



The dynamics of patriarchy as a cultural system in the social life of arab communities

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Arab;
Culture;
Patriarchy.

Article history:

Received Jun 10, 2026;
Revised Jun 18, 2026;
Accepted Jul 2, 2026;
Online Jul 30, 2026.

ABSTRACT

This study examines patriarchal culture as a dynamic cultural system among the Arab ethnic community in Kebonsari Village, Pasuruan City, comparing their perspectives and experiences with those of the surrounding non-Arab community. Using a comparative case study design grounded in Walby's (1990) theory of patriarchy, this study employed semi structured interviews and non-participant observation with 13 purposively sampled informants across three categories: household heads, married women, and the younger generation. Findings show that patriarchal authority operates unevenly across Walby's structures: the domestic sphere has undergone the most visible renegotiation, with joint decision-making replacing unilateral male authority, while culture remains the most stable structure, sustained through religious and lineage-based norms. Paid employment proves selectively restricted: women gain financial independence yet remain constrained in formal employment. Notably, variation in parental control over daughters' mobility appears as pronounced within the Arab community itself as between Arab and non-Arab groups, indicating that the persistence of patriarchal culture cannot be explained by ethnicity alone. These findings extend prior research on Indonesian patriarchal culture beyond textual and family level analyses, and offer policymakers an empirical basis for developing culturally responsive, rather than uniform, gender-equality programs.

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1. Introduction

A cultural system consists of norms, beliefs, and practices that ultimately shape the way of life of a particular society or group as a social standard. Typically, cultural systems can change at any time as time passes or as society evolves, meaning they are flexible and can adapt to the times. Conversely, cultural systems can remain strong, perhaps due to the preservation of the culture itself, through its transmission from one generation to the next. A cultural system relates to the 'culture' present in society it refers to practices or behaviors that uphold norms, whether religious norms or norms within a specific community. This system can influence social systems, personality development, and behavior (Berutu, 2023). A cultural system provides

customs, motivations, beliefs, and guidance for human behavior as social standards passed down from one generation to the next (Turyani, 2024).

Patriarchal culture positions men as the dominant party within the family, social institutions, decision making, and culture (Husnah, 2025). Patriarchal culture marginalizes the position and role of some women (Parhan, 2024). Patriarchal culture leads to women being undervalued and excluded in many ways." Patriarchal culture is considered a cultural norm because many people still view it as natural and continue to practice it in fact, it has become a common practice in daily life (Halizah, 2023). Cultural systems and patriarchal culture are intertwined; to use an analogy, a "cultural system" is like a large house in which there are inevitably rules governing daily life. And "patriarchal culture" is the rule itself or the central rule within that large house that serves as the core of these regulations. Despite the increasingly advanced times and more logically openminded thinking, it turns out that in some ethnic groups, this patriarchal culture still persists and is highly valued by certain communities.

This study is based on Walby's (1990) theory of patriarchy, which views patriarchy as a collection of interconnected social structures that allow males as a social group to oppress, exploit, and rule women as a social group rather than as a single, monolithic system. Walby lists six structures paid work, domestic production, culture, sexuality, masculine aggression, and the state through which patriarchy functions. The transmission, negotiation, and contestation of patriarchal norms within ethnic groups are significantly influenced by the institutions of culture and family production. Walby goes on to say that patriarchal behaviors are not set nor uniform but rather change according on the cultural, historical, and social contexts in which they are rooted. This means that the shape and intensity of patriarchy vary across social situations. When analyzing the Arab ethnic group, this structural viewpoint is especially helpful since it enables the research to go beyond a monolithic concept of patriarchy and instead pinpoint which individual structures endure, deteriorate, or change as a result of regular interactions with non-Arab cultures. One community worth examining in the context of patriarchal culture is the Arab ethnic community. The Arab community in Indonesia is a minority group that has been part of society for centuries (Allam, 2023). The Arab ethnic community is known for its strong kinship system, high regard for family honor, and a clearly defined division of gender roles based on norms and traditions passed down through generations. This influences society's perspective regarding the responsibilities of men and women at home and in the community, and shapes specific patterns of social life (Febrian et al., 2025). In daily life, Arab communities live side by side with non-Arab communities and share social activities with them. This situation makes it easier for people to exchange opinions, perspectives, and social experiences that may influence how they view patriarchal culture. To gain a deeper understanding of the concept of patriarchal society and the influence of cultural background on the formation of such perceptions, this study involves both Arab and non-Arab ethnic groups.

