



## The Politics of Silencing the Narratives of Lampung Women Heroes: A Decolonial Feminist Perspective

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### **Purpose**

*This study aimed to reconstruct the silencing of narratives about Lampung's female heroes in historiography shaped by the coloniality of knowledge and patriarchy.*

### **Method**

*This study used a qualitative approach with a literature study and critical historiography to analyze colonial archives, official Lampung history, writings about female figures, and literature on oral traditions containing collective memories about them. It employed decolonial feminist critique to examine the relationship between gender, memory politics, and local knowledge.*

### **Result/findings**

*This study showed that Lampung's historiography produces narratives of masculine heroic figures. This was shown by a historiography that centered on male figures as heroes, while the contributions of women such as Poeti Alam Naisjah Moeloek, Putri Mentawai, Ratu Mas Lamban Gedung, and Hj. Inci Hindun Rauf were reduced, silenced, or marginalized to the domestic and cultural realms. Oral tradition needed to be seen as an alternative epistemic medium and archive preserving the collective memory of the role of female heroes outside of written colonial archives and state narratives.*

### **Conclusion**

*This study concluded that silencing was read as a form of layered epistemic injustice between the coloniality of knowledge and the coloniality of gender. It also offered a framework to reconstruct Lampung's history in a more inclusive, gender-just manner, grounded in community knowledge.*

### **Keywords**

*Coloniality of Knowledge; Decolonial Feminists; Lampung's Female Heroes; Historiography, Oral Tradition*

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## Abstrak

### Tujuan

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk merekonstruksi pembungkaman narasi terhadap pahlawan perempuan Lampung dalam historiografi yang dibentuk oleh kolonialitas pengetahuan dan budaya patriarki.

### Metode

Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi pustaka dan historiografi kritis dalam menganalisis arsip kolonial, sejarah resmi Lampung, tulisan tentang tokoh perempuan, dan literatur tentang tradisi lisan yang berisi memori kolektif tentang mereka. Selain itu, studi ini juga menggunakan kritik feminis dekolonial untuk melihat hubungan antara gender, politik memori, dan pengetahuan lokal.

### Hasil/Temuan

Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa historiografi Lampung cenderung memproduksi narasi tokoh kepahlawanan yang maskulin. Hal ini diperlihatkan dengan historiografi yang berpusat pada tokoh laki-laki sebagai pahlawan, sementara kontribusi perempuan seperti Poeti Alam Naisjah Moeloek, Putri Mentawai, Ratu Mas Lamban Gedung, dan Hj. Inci Hindun Rauf direduksi, dibungkam, atau dimarginalkan ke ranah domestik dan budaya. Oleh karena itu, tradisi lisan perlu dilihat sebagai medium dan arsip epistemik alternatif yang melestarikan memori kolektif tentang peran pahlawan perempuan di luar arsip kolonial tertulis.

### Kesimpulan

Pembungkaman narasi terhadap pahlawan perempuan dibaca sebagai bentuk ketidakadilan epistemik yang berlapis antara kolonialitas pengetahuan dan kolonialitas gender. Studi ini tidak hanya mengungkap kesenjangan antara historiografi resmi dan memori lokal, tetapi juga menawarkan kerangka kerja untuk merekonstruksi sejarah Lampung yang lebih inklusif, adil gender, dan berlandaskan pengetahuan masyarakat.

### Keywords

Coloniality of Knowledge; Decolonial Feminists; Lampung's Female Heroes; Historiography, Oral Tradition.

## المخلص

### الهدف

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إعادة بناء تهميش الروايات المتعلقة بالبطلات في لامبونغ في التاريخ، والذي شكّلته هيمنة الاستعمار المعرفي والثقافة الأبوية.

### الطريقة

تستخدم هذه الدراسة منهجًا نوعيًا مع تصميم بحث مكتبي وتاريخ نقدي لتحليل المحفوظات الاستعمارية، والتاريخ الرسمي للامبونغ، والكتابات المتعلقة بالشخصيات النسائية، والأدب المتعلق بالتقاليد الشفوية التي تحتوي على ذكريات جماعية عنهن. علاوة على ذلك، تستخدم هذه الدراسة النقد النسوي ما بعد الاستعماري لدراسة العلاقة بين النوع الاجتماعي، وسياسات الذاكرة، والمعرفة المحلية.

### النتائج/المخرجات

تُظهر هذه الدراسة أن تاريخ لامبونغ يميل إلى إنتاج روايات عن شخصيات بطولية ذكورية. ويتجلى ذلك في التاريخ الذي يركز على الشخصيات الذكورية كأبطال، بينما تُهمل مساهمات نساء مثل الشاعرة ألام نايسجاه موبلوك، وبوتري مينتاواي، وراتو ماس لامبان غيدونغ، والحاج... تُختزل شخصيات إنجي هندون رؤوف، أو نُكتم أفواهها، أو تُهمش في المجالين المنزلي والثقافي. لذا، ينبغي النظر إلى التراث الشفهي كوسيلة معرفية بديلة وأرشيف يحفظ الذاكرة الجماعية للبطلات خارج نطاق الأرشيف الاستعماري المكتوب.

