Dan Aplikasinya Dalam Sastra Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Ombak, 2012).

²⁴ Abdullah, *Konstruksi Dan Reproduksi Kebudayaan*.

who can give good offspring. If this is not done properly, then women are considered unable to be good wives and mothers. This can be exemplified in the tradition of completing the Qur'an for women in Gorontalo, when a child cannot recite the Qur'an, the full blame is placed on the mother, not the father. So that a mother is judged unable to educate her child, but that is not the case with a father.

This also applies to a husband who fails at his job, and all of that will be the fault of the woman due to her inability to educate her children so the impact will be on the husband's success. This patriarchal system is still rooted in Gorontalo society. Patriarchal society not only marginalizes women with various rules, but men also have their limitations.²⁵ Realizing it or not, men are also victims of this system because of the demands of a strictly patriarchal society.

3. Women empowerment

Empowering women is an effort to provide motivation or support in the form of providing resources, opportunities, knowledge, and skills to women so that they can participate.²⁶ Empowering women is an important strategy for increasing the role of women in increasing their potential.²⁷ In certain communities, when women can be independent, they not only act as housewives but can also play the role of head of the family.²⁸ In their traditional roles as mother and wife, women can play a significant role in influencing and determining the future of children.²⁹ Existing studies on women's empowerment pay more attention to aspects of economic empowerment and health.^{30, 31}

²⁵ M. Fakhri, *Analisis Gender Dan Transformasi Sosial* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2013).

²⁶ Nursyaidah Nursyaidah, "Bentuk Pemberdayaan Wanita Karier Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an Dan Hadist," *Darul Ilmi: Jurnal Ilmu Kependidikan dan Keislaman* 7, no. 2 (2020): 227–241.

²⁷ D N P Butarbutar, L Sintani, and Luluk Tri Harinie, "Peningkatan Kesejahteraan Ekonomi Masyarakat Pesisir Melalui Pemberdayaan Perempuan," *Journal of Environment and Management* 1, no. 1 (2020): 31–39.

²⁸ Adil & Goso, "Peran Perempuan Kepala Keluarga Dalam Program Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Dan Pengaruhnya Terhadap Kontribusi Perekonomian Keluarga," *Journal Of Institution And Sharia Finance* 1, no. 2 (2018): 70–82.

²⁹ Muhammad Najib Azca and Rani Dwi Putri, "Perempuan Dan Peran Regenerasi Dalam Lingkaran Ekstremisme Kekerasan: Narasi Dari Indonesia Timur," *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama* 15, no. 2 (2021): 281.

³⁰ Candra et. al. Ayu, "Pemberdayaan Ekonomi Kelompok Perempuan Melalui Budidaya Hortikultura Secara Organik Dalam Polybag Di Lahan Pekarangan Desa Tanak Awu Kecamatan Pujut Lombok Tengah," *Jurnal Ilmiah Abdi Mas TPB Unram* 1, no. 1 (2019): 16–22.

³¹ Sri Astuti, Ari Indra Susanti, and Ariyati Mandiri, "Pemberdayaan Perempuan Untuk Meningkatkan Kesehatan Ibu Hamil Di Desa Cipacing Kecamatan Jatinangor Kabupaten Sumedang," *Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 1, no. 5 (2017): 288–291, <http://jurnal.unpad.ac.id/pkm/article/view/16413/8009>.

In practice, empowerment has a foundation. The principles of community empowerment in the Qur'an as in previous studies are the principles of *ukhuwwah*, the principle of *ta'awun*, and the principle of equality.³² The steps for empowerment as mentioned in the Qur'an include sustainable self-development and conducting coaching and skills education for the community. In the context of empowerment in reading and writing the Qur'an, women are expected to participate in educating their children. In rural communities, women are still given a dominant role in managing the household, including caring for and educating children. As educators, women must be provided with the provision of mastering the reading of the holy Qur'an which is the guideline for human life. So that women can play a role in Islamic education; guiding children to complete the Qur'an³³ and instilling Islamic character in their children.³⁴

C. Research Methods

The tradition of *khatam Qur'an* in the Gorontalo ethnic was chosen as the object of research for three reasons. The first reason is; The *Khatam Qur'an* is a hereditary tradition specifically for brides as an effort to give skills and roles to women. Second, not much attention has been paid to the analysis of the implications of the *Khatam Qur'an* tradition for brides as an effort to empower women while at the same time reproducing women's marginalization. The analysis shows that there is a tradition of *khatam Qur'an* as a form of character education. Third; This analysis provides an understanding of the additional burden on women to educate their children to be able to read the Qur'an. These three reasons show that a thorough understanding of the specialization of the *khatam* of the Qur'an for women has added to the burden on women in domestic affairs as well as being responsible for the education of their children. Thus there is a reproduction of women's marginalization.

