

Negotiating Patriarchal Authority in Islamic Marriage: Evidence from Pesantren Communities in Madura

***Shofiyun Nahidloh^a, Rofhani^b, Tri Pujiati^a, Amirul Haq Maqdam Wildany^c, Agustina Kumala Dewi Sholihah^a**

^a Universitas Trunodjoyo Madura, Indonesia

^b Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Indonesia

^c Ahgaff University, Yaman

*Corresponding author: shofiyun.nahidloh@trunojoyo.ac.id

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Abstract

Patriarchal authority in Muslim marriage has often been examined as a structure that reproduces gender inequality, while less attention has been paid to how such authority is negotiated within religiously grounded communities. This study intervenes in this debate by examining how patriarchal authority is maintained, negotiated, and reinterpreted in marriage practices among pesantren communities in Bangkalan, Madura. Drawing on qualitative data from in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis involving kyai, nyai, female santri, and married pesantren alumni, the study conceptualizes negotiation as the everyday process through which women navigate, accommodate, and reshape marital authority within existing religious and cultural frameworks. The findings show that patriarchal authority remains evident in male leadership and gendered divisions of marital responsibilities, but it is not exercised as an uncontested or fixed structure. Women negotiate this authority through educational participation, involvement in family decision-making, and reinterpretation of marital expectations within Islamic normative frameworks. The study contributes to scholarship on gender and Islamic family law by demonstrating that women's agency does not necessarily operate through rejection of patriarchal norms, but can emerge through their reinterpretation and renegotiation within religious frameworks. This perspective distinguishes the study from approaches that treat patriarchy primarily as either reproduced or resisted, highlighting instead the dynamic and context-dependent negotiation of marital authority in pesantren communities.

Keyword: *Negotiated Patriarchy; Islamic Family Law; Qiwāmah; Pesantren.*

Abstrak

Otoritas patriarkal dalam perkawinan Muslim selama ini sering dipahami sebagai struktur yang mereproduksi ketidaksetaraan gender, sementara perhatian terhadap bagaimana otoritas tersebut dinegosiasikan dalam komunitas yang berlandaskan nilai-nilai keagamaan masih terbatas. Artikel ini berkontribusi pada perdebatan tersebut dengan mengkaji bagaimana otoritas patriarkal dipertahankan, dinegosiasikan, dan ditafsirkan kembali dalam praktik perkawinan pada komunitas pesantren di Bangkalan, Madura. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen yang melibatkan kyai, nyai, santri

perempuan, dan alumni pesantren yang telah menikah, penelitian ini memahami negosiasi sebagai proses keseharian ketika perempuan menghadapi, mengakomodasi, dan membentuk kembali otoritas perkawinan dalam kerangka keagamaan dan budaya yang telah ada. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa otoritas patriarkal tetap terlihat dalam kepemimpinan laki-laki dan pembagian tanggung jawab perkawinan berdasarkan gender, tetapi otoritas tersebut tidak dijalankan sebagai struktur yang sepenuhnya tetap dan tidak dapat dipertanyakan. Perempuan menegosiasikan otoritas tersebut melalui partisipasi dalam pendidikan, keterlibatan dalam pengambilan keputusan keluarga, serta penafsiran kembali ekspektasi perkawinan dalam kerangka normatif Islam. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada kajian gender dan hukum keluarga Islam dengan menunjukkan bahwa agensi perempuan tidak selalu diwujudkan melalui penolakan terhadap norma patriarkal, tetapi juga dapat muncul melalui penafsiran dan negosiasi ulang terhadap norma tersebut dalam kerangka keagamaan. Perspektif ini menunjukkan bahwa otoritas perkawinan dalam komunitas pesantren merupakan proses yang dinamis dan kontekstual, bukan sekadar struktur patriarkal yang direproduksi atau dilawan.

Kata Kunci: Patriarki Negosiasional; Hukum Keluarga Islam; Agensi Perempuan; Qiwamah; Pesantren.