### الخلاصة

يُفسّر تهميش البطلات في الروايات التاريخية كشكل من أشكال الظلم المعرفي المتجذر بين استعمارية المعرفة واستعمارية النوع الاجتماعي. لا تكشف هذه الدراسة عن الفجوة بين التاريخ الرسمي والذاكرة المحلية فحسب، بل تقدم أيضًا إطارًا لإعادة بناء تاريخ لامبونغ بشكل أكثر شمولًا وعدلًا بين الجنسين، ومتجذرًا في المعرفة المجتمعية.

### الكلمات الرئيسية

استعمارية المعرفة؛ النسويات المناهضات للاستعمار؛ بطلات لامبونغ؛ التاريخ؛ التراث الشفهي

## INTRODUCTION

History as a product of knowledge is never entirely neutral, but rather shaped by power relations that determine who is recognized as a historical subject and who is excluded. In the context of Indonesian historiography, mainstream historical narratives tend to place men, particularly in military and political roles, at the center of heroism. Meanwhile, women's contributions are often reduced to domestic or symbolic roles, thus denying legitimacy as part of official history. (Octaviani dkk., 2022) This situation reflects not only gender bias but also the continuation of the coloniality of knowledge that regulates the hierarchy of historical sources and criteria for heroism.

This phenomenon is evident in local historiography, including in Lampung. Narratives of regional heroism are dominated by male figures involved in armed resistance or formal leadership. Colonial archives and local government documents primarily highlight the role of male figures, such as Radin Inten II, while the contributions of Lampung women in social, cultural, educational, and logistical networks tend to be overlooked. Yet, these roles are crucial in maintaining community continuity and collective values. Thus, Lampung's historiography reflects how these power relations operate in shaping gender-inequal collective memory. (Rosmana, 2010) This condition shows that the absence of women in official historiography is not solely due to a lack of data, but rather indicates the existence of a structural and epistemic silencing mechanism.

On the other hand, memories of women's roles remain alive in the oral traditions of the Lampung people, such as warahan (traditional narratives) and folktales. These traditions preserve alternative narratives not recorded in colonial archives or state documents. However, within the framework of modern historiography, which prioritizes written sources, oral traditions such as folktales and community memories are often not recognized as sources for academic history, as they do not conform to modern standards of knowledge established by colonialism. (Fatonah & Dkk, 2020) As a result, Lampung women not only lost their position in the historical narrative, but also lost their epistemic rights to be recognized as knowledge.

The phenomenon of the erasure or marginalization of women in historiography is not unique to Lampung, but rather a pattern found across various local contexts in Indonesia and other postcolonial regions. Numerous studies have shown that regional histories in Java, Sumatra, and Eastern Indonesia tend to prioritize male figures directly involved in war or formal politics, while women's contributions are limited to domestic, symbolic, or cultural roles. In the Acehese context, for example, female figures are often remembered only as the wives of warriors or moral symbols, even though local histories document their active involvement in war strategy and diplomacy. (Khan & SBA, 2017) A similar pattern is also found in Minangkabau and Balinese historiography, where patriarchal customary structures and state narratives work together to determine who is worthy of being called a hero.

In the broader context of Indonesian historiography, studies on women are still dominated by prominent figures such as Cut Nyak Dien, Martha Christina Tiahahu, and Dewi Sartika, without any critical analysis of the knowledge structures that shape this marginalization. Meanwhile, in the context of Lampung, studies on oral traditions have focused more on aspects of culture and identity, but have not yet connected them to issues of colonialism and gender. (Utomo, 2004) Thus, there is a theoretical and empirical gap in understanding how narratives of female heroism are shaped, ignored, or silenced in local historiography.

Ayu Ratih also expressed a critical view of these historiographical limitations, highlighting the narrow perspectives in Indonesian historical writing, which contributed to the underrepresentation of women, particularly those from non-elite backgrounds. She emphasized the importance of using alternative sources, such as oral traditions, to uncover women's experiences that have not been documented in official archives. (Ratih, 2024) This perspective strengthens the argument that the absence of women in historiography is

not due to the absence of a role, but rather to the limitations of the epistemic framework used in the production of historical knowledge.

To bridge this gap, this study utilizes a decolonial feminist perspective developed by Aníbal Quijano, María Lugones, and Gayatri Spivak. This framework allows for an analysis of how the coloniality of knowledge and the coloniality of gender operate in shaping hierarchies of heroism and silencing women's voices as historical subjects. Within this framework, oral tradition is positioned not merely as a cultural heritage but as an alternative epistemic archive that can challenge the dominance of colonial historiography. Karsiwana and Fatonah's local research on Lampung's oral tradition also serves as a basis for understanding the regional epistemic context.

The paucity of studies on Lampung's female heroes not only reflects a dearth of research but also demonstrates how the production of historical knowledge actively ignores women's experiences as historical subjects. Therefore, this gap is not positioned as a research weakness, but rather as an entry point for uncovering the political mechanisms of silencing in local historiography.

