

Living Qur'an of *Kempekan* at *Pesantren Babakan Ciwaringin*, Cirebon: Transmission and Transformation of the Qur'an Recitation

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Abstract:

This present study aims to explore the phenomenon of the Qur'an recitation by employing a 'Kempekan' model, which is transmitted at Pesantren (Islamic boarding school) Babakan. Kempekan is a style of tartil (a proper manner) recitation of the Qur'an promoted at Pesantren Kempek. A qualitative approach was designed in this ethnographic study. The data were collected through observation and interviews. The findings demonstrate two important points obtained from the living Qur'an of Kempekan. Firstly, the phenomenon of Kempekan which has emerged amid the pesantren not only to maintain the originality of the Qur'an recitation, but also to shape a new tradition of both its transmission and transformation patterns. It can be noticed from the development of the practice of today's Qur'an recitation in Indonesia. Secondly, the surge of Kempekan has pervaded a plethora of cultural aspects occurring in Babakan. This can be evidenced from communities in the so-called Region III Cirebon, namely: Majalengka, Kuningan, Indramayu, and Cirebon, who attended the khatm al-Qur'an. The transmission and transformation of Kempekan raise the dialectical model of the Qur'an and its distinctive culture. The recitation of the Qur'an is not only limited to the rituals of ubuddiyah (religious merits), but also impacts on aspects of culture, economy, the structure of society, and a new model of piety.

Keywords: *Living Qur'an; Kempekan; Pesantren; Tartil; Tradition*

INTRODUCTION

The living Qur'an, the ways in which the Quranic tenets and fundamental principles are internalized in Muslim daily lives and their peaceful interactions with others, has been highlighted in Indonesia as a new phenomenon and continues to transform in exploring the possibility of Quranic studies. The Qur'an is studied not only by employing the perspective of interpretation, but also by analyzing the external aspects which have been neglected, namely: portraying communities in reciting the Qur'an (Syamsuddin, 2007: xiv). In this overlook, Ahimsa-Putra (2012: 236) asserts that the Qur'an is interpreted as not only a holy book, but also the Muslim scripture that tries to be realized in daily routines as a guideline of Muslim authenticity.

It is worth mentioning that the living Qur'an is a study of phenomena that live amid Muslim communities in terms of the Qur'an as the object of study. Social paradigms that occur in the Muslim communities are used as the archetype to be further investigated. Even though it deals with the Qur'an, the study of living Qur'an does not rely on its intellectual existence. Nonetheless, this depicts emerging social phenomena related to the

presence of the Qur'an that covers a wide array of geographical areas and a certain period (Ahimsa-Putra, 2012: 238).

For this reason, positioning the living Qur'an as an object of study basically offers the phenomenon of the interpretation of the Qur'an in a broader and more varied perspective. It requires the use of socio-cultural symptoms in a more thorough investigation. In Ahimsa-Putra's (2012: 239) point of view, this approach places the paradigm assumptions of hermeneutic or interpretive anthropology as the basis for thinking in examining the phenomena.

Interestingly, the Quranic approach illustrates new stretches in the Quranic studies. Additionally, this approach also reinforces that the Qur'an cannot be separated from the social context. At least, it is revealed by the fact that the existence of the Qur'an among societies is regarded as not only a holy book, but other functions, including playing a role as an amulet and luck, facilitating prosperity, and balancing spirituality, in accordance with the human needs and understanding. Borrowing Esack's (2005) term, the dialectic of the Qur'an and the Muslim communities proposes that the Qur'an can fulfill a variety of uses in Muslims' daily lives (Dawing, 2017).

Concerning the portrait of the Qur'an and the Muslim communities, Rasmussen (2010) initiated the exploration of the issues in his interesting work entitled *Women, the Recited Qur'an and Islamic Music in Indonesia*. Rasmussen brings the readers to the heart of religious music praxis in Indonesia – the country that is deemed to be home for the largest Muslim population around the globe. Rasmussen also investigates the landscape of tremendous public voices, in which women recite the divine texts of the Qur'an and where the diversity of styles and genres of Arab-influenced Islamic music, is also carried out by female reciters. This book focuses on music styles, women's roles, and ideological and aesthetic issues.

