

## SHIFT IN THE MEANING OF KANCA WINGKING IN JAVANESE SOCIETY

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### **ABSTRACT**

Women are considered *kanca wingking*, which means women must always be behind. Javanese women are considered weak creatures and must always be protected. Therefore, Javanese women must always obey what men say. Javanese women are not allowed to refuse or refute men's wishes, they must always obey men. This research is a qualitative descriptive research. The object of this research is constructing the meaning of *kanca wingking* in Javanese society. The data collection techniques used were observation and literature study. Based on the analysis that has been carried out, it can be concluded that the concept of *kanca wingking* in Javanese society cannot be separated from the influence of patriarchal culture. This culture is contained in the teachings of ancient Javanese texts written by the ancestors of the Javanese people. Currently, the concept of *kanca wingking* has experienced a shift in meaning where women are complementary and can help men fulfill their responsibilities. Women are now the place where ideas or concepts mature and have the right to play a role in decision-making.

**Keywords:** *kanca wingking, patriarchal culture, feminism*

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## INTRODUCTION

Javanese people have various cultural concepts to organize their social life. Their culture has a sublime or noble meaning. Their noble culture makes Javanese society known as a society with good ethics because their culture is not only art but also rules and norms of life. The rules or norms of life of Javanese society cover all aspects of life, namely regulating relations between communities to the rules for running a household.

In married life, Javanese people have their own household guidelines. These guidelines are in the form of teachings from ancestors, many of which are contained in ancient Javanese texts. Javanese Manuscript contains *piwulang* or teachings for Javanese people living their lives. Javanese texts guide Javanese people in carrying out married life. The cultural concept of patriarchy or men as the central

figure in the household dominates the concept of household teachings in ancient texts.

The ancestors' teachings influenced the patriarchal culture that developed in Javanese society contained in ancient Javanese texts. Patriarchal culture makes men dominate and even have power in the life of Javanese society, including in domestic life. Men are the most central figures in the household, leading and having power. Everything that happens in the household must be decided by men and based on men's decisions. In this culture, women are marginalized figures and do not even have the right to decide or choose, women have to follow men in this culture.

Women are considered *kanca wingking*, which means women must always be behind. Javanese women are considered weak creatures and must always be protected. Therefore, Javanese women must always obey what men say. Javanese women are not allowed to refuse or refute men's wishes, they must always obey men.

The concept of *kanca wingking* can also mean the position of women in the kitchen. Women only have an obligation to take care of matters related to the rear, namely cooking, *macak*, and *manak*. Of these three things, Javanese women are only limited to cooking, dressing up, and giving birth. Javanese women are nothing more than complements to men who must be obedient and willing to be treated according to men's wishes.

Current developments influence society's perception of the status and position of women in the household. Modernization impacts Javanese women's thinking that they also have the right to determine their own lives. This perception is influenced by the development of feminism that is spreading in Indonesia. In the KBBI, feminism means the women's movement that demands complete equality of rights between women and men.

Feminism comes from the Latin word *femina*, which means having feminine characteristics. According to Aida Fitalaya S. Hubies (in Ardianto and Q-Anees, 2007: 184), feminism began with the perception of the unequal position of women compared to men in society. In general, the term feminism refers to the definition of an ideology of women's liberation because inherent in all its approaches is the belief that women experience injustice because of their gender (Kasiyan, 2008: 73).

Feminist, according to Nyoman Kutha Ratna (2013: 226), comes from the word *femme*, which means woman. Sugihastuti (2002:18) believes that feminism is a movement for equality between men and women in all fields, including politics, economics, education, and social and organized activities that defend the rights and interests of women. Feminism is a movement of women to gain autonomy or freedom to determine themselves.

Feminist thinking emphasizes that women are equal to men. Women have the right to be themselves without always obeying and following men. Women also don't have to walk behind men, even in this way, women can also have power. Equality of rights and gender is what influences society's perception of Javanese women.

Perceptions about Javanese women influence social changes that occur in society. Changes in the meaning of the concept of *kanca wingking* for Javanese women affect the social life of Javanese society. Javanese women can now compete with men and even do work other than in the kitchen. Based on the description above, this research will describe changes in the meaning of *kanca wingking* in Javanese society.

## **METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method, which emphasizes the use of data obtained from the field. Qualitative research is more about understanding social phenomena or symptoms because it is about learning about people (society as a subject). Accuracy in selecting and determining the source and type of data will determine the richness of the data obtained.

The research object in qualitative research is what is targeted. Research targets do not depend on the title and research topic, but are concretely reflected in the focus of the problem (Bungin, 2010:76). The object of this research is the construction of the meaning of *kanca wingking* in Javanese society. The data collection techniques used were observation and literature study.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Kanca Wingking* in Patriarchal Culture**

*Kanca wingking* is a cultural concept in Javanese society that is a reflection of patriarchal culture. *Kanca wingking* is aimed at Javanese women, which means that Javanese women only become back-door friends or women only take care of the kitchen. Women's duties only revolve around the kitchen, which shows women's place is in the back. In this concept, women are said to be weak creatures and must be protected.