This article argues that the absence of female heroes in Lampung historiography is not simply a result of limited historical data, but rather a form of silencing politics resulting from the intersection of colonial knowledge and patriarchy. This silencing of politics operates through the determination of masculine and exclusive criteria for heroism, thus excluding women's contributions from the official historical narrative. Therefore, this study aims to uncover the mechanisms of this silencing of politics and reconstruct narratives of female heroism through the integration of critical historiography and oral tradition as an alternative epistemic archive.

## METHOD

This study analyzes heroic narratives in power relations that influence historical knowledge, notably in decolonial feminism, using a qualitative method and historiographic method. (2023, Sinaga) This study examines Lampung's historiography, which ignores women in heroic narratives. Male heroes typically overshadow women's social and cultural contributions. This approach examines how formal history shapes, selects, and legitimizes historical narratives, particularly in relation to knowledge, coloniality, and patriarchy.

Three data sources were used in this investigation. Beginning with academic literature and historical archives. Second, recording *warahan* (traditional narratives), folktales, and research findings that capture the community's collective memory of female figures. Third, interviews with local historians provided little field data on Lampung's historiography and knowledge of heroism knowledge.

Data was selected based on narratives related to Lampung's local historical context, narratives that mention or imply women's role in social, cultural, educational, or other contributions, narratives in written or oral tradition documentation, and narratives that show differences between official historiography and community memory. Data selection also considered the repetition of narrative patterns in multiple sources, so the corpus of data employed was not random but illustrative of women's marginalization in local historiography.

This study includes interviews with local historians who critique the lack of empirical data on Lampung women's roles. Interviews show that the lack of written evidence does not necessarily mean there are no roles, but that the historical recording system is skewed toward specific forms of conflict.

There were multiple integrated data analysis stages. Heuristics and source criticism were employed to investigate each source's origins, production context, and biases. This study views these stages as part of an epistemic practice with limits, given the lack of documentation on women's responsibilities. Second, a decolonial feminist framework was used to interpret thematic terms including knowledge coloniality, gender coloniality, memory politics, and epistemic violence. This investigation found trends of women's si-

lencing, marginalization, and representation in many sources. Third, oral tradition documentation, written sources, and interview data were used for limited triangulation. This study acknowledges the lack of written archives and oral tradition documents that include women. The research findings show selectivity in historical knowledge development; hence, this limitation is not a weakness. Therefore, historian interviews are both supplemental data and a reflective resource for learning how historiography silences.

## RESULT/FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### **Decolonial Feminism, Coloniality of Knowledge, and Gender-Based Historiography**

Decolonial feminism not only speaks of women as oppressed subjects, but also more deeply critiques the way knowledge is produced, legitimized, and transmitted. Drawing on Aníbal Quijano's thinking on the coloniality of knowledge, decolonial feminism sees that colonialism does not stop at political and economic domination, but continues in epistemic structures that determine what is legitimate knowledge and who may be a subject of history. (Quijano, 2007) In this context, modern historiography, including Indonesian historiography, has never been completely neutral, because it still reproduces the colonial perspective that prioritizes written archives, masculine figures, and political-military events as the center of history.

Several studies on the coloniality of knowledge and historiography in Indonesia show that national history writing is still dominated by narratives of prominent figures and state perspectives, thus neglecting the experiences of marginalized groups, including women. Studies on the politics of historiography and the politics of memory highlight how history textbooks and curricula place men at the center of heroic narratives, while women's voices are relegated to moral or domestic roles. At the conceptual level, the decolonial feminist framework developed by, among others, Maria Lugones, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, and Gayatri Spivak, as well as studies on the coloniality of knowledge, emphasize that colonialism not only controls territory but also determines hierarchies of knowledge and forms a gender coloniality that positions women in the Global South as subalterns who are difficult to recognize as legitimate historical subjects and producers of knowledge.

Maria Lugones then expands this critique through the concept of gender coloniality, explaining that colonialism created a hierarchical gender order that positioned men as public actors and women as domestic and cultural subjects. Within this structure, the experiences and contributions of women, particularly indigenous women, were not recognized as political or historical practices, but as natural activities that did not need to be recorded. (Lugones, 2010) This historiography, born from a colonial-patriarchal framework, ultimately created mechanisms for the systematic erasure of women as subjects of knowledge.

Similarly, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, through the question "Can the Subaltern Speak," helps explain why indigenous women often appear "voiceless" in official histories. This voicelessness is not because they do not speak or act, but because existing structures of representation do not allow their voices to be recognized as legitimate knowledge. (Spivak & GC, 1988) In Lampung, women such as Poeti Alam Naisjah Moeloek or Ratu Mas Lamban Gedung are not absent from history, but are marginalized by the logic of historiography that cannot read social, educational, and cultural work as forms of historical struggle.