One region with a sizable Arab ethnic community was selected as the research site because the Arab community there has long lived and interacted with the local population and modern culture. This region serves as a relevant setting for observing firsthand how patriarchal culture is perceived and practiced in everyday social interactions. These conditions create an intriguing social dynamic, particularly regarding the persistence of patriarchal culture amidst the currents of social change. On one hand, traditional values are still upheld as part of cultural identity, while on the other hand, there are influences from education, modernization, and cross-cultural interactions that have the potential to shape how different generations view the patriarchal system. Given these conditions, it is important to examine the forms of patriarchal culture that are still upheld, as well as the perceptions of the Arab ethnic community regarding patriarchal culture as a cultural system in their social lives. This study is expected to provide an objective and contextual overview of the persistence of patriarchal culture within the Arab ethnic community in the study area, while also contributing academically to the study of culture, gender, and social life in multicultural societies.

A number of theme threads have emerged in the empirical study of patriarchal culture in Indonesia, although each one has a limited methodological or contextual scope. One method uses religious discourse to address patriarchy: (Ete et al., 2023) view androcentric readings of religious texts as a source of gender prejudice and suggest a more comprehensive hermeneutic model as a remedy, however (Khoiriyah et al., 2025) use foucauldian power relations theory and gramscian hegemony in a library based critical discourse analysis to demonstrate how the idea of the "sakinah family" serves as a patriarchal control mechanism. A second strand looks at patriarchy from a normative legal perspective: (Syahrizan & Siregar, 2024) compare Islamic family law principles of mutual respect with patriarchal home behaviors, demonstrating a continuing discrepancy between normative standards and real practice. A third strand focuses on field-based research, but it is limited to nuclear families: (Nurrahman, 2022) identifies specific instances of gender injustice in the home, including marginalization, subordination, violence, stereotyping, and double burden, based on interviews with two dual earner couples. Particularly, research on patriarchy in Arab cultural contexts is still literature-based and focused on its most extreme form: (Latuconsina, 2025), which synthesizes twenty five secondary sources from 1990 to 2025, examines honor killing as an extreme form of patriarchal control over women's sexuality, justified by the ideas of 'ird and sharaf, while recording regional variation and slow resistance movements.

When combined, these studies show three enduring gaps. In terms of methodology, only (Nurrahman, 2022) conducted interviews, and even that was restricted to two families rather than a whole community; the other four relied on textual, discursive, or normative-legal analysis instead of direct interaction with community members. Conceptually, the only study that specifically addresses Arab patriarchal culture (Latuconsina, 2025) focuses on its most extreme manifestation in Arab-majority societies overseas, ignoring the ways in which Arab communities living as an ethnic minority within a multicultural society maintain, negotiate, or change patriarchal norms. In contrast, none of these studies compare an ethnic group's attitudes and behaviors to those of the nearby non-Arab community in the same social setting. This gap carries theoretical weight, based on Walby's (1990) assertion that patriarchy functions through variable rather than fixed structures. Without empirical attention to everyday negotiation across ethnic boundaries, existing literature runs the risk of treating patriarchal culture as either an extreme case or a textual abstraction, rather than as a structurally variable practice continuously negotiated in everyday social life. The novelty of this research lies in its approach to viewing patriarchy as a dynamic social process. This study not only examines public perceptions but also how these perceptions are formed, influenced, and negotiated in daily life. Furthermore, this research is conducted within a multicultural context by comparing Arab and non-Arab ethnic groups, thereby demonstrating that patriarchy is not monolithic but can have different meanings depending on the social context. In terms of methodology, this innovation is operationalized through a comparative case study design that directly compares two instances by placing Arab and non-Arab informants in the same social setting. This design deviates from the methodological trends found in the reviewed literature: the only field-based study (Nurrahman, 2022) looks at a single family unit without a comparative social group, while discourse-based studies (Ete et al., 2023); (Khoiriyah et al., 2025) and normative legal analysis (Syahrizan & Siregar, 2024) rely solely on textual sources without informant data. In contrast, the comparative case study design used here permits cross-group triangulation, enabling the examination of patriarchal perception and practice as a relational and negotiated process shaped by daily interaction between Arab and non-Arab residents of the same locality rather than just as a static set of norms held by one community.