³² Ulfi Putra Sany, "Prinsip-Prinsip Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Dalam Perspektif Al Qur'an," *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 39, no. 1 (2019): 32.

³³ Abdullah Syafei, Nanat Fatah Natsir, and Mohamad Jaenudin, "Pengaruh Khatam Al-Qur'an Dan Bimbingan Guru Terhadap Kemampuan Membaca Al-Qur'an Di MTs Nurul Ihsan Cibinong Bogor," *Jurnal Dirosah Islamiyah* 2, no. 2 (2020): 130–149.

³⁴ Agustang, "Tradisi Khatam Qur'an Sebagai Upaya Perwujudan Pendidikan Karakter Islami Di Kota Ternate Maluku Utara," *Jurnal Foramadiahi* 11, no. 1 (2019): 34–50.

The reconstruction of women's marginalization as an implication of the *khatam Qur'an* tradition in Gorontalo ethnic can be explained through qualitative research that relies on data on ideas and ideas and activities related to the tradition of *khatam Qur'an* in the community obtained through in-depth interviews and observations of family life. participant. The existing data is used as the basis for the analysis of the reconstruction of the marginalization of women.

This research involves two categories of people; First, middle-aged women who in their youth were the object of the tradition of *khatam Qur'an* and today have a dual role in the family. Second, traditional leaders and religious leaders are involved in organizing the tradition of *khatam Qur'an*. The first category was chosen by four women as research participants and the second category as informants to enrich research data. Following are the profiles of the research participants.

Table 1: Profile of Research Participants

Research Participants	Participants Profile
<i>Ibu YN</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The peasant's daughter learned the Qur'an from her grandfather - High school graduate, having two daughters and a husband as a farmer and small trader
<i>Ibu UG</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The peasant's daughter learned the Qur'an from her grandmother - High School Graduation, Having two sons and a daughter. - The husband works as a street vendor outside the area and sends expenses to the family monthly.
<i>Ibu AH</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The trader's daughter, learning the Qur'an from a teacher - high school graduation, having two daughters, having a shop, and helping her husband as a cashier
<i>Ibu HD</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The peasant's daughter learned the Qur'an from her father - Bachelor's degree, Having a daughter and a son, the husband as a carpenter

The taking of this participant was to explore the reconstruction of women's marginalization as an implication of the tradition of *khatam Qur'an*. This aspect of the dual roles experienced by women is identified to explain the reconstruction of women's marginalization in a patriarchal community.

Research on the reconstruction of women's marginalization as an implication of the tradition of *khatam Qur'an* in Gorontalo ethnic proceeds through

the stages of data collection through interviews and observations. First; data sourced from in-depth interviews regarding efforts to educate and empower women by requiring them to learn to read the Qur'an and demonstrate their abilities in the audience. Second, this study is complemented by observations of the activities of four families of women who carry out multiple roles in the household. The various categories of data obtained from various sources and methods form the basis for an analysis of the reconstruction of women's marginalization as an implication of the ability to read the Qur'an in this tradition.

The data analysis process took place through three stages of analysis and two data analysis techniques. The three stages of data analysis include; (a) data reduction as a process of organizing data in a more systematic form, especially thematically; (b) data display as an effort to present research results in the form of tables and interview excerpts, and (c) data verification as a stage of data concluding, especially following trends from the data obtained. Data processed through these three stages were analyzed through (a) descriptive method and (b) displayed in the form of tables and diagrams. Description of the data as the basis for the process of interpretation which is carried out contextually. The stages of analysis and the analytical techniques used to make it possible to formulate conclusions regarding the reconstruction of the marginalization of women as an implication of the tradition of *khatam Qur'an*.