In Indonesia, studies on patriarchy, gender politics, and feminism largely examine how patriarchal culture, theology, and the state mutually reinforce each other in limiting women's public roles, both in the political and social spheres. Research on the canonization of patriarchy and patriarchal hegemony in Indonesian politics shows that women's representation in formal spaces, including in historical texts, is shaped by unequal power relations, such that women are often portrayed as moral symbols rather than political or historical actors. Studies on feminist movements in Indonesia generally focus on resistance to patri-

archal culture and critiques of postcolonial feminism, which is considered to still have a center-periphery bias. However, the application of a decolonial feminist framework to local historiography remains very limited. Thus, there is a lack of research specifically linking feminist critiques of patriarchy to the coloniality of knowledge in regional historiography, particularly regarding female heroes.

In Lampung's historiography, heroic narratives are still dominated by male figures such as Radin Inten II and KH Ahmad Hanafiah, who are considered to meet the standards of heroism based on military struggle and public leadership. Meanwhile, female figures rarely appear in official narratives, either as regional or national heroes. Lampung's oral traditions, such as *warahan*, *hahiwang*, and various folktales, demonstrate that the collective memory of the community actually contains many stories about women. (Hamid, 2024) This tradition can be understood as an alternative epistemic archive that records experiences that are not accommodated in formal historiography.

This finding is also in line with the results of interviews with Lampung traditional figures who emphasized that the limited documentation on women is not only a matter of lack of data, but is also related to the way history itself is constructed and understood. (Sunan, komunikasi pribadi, 27 Maret 2026) This strengthens the argument that the absence of women in historiography cannot be separated from institutionalized epistemic bias.

The resource person also touched on the differences between coastal and Pepadun communities in terms of social structure and cultural values. This variation demonstrates that women's experiences in Lampung society are not singular, but rather diverse, depending on their respective social contexts. However, in formal historiography, this complexity is often not accommodated, resulting in women's experiences being simplified or even omitted from historical narratives.

However, studies of female figures in the Lampung context are generally descriptive and moralistic, not yet understood as part of the epistemic injustice arising from the intersection of colonial knowledge and patriarchy. Therefore, this research seeks not only to reintroduce female figures to history but also to critique the structures of knowledge that contribute to their absence in historiography.

### **Masculine Historiography and the Coloniality of Knowledge**

Lampung Province was established on March 18, 1964, with the enactment of Government Regulation Number 31964, which later became Law Number 14 of 1964. Administratively, it is still part of South Sumatra Province, but long before Indonesia's independence, this region had indeed shown enormous potential and its own cultural colors that can add to the cultural heritage of the archipelago. (Khoiriyah dkk., 2019) Therefore, during the VOC era, the Lampung area was not free from the target of Dutch colonialism.

Lampung is known for its motto, "Sai Bumi Ruwa Jurai." This motto means one land (Lampung), inhabited by two populations: the indigenous Saibatin (coastal) and Pepadun (inland) Lampung tribes, along with immigrants from various regions who live together in social and cultural harmony. (Soebadio, 1981, hlm. 52) The Pepadun group thrives in the interior of Lampung and is known for its more open social system, particularly in terms of social mobility. Within the Pepadun system, a person's position within the customary structure is not solely determined by lineage but can be achieved through specific customary processes, such as the *cakak pepadun* ceremony, which allows for advancement to become a customary leader. This demonstrates the Pepadun community's more dynamic character, allowing for social mobility within the customary structure. Meanwhile, the Saibatin group developed in the coastal areas of Lampung and has a more closed and hierarchical social system. In this system, customary positions are largely determined by lineage, so leadership is passed down through generations within certain families. The Saibatin social structure emphasizes genealogical legitimacy, with only certain

groups having the right to occupy customary leadership positions. This has led the Saibatin community to maintain a more aristocratic tradition and social structure.

These two groups have distinct customary systems, social structures, and cultural practices, but both place custom as the primary foundation of social life. Within this system, customary leadership, kinship structures, and social status significantly determine one's position within society. One of the core values of Lampung culture is *piil pesenggiri*, which reflects the principles of self-respect, honor, and social identity. This value serves as the foundation for social interaction but also shapes the division of roles within society, including gender relations.

In Lampung's social structure, gender relations are hierarchical. Men generally occupy dominant positions in public spaces, such as traditional leadership and decision-making, while women are predominantly relegated to the domestic and cultural spheres. This division is not only social but also institutionalized in customary values and cultural practices. As a result, women's contributions to social, educational, and cultural spheres are often overlooked as significant historical practices. This situation is crucial in historiography, as it influences how women's roles are recorded or ignored in historical narratives.

Lampung, as a region, has a complex history, encompassing a system of kingdoms, customs, oral traditions, as well as colonial experiences and diverse social developments. (Pemerintah Provinsi Lampung, 2016) However, within the historiography of Lampung heroism, a recurring pattern emerges: the dominance of male figures depicted as military leaders or key actors in the resistance against colonialism, who also receive formal recognition from the state. This pattern shows the connection between masculine historiography and the coloniality of knowledge in shaping historical narratives.