INTRODUCTION

Gender inequality remains a persistent issue in many societies despite significant advancements in education, legal reform, and women's participation in public life. In Muslim communities, gender relations often intersect with religious interpretations, cultural traditions, and social institutions that shape the roles and expectations of men and women within family and marital life.¹ Women may negotiate patriarchal expectations through everyday strategies that balance family responsibilities, social expectations, and personal interests rather than simply rejecting existing arrangements.² Consequently, understanding how gender relations are constructed and transformed within religious

¹ Chelom E., Leavitt, David B. Allsop, Amber A. Price, Loren D. Marks, and David C. Dollahite. "Exploring Gender Roles in Highly Religious Families." *Review of Religious Research* 63 no. 4 (2021): 511–533. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13644-021-00476-9>; Maznah Mohamad. "Introduction to the Special Issue "Marriage, Intimacy, Gender and Islam in Southeast Asia". *Religions* 12, no. 7 (2021): 539. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12070539>

² Soma Chaudhuri, Merry Morash, and Julie Yingling. "Marriage Migration, Patriarchal Bargains, and Wife Abuse: A Study of South Asian Women." *Violence Against Women* 20, no. 2 (2014): 141–161. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801214521326>; Abdulah Pakarti, Muhammad Husni, Ending Solehudin, Maruf Maruf, Iqbal Saujan, and Saeideh Shakibiciu. 2025. "The Role and Application of 'Urf As a Source of Islamic Law: A Historical Review and Fiqhiyah Rules". *An-Nisa: Journal of Islamic Family Law* 2 (3): 175-92. <https://doi.org/10.63142/an-nisa.v2i3.300>.

communities has become an increasingly important concern in contemporary gender and religious studies.³ Studies of Muslim gender values likewise demonstrate that understandings of family roles and gender divisions are not uniform, but are shaped by changing religious orientations and social context.⁴ Within this context, marital authority should not be understood solely as a fixed expression of patriarchy, but also as a social and normative relationship that may be interpreted, accommodated, and renegotiated by spouses within particular religious and cultural settings.

Indonesia presents a unique context for examining these issues due to the diversity of its cultural traditions and Islamic educational institutions. Among these institutions, *pesantren* occupy a strategic position as centers for religious learning, socialization, and value formation that influence broader social and religious practices within Muslim communities.⁵ While *pesantren* are often portrayed as institutions that preserve traditional gender norms, recent social transformations have increasingly opened opportunities for women to access religious education, participate in public life, and contribute to family decision-making processes. This development suggests that gender relations within *pesantren* communities are more dynamic than commonly assumed.⁶ Muslim women's agency should not be understood solely through resistance to religious norms, but also through the ways women negotiate and interpret those norms within their social contexts.⁷

³ Saskia Glas, What Gender Values Do Muslims Resist? How Religiosity and Acculturation Over Time Shape Muslims' Public-Sphere Equality, Family Role Divisions, and Sexual Liberalization Values Differently, *Social Forces*, Volume 101, Issue 3, March 2023, Pages 1199–1229, <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/soac004>

⁴ Saskia Glas. "What Gender Values Do Muslims Resist? How Religiosity and Acculturation Over Time Shape Muslims' Public-Sphere Equality, Family Role Divisions, and Sexual Liberalization Values Differently." *Social Forces* 101, no. 3 (2023): 1199–1229. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/soac004>.

⁵ Bella Fadhilatus Sanah, Ika Wildah Nafisah, Maulidina Zahrah Mukmina, Satria Adli Cholid, and Taufan Adi Prayoga. "Implementasi Keadilan Gender di Pondok Pesantren Sabilurrosyad Kota Malang." *Jurnal Sosiologi Reflektif* 16, no. 1 (2021): 113–132. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jsr.v16i1.1774>

⁶ Fatmawati Fatmawati. "Gender, Authority, and Islamic Education: Bu Nyai's Role in Shaping Feminist Thought in Indonesian Pesantren". *Syaikhuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pranata Islam* 15, no. 2 (2024): 357-80. <https://doi.org/10.62730/syaikhuna.v15i02.7798>.