This study has practical implications for municipal gender equality policies in addition to its theoretical contribution. In accordance with Walby's (1990) framework, gender equality interventions are often created under the presumption that patriarchal practices function consistently throughout a particular population, paying little attention to how ethnic and cultural background shapes the particular structures through which patriarchy is reproduced or

contested. This study gives local government organizations, especially women's empowerment and child protection offices Department of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, an empirical foundation for creating more culturally sensitive gender-equality programs rather than implementing a single, uniform policy across ethnically diverse communities by documenting how Arab and non-Arab communities perceive and negotiate patriarchal norms differently within the same social environment. In addition to making a scholarly contribution to the study of culture, gender, and social life in multicultural societies, this study is anticipated to offer an objective and contextual assessment of the continuance of patriarchal culture among the Arab ethnic population in the study region.

2. Method

Methods or techniques used by researchers to collect and analyze data in accordance with the research topic. An appropriate design contributes to the accuracy and reliability of the data collected. This study employs a qualitative design, which yields data in the form of words or descriptions rather than numerical values. A research design is a guide used to conduct a study. This guide helps researchers understand the steps that must be taken, from the direction the research will take to providing an overview of the study from start to finish (Sina, 2022). Qualitative research is research aimed at understanding the events experienced by an individual, whether in terms of behavior, perception, or actions (Fiantika et al., 2022). By using a descriptive qualitative approach, which views these events as a whole and describes them in words based on field facts, researchers employ scientific techniques such as observation, interviews, and documentation. The descriptive method is a research strategy that uses collected facts to describe or explain a phenomenon (Febrian et al., 2025). More precisely, in order to capture how patriarchal perception and practice converge or diverge across ethnic boundaries, this study uses a comparative case study design (Yin, K, 2018), treating the Arab ethnic community and the non-Arab community within the same social environment as two cases examined in parallel. The goal of using this qualitative, comparative case study technique is to fully comprehend how the Arab populace views patriarchal culture as a social structure.

The research location in this case is Kebonsari Village, Pasuruan City, East Java. The Arab community in Kebonsari Village continues to maintain social bonds based on traditional principles, particularly regarding the division of roles between men and women, which is why this location was chosen. The researchers used purposive sampling to select informants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. Since not all community members possess awareness or experience regarding patriarchal society, informants who truly understand and are actively involved in such matters were selected. The informants are local residents of the Kebonsari area, with the non-Arab community serving as the comparison group and the Arab ethnic community as the primary focus group. Arab and non-Arab ethnic groups between the ages of 20 and 70 who are heads of households, have lived in Kebonsari for a long time, are involved in social and religious life, and have made or are currently making decisions within the family about marriage, children's education, or other issues were among the informants. Married adult women who are either working or stay-at-home mothers who have encountered or are presently dealing with role constraints, from those who follow social conventions to those who think critically. Additionally, the younger generation, which includes students and young professionals, may be more critical of or supportive of patriarchy owing to cultural reasons since they are more exposed to contemporary education and media. Until thematic saturation was attained that is, until further interviews stopped yielding new themes or categories pertinent to the study's goals data gathering continued (Fusch & Ness, 2015). This was achieved with a total of thirteen informants: two Arab and one non-Arab household head, three Arab and two non-Arab married women, and two Arab and three non-Arab younger-generation informants. While clear thematic patterns had emerged across the three categories by this point, some variation in individual responses persisted; this is addressed further as a limitation of the study in the Discussion section. This study complied with accepted ethical guidelines for qualitative research. Before beginning fieldwork, the researchers received an official research

authorization from Universitas PGRI Wiranegara that was sent to the Kebonsari Village local government office, allowing them to carry out the study there. Before participating, each informant gave their informed permission after being told of the study's goals, methods, and their freedom to discontinue participation at any time without repercussions. In the small-scale context of Kebonsari Village, all data are provided using initials or pseudonyms rather than full names to safeguard informant anonymity, and identifying features that may disclose an informant's identity were either reduced or generalized in the reporting of findings.