This statement is reinforced by the requirements to become a regional hero in Lampung Province, which are regulated in regional regulations (Perda) or gubernatorial regulations (Pergub), which are guided by central regulations (Law No. 20 of 2009). In Lampung, specific guidelines regarding the title of regional hero and regional figure are regulated through Lampung Governor Regulation Number 26 of 2012. The process of proposing heroes in Lampung Province is carried out through an administrative mechanism involving the Regional Title Research and Review Team (TP2GD), before being submitted to the national level. (Lampung Governor Regulation Number 26 of 2012 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of the Awarding of Regional Titles to Regional Heroes and Regional Figures, 2012) This mechanism shows that recognition of heroism is not only determined by individual contributions but also by an institutional verification process based on certain standards.

This situation suggests that although the nomination process is conducted at the regional level, the assessment framework used does not fully represent the local context, but rather adheres to national standards that tend to be uniform. Forms of contribution that do not meet these criteria, including the role of women in the social and cultural spheres, tend not to be accommodated in the process of recognizing heroism. Thus, the absence of specific regional regulations not only shows the centralization of the determination of heroism but also shows how the standards of historical knowledge used are exclusive and potentially reinforce the silencing of certain groups in local historiography.

Masculine historiography refers to a way of writing history that centers male heroism in the public sphere, while the coloniality of knowledge refers to the epistemic legacy of colonialism that still determines what and who is worthy of being recorded as history. In this context, only certain forms of struggle, particularly those that are military, public, and documented in writing, are recognized as legitimate historical acts. This historiography not only reflects historical reality but also actively shapes the boundaries of what forms of struggle are considered legitimate, rendering experiences outside these categories invisible.

This dominance is seen in the narratives about figures such as Radin Inten II and KH Ahmad Hanafiah. (Agustina, 2025) Radin Intan II, known as a National Hero descended from Radin Imba II, who fought against the Dutch since the age of 16, is depicted as a

symbol of military resistance against colonialism in the mid-19th century. (Rohmatillah dkk, 2024) His journey, from organizing resistance through a series of battles to his death, is comprehensively documented in colonial archives and historical studies. KH Ahmad Hanafiah, a cleric who led the Hizbullah Army in Lampung during the physical revolution of 1945–1947, was known for combining preaching and armed struggle to defend independence and was recognized as a National Hero in 2023. (Diskominfo, 2025) While both figures have important historical significance, they also embody patriarchal standards of heroism, which define heroes as those who directly lead war or armed resistance, engage in public engagement, and are documented in written archives.

This pattern shows that historiography not only records events but also establishes standards for who qualifies as a hero. Within this framework, women's contributions, often as social work, education, culture, and logistical support, are not recognized as historically significant. From a decolonial feminist perspective, this reflects the existence of epistemic power relations that determine who has the authority to be recognized in history and who is systematically excluded.

This finding is reinforced by the results of interviews with Lampung traditional figures who stated that no empirical documentation was found regarding the involvement of women in Lampung's colonial history. (Sunan, personal communication, March 27, 2026) However, in this study, this absence is not understood as evidence of a lack of role, but rather as an indication of bias in the system of historical knowledge production. The informants also emphasized that only certain forms of struggle, particularly those of a military nature and documented in writing, are legitimate as part of history.

This shows that women's social, cultural, and non-military contributions are not recognized by formal historiography. Thus, the absence of women in heroic narratives is not solely because of data limitations, but the result of epistemic selection mechanisms that systematically determine what is remembered and what is forgotten. In this context, historiography functions not only as a tool for recording history but also as an instrument of power that shapes the boundaries of historical knowledge.

### **Reconstruction of the Role of Lampung's Female Heroes**

Behind the dominance of male heroic narratives in Lampung historiography, there are a number of women who played important roles in social, educational, and cultural life, yet are not recognized as heroes in official historiography. Their presence demonstrates that women are not absent from history, but rather do not meet the standards of heroism established by masculine historiography and the colonialism of knowledge:

#### *Poeti Alam Naisjah Moeloek*

One of the prominent figures is Poeti Alam Naisjah Moeloek, a female intellectual from Lampung who is recorded in the regional archives as a figure in the fields of education and health. (Sulistiawati, 2017) She actively championed access to education for women during the colonial transition and early independence, promoting literacy and health knowledge through social networks and community activities. When education was still highly elitist and male-dominated, Poeti Alam represented a subtle yet significant form of social resistance, using education and health as tools for women's liberation (Iskantini, 2024). However, because her struggle took place in the socio-cultural realm and not on the battlefield, her name is not included in lists of national or regional heroes. Within the framework of decolonial feminism, Poeti Alam reflects the figure of a subaltern woman who struggles in silence and is excluded from the larger narrative because she does not conform to the logic of patriarchal colonial heroism. This situation shows that historiography not only ignores the role of women but also fails to recognize non-military forms of struggle as part of heroic practices. Thus, Poeti Alam's contribution is not lost, but it is not categorized as historically significant within the dominant epistemic framework.

