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## REVEALING THE INDOCTRINATION OF MADURESE MARRIAGE TRADITIONS: A HEGEMONY PERSPECTIVE

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### ABSTRACT

This article investigates the hegemonic messages in Madurese marriage indoctrination among young women. This study implements a qualitative approach and the data is collected by distributing a questionnaire to young Madurese women who are studying at the University of Trunojoyo Madura. The data obtained will be analyzed through the lens of hegemony theory. The finding indicates that Madurese marriage indoctrinations contain domination used to influence the ideology of Madurese women to reinforce the status quo of women's restriction.

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## INTRODUCTION

Madura is regarded as having uniqueness and a specialty in its cultural traditions. Taufiqurrahman (Taufiqurrahman, 2007) explains that the term uniqueness denotes a meaning that Madurese cultural traditions have dissimilar cultural-specificities with the ethnography of other cultural communities. He further elaborates that the Madurese cultural specialty can be identified through the obedience and the submission of the people to the 4 important figures who have the highest hierarchical position in society. Buppa, 'Babbu, Guru, ban Rato (father, mother, teacher, and government) are the main figures who when giving orders, advice, or prohibitions will be considered as a mandate that cannot be ignored (Atiqullah & umiarso, 2019). Demands to obey the four main figures exist in almost all aspects of Madurese life. Parents are on top priority for Madurese people in the process of decision making and life choices. In Madurese social life, parents rule the life of their children especially the daughters because women in Madura should be guided and protected (Mardhatillah, 2014).

The culture of Madurese society is also blended with Islamic teachings that become part of Madurese cultural life and embedded within traditional activities and local

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wisdom (Siddiq, 2018); (Hidayaturrehman, 2018). Madurese people hold strongly the Islamic teachings in individual and collective life (Hidayaturrehman, 2018); (Sopyan & Nidzami, 2018). Madurese people are very religious and they are strict moslems (Badriyanto, 2011). The integration of Islamic teachings in Madurese culture causes adherence to the figure of Kiai (teachers or respectable person in Islam) (Hidayaturrehman, 2018). According to Susanto as cited in (Hidayaturrehman, 2018) and Yanwar Pribadi (Pribadi, 2013), in Madurese cultural society, Kiai is considered as social elite not only in the religious field but also in politics, economics, and culture that becomes a central figure and plays a vital role in the life of the society. Since many of Madurese people attend Pesantren (Islamic boarding school) both for their formal and informal education, besides their parents, they listen much to the advices, orders, or prohibitions given by their Kiai. Everything a Kiai says will be obeyed by Madurese people because they believe that their adherence to Kiai will give blessed in their life. Otherwise, when they ignore the words of a Kiai, they will get into trouble in the future. The level of Madurese people's obedience to Kiai is higher than to the government.

The existence of important figures that have power in regulating the life of Madurese people signifies that there is hegemony from the more dominant party to the inferior one. This fact also indicates that Madurese society is hegemonic. A hegemonic condition happens when the dominated group consciously follows the orders from the more dominant party even if they object they will still carry on because they are dictated to. This fact is the mechanisms of hegemony process in Gramsci hegemony as explained by Lears which are the dominant groups impose a direction on social life and the dominated party are manipulatively persuaded to follow the order (Lears, 2016). Parents and Kiai as religious figures hold the power to control and rule the social life of the people in Madura. The way they impose power and domination is through indoctrination and narrations which are constantly injected into the inferior's mind since they were young.

One of the indoctrinations which contain hegemonic messages grown in Madurese cultural society is about marriage. Marriage is an important phase in their life as it is commanded in both the Quran and Hadith. One of the Quran's verses stated that marriage is one of Allah's signs as he creates everything in pairs and prophet Muhammad says that when a person gets married, he/she has completed half of his/her religion (E, 2016). Islam also requires marriages for avoiding adultery because it is forbidden (Ishaq, 2016) and those who do adultery will also get social sanctions. Therefore, when a person, men or women, reach a certain age, rather they are involved in courtship relationship they are suggested to get married. Apart from being considered part of a religious order, marriage in Madura also has strong social-historical values. As for these values, among others, are to build a family and have children.