Javanese women do not have the right to make decisions within the household. Decisions in the household are all in the hands of the man who plays the husband's role. Women as wives must obey and follow men, women must be willing to be treated according to men's wishes, and women must always stand behind men. This is because men are central figures and dominate and hold power in a patriarchal culture.

The concept of *kanca wingking* and even patriarchal culture in Javanese society cannot be

separated from ancestral teachings. Many of these teachings are contained in ancient Javanese manuscripts by court poets. Ancient manuscripts containing teachings are called *piwulang* manuscripts. *Piwulang* manuscripts or texts have good teachings and advice in life (Nugroho, 2008: 37). The characteristics of this type of text are generally in the form of instructive speech monologues about ways of life, daily social behavior, moral education guidance, and the manners that cultured humans should carry out.

In the *piwulang* text contains special teachings for palace princesses called *piwulang putri*. Nugroho (2020) stated that the *piwulang putri* texts have moral teachings aimed at the daughters of kings so that they achieve physical and mental balance in life in the world. The texts written by kings and poets are full of advice or advice addressed to the king's daughters in living their lives as women and as wives. Discussions about women are a very dominant aspect in women's *piwulang*. In its development, this teaching did not only apply to palace princesses, but also applied to the general public and even became an ethic that applied to all Javanese women.

The teachings in the *piwulang putri* script generally reflect the concept of *kanca wingking*, where women must obey and obey men. This is contained in the text of the *Piwulang Putri* manuscript entitled *Serat Darmarini on Pupuh Pocung*. The pupuh includes the following teachings:

1. Women must be truly steady towards their partner (*mantep*)  
Mantep means that a woman must be loyal to the man who marries her. A wife is required not to have the slightest intention of moving to another heart.
2. Women must be serious about marriage (*temen*)  
A wife who is "temen" is serious, responsible, and dedicated in her role. She maintains harmony in the relationship, showing loyalty, understanding, and cooperation. She is a strong, supportive partner, wise in decision-making, and always there for her family, balancing her responsibilities with care for her own well-being.
3. Accepting (*Narimo*)  
Narimo means accepting everything given by the husband. One accepts whatever or how much her husband gives her without complaining, criticizing, or demeaning her. This means being sincere and grateful for the situation.
4. Patience (*Sabar*)  
Patience means don't be easily provoked by emotions and don't get angry quickly.
5. Being devoted to your husband (*bekti*)  
*Bekti* means being devoted to your husband. A wife must obey and not fight her husband.
6. Attentive (*Gemati*)

A wife must have a soul entire of attention to her husband. Look after and care for your husband when he is healthy or sick.

7. Obeying (*Mituhu*)

*Mituhu* means obeying all your husband's orders. A wife is not allowed to deny what her husband says.

8. Secretive (*Rumeksa*)

*Rumeksa* means a wife must be able to keep all the secrets in the household.

9. Strong against temptations (*Wiweka*)

A wife must be strong against all temptations. A woman who is strong will get true love from her husband.

Based on these nine teachings, it is generally seen that men dominate more than women. Women are taught to always serve and obey men as husbands.

A woman's obligation as a wife to always be obedient and devoted to a man as a husband is something main in Javanese society. Men are likened to kings who must always be served because men have complete power over women. Until now, this behavior is still maintained and will continue to be justified. This is because the husband is the head of the household and earns a living for the family.

This system is still widely applied by the majority of Javanese people. This can be seen from the fact that many Javanese women still only do housework activities, such as doing kitchen work. In society, education for a woman is still considered insignificant because a woman's job is only at home, not earning a living or working. The factor that influences this assumption is that society still views women as weak creatures. This perception creates social problems that involve and discriminate against women.

First, the social problem that arises as a result of this perception is domestic violence (*KDRT*). Indonesian society, especially Javanese society, still uses a patriarchal cultural mindset, which gives rise to national discrimination against women. In cases of violence, women as victims are still blamed or share the blame for violence committed by men. Women who experience domestic violence are still blamed because society thinks that violence occurs. After all, women do not treat men well, such as disobeying and obeying men. The stigma of victims regarding treatment or service to their husbands has placed the victims as bad as the perpetrators of the crime themselves (Kania: 2015).

Male dominance, in this case, is still evident in a culture that creates a social construct that women are weak, both physically and emotionally. The social meaning of these biological differences further strengthens stereotypes against women that demean women and facilitate violence. Violence

can take place in families and personal relationships, it can also occur in the workplace or through cultural practices. Patriarchal culture has the effect that men are stronger than women, so wives have limitations in making choices or desires and have a tendency to obey all their husbands' wishes, even bad ones. There is a social reality that often occurs in a society where violence is normal if women do not obey their husbands.