⁷ Anna C. Korteweg. "The Sharia Debate in Ontario: Gender, Islam, and Representations of Muslim Women's Agency." *Gender & Society* 22, no. 4 (2008): 434–454. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243208319768>

This understanding is consistent with emerging scholarship that treats patriarchal relations as arrangements that can be negotiated and modified through everyday practices, rather than as structures that necessarily produce either complete domination or complete resistance.⁸ In Muslim contexts, women may exercise agency through religious engagement and activism while simultaneously working within established religious and social norms.⁹ Recent scholarship on Muslim women's agency further challenges a simplistic opposition between resistance and compliance by emphasizing that agency can be exercised within, rather than solely through the rejection of, religious, familial, and social structures, a perspective that is particularly relevant for examining women whose everyday choices remain embedded in religious and cultural expectations.¹⁰

Within the Indonesian context, Madura represents a particularly significant setting for exploring the interaction between patriarchy, religion, and marriage.¹¹ More broadly, studies of gender and political patriarchy in Indonesia indicate that patriarchal attitudes remain closely connected with social and religious understandings of gender roles, although their effects may vary according to educational, institutional, and cultural contexts.¹² This cultural construction is reflected in various

⁸ Srijana Karki and Tamara L. Mix. "Navigating the Patriarchal Bargain: Compliance with and Negotiation of Menstrual Customs in Kathmandu, Nepal." *Women's Studies International Forum* 99 (2023): 102767. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2023.102767>.

⁹ Rachel Rinaldo. "Pious and Critical: Muslim Women Activists and the Question of Agency." *Gender & Society* 28, no. 6 (2014): 824–846. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243214549352>

¹⁰ Sertaç Sehlirkoglu. "Revisited: Muslim Women's Agency and Feminist Anthropology of the Middle East." *Contemporary Islam* 12, no. 1 (2018): 73–92. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-017-0404-8>; Saba Hussain. "Social Justice, Politics of Authorisation and Agency: A Hybrid Theoretical Framework to Study Contemporary Muslim Femininity." *Women's Studies International Forum* 74 (2019): 188–195. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2019.04.005>

¹¹ Aminah Dewi Rahmawati, Emy Susanti, and Bagong Suyanto. "The Female *Klebung* of Madura within the Power Constellation of the Patriarchy: A Post-Colonial Feminism Perspective." *Simulacra* 4, no. 1 (2021): 87–99. <https://doi.org/10.21107/sml.v4i1.10391>

¹² Sally White, Eve Warburton, Pramashavira, Adrianus Hendrawan, and Edward Aspinall. "Voting against Women: Political Patriarchy, Islam, and Representation in Indonesia." *Politics & Gender* 20, no. 2 (2024): 391–421. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X23000648>.

social practices, including the well-known tradition of *carok*, which is often associated with the defense of family honor involving women.

The persistence of patriarchal norms, early marriage, and poverty in Madurese society continues to restrict women's access to education, public participation, and marital decision-making.¹³ However, recent social dynamics, driven by expanding educational opportunities, broader access to information, and the active roles of female religious leaders, indicate that these traditional boundaries are being continuously negotiated, allowing Islamic family institutions to function effectively when leadership contextually integrates gender equity principles.¹⁴ This transformation aligns with contemporary Muslim legal thought, which challenges rigid patriarchal authority by reinterpreting classical jurisprudence in ways that demonstrate that gender equity is compatible with Islamic principles.¹⁵ Ultimately, recent legal scholarship reinforces this shift, highlighting a gradual transition toward gender-sensitive interpretations that acknowledge and protect women's active participation in family decision-making.¹⁶

Studies of Madurese society emphasize patriarchal culture, women's marginalization, early marriage, and gender-based inequalities.¹⁷ While studies of *pesantren* have focused more strongly on religious authority, Islamic education, and institutional transformation. Research on gender roles, gender equality, and gender-based education within *pesantren* in Madura is particularly important because these

¹³ Umi Supraptiningsih, Hasse Jubba, Erie Hariyanto, and Theadora Rahmawati. "Inequality as a Cultural Construction: Women's Access to Land Rights in Madurese Society." *Cogent Social Sciences* 9, no. 1 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2194733>