However, in reality, marriage in Madura has an important issue that is interesting to be studied. In Madura, men and women get different treatments in dealing with marriage due to gender differences. Men get more freedom than women in designing their future marriage. Men do not have a time limit for marriage, men are free to choose partners, and men do not get social burden if they do not carry out the existing traditions. While women since they were kids, they are exposed to the teachings about the importance of marriage for a woman, they are also taught the duties and responsibilities of women in marriage, also about who they get married to, and many more. These marriage teachings are delivered by parents and elder people in the family and Kiai or teachers from their Islamic school, also from elder people in their social environment. Those repetitive teachings about marriage turn into indoctrinations since

they get ingrained into Madurese women's minds. As the result, Madurese women will implement them in their life. In other words, it can be said that in the life of Madurese women, there is a hegemony given by more powerful parties to control and rule their steps in marriage in the form of indoctrination.

Dealing with this issue, this study is going to investigate what indoctrinations exist among Madurese women about marriage and how hegemonic are those indoctrinations. To know how hegemonic the marriage indoctrinations among Madurese women, this study will also look at the response of young Madurese women who have not married yet in accepting the indoctrinations. To analyze the issue, this study uses the perspective of Antonio Gramsci about hegemony. There are many interesting ideas around the concept of hegemony, but this study focuses on the ideas of cultural hegemony. The notion of cultural hegemony is related to the political control when there is a dominant social group or a dominant class within a society that ascend the power and maintain their privilege status (Lears, 2016).

This study has not been conducted by many researchers. Research on Madurese culture and Madurese marriage traditions are varied. Akhmad Siddiq (Siddiq, 2018) in his article entitled *Contesting Religion and Ethnicity in Madurese society* describes the historical phases of Madurese identity construction, the origins of Madurese ethnicity, and how Islam involves in the cultural identities of the Madurese. The article is in line with this study in terms of discussing the connection between tradition and religion in Madura. However, the article links the integration of religion and culture with social identity construction. Some other articles study the marriage traditions in Madura, such as arranged marriage and early marriage. Abdul Muhith (Muhith et al., 2018) in his article " *Analysis of Cause and Impacts or Early Marriage on Madurese Sumenep East Java Indonesia*" discusses the factors driving early marriage and to determine the impact of early marriage. The results showed that the factors driving early marriage are economic, education, parents, and customs factors. Early marriage also has negative impacts, among them are: the couple often get quarrel, the couple cannot control their ego well, the couple does not have enough knowledge to deal with children, and sometimes there are still interferences from parents. While the positive impacts of early marriage are it can reduce the economic burden of parents, avoid children from bad deeds and children will learn how to live a family life. In line with the article, this study will also explore the marriage traditions in Madura but more into the indoctrination phenomena.

