



The Existence of Women in the Traditional Rituals of the Jatilawang Bonokeling Community in Banyumas Regency

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the existence of women in the procession of *perlon unggahan ritual*, one of rituals in Bonokeling indigenous community. This research uses qualitative method with empirical or field research approach. Data collection methods were conducted by means of in-depth interviews, observations, documentations and literature studies. The results obtained indicated that women have a good role and position in the Bonokeling community. This happens because of the awareness of gender equality in Bonokeling community as a representation of egalitarian character. In traditional ceremonies in Bonokeling community, women have productive, reproductive, and socio-cultural roles. Women's interests in *perlon unggahan rituals* can be involved and carry out worship. For the Bonokeling community or breed, *perlon unggahan* has a very sacred value and becomes a spiritual path (worship charity). Women as *nyai wadon kunci* and so on (organizational structure of *nyai wadon kunci*), *nyai wadon bedogol*, and so on (organizational structure of *nyai wadon bedogol*). Their roles include (a) *Nyai wadon kunci* assisting the task

of *kyai kunci*; (b) *nyai wadon bedogol* assisting the task of *kyai bedogol*; (c) women: carrying out tasks in the *perlon unggahan*'s tradition as specified.

Keywords: women's existence, *perlon unggahan ritual*, *Bonokeling community*

1. Introduction

Differences in the occupations of men and women in a social community are a necessity. This is also what is found in the Bonokeling indigenous community. As long as they go hand in hand and support each other, the existence of men will never interfere with the existence of women in public spaces. In indigenous communities, men and women have different gender roles and responsibilities and for that reason they also often have different needs, desires and interests. Traditionally, indigenous women were generally respected by indigenous men and had equal access to and control over collective land and natural resources.¹

In general, the dynamics of the development of gender roles in society are motivated by several factors, including: social structure, the social environment of the community, to myths and stories in the past. This then makes the constructs in society regarding the with distribution roles of men and women have their own space.² The development of gender roles in society will not be a trigger for conflict. On the contrary, if gender roles are properly implemented, community life will be harmonious.³ In fact, there are still a common misconception about the words "gender" and "sex". They are words used to describe the same thing, when there is actually a big difference between the two. Judith Lorber, a professor of sociology and human studies, describes how the "gender" of a person is a "social phenomenon," and that being a man or woman is different from being a female or male (Judith, 2015). Lorber explains that the sex of a person is different from their sexuality because sexual orientation, identification, and practices are socially constructed and have their own specific forms of practice. Kate Gilles, the author of "What is Gender? And Why is Gender Important," also states that

¹ Michael C Howard., *Contemporary Cultural Anthropology*. New York, Harper Collins Publisher 1989, Third Edition p.147

² Ibid.,

³ Ibid.,

sex is an anatomical term, used to describe the physical characteristics of a person, while gender is a generalization of how men and women should look and behave in society. These facts show the clear differences between sex and gender. Sex is anatomical, while gender is social and psychological. Therefore, gender should not be confined to the sex of an individual, because gender is not actually a biological occurrence.

Despite of the tendency of religious scholars at this time, especially in religious expressions, focuses more attention on one gender group only, namely men. That is what happened to some indigenous communities in Indonesia. When discussing the existence of women, for example, several questions will arise such as: what is the situation faced by women, what is wrong with women? And how can they improve and change the social world, what is the role of women; and what is the difference between women. In fact, the role of women in certain indigenous communities has proven to be no less important than the role of men.

One of the interesting issue in this research is that the first kyai kunci in the Bonokeling community was a woman, namely the granddaughter of Kyai Bonokeling herself, Ni Cakrapada. Only from the second order until now, the position of Kyai kunci has always been taken from the male line due to the mandate from the ancestors. In that case, the position of women in the Bonokeling indigenous community occupies a strategic place. As a historical capital that emphasizes the importance of the existence of women in the life of the Bonokeling community. In addition, women in Bonokeling have a patented social function space. Bonokeling women instinctively place themselves in important positions in every Bonokeling ceremony. Based on these facts, the researcher is interested in further researching the existence of women in the Bonokeling traditional community of Pekuncen Village, Jatilawang District, Banyumas Regency.⁴ It necessarily need to be researched.