Observation is the foundation of science because scientists obtain information from their observations. This information consists of real facts that occur in the real world (Abubakar, 2021). To maintain objectivity and prevent bias, observations in this study were conducted using the non-participant observation method, which means that the researcher was present and observed directly without actively participating in community activities. An interview is a data collection method that involves a direct question and answer session and face to face interaction between the researcher and the informant (Nashrullah et al., 2023). An interview is a conversation between a researcher and an informant aimed at obtaining information or data in accordance with the research objectives (Saleh, 2023). Semi structured interviews, which use a set of guiding questions as a basic framework but allow the researcher the freedom to ask follow-up questions based on the informant's answers, yield richer and more detailed information. Written field notes and informant demographic records were utilized as documentation in this study to supplement and contextualize the data from observations and interviews. In line with the comparative case study approach, data analysis was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, the data from each case the Arab informant group and the non-Arab informant group were analyzed independently using manual thematic analysis in accordance with (Braun & Clarke, 2006) six phases: familiarization with the data through repeated reading of field notes and interview transcripts; inductively generating initial codes from the data; compiling codes into candidate themes; comparing themes to the coded extracts and the entire dataset; defining and naming themes; and creating the final analytical narrative for each case. The second step involved comparing the themes that emerged from the two within-case analyses using cross-case analysis (Yin, K, 2018) in order to find areas where the perceptions and practices of patriarchal culture of Arab and non-Arab informants differed and converged. These findings serve as the foundation for the comparative conclusions that are shown in the results section.

This study used method triangulation, which cross-checked interview data against field observations and documentation, and source triangulation, which compared accounts across the three informant categories (household heads, married women, and the younger generation) as well as across the two ethnic groups, to determine the reliability of the results.

3. Analysis and Results

Researchers gathered information about the local community's perceptions, experiences, and knowledge about patriarchal society in day-to-day social interactions. Thirteen informants in all, representing three informant categories household heads, married women, and the younger generation participated in this study. They were both Arab and non-Arab residents of Kebonsari Village.

Table 1. Characteristics of Informants

No	Initials	Age	Ethnic	Gender	Category
1.	B.K	57	Arab	Male	Household Head
2.	B.M	51	Arab	Male	Household Head
3.	B.A	50	Non-Arab	Male	Household Head
4.	S.N	32	Arab	Female	Married Woman
5.	S.K	27	Arab	Female	Married Woman
6.	S.I	40	Arab	Female	Married Woman
7.	I.A	46	Non-Arab	Female	Married Woman
8.	I.U	42	Non-Arab	Female	Married Woman

No	Initials	Age	Ethnic	Gender	Category
9.	L.A	24	Non-Arab	Male	Younger Generation
10.	I.M	25	Arab	Male	Younger Generation
11.	S.Y	24	Arab	Female	Younger Generation
12.	N.S	23	Non-Arab	Female	Younger Generation
13.	A.G	22	Non-Arab	Male	Younger Generation

3.1. Culture as a Social Life Value System

The results show that both Arab and non-Arab informants in Kebonsari Village continue to base their daily behavior on cultural values, but there are some differences in how these values are explicitly grounded. Respect for parents and appropriate behavior were identified by Arab respondents as principles that were taught without regard to gender: "*Tentunya nilai-nilai yang baik, sopan santun, patuh dan hormat kepada orang tua, baik perempuan maupun laki-laki memiliki porsi yang sama dan tidak ada perbedaan*" ("Of course, good values, good manners, obedience, and respect for parents—whether they are women or men—are equally important, and there is no difference") (S.K, 27). While moral standards are preserved, informants also stated that cultural practice is dynamic and that their implementation is likely to change with time: "*Dikatakan lebih baik juga tidak sepenuhnya, pasti ada sisi baik dan buruk di setiap zaman*" ("It's not entirely true that one era is better than another; there are certainly good and bad aspects to every era") (S.K, 27).

Despite the lack of explicit ethnic framing, non-Arab respondents indicated a generally comparable value orientation. An essentially identical list of fundamental principles was noted by one non-Arab informant: "*Nilai kebiasaan yang perlu dijaga perihal sopan santun, ketaatan ke agama, moral dan tetap menjaga batasan baik buruknya*" ("Values that should be upheld regarding manners, religious observance, morality, and maintaining a clear distinction between right and wrong") (I.A, 46), while specifically identifying patriarchal behaviors as the factor that has to be reevaluated rather than religious or moral principles: "*kebiasaan sopan santun sih. kalo yang perlu di evaluasi itu kebiasaan patriarki*" ("It's just a matter of manners. What really needs to be evaluated is the patriarchal mindset") (N.S, 23). Interestingly, when expressing his goals for his future family, a non-Arab source also specifically mentioned Islamic principles, planning to split responsibilities by "*mencontoh nilai nilai kenabian*" ("following the example of prophetic values") (A.G, 22). These results imply that the fundamental moral religious value system found here respect for parents, civility, and behavior based on religion is a shared normative framework across both ethnic groups within the larger Muslim community of Kebonsari rather than a solely Arab cultural marker. The extra layer of lineage-based control (nasab) covered in the next sections, which functions in addition to rather than in substitute of this common moral religious foundation, is what uniquely sets Arab informants apart rather than the general value system itself.