To sum up, the study and research about marriage indoctrinations in Madura have not been brought up into discussion. The issue and phenomenon are there over decades and give significant influence to the construction of Madurese women's thought and action. However, not many scholars or researchers explore this issue since most studies about marriage in Madura criticize the practice of marriage traditions, such as early marriage and arranged marriage, from the perspective of feminism. The critics indeed give a contribution to widely open people's eyes and mind that the marriage traditions in Madura are problematic. The study of this article also supports and in line with the previous studies, but this study is more concerned and focused on what makes Madurese women still agree and compromise with the marriage traditions although they know that it has more harms to their future married life. Therefore to answer the curiosity, this study brings up the issue of marriage indoctrinations got by Madurese women whom we believe that indoctrinations play a vital role in constructing people's belief and action.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach. This study is done through an unstructured interview and distributing questionnaires. The focus of this study is on the marriage indoctrinations among Madurese women. This study aims to investigate how hegemonic are those indoctrinations and the response showed by Madurese women. The data collection is done through unstructured interviews and distributing questionnaires to participants. The participants are 20 female students of the University of Trunojoyo Madura. This study also uses purposive sampling, in which the process of selecting participants is performed by considering certain things based on the research objectives. The participants for this study must follow these several criteria: a) originally from Madura b) unmarried c) age 19-22 d) willing to be involved in the research. The use of questionnaires and interviews are applied to collect the data from 20 participants who meet the above-mentioned criteria. The data analysis of this study uses the Milles and Huberman model which starting from reducing the data obtained, presenting the data and last is drawing a conclusion.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Madurese women live in a unique social environment. They are part of a society that has a strong culture and traditions. It causes Madurese women to have to deal with practices that must be performed to show their adherence. Since they were kids, their mother, or the elder people in the family guide them to understand what they are expected to do and not to do by society. They are also told about the social sanctions if they cannot meet the social expectations. Confronted with this condition, Madurese women are accustomed to prioritizing tradition-related activities over their interests. They will think twice or will make a lot of considerations if they want to act differently, therefore, most of them prefer to compromise rather than have to face problems as the consequences of their actions.

Madurese women are precious and powerless at the same time. In the structure of Madurese society, women are considered as an important entity. They become a symbol of prestige and honor of the family (Mardhatillah, 2014). It implicates that Madurese women should keep their actions or attitude because whatever they do will be under the spotlight of society. They are expected to keep or even raise the dignity of the family, thus they are fully guided and supervised in order not to make a mistake that can break the family reputation (Mardhatillah, 2014). Although in the first place the intention is to guide and protect the Madurese women because they are precious, yet on the other side it restricts their freedom. They are not provided with various opportunities that they can try in their life, but they are just designed to be submissive and able to carry out the culture and traditions without complaining. Their family or people around them take a big role in controlling their life. With such a scenario, Madurese women seem to have no full power to create and determine their future life (Mardhatillah, 2014).

The above-mentioned circumstances about the life of Madurese women show that there are domination and hegemony carried out by certain parties who have certain goals as well. If there is domination it means there is hegemony and the other way around. Domination denotes subjugation, or the exercise of absolute control either by a state or by an individual (Kendie, 2006). On the other hand, hegemony conveys such a notion as influence, patronage, or leadership (Kendie, 2006). Hegemony is the domination of one group to another which is often supported by legitimating norms and ideas (definition from Britannica.com via (Pratama et al., 2017). Domination and hegemony aim to diffuse power by negotiating a set of beliefs and values to achieve

power and authority (Pratama et al., 2017). Power in Gramscian analysis resides in an ideology and it socializes through social institutions such as school, church, and also by an individual (Daldal, 2014).

The domination over Madurese women exists in almost every aspect of their life including in dealing with marriage (Sugiarti, 2017). In the perspective of Madurese women, marriage is a dream and a life goal. Parents, relatives, teachers, religious figures or Kiai, and society, in general, contribute the ideas of the importance of marriage to the mindset of Madurese women. Based on the answer given by the participants, since they are kids they get teaching from their parents and also their religious teacher such as Ustadz and Kiai that as a woman they have to prepare themselves for marriage. The preparation is needed because in the future when they enter into marriage, they will carry out responsibilities as a wife and as a mother. To be able to play well the role of a wife and a mother, they are exposed to the activities of domestic life such as cooking and doing the chores. There is a saying in Madurese culture: *jha 'gitenggi asakola, dagghi' badha e dapor keya*, which means "don't go to school high, later in the kitchen too" (Rozikin & Kurniawan, 2018). One of the participants stated that:

*"I was told by my mother that I will get married in the future and become the wife of someone. As a woman, I must be able to take care of the house because that is part of my responsibilities. Since I was in elementary school, my mother asked me to help her doing the chores such as cleaning the house, washing the dishes, doing the laundry, and even cooking. When I tried to argue because I was too lazy doing those things, my father and my grandmother will say that no one wants to marry me if I am lazy. A girl who is good at doing domestic activities will get a husband easily, my mother said." (Participant 3)*