*Hj. Inci Hindun Rauf*

A similar story is experienced by Inci Hindun, who provides another example of female heroism through her work on the front lines. Her involvement in the Indonesian Women's Movement (GERPI) in Lampung from 1945–1949 demonstrated the important role of women in contributing to independence, supporting the establishment of a Women's Vocational School to equip women with life skills while protecting them from exploitation, coordinating logistics, such as rice from Lampung to Palembang to support the Five Days and Five Nights battle, and managing struggle equipment, such as sewing flags and troop attributes. (Pertiwi Nur, et.al., 2015) All of this work makes up the social and material infrastructure that makes armed struggle possible, but it is rarely understood as heroic. The logistical and organizational role played by Inch Hindun shows that the success of armed struggle is inseparable from the often-unseen support work. However, because historiography only highlights the actors on the front lines, this hard work is not constructed as a form of heroism, but is considered a supporting activity with no primary historical significance.

*Ratu Mas Lamban Gedung,*

A female figure appearing in traditional narratives and oral traditions. A woman from Abung Siwo Migo led her community during the difficult transition between colonialism and independence. She did not take up arms, but upheld honor, promoted education, and fostered social solidarity within the traditionally male-dominated structure. In the oral traditions of the Abung people, Ratu Mas Lamban Gedung is depicted as a dignified and wise figure. (Iryana, 2025) Her role included leading Lamban Gedung, a large house that served as a center for social, economic, and religious education during the transition from colonial rule. Many boys and girls were taught to read the Quran, write Arabic-Malay script, and understand Islamic law. The Piil Pesenggiri (religious teachings of self-respect) became the moral foundation of Lampung society. Furthermore, she instilled the idea that women should think and stand as equals, rather than submit to forces that restricted their freedom of movement. In this context, her leadership demonstrates that female authority can exist in forms distinct from masculine models of leadership. However, because modern historiography emphasizes formal and military leadership, these forms of community-based leadership and cultural values are not recognized as part of heroic history.

*Putri Mentawai Ratu Semaka*

Besides more realistic historical figures, the Lampung oral tradition also contains legendary figures who serve as symbols of female heroism. From the coast, Semaka is depicted as a strong and skilled martial artist who challenged the abuse of power by the royal army against the people of Semuong and gathered the village youth to fight them. (Nasution & Dkk, 2021) Despite its mythological nature, the existence of this figure shows that in society's collective memory, the concept of female heroism remains alive and recognized. However, because modern historiography only recognizes written sources as authentic, this narrative is not considered part of history, but rather merely a legend. This shows a hierarchy of knowledge that places oral tradition as a lower form of knowledge.

Viewed as a whole, the existence of these female figures shows that the historiography and archival system in Lampung still operates within colonial and patriarchal logic. (Soebadio, 1997) Criteria for heroism that emphasize military, political, and public spheres systematically marginalize women's contributions in the social, educational, logistical, and religious spheres. From a decolonial feminist perspective, these contributions can be understood as practices of epistemic resistance, in which women maintain and transmit knowledge, values, and cultural identity amidst colonial and modernizing pressures.

Thus, the absence of women in the historiography of Lampung heroism is not because

of a lack of role, but to the failure of the historiographical system to recognize and acknowledge forms of struggle outside of masculine and colonial frameworks. In this context, the silencing of women is not a passive process, but an active practice in the production of knowledge that determines who is remembered and who is forgotten.

#### *Oral Tradition as an Epistemic Archive and Space of Resistance*

Lampung has a shortage of historical manuscripts, frequently attributed to a lack of documentation. Critical historiography considers this predicament to be the result of historical and epistemological processes, rather than solely a technical issue. Mildawati dkk., 2024 The lack of recorded archives does not preclude historical occurrences or experiences, but rather how the dominant historiographical system produces, selects, and legitimizes information.

During colonial times, colonial interests shaped historical knowledge. Dutch colonial authorities only recorded locations, events, and actors strategically vital to their administration and economic exploitation. Official archives rarely chronicled Lampung, which was not always at the centre of colonial political concern. Thus, many local experiences unconnected to colonial goals were omitted from historical records. This extended the role of marginalised groups like women, who were systemically excluded from colonial historical narratives.

Instead of written evidence, Lampung residents use oral tradition to pass on collective memory. Cultural traditions like *warahan*, *hahiwang*, *memmang*, and others preserve and pass on information. This system stores knowledge in social practices, rituals, and daily interactions, not statistical archives. Because modern historiography exclusively accepts recorded sources, this oral tradition-based knowledge system is not considered authentic history.

The scarcity of historical texts is linked to patriarchal social institutions that shape knowledge production. Many documented histories, notably Lampung, centre on male characters in physical struggle, formal leadership, and military warfare. Women's social, cultural, and domestic contributions are not recognized historical events. Thus, women's experiences are underdocumented and not part of history. Academic criteria that require documented archives have increasingly excluded other knowledge in modern historiography. Oral traditions are considered less valid and excluded from historical writing. Written archives are deemed superior to local knowledge, lived out in cultural practices, which is less scientific. This hierarchy is a colonial epistemic legacy that remains.

Thus, Lampung's historical manuscripts' limits are caused by a structural process of knowledge selection and legitimization, not a lack of facts. Not recorded is not something that does not exist, but it's not valid knowledge. Thus, the lack of recorded archives allows us to evaluate how history silences specific realities, including women's roles. This concept makes archive limits a methodological difficulty and an epistemic problem tied to political silencing in historical knowledge generation.