Culture is the totality of human beliefs, behaviors, and innovations within society that are internalized by individuals through education (Rofi & Halid, 2025). Culture is a set of rules that govern interpersonal relationships within a community (Pujiyanti, 2021). Culture is a social construct composed of values that exist and evolve over time (Rismi et al., 2022). Cultural values are continuously passed down, interpreted, and practiced alongside the process of social change (Astawa, 2022). Culture is learned through social interaction rather than biological inheritance it is social because it arises from a community that shares, existing as a collective possession of the community rather than of individuals it is transmitted because it is passed down across generations through language rather than genes; it is continuous and cumulative because it gradually builds upon itself, integrating the past and present for progress it is consistent with interrelated elements, and flexible and dynamic, though relatively stable, so that it changes slowly in step with the times (Louise, 2021).

3.2. Patriarchy in Decision Making and Family Life

Results show that real decision-making power and formal headship do not always coincide, and that this decoupling varies even within the Arab group. There were differences between the

two Arab family leaders. According to (B.K, 57), making decisions is always a collaborative, deliberative process: "*Keseharian saya kalau membahas yang berkaitan dengan mengambil keputusan, keuangan, anak ataupun lainnya ya dengan musyawarah*" ("In my daily life, whenever I discuss matters related to decision-making, finances, my children, or anything else, I do so through mutual discussion"). In contrast, (B.M, 51) admitted that, despite his official headship, his wife had more practical authority: "*Untuk pengambilan keputusan biasanya lebih banyak istri, karena saya biasanya iya iya saja meskipun diskusi bareng*" ("My wife usually makes the decisions, because I usually just go along with whatever she says, even though we discuss things together").

The head of the non-Arab home described a similar deliberate tendency. Every family choice, according to (B.A, 50), necessitates mutual debate, whether it involves his children or himself: "*Suatu keputusan yang bersangkutan selain dengan diri sendiri ya harus musyawarah, pun kalau itu bersangkutan dengan saya sendiri juga harus diskusi dengan istri selayaknya suami yang selalu terbuka dengan istrinya*" ("Any decision that involves more than just myself must be made through consultation; even if it concerns me personally, I must discuss it with my wife, as a husband who is always open with his wife should be"). Both groups' female informants claimed to have significant influence over decisions. One responder among Arab informants said: "*Kalau untuk pengambilan keputusan, jujur saya lebih dominan*" ("When it comes to decision making, to be honest, I'm the one who has the final say") (S.N, 32). The same pattern emerged among non-Arab informants: "*Kalau ambil keputusan diskusi dulu, tapi ya untuk lebih besar ambil keputusannya ya saya*" ("If we need to make a decision, let's discuss it first, but when it comes to bigger decisions, I'll be the one to make them") (I.A, 46). These results show that the decoupling of formal headship from actual authority is a pattern that transcends ethnic boundaries and varies significantly amongst homes within the same ethnic group rather than being a uniquely Arab or non-Arab phenomena. In line with Walby's (1990) theory of household production as a continuously negotiated rather than fixed structure, this intragroup variation between (B.K.) and (B.M.) as well as between the Arab and non-Arab groups as a whole suggests that household-level factors (such as individual disposition or marital history) may shape decision-making dynamics as strongly as ethnic or cultural background.