2. Methods

This research uses empirical research, with qualitative methods to examine symptoms, events and phenomena that are non-literary in nature

⁴ Interview result with Mbah Sumitro, 18 Juni 2022. He explained that *Juru Kunci* in Indonesian term means Main Character of Religious sect.

in understanding the phenomena experienced by the research subject. this was conducted in Pekuncen Village, Jatilawang District, Banyumas Regency. Ethnographic research has three principles, namely naturalism, understanding, and discovery.⁵ Naturalism here means that research in a natural setting requires researchers to try to minimize their influence on the behavior of the people to be studied. Understanding, in this case the researcher is expected to be able to explain human actions effectively in order to gain an understanding of the underlying cultural perspectives. Meanwhile, discovery means that another style in ethnographic research is the conception of the research process as inductive or based on findings.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews with purposively determined informants, namely Kyai Sumitro (spokesperson of the Bonokeling community), Naswen (female figure from the Bonokeling indigenous community), Nyai Kartasari (wife of the key kyai of the Bonokeling indigenous community), Kurniyadi (youtuber from the Bonokeling indigenous community), and Ahmad Tohari (Banyumas cultural expert). The in-depth interviews were accompanied by observations of the Pekuncen village environment as well as facilities and infrastructure related to the social and religious activities of the Bonokeling community. The blended data collected includes the procession of perlon unggahan ritual, the division of roles between men and women and their meanings in the ritual so that the concept of gender equality according to the Bonokeling community will be obtained.

3. Theory Review

Women's Self-Actualization in the Javanese Cultural System

The existence of an understanding that distinguishes the position of women and men has resulted in the division of tasks in the domestic sector, namely in household life and the public sector, namely outside of household life.⁶ This situation still occurs in Javanese society, making it difficult for women to find their identity and develop their personal potential. Through social and cultural structures, women in Java are organized with formulas and uniformity, so that stereotypical views of women continue to be attached to Javanese women's

⁵ Emzir. (2019). *Metodologi Pnelitian Pendidikan: Kuantitatif dan Kualitatif* (1st ed.). Rajagrafindo Persada.

⁶ Koentjaraningrat, *Pengantar Ilmu Antropologi*. (Jakarta: Rinema Cipta, 1990), hlm. 47.

personalities. Women who are structurally shackled by these values feel unable and unwilling to develop their potential and get involved in various sectors of life.⁷

The role and position of women in the Javanese cultural system has become a common pattern of thought which is not only applicable to Javanese women, but has become the majority thought that forms a stereotypical view for women. This can be seen from soap opera stories that depict the role of women who are only fixated on 3M namely masak (cooking), manak (giving birth) and macak (dressing up).

The teachings in the Javanese cultural system are cultural values that do not support the position of women's equality in various sectors of life. These values tend to pamper and enjoy men and put women in the number two position under male power. The existence of these values makes it difficult for women to develop as individuals and also find their true selves. This eventually makes women feel brave and unable to develop their potential.⁸

But with the changing times, there is a diversity of perceptions among women themselves. Traditional perceptions still assume that it is the nature of women to be submissive and obedient to men. The role of women is only limited to the domestic area, namely serving and taking care of the household. If women must be involved in the economic sector, it is only to help their husbands because of insufficient salaries so that only economic reasons, namely as additional breadwinners, are not to develop women's abilities in the public sector.⁹

On the other hand, women who have a more modern perception think that women and men have the same opportunity to develop their abilities in various sectors of life. In this case, it finally affects the behavior where the main breadwinner is in the hands of the wife because the husband is laid off and this does not cause conflict between the two because of the assumption that women are actually capable if the opportunity is given.¹⁰

However, the author realizes that the perception of these cultural values is not the only factor that influences the development of women's potential in

⁷ hromi T O, *Kajian Wanita dalam Pembangunan*. (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1995), hlm. 89.

⁸ Irving M Zetlin, *Memahami Kembali Sosiologi (Kritik terhadap Sosiologi Kontemporer)*. (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1995), hlm. 36.

⁹ Paul, Johnson, Doyle, *Teori Sosiologi Klasik dan Modern*. (Jakarta: PT Gramedia, 1986), hlm. 24.

¹⁰ Poloma, Margaret. *Sosiologi Kotemporer*, (Jakarta: Yayasan Solidaritas Gadjahmada, CV Rajawali, 1984), hlm. 18.

various sectors of life. However, from the description above, there is still a close relationship between women's perceptions of Javanese cultural values and the process of developing women's potential. In reality, this has been realized in the thought patterns found by the author from the results of interviews in the field.