Before Rasmussen wrote his previously mentioned work, Esack (2005) presented in-depth elaboration through his work entitled *The Qur'an: A User's Guide* published by Oneworld Publications, Oxford. Esack points out that the Qur'an plays a very pivotal role in providing comfort and healing in the world in addition to something promised later in the hereafter for those who believe.

The Qur'an, furthermore, which has the nature to be uttered should have an accurate transmission path, reaching the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Likewise, the Qur'an is also known to have a variety of recitation. Each of it has the narration that was promoted by the transmitters, namely: Nafi' (d. 169 H), 'Ashim (d. 127 H), al-Kisa'i (d. 189 H), Ibn 'Amir (d. 118 H), Abu Umar (d. 154 H), and Ibn Kathir (d. 120 H). The narration of these transmitters is considered valid and authentic from the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Meanwhile, recitation of the Qur'an in public spaces, according to Nelson (2001: xiv), is a common phenomenon that occurs in Muslim communities, as it constitutes a usual symptom in Egypt and all contexts of Islamic societies.

This current study highlights that the Qur'an recitation by applying the *Kempekan* model in Babakan, Ciwaringin, Cirebon, West Java-Indonesia has been introduced by Kiai Tamam Kamali since 1955. Kiai Tamam studied *qira'ah* (recitation and reading) of Imam 'Ashim from Kiai Umar Soleh bin Kiai Harun, Kempek. Meanwhile, Kiai Umar himself was a student of Kiai Munawwir bin Abdullah Rasyad, Krapyak, Yogyakarta (Jamaluddin, 2018). Kiai Munawwir chose *qira'ah* of Imam 'Ashim bi-riwayat Hafs as the standard of recitation taught to his students.

Due to the Kiai Munawwir's effort, the *qira'ah* of 'Ashim has been well-known as variant readings of the Qur'an in society and promoted prominent students, such as Kiai Umar Solo, Kiai Arwani Kudus, Kiai Murdadlo Buntet, Kiai Mufid Pandanaran, Kiai Yusuf, and Kiai Umar Kempek, which becomes the focus of the study on the *Kempekan* tradition.

In line with Nelson (2001), the variation of the Qur'an readings in Egypt copes with forms of practice, polemic discourse, mapping of assembly points, and separation between music and the Qur'an recitation. It illustrates how Nelson conducted grounded research, attended *qira'ah* events, interviewed reciters, understood their recitation techniques, and observed relating issues. Since this study emphasizes the phenomenon of *Kempekan* tradition, it does not elaborate much on the songs used in reading the Koran itself, such as how the character of the song or composition in it.

DISCUSSION

Methods of the Qur'an Recitation of *Kempekan*

In the Region III Cirebon, West Java consisting of Kuningan, Indramayu, Majalengka, and Cirebon, *Kempekan* becomes a famous model of the Qur'an recitation. Cirebon covers three surrounding regencies, namely: Kuningan, Indramayu, and Majalengka. The three regencies are included in the area of West Java. Generally, the people of West Java call them the Region III Cirebon. *Kempekan* is the name addressed to Kempek, an area in Cirebon Regency. It denotes one of the centers of Quranic studies in the Region III Cirebon, which refers to *qira'ah* of Imam 'Ashim.

Moreover, the person who first taught the Qur'an recitation in the variant reading of Imam 'Ashim at Kempek was Kiai Yusuf bin Harun. A few years later, Kiai Yusuf passed away and was continued by his younger brother, Kiai Umar bin Harun (Jamaluddin, 2018). Handled by Kiai Umar, the Qur'an recitation experienced a peak of fame so that people called it *Kempekan*. The *sanad* (the chain of Hadith narrators) system can connect regular reciprocity between individuals or groups, which can be analyzed in the continuity of social practices. It confirms the conception of Anthony Giddens declaring that individuals are formed because of certain space and time as well as the relationship between reciprocity among others (Busco, 2009: 253).