D. Results

The tradition of *khatam Qur'an* for the bride and groom has become a tradition passed down from generation to generation as an effort to empower women in Gorontalo ethnic with a patriarchal pattern. The empowerment of women in the first generation gave birth to women who could play a role in family education. These roles in the next generation will increasingly add to the burden on women. The relationship between patriarchal culture and the reconstruction of gender inequality in women can be proven by three facts (1) the tradition of *khatam Qur'an* for women (2) the tradition of *khatam Qur'an* as an effort to empower (3) the patriarchal culture and the dual roles of women. These three facts are described in detail in the following sections.

1. The Tradition of *khatam Qur'an* for Women

The tradition of *khatam Qur'an* before the marriage ceremony is specifically for women only found in rural areas of Gorontalo. This tradition is coupled with performing the *saronde* dance which is carried out the day before the marriage contract.³⁵ This tradition has raised the dignity of marginalized women. Post-colonial women are considered low class. It is hidden in the cubicles of the bamboo house and can leave the house after becoming a wife. This was stated by the following informants:

“My mother told me that in the past girls were very secretive because they were confined and were not allowed to leave the house carelessly. The girls could only move around in and around the house. Cooking, washing, sweeping and arranging the house and the surrounding environment. When leaving the house, girls must be accompanied by their parents or family. There were also girls whose parents had hidden them in the bamboo houses. They can go out freely after being arranged and getting married” (Ibu UG, participant).

*“Women of the past were not free to roam. The tradition of *khatam Qur'an* is a trigger for the birth of women's freedom with the reason to learn to read the Qur'an. Those who are getting married must be able to show their ability to read the Qur'an in front of an audience the day before the ceremony. This momentum requires women to prepare themselves optimally. The preparation needed is in the aspects of mastering the reading of the Qur'an and the courage to appear in public. Preparation for mastery of reading the Qur'an is focused on juz 30, especially reading letters adh-Dhuha to an-Naas” (Pak UN, traditional leader).*

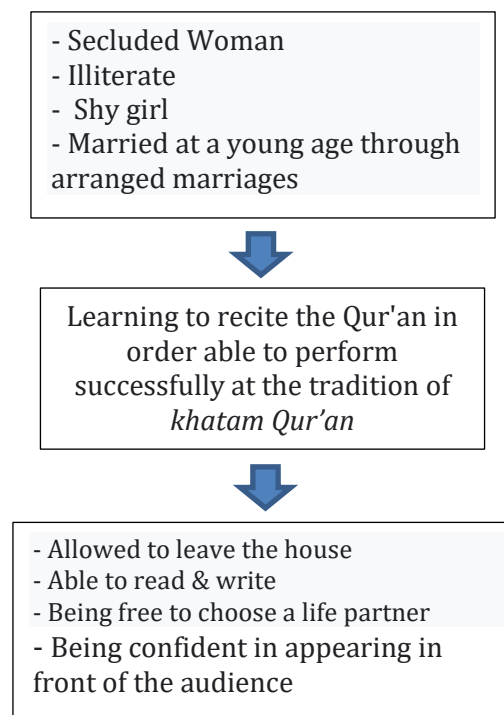
Four research participants stated that they learned the Qur'an since childhood and made every effort to finish reading from chapter 1 to chapter 30. They maximized their mastery of reading after receiving the proposal of the man with whom they were betrothed. The courage to appear in public requires women to train continuously both in front of their parents and in front of the mirror. This condition forced Gorontalo women who were shy to finally be brave.

This data shows that the empowerment of women in Gorontalo originates from the tradition of *khatam al-Qur'an*. Women in the colonial era who were secluded by their parents until they reached the age of marriage are now being

³⁵ Najamuddin Petta Solong and Muhammad Arif, “The Marriage Procession Outside the Marriage Hall and Its Impact on Children ’ s Education for Gorontalo Communities,” *Al-Ulum* 19, no. 2 (2019): 443–462.

released to continue their education and have a career in the public arena. Four female participants in this study told how their grandmothers in the past were marginalized, illiterate, shy, and married at a young age through arranged marriages. Thanks to the tradition of *khatam Qur'an* has provided space for girls to learn the Qur'an. Learning to recite the Qur'an has opened the door to freedom, including the freedom to choose a life partner. Today's generation of women has been allowed to study in the city. They are not only skilled at reading and writing but also have the confidence to appear in public. These data can be described in the following diagram:

Diagram 1: The Tradition of *Khatam Qur'an* Sets Women Free



The diagram above illustrates how the tradition of *khatam Qur'an* has slowly but surely freed women from cultural confines. They are free to study far, free to have a career outside the home and free to choose a life partner. This does not happen in one generation but takes place in several generations.