This can be interpreted that women's perceptions of the values contained in the Javanese cultural system still have a role in the process of developing the potential of women themselves, although this only applies to certain things. Thus, until now Javanese culture, although with different qualities, still places women as second-class figures. Women are seen as primarily working in the domestic sector, cleaning the house, cooking, washing, and taking care of children. If women have to work in the public sector, besides having to choose a job in accordance with their nature, women only remain as helpers to their husbands in fulfilling the needs of the family's livelihood. In short, it can be interpreted that Javanese culture, which is quite thick with gender bias, is an obstacle to optimizing women's participation in the public world. In Javanese culture. The thickness can be seen philosophically in the expression *suwarga nunut neraka katut, nek awan dadi teklek nek bengi dadi lemek*, the meaning of the word "wanita" (wani ditoto), and the relationship between husband and wife is symbolized as five fingers of the hand.¹¹

The Function of Rituals in Javanese Society

Indonesian people have recognized the existence of beliefs before the entry of Hinduism and Islam. People at that time still adhered to animism and dynamism. Animism is the belief in the existence of spirits or souls in objects, plants animals and also in humans themselves.

Javanese people think that ritual ceremonies are performed so that they are protected from evil things. They ask God, Allah the almighty for blessings and ask evil spirits not to bother them. Remnants of such rituals are still often found in the lives of Javanese people today. However, they have morphed into traditional folk arts such as *kuda lumping*, *barongan* and *wayang kulit* shows.¹² According to Victor Turner, the function of rituals is seen from the close relationship between the implementation of ritual expressions and the values

¹¹ Budi Susanto dkk, *Citra Wanita dan Kekuasaan (Jawa)...*, hlm. 79.

¹² Prihatini dkk, *Seni Pertunjukan Rakyat Kudu*, (Sukoharjo: Pascasarjana dan ISI Press Surakarta, 2008), hlm.164-165.

displayed. Wilson also explains that rituals are also a medium for people or communities to reflect on most of their conventional and mandatory activities. But the conventional and obligatory expression is the value of the community that is displayed. Furthermore, Turner uses Wilson's conclusions and compares them with the studies he conducted in West and East Africa before and after independence.¹³

According to Durkheim, the function of rituals is an outbreak of expression or expression of feelings, as well as an effort to neutralize negative feelings, sadness, grief experienced by the community or society. On the other hand, rituals are also an expression of solidarity and social strengthening. Renewal of moral life and preserving identity because repeatedly performed rituals provide strong memories and also maintain relationships and preserve identity because repeatedly performed rituals provide strong memories and also maintain community relationships with the past.¹⁴

In line with Turner, Arnold Van Genep, explains that the strong correlation between rituals and the reality faced by natural communities is because there is no stage of human life that is not related to rituals. From birth to death, humans have been associated with rituals. On the other hand, Genep explained that each ritual has a different function that is not only for personal interests, but especially social functions. Genep gave the example of pregnancy and child birth rituals. These rituals are carried out separately but are related to each other because they are first intended for protection from evil influences for the pregnant mother, the unborn baby and then recovery after childbirth.

Nonetheless, rituals with personal functions are performed with the community because the period of pregnancy is a time when a woman is separated or suspended from the routine of her community. Hence, the mother's recovery period after childbirth is also a preparation for her to return and engage in the routines of her community.

¹³ Bertolak dari perbandingan tersebut Turner menegaskan bahwa ekspresi dalam ritual tidak sekedar menggambarkan relasi ekonomi, politik, dan sosial. Ekspresi dalam ritual juga bukan sekedar kunci yang menentukan dalam rangka bagaimana orang berfikir dalam merakan hubungna tersebut, adan tentang alam serta lingkungan masyarakat dimana mereka berada. Lihat Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process Structure and Anti-Structure*, (Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1996), hlm. 6.

¹⁴ Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of The Religius Life* (New York: The Free Press a Devision of Macmillan Publisng Co. Inc. 1965), hlm. 516-517.

Bonokeling Indigenous Community

Bonokeling community is located in Jatilawang sub-district of Banyumas Regency, precisely in Pekuncen village. This area is located about 5 KM to the south of the Jatilawang sub-district capital. According to the Pekuncen village head, 70 percent of Pekuncen residents are followers or descendants of Bonokeling. In addition to Pekuncen, Bonokeling followers are also scattered in several areas of Banyumas such as and outside Banyumas such as Cilacap, Banjarnegara, Purbalingga and several regions in Indonesia. Although nowadays many of Bonokeling's children and grandchildren have migrated, they return every year, precisely during the uploading ritual held on the last Friday before the fasting month or romadhon.

The early history of the emergence of the Bonokeling community in Banyumas is still confusing. According to Mr. Sumitro (Head of Pokmas) of Bonokeling Community, the Pekuncen area used to be its own kingdom led by a just and wise king and queen. Meanwhile, according to Ahmad Tohari, one of Banyumas' cultural figures, the Baonokeling Community is a seepage of Mataram Islam in the past that was brought to Banyumas. The birth of Bonokeling occurred long before Banyumas was established in 1832.