Kempekan is a method of the Qur'an recitation that has been developed at Pesantren (Islamic boarding school) Kempek (Jamaluddin, 2018). This tradition triggers a well-established community that possesses a strict method of the Qur'an recitation. Alfiyah (2017: 374) reports that a community of the Qur'an recitation exists as a transformative institution highlighting the process of production and reproduction of the values of Islamic teachings with moderate character and local culture. Not only do these socio-cultural values bring changes in Islamic understanding, but it also meets a broader social life through education and economics. Ali (2018: 21) offers that the Islamic tenets promoting moderate values play a crucial role in realizing a quality human civilization with moderate education, tolerance, justice, peaceful co-existence, and socioeconomic and ethnoreligious backgrounds in life.

Pesantren, the oldest educational institution in Indonesian history, has played a very pivotal role in the Islamic process through cultural processes accommodating a variety of culture. The ability of *pesantren* to organize a cultural dialogue/adaptation represents the main character that is not possessed by other educational institutions (Ni'am, 2015: 124-125). In reality, as a subculture, *pesantren* develops along with the needs of Muslim communities. Atabik (2014: 169) suggests that the dynamics of life in *pesantren* directly

reflects the pattern of its students, which emphasizes spiritual aspects. The subculture dialogue is a manifestation of the adoption and adaptation of external cultures with the value of internal Islamic culture in Indonesia (Gusman, 2010: 1-2).

Kempekan refers to the Quranic studies tradition that has developed within *Pesantren Kempek*, one of the old Islamic boarding schools in Cirebon area, and then contributes a surge of influence to Cirebon people and its surroundings. A *santri* (pesantren student) who is considered good at his/her Qur'an recitation includes those who are able to read it by Kempek standards. The students frequently employ the *Kempekan* art of the Qur'an recitation. If they study with Kiai Tamam Kamali, the *Kempekan* model is not rhythmically performed in the art of *murotal* songs; this model rarely shows complicated vocalization. The *Kempekan* model emphasizes *tajwidul* Qur'an (Interview with Jamaluddin Muhammad). To master the *Kempekan* model, people should learn directly to the respective experts. In the context of persistence in sharpening the knowledge of the Qur'an recitation model, Azyumardi Azra points out that *santri* is categorized into Muslim entities oriented to religiosity (Muzakka, 2017: 65).

Kempekan at Pesantren Babakan

Kiai Tamam Kamali is the person who first taught the art of the Qur'an recitation called *Kempekan* in Babakan. It has the same teaching activities as other ones, but promotes a distinctive model. For example, when teaching, Kiai Umar used *panjalin* wood to educate his *santri* who misread Qur'an verses. Conversely, Kiai Tamam corrects his *santri* who read Qur'an verses in inappropriate ways (Jamaluddin, 2018). In other words, the adoption of the *Kempekan* model at *Pesantren Babakan* seems to be realized easily although the transformation and transmission demonstrate little difference in its teaching methods.

This study promotes the application of *Kempekan* at *Pesantren Babakan* as a standardized method of *qiroati* (the Qur'an recitation), which can be adopted at other Islamic boarding schools. It is due to the fact that the *qiroati* module is equipped with complete and student level-based teaching materials. The competencies developed in the *qiroati* method refer to the ability to read the Qur'an explicitly according to the *makharij al-buroof* (points of articulation of Arabic letters) and the *tajwidul* Qur'an. The final part of the *qiroati* module includes several Quranic readings that are outside the general rules of *tajwid (gharib)*. It implies that the *qiroati* method helps the *santri* memorize Quranic reading or letters in the module taught (Romul, 2018).

Likewise, the content or comparison material may not be a new experience at *Pesantren Babakan* as it is usually taught at Islamic boarding schools. Further, the systematization of the materials needs to be taken into account in relation to the level of needs and difficulties. In fact, *Pesantren Babakan* has not carried out yet. If it is systematized, the learning process can be standardized by completing the first-level module and continuing to the next one.