From the above statement, it can be seen that family takes a big role in imposing indoctrination about marriage to a daughter. The indoctrination is inserted into daily communication and it's unarguable. At the first stage of operating hegemony, indoctrinating ideology is essential as it determines the further stages of the operation and gives the dominant class a 'starting place' to run their hegemony (Pratama et al., 2017). In this case, parents or family are the dominant class who try to exercise their power in constructing the mind of their daughters about the importance of marriage for Madurese women. Family is one of the institutions which can give persuasion to get consensus (Ali, 2017). As previously ever mentioned that in Madura parents (Bupa' and 'Babbu) are the main figure and they are in the first order of social hierarchy (Susanto, 2015). A child is required to obey their parents and should not do things that upset them. As the party that does not have the power to object to the request from parents, Madurese women internalize the indoctrination. There is a drive under their unconsciousness which tells them that marriage is their future and thus they must fit themselves with all the standards to easily get a partner in the future. This case signifies that the hegemony happens because as the dominated party, Madurese women act or practice what is told by the dominant one.

Many young Madurese women will feel worried when they reach twenty years old but they are still unmarried or no one proposes to them. Married at a young age for a woman is very common in Madura and it even becomes part of the tradition. Although this tradition is still problematic and debatable (Bawono et al., 2019), but the majority of Madurese society still do the practice. There are hegemonic messages spread among Madurese women related to this case, as mentioned by some of the participants:

*"My neighbor always asks me when will I finish college and when will I get married. My age is 21 now and almost all my peers in my village have been married. They often say that do not pursue your study too high because men will be afraid to propose you." (Participant 1)*

*"Whenever I go out of the house and meet with my neighbors, they always ask when I will get married. Sometimes I feel shy and just smile to answer the question. Not only my neighbors but also my relatives when we have a family gathering like to ask have I got a partner or no. They often remind me not too married late because I am a girl." (Participant 5)*

To analyze this case, why Madurese women are required to marry young we have to look at whether or not there are messages, narration, or indoctrination that spread among Madurese women. The majority of people in Madura are Moslem and the influence of Islamic teachings is very strong in almost every aspect of life. Madurese people believe that when a girl reaches puberty age (aqil baligh), it means that she is ready for marriage (Bawono & Suryanto, 2019); (Kuswandi & Azizah, 2018). Among Madurese people, there is a common saying which is *ta' paju lakek* '. This saying means no one wants to propose or marry a girl whose age is beyond the usual age for marriage and this girl will be labeled a spinster.

This saying of course kind of indoctrination because it creates a psychological burden to a girl. The party that imposes this indoctrination aims to hegemonize Madurese women with the culture or tradition of marriage at a young age. For Gramsci, hegemony is exercised by the ruling class not only through coercion but also through consensus, managing to impose their worldview, a philosophy of customs and 'common sense' that favor the recognition of its domination by the dominated classes (Enrique & Ramirez, 2015). The indoctrination of *ta' paju lakek*' and being a spinster, in this case, become the common sense of people in Madura which contributes to their assumption that marriage at a young age for a woman is just a natural order of things. The notion of common sense itself in Gramsci's perspective is an ideological construct that is accepted by all-even contradictory-segments of the society because it is the discourse that follows in "normal time" (Daldal, 2014).

To further analyze the indoctrination of marriage at young age, the ideas of *ta' paju lakek*' perhaps are made by a certain party in the society who has a certain goal to limit women's movement. Madura has also implemented some values of patriarchy which place men as a superior component compared to women. Most Madurese women are still confined within the patriarchal culture and they only occupy jobs in the private sector (Sudarso et al., 2019). With any motives or goals, the indoctrination of marriage at a young age influences the life of Madurese women. To some extent, it creates anxiety for women if they reach a limited age and she does not get married yet. The anxiety happens because they afraid of being the source of public gossip and have to bear the shame. If it happens and some Madurese women experience the same thing, it means that the hegemony of marriage at a young age for Madurese women is successfully operated and imposed.