The name of Bonokeling is still a polemic. Based on information from Mbah Sumitro and Ahmad Tohari, the term Bonokeling is a nomenclature given by the Banyumas Dinporabudpar in 2007. According to Mbah Mitro, the original designation is Banokeling and the village name is also not Pekuncen but Pakuncen. Meanwhile, according to Tohari, the correct one is Banakeling because it is a representation of the Banyumas language. The most interesting thing about the Bonokeling community is its persistence in carrying out traditions through various forms of rituals. In one year, there are more than 20 rituals performed by the Banokeling community, both large and small scale rituals. All of them are packed in a sacred and harmonious atmosphere. In every ritual, the Baonokeling community always wears all-black traditional clothes and a blangkong headdress.¹⁵

¹⁵ Kesan unik dan khas yang ditampilkan oleh anggota komunitas Adat Bonokeling dengan mengenakan blangkong dan pakaian Jawa kuno inilah yang secara tampak luar mewujudkan ekspresi keberagaman dan wujud keyakinan Islam "Kejawen" ditengah masyarakat sekitarnya yang mayoritas beragama Islam puritan. Kekhasan ekspresi keagamaan yang berkaitan dengan sistem keyakinan, nilai, hukum yang berlaku dan ritual inilah yang kemudian yang disebut dengan religiusitas. Lihat Wahyu, Anindya. 2013. Interaksi Masyarakat Komunitas Adat Bonokeling dan

So far, many people have assumed that the Bonokeling community is part of the Kejawen faith. But this is denied by Mbah Mitro. According to him, the Bonokeling community is all Muslim, without any appendages, either Kejawen/ Abangan Islam or puritan Islam that has been written by many people. Bonokeling's children without exception are Muslim. The proof is that if a Bonokeling person gets married, he/she has to say the two creeds (kalimat syahadat). Similarly, when someone dies, the funeral process is also prayed using the prayers contained in the Quran. One of the things that distinguishes Banokeling Islam from Islam in general is that Banokeling people do not pray or sholat.

Ahmad Tohari, a cultural and religious figure in the Jatilawang area, argues that although they do not pray, it is not a problem that should be exaggerated. Because, when Bonokeling has practiced *akhlakul karimah* (good morals), it is also a teaching of Islam. There is no term Kejawen, abangan or anything else. Bonokeling is a Muslim, although it does not practice Islamic law such as prayer. Islam is not only NU, Muhammadiyah, Al-Irsyad and others. Bonokeling is a representation of Islam with local character. As long as they worship the one God who created the universe, it can be called Islam.

The influence of modernization has touched all levels of society, including indigenous peoples. The way of life of indigenous people must adapt to the various influences of modernization in various fields. Banokeling community is very adaptive to various influences of modernization. The Banokeling community separates which aspects can be changed to adapt to the times and which aspects must remain authentic, even when they conflict with modernization. Things that are maintained include all kinds of traditions of honoring ancestors that are implemented in various rituals or ceremonies. While things that are allowed to change are certain social systems such as marriage and ownership of technology with certain restrictions.

Komunitas Muhammadiyah Di Desa Pekuncen. Kecamatan Jatilawang. Kabupaten Banyumas. *Jurnal Solidarity: Journal of Education, Society and Culture*. Vol 2(2). April. hlm. 65-71. Blangkon dan pakaian Jawa kuno yang ditampilkan oleh Komunitas Adat Bonokeling tidak hanya membuat komunitas ini lebih mudah dikenali oleh masyarakat umum tetapi juga menggambarkan bahwa mereka masih *nguri-uri* atau memelihara tradisi leluhur "*kejawen*" ditengah masyarakat Desa Pekuncen.

4. Results and Discussion

a. Rituals of Bonokeling Indigenous Community

The Bonokeling community originated from the teachings brought by a figure who was later called Kyai Bonokeling by the followers of this sect. Kyai Bonokeling is said to have come from the area around Purwokerto, precisely from Pasir Luhur. The Pasir Luhur area is said to be the former kingdom of Pajajaran. The exact move of Kyai Bonokeling to Pekuncen Jatilawang is not known. The Bonokeling site is located in Grumbul Pekuncen, Pekuncen village, Jatilawang sub-district, approximately 2 km south on the highway between Margasana and Jatilawang. From Purwokerto city, it is approximately 20 km. The Bonokeling Site complex consists of an old tomb that is thought to be the tomb of Bonokeling, an early Islamic propagator in Banyumas, especially in the Jatilawang area and its surroundings, as well as traditional buildings inhabited by some of the communities supporting the customs and traditions associated with the site.