Pesantren Babakan exposes three main characteristics of the Qur'an recitation by employing the *Kempekan* model. First, this model emphasizes the *makharij al-buroof* and the *sifat al-buroof* (the characteristics of Arabic letters). Each letter in the Qur'an recitation should be pronounced in terms of its *makharaj* (points of articulation) and *sifat* (characteristics). It indicates that it should also be articulated appropriately because errors in *makharaj* and *sifat* may have a fatal effect on the meaning of Quranic verses. Additionally, the recitation model of *Kempekan* can be noticed from the movement of mouth which

always extremely changes between one letter and others. Sometimes, the mouth cavity is widely open, or both of the lips are tightly closed for a long time (Romul, 2018).

Second, *Kempekan* demonstrates *tajweed*, including *idzhar*, *ikhfa*, *idgham*, or *iqlab*. For instance, Arabic letters that meet *noon* or *meem sukoon* has the consequence of different ways of reading. They need to be read clearly or vaguely. Not to mention, there are those that are compensated with the sound of *meem*, involving the rules of *madd* (elongation). The stretching sound covers the rules of *tajweed*; when the letter is read one, two, or more *harakat* with a maximum of six *harakat* (Romul, 2018).

Third, the *Kempekan* model focuses on *waqf* (stopping) and *washl* (continuing). Reading the Qur'an requires strong breathing techniques. It implies that the reciters deem the *waqf* and *washl* rules. Primarily, they stop reading at the end of each verse to take a breath. Nonetheless, when there is no sign of *waqf*, reciters cannot take a breath. It is called the *waqf* and *washl*. Meanwhile, the *Kempekan* model promotes distinctive terms of *waqf* and *washl* (Romul, 2018).

From *Kempekan* to the *Khatm al-Qur'an*

The *Kempekan* phenomenon has depicted interesting events, including *khatm al-Qur'an* (completing the Qur'an). The *pesantren* environment demonstrates the strong tradition of *Kempekan*. In a full month, approximately forty *pesantren* take turns to hold the *khatm al-Qur'an* (Romul, 2018). This event yields various interesting effects. First, the culture of *silaturahmi* (networking) is engaged, in which the moment propagates the arena of *silaturahmi* of lots of parties. The parents of the *santri* gather in this event. In addition to the *silaturahmi* among the *santri* parents, family, relatives, or neighbors, they obviously get in touch with *kiai* (the *pesantren* caregivers).

Moreover, the *pesantren* alumni also may take advantage of the *khatm al-Qur'an* event to greet their old friends when studying together. After graduating from the *pesantren*, they meet again and tell their daily routines in this event. They also visit their *pesantren* and do *ziarah* (grave visits) in their *kiai's* grave (Arsyad, 2018).

It is interesting to note that the *khatm al-Qur'an* becomes a gathering event for the family of the *pesantren* itself. The *kiai's* families and relatives who live outside Babakan, such as Pati, Central Java, are usually present and returning to their hometown. They also use this moment to do *silaturahmi* with each other. The *pesantren* that organizes *khatm al-Qur'an* always invites lots of *kiai* and their wife among *Pesantren Babakan* (Arsyad, 2018).

Giddens calls it "social practices: the basic domain of study of the social science, according to the theory of structuration, it is neither the experience of the individual or the existence of societal totality, but social practice is ordered across space and time", and it represents how human beings live their daily lives (Busco, 2009: 253). In a broader social construct, *khatm al-Qur'an* refers to cultural engineering that enhances the relationship of communities. Furthermore, *khatm al-Qur'an* is a unifying instrument to avoid conflict and clash. The moment provides the cohesiveness of human beings' relationships to erode hatred, jealousy, envy, and hardship which may become a source of chaos in society. Indonesia may unite because of peaceful events, including the *khatm al-Qur'an*.