¹⁴ Abdul Bari Awang, Muhamad Mu'izz Abdullah, Amilah Awang, and Naimah Mohamad Nasir, trans. "An Analysis of the Justice of Faraid Law in Relation to the Concept of Qiwwamah in the Sustainability of the Muslim Family Institution". *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 8 no. 2 (2025): 1160-83. <https://doi.org/10.22373/ujhk.v8i2.26431>

¹⁵ Mohamed Sulthan Ismiya Begum, Indriaty Ismail, Zul'azmi Yaakob, Ahamed Sarjoon Razick, and Mohamed Mahroof Ali Abdullah. "Gender Equity in Muslim Family Law: Modern and Contemporary 'Ulamā's View". *Al-Ahkam* 34, no. 2 (2024): 221-56. <https://doi.org/10.21580/ahkam.2024.34.2.20773>.

¹⁶ Durotun Nafisah, "Positivisasi Hukum Keluarga Islam di Indonesia dalam Perspektif Gender." *De Jure: Jurnal Hukum dan Syariah* 7 no. 1 (2020): 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.24090/mnh.v7i1.575>

¹⁷ Hasanatul Jannah, and Rachmah Ida. "Nyai Madura: Representation of Female Religious Leaders in Contemporary Indonesia". *Space and Culture, India* 7 no. 1 (2019): 240-49. <https://doi.org/10.20896/saci.v7i1.408>.

institutions influence local social structures, cultural values, and religious education systems. As one of Indonesia's most influential Islamic educational institutions, *pesantren* continuously shape religious, social, and educational practices. Recent studies indicate that gender perspectives within these institutions have gradually shifted from predominantly patriarchal paradigms toward more gender-responsive educational approaches.¹⁸ This transformation is also reflected in broader debates concerning gender-sensitive practices and the changing roles of women within Islamic educational institutions.¹⁹

Despite the substantial enrollment of female students (*santri putri*), gender disparities persist in *pesantren* education, where women's leadership, decision-making, and public religious roles remain constrained by traditional gender expectations.²⁰ Such forms of agency are particularly important in contexts where women's choices are shaped by overlapping religious and patriarchal expectations, suggesting that accommodation, reinterpretation, and negotiation may constitute meaningful forms of agency,²¹ this institutional reproduction of domestic and public social norms directly limits broader gender equality in society,²² with patriarchal values embedded in *pesantren* traditions

¹⁸ Asnal Mala, Uswatun Chasanah, and Siti Marpuah. "Gender Mainstreaming in the Policy of Islamic Boarding School Education: A Systematic Literature Review". *An-Nisa' Journal of Gender Studies* 18 no. 1 (2025): 31-44. <https://doi.org/10.35719/annisa.v18i1.316>.

¹⁹ Abu Nawas, I Gusti Ngurah Darmawan, and Nina Maadad. "Single-sex 'Pesantren' Schools: Unravelling Girls' and Boys' Peer Connections and Their Impacts on Wellbeing and Learning Outcomes." *International Journal of Educational Research* 125 (2024): 102339. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2024.102339>.

²⁰ Sri Intan Wahyuni, Mega Cahya Dwi Lestari Dwi Lestari, Diana Sartika Sartika, and Sulasmi Sulasmi. "Kepemimpinan Perempuan Dalam Pengembangan Lembaga Pendidikan Di Pondok Pesantren". *SURAU : Journal of Islamic Education* 1, no. 2 (2023):161-70. <https://doi.org/10.30983/surau.v1i2.7070>.