The existence of the tomb and the site complex with very traditional nuances has existed since the beginning of the spread of Islam in Banyumas (15th century). This can be assessed from the traditional ceremonial procedures that use Islamic prayers but are still fragmentary and imperfect. Bonokeling was a figure who spread Islam in the Jatilawang area, combining Islam with a very strong kejawen element. Apparently the teachings given by Bonokeling were not yet perfect, but Bonokeling passed away. By his followers, Bonokeling was buried in the area inhabited by his followers for generations. They build a community based on the teachings of their ancestors.

Based on the narration of several sources, the presence of Kyai Bonokeling was in the context of among farmers, namely babad alas for the purpose of opening new agricultural land in the area. The presence of Kyai Bonokeling in Pekuncen in addition to clearing agricultural land also spread the Islamic faith by accommodating various local cultural values. One of the prominent characteristics of the traditions he developed was the tradition of celametan for various purposes. Kyai Bonokeling had a wife named Mbah Kuripan.¹⁶

She gave birth to four children Dewi Pertimah who lived in Tinggarwangi, Gandabumi who lived in Pungla, Danapada who lived in Pekuncen, and one

¹⁶ Nawawi. *Bonokeling dalam Gelombang Puritanisme*. (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Senja, 2022)

in Adiraja. From Danapada's descendants three children were born, two sons Danatrana and Capada and a daughter named Cakrapada. Cakrapada had a husband who came from an area called Selastri who later Cakrapada's husband was known as Kyai Cakrapada. The leadership of Kyai Bonokeling was passed on by Cakrapada who became known as Ni Cakrapada as the first Kyai kunci of this sect.

Until now, the number of Kyai Kunci who are the leaders of this sect community has reached the thirteenth generation of Kyai Kunci. The following is the order of the thirteen Kyai Kunci, namely, Ni Cakrapada, Kyai Sokacandra, Kyai Candrasari, Kyai Raksacandra, Kyai Tirtasari, Kyai Prayabangsa, Kyai Padasari, Kyai Prayasari, Kyai Singapada, Kyai Jayadimulya, Kyai Arsapada, Kyai Karyasari, Kyai Mejasari. Based on folk tales, Bonokeling was one of the propagators of Islam who was sent by the sultan of Demak to spread Islam in the Banyumas Regency area in the 15th century. The efforts made by Bonokeling in carrying out his religious mission required a very heavy struggle, because the people in the Banyumas Regency area at that time still had various beliefs such as animism, dynamism, Hinduism, Buddhism and others. However, thanks to his perseverance, sincerity and devotion to Allah SWT, Bonokeling succeeded in broadcasting Islam, in various areas that he visited, such as in the Pasir area (in West Purwokerto District now), Cikakak area (in Wangon District now), Kedungwringin area (in Jatilawang District now), Bonjok area (in Rawalo District now), and in Adiraja, Adipala Cilacap area. In these places Bonokeling never stay too long, so there are not many relics and traces that can be traced today. In Pekuncen village (place where the Unggahan ritual event took place), Jatilawang sub-district, he stayed until the end of his life. In this place Bonokeling built a family and had many descendants. To the surrounding community and his descendants, Bonokeling taught aqidah and Islamic law.

One of the teachings conveyed is that Muslims are required to fast in the month of Ramadan, so that the month of Ramadan is a holy month that has special privileges and must be honored. Therefore, every time the month of Ramadan approaches, Bonokeling gathers all his descendants to hold an event to welcome the arrival of the holy month of Ramadan with prayers and dhikr to Allah the almighty.

The following is a review of some of the rituals in the Bonokeling Community. First, *the Unggahan Ritual*.¹⁷ This ritual is a kind of welcome to the coming of the month of Ramadan. It is held one week before Ramadan, usually the last Friday before the month of Ramadan. The essence of this event is a gathering between Bonokeling's children and a pilgrimage to Bonokeling's grave. The unique thing about this ritual is the arrival of Bonokeling's children from various Bonokeling regions which can reach thousands. For areas around Banyumas, such as Cilacap, Banjarnegara, Purbalingga, Bonokeling followers are required to walk from their homes to Pekuncen. Some walk all day to get to Pekuncen. Their arrival to Pekuncen is also not empty handed. Usually they come with a variety of foodstuffs to be processed and eaten together during the ritual. Uniquely, it is men who cook all the dishes in this ritual. Women only provide the place.