Patriarchy is a social structure that views men as the primary holders of authority and power within a social group (Sefthiyan et al., 2024). According to Bressler, a patriarchal culture is a social system within a society in which men hold primary power and thus serve as the center of control within that social system (Kholifah & Masrurroh, 2022). As breadwinners and family leaders, men grant authority to their wives, that is, to women (Savitri, 2022). According to Beauvoir's book "The Second Sex", women are often objectified and lack full autonomy over their own lives (Munaris & Nugroho, 2021). The view that women are unworthy of playing an important role in society is the root cause of the oppression of women in patriarchal societies (Amalia et al., 2026). Over time, changes in the division of roles and power have begun to emerge, although the patriarchal system remains quite dominant in many households. Many families today have witnessed changes in their role sharing patterns as a result of women's increasing education and higher employment rates. Currently, some families are beginning to share household chores and financial responsibilities more equitably, with men and women working together to manage the household and provide for the family (Hafani, 2025). Therefore, it is only right that husbands take on the responsibility of providing for their wives and protecting them so that their wives can focus on this important role (Fauziyah, 2021).

3.3. Arab Identity and Contemporary Social Transformation

The results of the study show that social life in the community is still influenced by Arab ethnic identity. Values like upholding limits in social relations between men and women who are not mahram are still upheld today, according to several sources. Additionally, maintaining the Arab family lineage especially for daughters remains a priority in the context of marriage. However, society is starting to be more accepting of women's education and employment. The majority of the informants encourage women to pursue higher education and fulfill their goals before to getting married. Because women are the family's primary instructors, some informants

even think that women's education is essential. The options for women to work and seek careers also reflect this change in view point. While opinions on women working outside the house vary, most respondents agree that women currently have more chances than in the past. These results show that the Arab ethnic group is trying to strike a balance between adapting to social change and preserving heritage.

When it came to parental control on females' career and educational mobility, there was a particularly noticeable difference. The leader of an Arab home, Bapak Khalid, described a categorically restricted stance: "*Kalau anak perempuan saya mau kuliah atau kerja jauh saya larang dan tidak boleh*" ("If my daughter wants to go to college or work far away, I'll forbid her and she won't be allowed to") (B.K, 57). This was in stark contrast to the other two heads of the home, who both supported daughters' mobility under supervision even though they belonged to different ethnic groupings. Another Arab, (B.M, 51) said: "*Ya tidak apa kalau memang mau fokus karir atau kerja dulu meskipun jauh, itu hak dia*" ("Yeah, it's okay if she really wants to focus on her career or work first, even if it's far away that's her right"), The leader of the non-Arab home, (B.A, 50), talked about actively supporting his daughters' independent professions in a different city as long as family contact was maintained: "*2 anak perempuan saya juga bekerja di malang, ngekos dan dekat dengan keluarga setiap hari ngasih kabar dan memantau, selagi anak tidak menyimpang tindakannya bagi saya tidak masalah*" ("My two daughters also work in Malang, live in a boarding house, and are close to our family; they check in with us every day and keep an eye on things. As long as my children aren't getting into trouble, it's not a problem for me"). Although nasab (lineage) considerations remain clearly prominent among Arab informants specifically, as in one informant's account of marriage and lineage continuity, this pattern suggests that restrictiveness around daughters' mobility in this study is not reducible to ethnic identity or religious framing alone, but rather reflects individual household orientation. This finding complicates any straightforward narrative linking Arab identity to more restrictive patriarchal control: "*kalau anak perempuan tidak menikah dengan laki-laki sesama arab kan nanti nasabnya terputus*" ("If a woman doesn't marry a fellow Arab man, her lineage will be cut off") (S.I, 40).

The Arab ethnic group consists of people originating from specific regions in the Middle East (Biscontin, 2025). The history of the Arab ethnic group's arrival in Indonesia is quite long. The Hadrami Arab population in Indonesia, in particular, is part of a global diaspora that has spanned centuries (Ardiza, 2021). They prioritize lineage (nasab) as the foundation of social stratification, maintain the Arabic language as a symbol of religious standing, and practice endogamy marrying within their own group. Arab communities have begun to adapt and form a new hybrid identity a blend of Arab and local Indonesian identities rather than maintaining their exclusivity entirely (Fatiyah, 2025). The forces of globalization have had an increasingly significant impact on the development of Arab societies in the modern era, globalization has brought about profound changes in people's perspectives and lifestyles (Perenia & Hasaniyah, 2025). The results of the study indicate that patriarchal culture is still a fundamental component of the Arab ethnic community's cultural system in Kebonsari Village, but the complete dominance of men over women is no longer considered patriarchy. Men are still seen by the community as the heads of the family, but they fulfill this position by working together and consulting with women. Furthermore, although Arab cultural values and religious teachings continue to be the fundamental pillars of the community's social life, modernity has led to shifts in attitudes toward education, careers, and women's freedom of expression across both ethnic groups, even as nasab-based regulation remains a distinguishing feature specific to the Arab community.