Second, singing *shalawat* (a religious chant praising Prophet Muhammad), equipped with *rebana* (traditional tambourines), is another art performance in the *khatm al-Qur'an* event. It could be found that approximately twenty-five *khatm al-Qur'an* stages were provided when this study was conducted until before Ramadan in 2018 at that time located at *Pesantren Babakan* (Arsyad, 2018). The *pesantren* students were skilled at playing the *rebana*.

In addition, several *pesantrens* also presented other performance arts such as *qasidah* (Islamic pop music), drama, poetry, and dance. The presence of artistic elements in the *khatm* al-Qur'an event attracted people's attention so that event participants watched and enjoyed it. At a glance, *pesantren* does not have a variety of art performances. In fact, it is very familiar with various types of art, and even lots of *pesantrens* have developed film art. At that time, Prof. Dr. KH. Sayyid Agil Husen al-Munawwar delivered his lecture and *qasidah* verses through his great voice on May 1, 2018 at the *khatm* al-Qur'an situated at *Pesantren Kebon Jambu al-Islamy*.

This study promotes that *rebana* constitutes a structure in the *khatm* al-Qur'an event starts with the presence of the community of *santri* artists (KSS) who has pioneered the art at *pesantren* and then integrates the values of the Qur'an. As a result, the songs that were performed were mostly Quranic nuances. It shows that the *pesantren kiai* play their roles as agents of *rebana*, whereas the audience is the community and *santri* (Baequni, 2018). However, some younger generations of *pesantren* prefer western songs. This reveals that the proliferation of *rebana* art becomes a structure in the *khatm* al-Qur'an.

Third, *pesantren*-based culinary served at the moment of *khatm* al-Qur'an represents various typical *santri* food and has unique and interesting menus (Arsyad, 2018). Some of the menus maybe cannot be found outside *Pesantren Babakan*. Like other events, each stage of the *khatm* al-Qur'an is surrounded by food vendors. They sell snacks that may attract children. It is understandable that the parents of the *santri* and other visitors usually bring their children.

Further, the main custom of *pesantren* that cannot be neglected is how the *pesantren* tradition serves its guests. The host provides various dishes that are ready for anyone who comes. The living room at *pesantren* is open to guests where they can chat and eat the dishes together. The menus are very typical of *santri*. For those who have ever studied at *pesantren* as *santri*, the occasion is used to recall the memory of food when they lived at *pesantren*. There are various vegetable soup, sambal, side dishes, fried tofu, chili sauce, and many others.

Unlike the typical menus for *kiai*, not all visitors have the opportunity to eat the special menu. The menus are served inside of the *kiai's* house, including a steamed chicken-vegetable soup, typical of the *kiai* family in Babakan. This kind of soup resembles *garang asam* (chicken cooked in spices and coconut milk) made in Kudus, Central Java. There is fried chili with a mixture of small pieces of chicken innards. Besides, there are also various dishes of seafood and freshwater fish. Sometimes, there are chicken satay or *sate kambing* (the Indonesian name for mutton satay) dishes. The visitors can also enjoy goat head gulai/curry, *kebuli* rice, various *lalapan* (raw and fresh vegetables), and stewed banana blossom.

The menus above do not include snacks such as fried and wet cakes. Some *pesantren* also adds typical Cirebon menus, namely: *empal gentong* (beef served from a clay barrel), *nasi lengko* (vegetarian rice), *nasi jamblang* (teak leaf-wrapped rice sides), and *tabu gejrot* (fried tofu in sweet spicy sauce). Modern menus with Indonesian, Arabic, and European tastes are sometimes served such as *capcay* (Chinese-Indonesian stir fried vegetable dish), black pepper beef, biryani rice, and zuppa soup.

Fourth, the study also exposes that the attraction of the *khatm* al-Qur'an is derived from to the *muballigh* (Muslim preacher) (Romul, 2018). Almost all *khatm* al-Qur'an events invite the preachers who present their *mauidhab* (lecture) at the top session before reciting

prayers. The preachers come from Babakan *kiai*/ulema, alumni, and even national public figure.