This condition allows us to study how Lampung people stored knowledge of written archives. *Warahan*, *hahiwang*, *memmang*, *talo balak*, *sagata*, and *pepacur* are prominent examples of Lampung's oral traditions that preserve and convey community memory. Cultural rituals like ceremonies, religious study groups, and family interactions pass along stories about traditional leaders, religious figures, women, and social and historical events. In addition to storytelling, oral tradition defines the Lampung people's historical, moral, social, and spiritual identity (Fatonah & Dkk, 2020).

Oral tradition also teaches self-respect, hospitality, and social skills *such piil pesenggi-ri*, *nemui nyimah*, and *nengah nyappur*. This tradition produces local knowledge and validity independent of written archives through recurring procedures, social behaviours, and value internalization in daily life. Oral tradition stores, organizes, and transmits knowledge over generations, making it an epistemic archive.

Oral tradition is an alternative epistemic repository that challenges Western knowledge's reliance on written documents as the sole acceptable historical source, ac-

ording to decolonial feminists. Oral memory is the main way Lampungans remember their contributions and values. (2023, Kurniawan) Despite not being recorded in colonial archives or official historiography, women's tales live on here. A conversation with a Lampung historian confirmed that most historical knowledge was passed down orally and difficult to prove academically. Personal correspondence, March 27, 2026, Sunan This statement highlights the limitations of written record systems and emphasizes that women's roles are remembered in ways not recognized by formal historiography. Thus, the absence of recorded data does not reflect the absence of roles, but rather the discrepancies between local knowledge systems and modern academic norms. The conflict between oral tradition and modern historiography shows that historical writing accepts only certain information. Oral tradition, which holds alternate narratives about women, is typically invalidated by archival-based academic criteria. Local sources are marginalized, which indirectly silences women in historiography.

Oral tradition is an alternative archive and a platform for epistemic opposition to colonial and modern knowledge. These cultural traditions help Lampung residents understand history and recall the role of women who are not included in the official narrative. However, oral tradition keeps women in history. Women are both the subjects of stories and the carriers of values, knowledge, and collective memory through parenting, teaching, and cultural practices. Thus, oral tradition allows women to be remembered outside of formal historiography.

This shows disregard for historical and cultural legacy, which should be safeguarded. Undocumented history is hard to research. Community and government roles in maintaining Lampung's literary works must be addressed. To preserve this historical and cultural heritage, multiple parties must document and preserve. Documentation helps older and younger generations understand their cultural heritage. Technological and media changes contribute to documentation shortages. Many accessible written texts remain unpublished in the digital age. However, this constraint contributes to documentation issues. Historically, individuals spread literature orally. Since literary works can alter throughout time, oral transmission loses accuracy. Thus, optimising technology for historical and cultural preservation is essential. Indigenous communities and academic departments that use culture studies references suffer from a lack of documentation. Poorly documented Lampung literature can hamper researchers and academics from studying its history and culture. This is difficult since oral traditions, rich in social and cultural background, are essential to science. These paintings frequently reflect community ideals.

### **Patriarchal Colonial Power, Politics, and Decolonization of Historiography**

The framework of historiography must be examined to understand how Lampung's heroines were silenced. Power relations shape historiography, determining what is genuine information, who is documented, and who is neglected. This background shows how colonialism and patriarchy support each other in historiography. Colonialism provides a selected administrative structure, archives, and historical categories, while patriarchy decides who can appear publicly and who must return home.

Our theory shows that Lampung's female heroes were silenced by the convergence of colonialism, the state, and local patriarchy. In colonial times, administrative and archival agencies exclusively chronicled military and power figures, therefore indigenous women rarely received historical attention. After independence, Indonesia continued to tell heroic stories about combat, important personalities, and male public leadership. While patriarchal systems and local norms continue to position men in formal power, women's contributions to social, educational, and religious issues are domestic duties without historical relevance (Damanik, 2021). This implies that structural and layered power relations silence women in historiography. This domestication of women refers to a political mechanism that limits women's presence in the public realm and historiography, not only social roles. Social, educational, religious, and community care are women's intrinsic tasks, not

political or historical efforts. Thus, while women fight for society, their effort is not considered heroic.

In an interview, a Lampung historian said patriarchal norms still shape Lampung culture. Men dominate the public sphere, including heroics, while women control the domestic sector, according to the respondent. Sunan, March 27, 2026, personal communication. This remark shows that gender roles are institutionalized in society. The absence of women from historiography is not because of a lack of role, but to a social construction that constrained women's ability to be recognized as historical actors. This represents gender colonialism, which systemically shapes historical recognition, according to decolonial feminists.