3.4. Theoretical Interpretation of Findings

The results of this study show that the Arab ethnic community in Kebonsari Village's patriarchal culture functions as a structurally variable rather than monolithic system. This pattern is consistent with Walby's (1990) theory that patriarchy operates through a number of interconnected structures whose form and intensity vary depending on the social context. An inconsistent image emerges when the results are mapped against Walby's six structures. The

most obvious revision has occurred in the organization of domestic production: male leadership in the home is now wielded through a consultative dynamic in which wives actively participate in family decision-making rather than unilaterally. One informant noted that "*Kalau untuk pengambilan keputusan, jujur saya lebih dominan. Bukan berarti dia pasif dan nurut iya-iya saja, akan tetapi saya biasanya tetap ngomong diskusi dan kasih tau pemahaman saya*" ("When it comes to decision-making, to be honest, I take the lead. That doesn't mean he's passive and just goes along with everything, but I usually still discuss things with him and share my perspective") (S.N, 32). As fundamental Islamic values respect for parents, responsibility, and the upholding of social boundaries between non-mahram individuals continue to be passed down through families, schools, and religious organizations, the framework of culture continues to be the most resilient pillar.

On the other hand, rather than showing a lack of participation, the patterns of sexuality (such as endogamous marriage choices and mahram interaction standards) and paid labor show a more equivocal pattern of partial autonomy. While their ability to work outside the house was nonetheless restricted, a number of women from both ethnic groups reported maintaining autonomous financial control. A non-Arab source talked about having control over her own income but needing her husband's approval to work at all: "*Keputusan diambil dari musyawarah, untuk uang sendiri dikendalikan sendiri, untuk bekerja harus izin suami*" ("Decisions are made through discussion, personal finances are managed independently, and permission from the husband is required to work") (I.U, 42). Arab informants showed a similar trend of limited economic liberty, encouraging home-based business ventures but discouraging outside employment: "*kerja membuka usaha sendiri masih oke saja tapi kalau kerja diluar itu tidak karena kerja sudah jadi kewajiban suami*" ("Working to start my own business is still okay, but working outside the home isn't, because working is my husband's responsibility") (S.N, 32). This pattern of constrained formal employment combined with self-controlled or home-based income implies that the paid job structure in this society is selectively circumscribed rather than completely open or closed. In contrast, the state and the institutions of masculine violence fall outside the purview of this study and offer legitimate directions for further research.

This study's comparative component, which compares Arab and non-Arab informants in the same social setting, produces a conclusion that goes beyond within-group description. Although both communities acknowledge male headship as a normal arrangement, there are significant differences in the methods used to perpetuate this norm. The Arab familial lineage (*nasab*) serves as an extra layer of social regulation, especially when it comes to marriage, and religious framing and ethnic identification are the main ways that Arab informants uphold patriarchal standards. This importance of (*nasab*) is reminiscent of the Hadrami diaspora societies described by (Ho, 2006), where genealogical identification serves as an active method for preserving social boundaries and community coherence over generations in addition to being a marker of origin. Similar gender role expectations are present among non-Arab informants, although they are expressed more through general cultural norm than through ethnic or religious responsibility. As the non-Arab household head remarked, "*Suatu keputusan yang bersangkutan selain dengan diri sendiri ya harus musyawarah selayaknya suami yang selalu terbuka dengan istrinya*" ("Any decision that affects more than just oneself should be made through discussion, just as a husband who is always open with his wife") (B.A, 50), framing spousal openness as a matter of general marital practice rather than religious duty. This discrepancy is consistent with as discussed in (Brenner, 2001) review of Blackwood's (2000) study of the matrilineal Minangkabau society in West Sumatra, where women have significant control over family and land matters but still have to deal with Islamic and governmental discourses that are dominated by males. This trend implies that patriarchal systems in other areas, like lineage or public life, are not always displaced by women's home power, even when it is codified as in matrilineal civilizations. In Kebonsari, where consultative decision-making coexists with persisting male authority in areas of lineage and marriage, a functionally comparable pattern seems to maintain, albeit within an opposite kinship structure (patrilineal

rather than matrilineal).