Among *pesantren*, *muballigh* denotes a profession that is adhered to *kiai*. It indicates that every *kiai* is a *muballigh* even though not all *muballigh* is *kiai*. Regarding this profession, *muballigh* closely relates to competencies, skills, and ethics although some the preachers do not care about the professional criteria. Essentially, the Muslim preachers deliver their religious lecture equipped with a sense of humor and agitation. Giddens calls it 'practical consciousness', in which the routine of personal and social life is constructed through the performance of practical awareness groups (Ashaf, 2006: 212).

All Babakan *kiai* perform the function of *muballigh*. They are frequently invited in *majelis ta'lim* (Muslim prayer groups), *selamatan* (ceremonial) rituals, and celebrations of Islamic holy days in both Babakan and the surrounding areas. In fact, some *kiai* is invited to deliver their lectures held outside the Indonesian island of Java. One of the *kiai* whose lectures were very impressive was late KH. Yahya Masduqi. He used to use soft and loud voices. The content of his lectures was very great because of the depth of his knowledge and the breadth of his networking (Romul, 2018).

Becoming a *muballigh* is one of *santri*'s dreams. When studying at *pesantren*, they are motivated and trained to be able to be a good public speaker. There is almost no special subject regarding *tabligh* (prayer event), but the tradition of *shalawatan* or *marhabanan* every Friday night becomes the opportunity to practice *mubadlarah* (speeches) for *santri*. To perform well, they practice their *mubadlarah* independently or are guided by their seniors (Romul, 2018).

Fifth, the present study proposes that the *khatm* al-Qur'an event at *Pesantren* Babakan enhances the tradition of building a good relationship. It is noteworthy that the event propagated to establish good networking starting from March to May at *Pesantren* Babakan. The event presents a unique view to increase the participants and visitors' mobility and gathering. The term of building *silaturahim* refers to brotherly relations among the families of the *pesantren*. Although the statistical calculation reveals that *Babakan* consists of fifty *pesantren*, in fact, it can be simplified into a chain of friendship. It demonstrates that one *pesantren* and another one possess a close relationship. In the *khatm* al-Qur'an series, the relationship is reinforced in which the representatives of *pesantren* attend the events (Romul, 2018). It proposes that if there are twenty-five *hajflah* (*khatm* al-Qur'an) schedules, the intensity of the gathering to promote *silaturahim* is twenty-five times in the March-to-May period.

Interestingly, this phenomenon explains two things, namely: the genealogy of *kiai* teaching at *pesantren* and the unique model of *pesantren* management. Concerning genealogical matters, some *kiai* at *Pesantren* Babakan have written and discussed them, including late KHM. Mudzakkir and KH. Marzuqi Amin. Prominently, the family relations of the contemporary *Pesantren* Babakan are back to the three central figures, namely: KH. Amin Sepuh, KH. Abdul Hannan, and KHM. Sanusie. The details of the line-up and down genealogy are quite complex (Romul, 2018).

Finally, the tradition of *atur-atur* (a Javanese custom of inviting others to come to someone's house for a certain event) is also demonstrated in this study. It deals with how to invite *santri* families and residents around Babakan to attend the *khatm* al-Qur'an at the *pesantren*. There, interestingly, is no invitation letters for them due to the consideration that the event is routinely held at *Pesantren* Babakan in *Rajab* and *Sya'ban* (Islamic months). Thus, the family and *santri* have already understood the periods of the *khatm* al-Qur'an

organized at the *pesantren*. They, nevertheless, need to be informed about the time of the *khatm* al-Qur'an through the *atur-atur* tradition (Romul, 2018).

Atur-atur is the form of delivering an invitation or messages to invited people. This tradition requires a trusted person to accomplish it. He is the one who is very responsible for ascertaining that the invitation letter is safely received. This tradition, moreover, stimulates the *santri*, parents, and alumni of *Pesantren Babakan* to attend the *haflah khatm* al-Qur'an. In other words, they tend to be present even though it is without an invitation letter (Romul, 2018).