Furthermore, related to marriage tradition, Madurese women also have to deal with the arranged marriage. This phenomenon cannot be separated from the tradition of marriage at a young age. Before deeply analyze the respondents' answer and what indoctrination Madurese women get related to this tradition, it is better to know the history of arranged marriage. The level of the kinship of Madurese people is very strong (Dharmawan et al., 2017). Madurese people are always taught to maintain good relations with their extended family. If for example one of them has a celebration, their

extended family will be willing to support physically and financially. To maintain and keep a good relationship Madurese people commonly arranged the marriage of their daughter with someone from their extended family (Rahmadani & Farhany, 2019); (Karisyati & Hadi, 2017). Parents often say to their daughters that they will choose the best partner for them because all parents want happiness for their daughter. Related to this case, here is the respondent's response:

*"My Kiai (religious teacher/figure) always say to me that as a child I have to respect my parents and be obedient to them. Allah (God) does not give his blessing to those who make their parents disappointed. Every time I disagree with my parents, I always remember this saying then I try to compromise with them. When my parents told me about an arranged marriage, for example, I disagree. I think that in this modern time everyone has their right to choose someone they will marry. But then my parents said that due to living in the modern time that there are many negative things possible to happen, they do not want me to choose the wrong person as my husband. They insist that they will find the best one for me." (Participant 7)*

*"My older sister ever told me that at first marriage does not require love but you must find the right person. She said that she married her husband because their marriage has been arranged by our family and his husband's family. Now she lives happily with him and her kids. She asked me not to worried about arranged marriage and I must give my trust to the family's choice." (Participant 12)*

The tradition of arranged marriage has been done by Madurese society for a long time ago. So for Madurese young women, arranged marriage is something they are familiar with because the elder women in their family have been through this process before they were married. Madurese women often get a warning from their family that they have to be careful in finding a partner because in modern times it is difficult to identify people's characteristics especially when they are from other cultures or outside their living environment. Therefore, they have to give the right to choose their future partner to their family (Arroisi & Quraisyin, 2015). Their family will find the right partner who has a good family background, religious and has good characteristics as everyone expected.

The statements were given by the respondents clearly show that they get indoctrination from their family that the marriage which is arranged by the family is the best marriage for them. Although they disagree at first because this message is continuously said to them, then it makes them believe that what their family said is right. From this situation, the indoctrination has rooted deeply in Madurese women's unconscious mind until they feel that as the dominated party, they have to give their consent to the dominant one. Consent, for Gramsci, involves a complex mental state, a contradictory consciousness, mixing approbation and apathy, resistance, and resignation (Lears, 2016). So, it can be said that for Madurese women to accept the hegemony of arranged marriage they have to fight with their contradictory perspective because there is denial inside their selves. Although in the end, they give their consent it takes time and the dominant party has to voice the indoctrination many times. It shows that to gain the consent of the dominated party, the dominant party needs an active commitment to distribute the hegemony (Lears, 2016); (Enrique & Ramirez, 2015).

Besides, another indoctrination which is also widely spread among Madurese women is about *sangkal*. *Sangkal* is Madurese language which means prohibition or restriction that should be avoided for social and cultural reasons. *Sangkal* is a kind of

myth believed by Madurese people. Someone who does an action which has already been claimed as *sangkal*, in the future, he/she will be in trouble because it means that he/she has done something which is not allowed. Among Madurese society, it is believed that rejecting a man's marriage proposal is *sangkal*. To be specific, Madurese women should not reject the first marriage proposal given to her. If she rejects it, society believes that in the future it will be difficult for her to get another marriage proposal from a man. Every woman in Madura knows about this myth because it has been transferred a lot throughout generations. As one of the participants said:

*"Don't be too picky about looking for men as a husband. If there is someone who comes to your family and proposes to you, please don't reject. We are afraid that you will get sangkal. Many women are not married until they are age-old because they ever reject a marriage proposal before. We don't want you to be like them." This statement is often said by my parents and elder people in my family. I was threatened by the word sangkal that it makes me afraid. Many people believe in it and I cannot deny that I also start to believe it. So, in my mind, there is fear if I reject someone's marriage proposal I will get sangkal and it will be difficult for me in the future to get another marriage proposal." (Participant 20)*

Another participant also responded to the discussion of *sangkal*.