Contemporary knowledge systems prioritize written archives over oral memories and community experiences, according to Quijano. The coloniality of gender (Lugones) describes how indigenous women are lower in patriarchal colonial authority. Spivak adds that subaltern groups like indigenous Lampung women speak through practices and traditions, but dominant representation mechanisms make their voices inaudible in official places. 2020 (Nunez-Pardo) This study uses a decolonial feminist paradigm to understand Lampung's female heroes' silencing as epistemic injustice; they are rejected for their political and social labor and as subjects of knowledge.

Nowadays, oral traditions and local memory are used as data sources and to decolonize historiography. Karsiwan dkk, 2022 By combining Poeti Alam, Ratu Mas Lamban Gedung, Putri Mentawai, and Hj. Inci Hindun Rauf's oral narratives with written archives, this study broadens Lampung heroism beyond war and the state to include women's social, cultural, educational, spiritual, and logistical work. Heriyanto (2023) This debate addresses the research objectives in the introduction while changing Lampung history from patriarchal colonial archives to a more inclusive, gender-equal, and community-based historiography.

Decolonizing historiography involves a change in how history is understood and written, not only adding women's names. The merging of oral and written sources is a way to critically examine archives and legitimize social memory. (2023, Mohanty) Instead of supplementing written archives, oral traditions are used to reveal what official documentation omit. This view reads silence in archives as power relations that control who is preserved and eliminated. A feminist, Indonesia-centric approach can create new histories from local realities and historically disadvantaged voices.

To decolonize historiography, this research integrates written sources and oral traditions as complementary knowledge systems. Colonial archives and historical materials are reviewed critically to discover biases, gaps, and limitations. Oral traditions are legitimate sources of information that record society's experiences by themselves. The oral history method collects data and reconstructs historical events from the perspectives of undocumented persons. This research attempts to restore forgotten textual tales, particularly those about women in local history, using interviews, testimonials, and community memory. By merging oral and written sources, this research advocates a change from colonial historiography to Indonesia-centric and female historiography. This perspective uses local knowledge and women's experiences to analyze history instead of colonial archives. Women are not only study subjects but also historical knowledge producers and transmitters.

According to this research, historical writing cannot be limited to colonial archives and masculine narratives. Long thought to be objective, historiography is actually the consequence of power dynamics. Thus, historical writing must be rethought, notably by shifting from large narratives about the state, conflict, and masculine figures to more diverse local realities. Women's experiences in social, cultural, educational, and community areas must be included in the historical narrative, not discounted. Adding fresh data and including minority experiences in the historical narrative, decolonizing historiography transforms how history is understood. This method also requires a move toward a more inclusive and gender-equal history that treats women as active historical subjects rather than objects.

Thus, gender equality in historical writing is a step toward rectifying long-standing epistemic biases in historical knowledge production. Emphasizing local realities allows alternative narratives, not accommodated by colonial historiography, to emerge. For a localized history, oral traditions, collective memory, and communal cultural activities are essential. History is now seen as a pluralistic realm where multiple experiences can coexist. Historical writing emphasizes local realities and gender equality enhances narratives and decolonizes information. History is also about how the past is understood, interpreted, and used to influence present-day viewpoints. This research admits that decolonial feminist rereadings of history are limited by the lack of written material and the prevalence of oral sources. But these limitations reveal biases in the historical knowledge creation system. Instead of replacing one form of knowledge with another, the strategy promotes conversation between knowledge systems. Besides enriching historical data, this study decolonizes historiography, making room for minority narratives. This method emphasizes that history is about what is written and ignored and how power relations shape both.

## CONCLUSION

This research shows that the silencing of narratives of female heroes in Lampung historiography is not solely because of a lack of data, but the result of political practices of knowledge that operate through power relations between the coloniality of knowledge, the coloniality of gender, and local patriarchy. Official historiography, oriented towards written archives, male figures, and military events, not only limits the definition of heroism but also actively determines who is worthy of recognition as a historical subject and who is excluded from collective memory.

In this context, the use of a decolonial feminist perspective allows for a transformation in understanding the concept of heroism. Heroism is no longer understood narrowly as heroic deeds on the battlefield or male public leadership, but is expanded as a social practice encompassing social reproduction, education, the maintenance of cultural values, and collective contributions that have previously been marginalized. Thus, this research not only reveals the absence of women in historiography but also conceptually challenges masculine and colonial standards of heroism.

This study shows that the oral traditions of the Lampung people function as alternative epistemic archives, preserving collective memory outside the formal archival system. Within this framework, oral traditions are positioned not merely as supplementary data but as sources of knowledge with their own legitimacy. Therefore, to overcome the dominance of colonial knowledge in historiography, concrete steps are needed, including the integration of oral traditions into historiographic practice, the development of validation mechanisms for local sources, and a reinterpretation of heroism criteria that are not solely based on written archives and militaristic narratives.

Theoretically, this research contributes to expanding the application of decolonial feminism in the study of local historiography in Indonesia, particularly in understanding the relations between knowledge, power, and gender. Practically, this research opens up opportunities for more inclusive regional history writing by recognizing the diversity of sources of knowledge and the historical experiences of communities.

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Evi Zulvia, Rizqi Handayani, Gesit Yudha  
*The Politics of Silencing the Narratives of Lampung Women ...*

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