Technically, *shahibul hajat* (the person holding the agenda of *khatm* al-Qur'an) may ask the trusted person to invite residents. He should mention the event, day, date, and place clearly and definitely. The reliable person should confirm the parties who want to be invited to the event. *Shahibul hajat* does not need to mention the list of participants, but the number of residents or families to be invited such as 100, 150, or more. The trusted person is supposed to have the priority of the participants regarding the number managed by the *shahibul hajat* (Romul, 2018). Afterward, he comes to the invited ones' house and may take advantage of a certain opportunity that exists before the time of the *khatm* al-Qur'an. Additionally, he may use prepared sentences with a special *shighat* (standard) to invite the list of the participants, including the subject, time, and venue of the event. It is consistent with Turner's (1991: 131) statement asserting that how something is done by habits in the community.

Finally, it is important to note that *atur-atur* has been implemented for a long time. For years, there is the one who is assigned to pursue this kind of tradition. H. Apud and Mang Juli used to accomplish the duty. Today, Mang Imam, Mang Syafii Bi Sakini, Kang Syukur, and others become the ones who are in charge of inviting the participants (Romul, 2018).

Piety and the Living Qur'an Phenomenon

The phenomenon of *Kempekan* has suggested that a variety of structures results from which each structure is strengthened by the Qur'an. All segments use the Qur'an as the guideline to carry out cultural movements. For instance, *rebana* art performances use the Qur'an as a song, *silaturahmi* promotes Muslims to bring the Qur'an, *santri* culinary draws ornaments in the form of the Qur'an, and so on. It fits Barir's (2017: 84) study explaining that Islamic symbols are not only a lifestyle, but also a necessity. Moreover, the development of ornament/calligraphy involves the great role of Islam in initiating branches of art and is always present in the lives of Muslim communities.

It also affirms Mattson's (2013: 214) point of view declaring that the verses of the Qur'an are handwritten in the form of calligraphy and carvings ornamenting lots of mosques and Muslims' houses. The Qur'an verses can also be printed on mass-produced calendars and wall clocks. They, likewise, are sometimes used as amulets, virtues, and talismans. What Mattson quoted according to Oleg Grabar in his book entitled "The Mediation of Ornaments" describes that the rejection of artificial forms in the first century gave a significant impact on the aesthetics of Muslim communities. For example, various objects with a piece of writing became the dominant model of decoration. In the ninth and tenth centuries, the trend of Baghdad emerged to decorate the types of objects used in everyday life, including bottles, handkerchiefs, and turban, with interesting poem and expressions.

The phenomenon yields a discourse of piety which is contested into the public sphere. Piety is measured by what appears in public, and in the contest of public piety, the Qur'an constitutes the 'nodal point'. Each structure of mentioned traditions always contains the symbol of the Qur'an. It implies that the influence on the public is very significant, especially for the surrounding community. In addition, in this context, the popularity of the *Kempekan* leads to a shift in religious authority from the traditional authority to a new one that is shaped and developed by supporting structures such as the structure of art media. The authority that Babakan people build through the art of recitation performed on stages is legitimized by the *Kempekan* standards. It is relevant to Mattson's (2013: 132) overlook stating that the Qur'an recitation art noticed in the form of teaching and oral delivery cannot be ignored. Through oral teaching, all aspects of *tajweed* and the values of vague recitation, such as tone and tempo, can be heard.

CONCLUSION

The *Kempekan* phenomenon promotes several traditions represented in the *khatm* al-Qur'an event. The celebration of the Qur'an recitation employing the *Kempekan* model demonstrates a ritual of the recitation of the Qur'an which requires various terms and conditions for its reciters. This recitation model is suggested to preserve the transmission and transformation of the Qur'an recitation that meets the standards. Additionally, the *Kempekan* tradition also presents a surge of rites that are not only reciting the God's *kalam* (divine revelation), but also highlighting various cultural elements to familiarize the reciters with the culture of the local community. The phenomenon of the *Kempekan*'s living Qur'an enlivens the Quranic discourse which is not only focusing on how it uses a textual approach, but also declaring how the community integrates the Qur'an with tradition and culture.

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