2. The Tradition of *Khatam Qur'an* as an Empowerment Effort

The empowerment of women sparked through the tradition of *Khatam Qur'an* has shown significant progress compared to previous generations of women.

Four women who participated in this study told how their mothers and grandmothers had experienced conditions in the past. This was stated by several research participants.

“According to my grandmother, the conditions for girls at that time were not free to roam around and play, even if it was only with the neighbours’ children. There is no activity going back to school. Schools are so far away that many children do not receive an education. Parents who know reading the Qur’an, teach their children to read the Qur’an well. While parents who cannot teach to read the Qur’an, their children are illiterate. It’s different from my mother, who can play at a neighbour’s house but is still under the supervision of her parents. Already able to go to school because the distance between home and school is not that far. Learn to recite the Qur’an together with neighbouring children when their parents take them to the place where they recite the Qur’an. At that time, many children could not continue their education because they had to go to school in the city. When I was still a child, girls were allowed to go to school in the city so many girls were already well educated” (Ibu UG, Participant).

“In the past, the activities of girls were only focused on domestic affairs. Since childhood trained to be a housewife. There is a view that it is pointless for a woman to go to higher education, in the end, to still take care of the household. This opinion was very appropriate to the conditions of that era. Girls are married off at a young age through arranged marriages. Seeing the development that many women have higher education and are on an equal footing with men, I continued my education to the undergraduate level even though I was already married” (Ibu. AH, participant).

“My grandmother never received an education, was illiterate and could not recite the Qur’an. Then my mother was not fluent in reciting the Qur’an and was able to go to school even though she only graduated from elementary school. It’s my turn to change things. After graduating from elementary school, I attended a boarding school for 6 years and continued my education up to university. Even though I have graduated and have a career as an educator, I am still skilled at managing the household” (Ibu. HD, participant).

The results of the study show that there has been the empowerment of women in three generations. In the first generation, women were nothing more than housewives who took care of domestic affairs, in the second generation, women were given the role of not only taking care of the household but also educating children. In the third generation, the role of women is increasing because they are already able to have a career in the public arena. Although there have been changes in the educational aspect, their role as housewives has not changed. The data from interviews with the four research participants can be described as follows:

Table 2: Condition of Women in 3 Generations

Women	Status	The Skill	The Roles
Generation 1	Secluded women are allowed to leave the house after getting married	Illiterate	Housewife
Generation 2	Allowed to learn Qur'an out of the house	Able to read Qur'an and teach it	Taking care of the household and educating children
Generation 3	Allowed to go around and study in the city	Able to read, write and have a career outside	Taking care of the household, educating children, and helping to make a living

The table above shows changes in the condition of women in three generations. The three components; status, skills and roles all experience changes while at the same time indicating progress in empowerment. What has not changed is the role of women in managing the household. Their role increases so that the workload of women becomes heavier.

3. The Patriarchal Culture and The Dual Roles of Women

The Gorontalo ethnic adhere to a patriarchal culture. This can be understood from beliefs and behaviour and can be observed in community activities in household life. Research participants stated that domestic affairs were the main task of women. It is taboo for men (husbands) to do domestic work such as cooking and washing clothes. The wife will feel embarrassed if her husband is seen by other people cooking or washing clothes. This is as stated by the following traditional leaders and research participants:

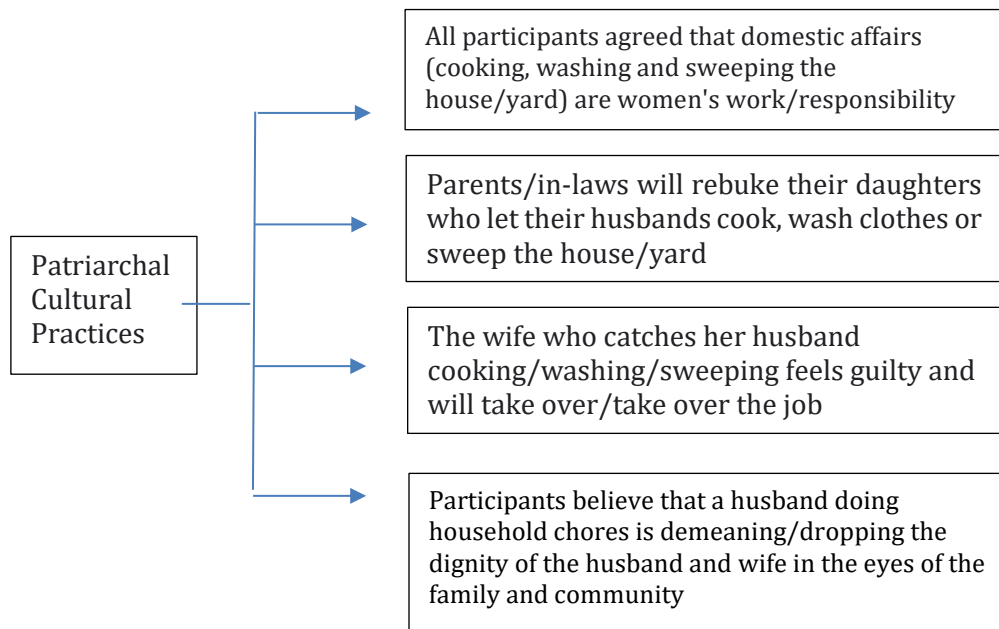
"According to Gorontalo's customs, a husband has a high position in the family. His main task as the head of the family is to make a living for the family, while the wife's job is to take care of the household, therefore, it is inappropriate for the husband to do household chores even though he is not working. This is seen as lowering his status as the head of the family" (Pak UN, traditional leader).

"Men are considered higher than women in the family, which is hereditary. A woman's parents will reprimand their daughter for letting her husband do the work in the kitchen. Therefore, a wife will seize the kitchen work that is being done by her husband and then let her husband sit back and relax" (Ibu YN, participant).

“My mother taught me that a wife's job is to serve her husband, so it would be embarrassing if the husband served his wife, for example, washing, cooking and so on. I continue to do what my parents taught me, even though sometimes I feel tired and annoyed to see my husband being more silent and not helping when he is at home” (ibu UG, participant).

The research results show that patriarchal culture is very strongly embraced by the four research participants. The patriarchal culture adopted by the four participating women's families can be described as follows:

Diagram 2: Patriarchal Cultural Practices in the Family



This understanding of patriarchal culture causes women to have multiple roles in the family. Four research participants are housewives who carry out three roles at once, namely as housewives, accompanying the growth and development of children and playing a role in the public arena. These data can be described in the table below:

Table 3: The Multiple Roles of Women in the Family

Participants	The Multiple Roles		
	Role 1	Role 2	Role 3
Ibu YN		Teaching her two daughters to recite al-Qur'an	Religious instructor
Ibu UG		Teaching her three children to recite al-Qur'an	Honorary teacher
Ibu AH		A Qur'an teacher taught her daughters the Qur'an. She accompanied her children to complete school assignments	Small trader
Ibu HD	Cooking, washing, and sweeping the house/yard before doing role 3	Teaching to recite the Qur'an for her two children and complete homework from school	Government Employees (ASN)

The four female participants could not leave their domestic roles even though they were busy with their professions as extension workers, honorary teachers, traders and civil servants (ASN). Their role has increased apart from helping the family's economy as well as taking care of the household and educating children, both learning the Qur'an and accompanying children to complete homework given by teachers at school.

E. Discussion

Before the colonial period, Indonesian women were politically equal to men. In various regions, women have led the kingdom. In the 17th century, for more than 50 years the kingdom of Aceh was ruled by a Queen.³⁶ Women in Gorontalo were also not left behind. The bargaining position of women is very high and they occupy the top leadership of the kingdom.³⁷ Colonialism has degraded the position of women. Even though during the colonial period, women were involved in the battle against the invaders. Since then, the position of women began to weaken. Women are positioned as a lower class in the seclusion of men.