Second, *The temurun ritual*. If the *unggahan ritual* is done a week before Ramadan, then the derivative is done after the completion of Ramadan. However, those who follow this ritual are not as many as in *the unggahan ritual*, because most of the migrants have returned to their respective migrations. In general, this ritual is almost the same, namely a gathering and grave pilgrimage to the grave of Mbah Bonokeling and other graves around the Pekuncen village cemetery complex.

Third, *perlon* of Kyai Gunung. This activity is an event to clean the grave of Kyai Gunung, which is located about 50 (fifty) meters from the grave of Mbah Bonokeling. Information from the village head of Indigenous Bonokeling Mbah Sumitro.¹⁸ He explained that Mbah or Kyai Gunung is a close person of Mbah Bonokeling or can be said as his general. The activities of *perlon Kyai Gunung* are divided into two groups. There is a group that cleans the tomb, and there is a group that makes dishes to be eaten together. For tomb cleaning activities, in addition to cleaning, the tomb is also repainted. In the tomb complex, there are other graves of people close to Mbah Bonokeling. Almost all the tombs are

¹⁷ Victor Turner meneliti tentang proses ritual pada masyarakat Ndembu di Afrika Tengah. Menurut Turner, *ritus-ritus* yang diadakan oleh suatu masyarakat merupakan penampakan dari keyakinan religius. *Ritus-ritus* yang dilakukan itu mendorong orang-orang untuk melakukan dan mentaati tatanan sosial tertentu. *Ritus-ritus* tersebut juga memberikan motivasi dan nilai-nilai pada tingkat yang paling dalam. Dari penelitiannya ia dapat menggolongkan *ritus* ke dalam dua Bagian, yaitu *ritus* krisis hidup dan *ritus* gangguan. Lihat Wartajaya Winangun, *Masyarakat Bebas Struktur, Limititas dan Komunitas Menurut Victor Turner*, (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1990), hlm. 58.

¹⁸ Hasil Interview dengan Mbah Sumitro, beliau adalah Ketua Adat Komunitas Bonokeling, 23 Mei 2022.

protected by buildings made of wood and bamboo that are decades old. Based on information from one of the caretakers, the tombs there cannot be built permanently using cement. The tomb area is large. It is protected by large trees that are hundreds of years old. Only the children of Bonokeling's descendants can be buried there.

Fourth, *Senin pahingan ritual*. The *senin pahingan ritual* is performed every Monday (Senin pahing) according to the Javanese calendar. The event is carried out through a series of activities that begin with a gathering together in the hall (ruang pasemuan). On this occasion, important matters about the community are usually discussed, especially the ritual activities that will be carried out next. The event is also allowed to present local government elements such as the regent, sub-district head and village head to carry out socialization of various local government programs. The event is followed by prayers and eating together in the area of a large tree to the south of the Bonokeling settlement. Uniquely, the food eaten in this ritual is only “ketupat” and “tumpeng” (Javanese foods) without *side dishes* (lauk pauk). The “kupas” (rice) is a small “kupas” called “kupas selamat” as a symbol of asking for safety to the God the almighty.

Fifth, *the Muji Ritual*. The *muji ritual* is performed every Friday night in the month of Suro (Javanese calendar). The event is held in the “Hall” (ruang pasemuan) with a sacred atmosphere that can only use lighting in the form of traditional lamps (sentir). The event starts at 21.00 WIB and lasts until dawn (menjelang shubuh). The series of activities began with “sungkem” (shake hands) from the younger generation to the older generation and then continued with *muji* or hope. *Muji* (hope) is a recitation of traditional Javanese songs performed repeatedly. The event is interspersed with a meal together in the form of “tumpeng” (Javanese rice) which is carried out before midnight. In one of the *muji rituals*, there is also a ritual of lowering the ‘sacred tambourine’ which is said to be lowered and played only once a year.

b. Women’s Existence in Bonokeling Traditional Ceremony

History has recorded that women and men are human beings with different roles that have created a patriarchal system that limits women’s opportunities to develop according to their potential. The division of roles between women and men gradually binds and degrades the position of women as human beings. Women get domestic roles and men get public roles. The public sphere consisting

of public institutions, the state, government, education, companies, banking, trade, and others is almost entirely controlled by men. Women tend to have no power and are not properly represented in the public sphere.¹⁹

But in recent years, women have been reclaiming the public sphere by expanding women's access in all areas of life. This has led to a change in previously held cultural values that have influenced women's patterns of thought and action. The new role aspired to is the opportunity to take part in determining the lives of women in particular and the wider society in general. Women who in the beginning only deserved to work in the kitchen, are now starting to be proven with more opportunities for women to develop their potential outside the domestic role, namely the need to self-actualize.²⁰