The function of modernity and intercultural interaction as accelerators for norm revision is the subject of a third discovery. Arab informants' growing acceptance of women's education and participation in the workforce is indicative of what (Walby, 2009) characterizes as the impact of globalization on patriarchal structures not their disintegration, but rather their reconfiguration from private forms centered on domestic confinement to public forms expressed through unequal participation in education and labor markets. A source expressed support for higher education for women, but at the same time emphasized the priority of domestic roles, stating that *"Perempuan harus bisa berpendidikan tinggi jauh lebih tinggi dari laki-laki tapi perempuan berpendidikan tinggi karena guru nomor 1 dirumah bagi anak-anaknya ya ibunya"* ("Women should be able to attain a much higher level of education than men, but the reason women are highly educated is that the number one teacher at home for their children is their mother.") (S.N, 32). From a parallel theoretical standpoint, as discussed in (Johnson, 1993) review of Chafetz (1990) contends that while women's labor force participation is restricted and males continue to have disproportionate control over material resources, gender systems remain stable. While the limited financial control reported by informants like (I.U, 42) and (S.N, 32) indicates that the relationship is more complex than a simple presence-or-absence of participation, suggesting that attitudinal change may precede but does not guarantee full structural change, the partial nature of women's economic inclusion observed in this study attitudinal openness without fully unrestricted economic autonomy is generally consistent with this prediction.

There are several restrictions on the sample composition of this study. Despite the fact that the final sample of thirteen informants guaranteed representation of both ethnic groups across all three informant categories, the number of participants per subgroup is still small, and several response patterns, particularly with regard to parental control over daughters' mobility, varied significantly even within the same ethnic group. This suggests that thematic saturation across all patriarchal structures examined here may not have been fully achieved. To further validate the trends seen here, future studies might benefit from a bigger sample, especially more household heads from both ethnic groups. When considered collectively, these results imply that the idea of a "dynamic patriarchy" needs more factual accuracy than is usually provided in gender and cultural studies. This community's dynamism is not consistent across all six of Walby's (1990) structures: it is most pronounced in domestic production and culture, partially evident in the bounded autonomy observed within paid work, while the structures of sexuality, masculine violence, and the state remain largely underexamined. For a long time, Arab communities in Indonesia, especially those of Hadrami descent, have maintained transnational identities shaped by religious networks, cross-cultural mobility, and genealogy (Ho, 2006). Patriarchal norms are selectively maintained, modified, or challenged within this layered identity that is simultaneously Arab, Muslim, and Indonesian. Future research should attend specifically to the structures of sexuality and the state within Arab minority communities in Indonesia, as well as extending the preliminary findings on paid work presented here with a larger sample, as these avenues are likely to reveal tensions between economic participation and the preservation of ethnic identity that the current study was not designed to fully capture.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that patriarchal culture within the Arab ethnic community of Kebonsari Village functions as a structurally variable system rather than a fixed system of male dominance, with renegotiation concentrated primarily in the structure of domestic production and partially evident in paid work, while the structure of culture remains comparatively stable across generations. Importantly, this variability is not confined to differences between Arab and non-Arab groups; it is equally pronounced within the Arab community itself, where household heads displayed markedly different approaches to spousal consultation and parental control over daughters' mobility. This intra-group variation reinforces Walby's (1990) proposition that patriarchal structures operate as continually negotiated arrangements shaped by household-

level dynamics, not solely by ethnic or religious affiliation. Theoretically, these findings extend prior literature on patriarchal culture in Indonesia – previously confined to textual, discursive, or single-family analyses – by demonstrating, through direct cross-ethnic comparison, that the decoupling of formal patriarchal authority from its practical exercise operates as a broader social pattern rather than an ethnically bounded one. Practically, these findings suggest that gender-equality interventions designed by local government bodies, particularly women's empowerment and child protection offices, would benefit from accounting for household-level variation rather than relying on uniform, ethnicity-based assumptions about patriarchal practice. As discussed above, this study is limited by its relatively small and uneven sample across informant subgroups; the patterns identified here should therefore be read as indicative rather than definitive. Future research would benefit from a larger and more balanced sample across ethnic groups and informant categories, particularly additional household heads, and could productively extend this inquiry to the structures of sexuality, masculine violence, and state policy, which remain underexamined in the present study.

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