Acts of domestic violence are still taboo and should not be discussed. The mindset of women who are still based on the teachings of *rumeksa*, which means they must be able to keep secrets, is also a factor in the rise of domestic violence because, for Javanese society, everything that happens in the household is secret, including violence within it. Women are still afraid and do not dare to say what is happening to them because men still hold power in the household. Therefore, much violence against women is not revealed due to the factor of maintaining confidentiality in the household.

Second, the social problem that arises as a result of patriarchal culture is early marriage. From the many cases collected by the National Commission on Violence Against Women, almost 50% of early marriages were carried out between women aged under 18 years and men aged over 30 years and occurred under pressure or coercion. Women only receiving a living and doing housework is a social construction formed by society regarding early marriage. Women are limited to the status of a wife, they are not allowed to continue their education or develop their talents. Women may only do work related to housework.

In the book "*Dinamika Gender dan Pengelolaan Kekayaan Alam*" written by E. Linda Yuliani, it is explained that the patriarchal culture that still exists in society makes women's position cornered in cases of early marriage. They do not have the freedom to refuse because, in some traditions, women who refuse to marry are women who are despicable and do not know themselves. So, even though the social reality is that many of them are not mentally ready to get married, unfortunately, this fact is still ignored.

### ***Kanca Wingking in Contemporary Javanese Society***

The concept of *kanca wingking* for Javanese women, which means back friend, has undoubtedly changed and is different from the previous concept of *kanca wingking*. The meaning of *kanca wingking* is changing due to the emergence of feminist thinking in society. Feminism changes society's view of women, stating that women also have the same rights as men. This is because feminism focuses on gender equality that men and women have the same status.

Suriani's research results (2017:58) show that Javanese women can hold two roles simultaneously in the morning, they take care of domestic work as housewives, and then in the

afternoon, they also do work outside the home (career). In this case, a Javanese woman can still demonstrate the acquisition of power in the family environment by continuing to prioritize Javanese culture. She even has the ability to play multiple roles simultaneously and not pay attention to one of these roles.

In its development, Javanese women can increasingly choose and have rights over their own lives. Javanese women no longer only do domestic work or housework but have the right to earn an income. This is because Javanese women now do not have to obey men because women and men have degrees. The increasing development of feminism means that women who previously did not have the right to continue their education have the right to be able to continue their education and develop their talents.

Women can do jobs that previously could only be done by men. Women can have jobs outside the home, apart from being influenced by feminist thinking, this is also influenced by pressing economic needs. This forces women to leave the house and start working to meet their needs. In this case, society understands and puts aside the concept that women cannot do work other than taking care of the household.

Women who work or earn a living reflect the shifting meaning of the concept of *kanca wingking*. In this case, the meaning of *kanca wingking* for women means that women are the ones who can help when the party in front, namely men, cannot do their job well. In this case, the shift in the meaning of *kanca wingking* is influenced by the demands of life. Then, women involved in decision-making show a change in the meaning of *kanca wingking*, where women are now not only obedient but becoming a forum for maturing ideas or concepts women can be invited to consider a decision.

Education is a factor that influences the thinking of Javanese women today. Women are becoming braver and able to express their opinions because they have a better educational background. Currently, in society, especially Javanese society, women are involved in decision-making, whether in the household, socially, or in politics. Women have the right to take part in decisions. Javanese women who are involved in community decision-making increasingly show that Javanese women already have the same status as men.

Awareness of the importance of education for women is an important factor influencing the shift in the meaning of *kanca wingking* in Javanese society. Education is the key to realizing gender justice in society, including those that adhere to a patriarchal culture. Because education is a tool for transferring societal norms, knowledge, and abilities. Education gives women broad insight and knowledge, which is helpful in finding work and their careers.

## CONCLUSION

The concept of *kanca wingking* in Javanese society cannot be separated from patriarchal culture. The idea of *kanca wingking* is included in the teachings contained in ancient Javanese texts of the *piwulang putri* type. In the *kanca wingking* concept, women are always required to obey men and do not have the right to make decisions. This is because women must always follow and walk behind men. Javanese society has a stereotype that women are weak physically and emotionally. These stereotypes give rise to social problems in Javanese society that discriminate against women, namely domestic violence and early marriage.

The concept of women as *kanca wingking* has experienced a shift in meaning. In Javanese society, women are no longer complements or people who must always follow and obey men, but Javanese women can also help if men cannot fulfill their obligations. Women as *kanca wingking* not only obey men's decisions, but women become a forum for maturing ideas or concepts. Javanese women have the right to choose their own lives, have the right to have outside work and have the right to have an opinion and take part in decisions. The development of feminism, especially awareness of the importance of education for women, is an essential factor that influences the shift in the meaning of the concept of *kanca wingking* at this time.

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