For the Bonokeling community or the sons of Banokeling, *perlon* is interpreted as *merlokaken* (Javanese term), a contribution to life towards the afterlife. Therefore, *perlon* is interpreted as a form of religious deeds, *pengeling-eling* (reminder), as well as community service and mutual cooperation among community members. For this reason, *perlon ritual* activities as Javanese tradition are held every month, called *perlon rikat* in the form of cleaning activities around the tomb by praise God, with the aim that the Banokeling lineage remains firmly bound to the customs and traditions of the Banokeling lineage. In addition to the monthly rituals, the biggest ones are *perlon unggahan* (Bulan Sadran) and *perlon turunan* (bulan syawwal).

Perlon unggahan ritual (Bonokeling traditional ritual), is held in order to welcome the arrival of the month of Ramadan. *Unggahan*, comes from the word "unggah" or "mungguh" which means to rise, or enter the month of fasting which is a holy month. As the biggest ritual activity, *perlon unggahan* is not only attended by Banokeling lineage from Pekuncen village, but also by Banokeling lineage from outside the village (called *sukuraja*), both men and women. Thus, *perlon unggahan* is a ritual of religious deeds as well as a medium of gathering Banokeling's lineage each other.

Unggahan is a ritual performed once a year to welcome the holy month of Ramadan. The word *unggahan* comes from the root word *unggah* which means to go up (*mungguh*) or in this context *unggahan* means 'Entering the Holy Month of Ramadan, because the month of Ramadan is a holy month and is considered

¹⁹ George Ritzer, *Sosiologi Ilmu Pengetahuan Berparadigma Ganda...*, hlm. 88.

²⁰ Nafsiah Mboi, *Perempuan dan Pemberdayaan...*, hlm. 102.

holy by many Muslims in various parts of the world without exception the Bonokeling community. They call this ritual “*perlon unggahan*”. The ceremony or ritual is held in the month of “Ruwah” or often called the month of Sya’ban precisely on Friday (Jumat kliwon) or Tuesday (Selasa kliwon) in the month of Sadran or Ruwah but sometimes the time changes depending on the year, what is certain is that the ritual is held close to the month of Ramadan or Fasting, by the Bonokeling community especially calling the month as ‘bulan sadran’. In this unggahan ritual takes quite a long time because there are so many participants who take part in this event, not only the sons and daughters of Bonokeling in the village of Pekuncen but all the sons and daughters from around Banyumas and many guests from outside who take part in this ritual.

This ritual is led by a Bonokeling community member who is called by the local community as ‘Kyai’. This kyai is not a cleric who is quite qualified in terms of religion, especially Islam, but a traditional leader of the community. A kyai in the Bonokeling community is not chosen on the basis of intelligence or proficiency in preserving Javanese culture. However, the kyai must be of kyai descent as well. In this ritual, there are six people who are elders and are called kyai, namely the kyai (traditional leader) and five others are “*bedogol*”. The five people are in charge of assisting the activities of the key kyai, such as in the implementation of existing traditions and serving guests or pilgrims who come to the grave of Kyai Bonokeling.

The unggahan ritual is the biggest ritual because it is the most attended by the “*anak putu*” (children and grandchildren), even the grandchildren who are migrating take the time to come home and attend this ritual. The values of togetherness in this ritual are very strong because various children unite and mingle without any differences. They come in droves from various regions, especially Banyumas and Cilacap regency.

Women or mothers, by the Bonokeling indigenous community or the Bonokeling lineage, are seen as God’s representatives, that we exist because there is a mother (as an intermediary), so mothers are highly valued. The Bonokeling lineage’s high regard for women is also evident in the provision of inheritance distribution, where male and female heirs have the same rights and obligations. These views or values influence the division of male and female roles and their meanings, in the implementation of *perlon unggahan*.

This view cannot be separated from the belief system of the Bonokeling lineage and its elements, which can be seen in the texts (Pujudan). Pujudan is a recitation of prayers performed by the Bonokeling lineage. When recited, Pujudan must be sung with a certain action. Here is one example of Pujudan:

Ngapunten sedherek sedanten mawon nggih

Lah niji Kyai Pengulu Kali Pina sepuh sedaya mboten kula wiji, kula aturi nekse ni Sayyidan.....

Kula ajeng mbabaraken perlunipun si Dadap (the person who has a desire) anggenipun ndamel caosan sekul pyar wonten pagelaran, badhe ndumung dating Ingkang Kuasa, milanipun tiyang smenten dipun caosi dhahar.....