³⁶ Ida Hidayatul Aliyah, Siti Komariah, and Endah Ratnawaty Chotim, "Feminisme Indonesia Dalam Lintasan Sejarah," *TEMALI: Jurnal Pembangunan Sosial* 1, no. 2 (2018): 140–153.

³⁷ Basri Amin, *Menggerakkan Roda Zaman: Rujukan Sejarah Perempuan Gorontalo* (Jakarta: Pustaka Indonesia Press, 2016).

This research shows that the fall in the position of women has begun to be lifted through the tradition of *khatam Qur'an*. This tradition requires women who are secluded by their parents to leave the house to learn to read the Qur'an. The ban on leaving the house for women has relaxed as they have to demonstrate the ability to recite the Qur'an in public. Gradually, young women were not only allowed to continue their secondary and tertiary education but at the same time to work in the public sphere on an equal footing with men. Thus, the tradition of *khatam Qur'an* is one of the aspects that liberates women from cultural confines by giving them roles both within the family and in the public sphere. The confinement is not immediately released in one generation but can be felt by the third generation. Another aspect that contributes to liberating women is the local condition which continues to experience social changes before and after independence.

The freedom for women to play a role in the public sphere does not necessarily separate them from domestic roles. This is caused by the strong patriarchal culture that is still taught in the family and community. Society still believes that men (husbands) doing household chores is demeaning them as husbands. This belief is followed by acts of prohibiting, admonishing and advising women (wives) who are caught letting their husbands do the household chores. It is this patriarchal culture that does not seem to support women's empowerment, as a result, women experience more workload (multiple roles).

The results show that there are efforts to empower women to be on an equal footing with men. This effort requires the support of changing people's attitudes towards gender equality as shown by the sharing of roles between husband and wife in managing the household. This division of roles requires seriousness, including mental readiness. This mental readiness to change the attitude of the family and society must be fully supported by efforts that side with women from competent parties.

This research shows that there is a reconstruction of the marginalization of women in the midst of empowerment efforts that are carried out culturally through the tradition of *khatam Qur'an*. On the one hand, women are given a new role in family and community life as an implication of the weighting of knowledge.

The roles played by women have helped men in the aspect of improving the family economy. But on the other hand, women's roles that relieve men are not followed by changes in men's attitudes to share roles in domestic affairs. This condition has added to the burden on women because they have to complete domestic affairs without the support of their husbands in the midst of their new role in their community.

The results of this study show that there is a new threat of marginalization of women as a result of a patriarchal culture that is still firmly held by the family and society. Relevant parties can make further efforts to create gender-equitable traditions so that women are not only required to be able to appear in public, but also require men to change their mindset. With this change in mindset, there will be an even distribution of roles in managing domestic affairs.

F. Conclusion

The tradition of *khatam Qur'an* essentially means glorifying women who are socially and culturally marginalized. In the patriarchal pattern of Gorontalo ethnic, women are subordinated to men. Socio-cultural constructs roles that are not gender-just. Women are fully responsible for domestic affairs, while men play the role of earning a living. With the ability to read the Qur'an well, women are expected to take full responsibility for religious education in children. This role has implications for increasing the burden on women as housewives. Thus it can be said that this tradition further elevates the walls of women's domestication. Apart from reconstructing the marginalization of women, this pattern is very risky when women become single parents.

The concept of empowerment used in this study shows that the tradition of *khatam Qur'an* has empowered women from socio-economically marginalized groups to those who play a socio-economic role in the family. The empowerment that has occurred is not followed by a change in the attitude of the family and society towards the construction of patriarchal culture. On the one hand, this construction privileges men but on the other hand marginalizes women. Although women have been freed from cultural marginalization, they have not been able to be free from domestic roles.

This research is only limited to the reconstruction of women's marginalization that occurs between generations. Research participants are still very limited. Other researchers need to expand research participants by looking at the positive side of the dual roles of women which have produced women who are tough compared to men who are spoiled by a patriarchal culture.

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