*"I tried not to believe with the myth of sangkal for those who reject a marriage proposal. However, since I got many stories from people around me that sangkal does exist, it makes me worried too. As a woman, to be honest I am afraid of being a spinster because, in my village, spinsters will be talked and gossiping. I imagine that it will be difficult to bear such a social burden." (Participant 17)*

The statements of the participants indicate that the myth of *sangkal* has threatened Madurese women and causes fear. Although logically it is hard to accept, because the myth has turned into a belief, thus people will think that it is better to avoid it and it also happens to Madurese women. They are often told by the elders about the myth of *sangkal* when rejecting a marriage proposal; therefore it makes them afraid to reject a marriage proposal. Of course, this situation is dilemmatic because if they accept a marriage proposal because they are afraid of the myth of *sangkal*, it means that they will deal with forced marriage. The indoctrination of *sangkal* put Madurese women in a difficult situation. A marriage proposal commonly comes from a family that has an agreement before with the Madurese women's family. This happened in connection with the tradition of arranged marriage. Thus, if there is a woman rejects a marriage proposal it means that she breaks the agreement made by two families and the woman's family will not get trusted anymore by other families. Therefore, it is believed that once a woman rejects a marriage proposal, there will be no other marriage proposal comes and the woman will be a spinster. In the case of *sangkal* myth, parents and elder people are the main actors in indoctrinating the myth of *sangkal*. Their children's minds are still pure but because of the indoctrination, it blocks and closes the mind of their children so they become close-minded people (Mutmainnah, 2018). They grow up as a person whose mind believes that *sangkal* does exist and they have to avoid it.

From the perspective of hegemony, the myth of *sangkal* is a consensus. When Gramsci talks about consensus, he relates it to the spontaneity that is psychological in nature which includes various acceptances of rules sociopolitical or other regulatory aspects. Consensus can happen; 1) because of fear of the consequences of not conforming, 2) because accustomed to following goals in certain ways, and 3) out of awareness or approval of certain elements (Siswati, 2017). The myth of *sangkal* causes



fears and threatens the steps of Madurese women in deciding with whom they will marry. They internalize the myth of *sangkal* because the more powerful parties such as parents and the elder people keep reminding them about the consequences. It affects their psychological and it is represented through their action in which they will agree and compromise with any marriage proposal comes to them. It shows that indoctrination which is connected with myth or belief resulting in very powerful effects influencing both the thought and the action of people.

## CONCLUSION

From the analysis, it is clearly shown that the marriage indoctrinations got by Madurese women are very hegemonic. The indoctrinations although are only in the form of saying or narration but can influence the mindset and the action of Madurese women. The marriage indoctrinations have been passed down throughout generations so they turn out into beliefs that Madurese people use as a consideration when making a decision or doing an action. The indoctrinations are also internalized and affect the psychological of Madurese women, therefore it can be said that the indoctrinations have taken the consent of Madurese women to compromise and agree with any situations related to the indoctrinations. The marriage indoctrinations got by Madurese women also signify that there is domination over the life of Madurese women. The domination given by more powerful parties wants to control Madurese women's life and limits the movement of them. Above all, all the indoctrinations about marriage given to Madurese women have a complex meaning which is not only about what they can do and what they cannot do regarding marriage. The effects of the indoctrinations reinforce the status quo of women's restriction in Madura as Madurese women are considered as an important entity whom they are precious and powerless at the same time thus they need to be guided and monitored in order not to choose the wrong path in their life.

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