Pujudan in the Bonokeling breed's belief system is both ethically and not. Thus, this research is not able to reveal a much deeper meaning and determine the Bonokeling lineage's attitude towards women or mothers. During the *perlon unggahan ritual* before the pandemic, men were in charge of cooking (processed mutton and chicken) because the food served had to be pure, considering that women who were menstruating could not actively participate in the *perlon unggahan ritual*. In terms of health, menstruation is the excretion of blood feces full of bacteria, so in a preventive effort, women who are menstruating should not cook because of concerns about food being contaminated with bacteria. Meanwhile, from a religious perspective, the food served is a form of prayer so it must be holy.

At the end of the *perlon unggahan ritual* activity, the women and men groups do activities together to take the "sukuraja" home, pilgrimage to the graves of their ancestors namely "nyadran", and clean the grave of Kyai Bonokeling. Respect for women is still evident at the end of unggahan ritual activity—where the women of the Bonokeling lineage in Pekuncen Village are invited first to visit and pray at the grave of Kyai Bonokeling.

c. Role of Women in Bonokeling Community

Women have special roles in the Bonokeling Community. These roles are at least illustrated in the following table :

No.	Role In The Ceremony	Woman
1.	Division of productive, reproductive, and socio-cultural roles	Productive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helping husband work in the fields: <i>tandur</i>, <i>matun</i>, harvesting • weaving cloth (shroud cloth)
		Reproductive: Play a major role in household chores
		Social culture: Village administrators (PKK), <i>dasa wisma</i> administrators, assistant leaders/customary figures (<i>nyai wadon kunci</i> and <i>nyai wadon bedogol</i>)
2.	Practical needs (concerning conditions)	Women's interests in the <i>perlon ritual</i> can be involved and carry out worship. For the Banokeling community or breed, <i>perlon</i> upload has a very sacred value and becomes a spiritual path (worship charity).
3.	Strategic needs (concerning positioning)	In the <i>perlon unggahan</i> :
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status: Women as <i>nyai wadon kunci</i> and so on (organizational structure of <i>nyai wadon kunci</i>), <i>nyai wadon bedogol</i>, and so on (organizational structure of <i>nyai wadon bedogol</i>). • Roles: (a) <i>Nyai wadon kunci</i> assists the <i>Kyai Kunci</i>; (b) <i>Nyai wadon bedogol</i> assists the <i>Kyai bedogol</i>; (c) women: carry out tasks in the <i>perlon unggahan</i> as determined.
		- Access and control: assisting leaders and organizers of <i>perlon</i> events

In addition to roles, women in the Bonokeling indigenous community have different positions from men in several ways. As in the following table:

No.	Specificity	Woman
1.	Access	Providing space to assist leaders (kyai kunci and kyai bedogol) and organizers of cultural events.
		Walking in front of a group of men on the journey from Adipala, Cilacap Regency to Pekuncen Village, Banyumas Regency
		Obtaining the task of preparing food after ritual
		Getting the opportunity to purify and visit the grave of Kyai Bonokeling first.
2.	Participation	Women's participation in every stage of perlon unggahan ritual is in accordance with customary provisions and orders from Kyai Kunci and Kyai Bedogol as well as Nyai Wadon Kunci and Nyai Wadon Bedogol.
3	Control	In general: women (nyai wadon kunci and nyai wadon bedogol help the power of the key kyai and kyai bedogol in the process of perlon unggahan ritual) Women have power over decision-making at every stage of the perlon ritual that they participate in according to the direction of the key kyai or kyai bedogol.
4.	Function	Fulfillment of spiritual needs through participation in each ritual (Unggahan ritual).

5. Conclusion

Women have a good role and position in the Bonokeling community. This happens because of the awareness of gender equality in Bonokeling community as a representation of egalitarian character. In traditional ceremonies in Bonokeling community, women have productive, reproductive, and socio-cultural roles. Women's interests in the *perlon ritual* (traditional ritual) can be involved and carry out worship. For the Banokeling community or breed, ritual of *unggahan traditional ritual* has a very sacred value and becomes a spiritual path (worship charity).

Women as *nyai wadon kunci* and so on (organizational structure of *nyai wadon kunci*), *nyai wadon bedogol*, and so on (organizational structure of *nyai wadon bedogol*). Their roles include (a) *Nyai wadon kunci* assisting the duties of the *kyai kunci*; (b) *nyai wadon bedogol* assisting the duties of the *kyai bedogol*; (c) women: carrying out tasks in the traditional rituals specified.

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