²¹ Saba Hussain. "Social Justice, Politics of Authorisation and Agency: A Hybrid Theoretical Framework to Study Contemporary Muslim Femininity." *Women's Studies International Forum* 74 (2019): 188–195. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2019.04.005>

²² Elly Malihah, Siti Nurbayani, and Puspita Wulandari. "Women in the Eye of Pesantren". *KnE Social Sciences* 4, no. 10 (2020):10–21. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v4i10.7387>; Harisman, Harisman, and Feni Maftuchah. "Gender Equality in Islamic Boarding Schools: Paulo Freire's Philosophical Review of the Education System Fathul Muin Banyumas Islamic Boarding School". 2024. *Yinyang: Jurnal Studi Islam Gender Dan Anak* 19, no. 1 (2024): 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.24090/yinyang.v19i1.10754>.

acting as a primary driver, particularly in Madurese contexts.²³ While some *pesantren* have introduced inclusive educational practices, limited empirical evidence explains how gender-based reforms and female religious leaders foster local social transformation.²⁴ Gender relations are shaped by institutional rules, religious authority, and expectations concerning women's roles, indicating that *pesantren* can simultaneously reproduce gender hierarchies and provide spaces in which women negotiate their positions.²⁵

The literature therefore presents an important tension. *Pesantren* can reproduce patriarchal norms and gender bias through traditional religious interpretations,²⁶ whereas another demonstrates the growing agency of female scholars and religious figures who promote inclusive Islamic interpretations and gender-responsive practices.²⁷ Ultimately, these conflicting dynamics leave the relationship between Islamic education and gender equality highly contested, underutilizing religious education as a tool for women's empowerment.²⁸ This tension is particularly significant when examining marriage, because the negotiation of gendered authority extends beyond educational institutions into everyday family relationships and decision-making.

²³ Sudarso, Sudarso, Petrus E. Keban, and Siti Mas'udah. "Gender, Religion and Patriarchy: The Educational Discrimination of Coastal Madurese Women, East Java." *Journal of International Women's Studies* 20, no. 9 (2019): 2–12.

²⁴ Evi Muafiah, Laili D. Mayasari, Atik H. Imtihanah, and Binti Yuliani. "Gendered Pesantren in Contemporary Indonesia: Female Agency, Institution, and Everyday Lives." *QIJIS (Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies)* 12, no. 1 (2024): 39–74. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v12i1.19859>; Dera Emilia Prastiwi and Irzum Fariyah. "Women Ulema's Perceptions of Efforts to Resolve Patriarchal Hegemony in Pesantren". *Buana Gender: Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Anak* 9 no. 1 (2024):26-34. <https://doi.org/10.22515/bg.v9i1.8170>.

²⁵ Amanah Nurish. "Women's Same-Sex Relations in Indonesian Pesantren." *Gender, Technology and Development* 14, no. 2 (2010): 267–277. <https://doi.org/10.1177/097185241001400207>.

²⁶ Isnaini Nuruddin Akbar. "Normalization of Gender Bias Regulations in Pondok Pesantren." *Refleksi: Jurnal Filsafat dan Pemikiran Keislaman* 23 no. 1 (2023): 124–142. <https://doi.org/10.14421/ref.v23i1.4768>

²⁷ Jannah, Hasanatul, and Yunda Fitriyah. "Gender Equality Actions of Female Religious Figures in Madura (A Study on Locality Gender)". *HUMANISMA : Journal of Gender Studies* 9 no. 1 (2025):48-63. <https://doi.org/10.30983/humanisma.v9i1.9374>.

²⁸ Wardana, Khansadhia A., Rahayu Rahayu, and Sukirno Sukirno. "The Long And Winding Road: Confronting Sexual Violence On Women In Pesantren." *Masalah-Masalah Hukum* 52, no. 3 (2023): 217-226. Accessed June 26, 2026. <https://doi.org/10.14710/mmh.52.3.2023.217-226>

Conceptually, previous studies define gender roles as socially constructed expectations that shape the behaviors and responsibilities assigned to men and women.²⁹ Gender equality is understood as the principle of ensuring equal rights, opportunities, and participation regardless of gender.³⁰ Meanwhile, gender-based education refers to educational practices designed to promote fairness, inclusivity, and equal opportunities while challenging discriminatory gender stereotypes within learning environments.³¹

The theoretical significance of this study lies in understanding agency not simply as resistance to patriarchy, but as a capacity exercised within existing normative and power relations. Mahmood explains how women may act through religious norms and ethical traditions,³² while Kandiyoti's concept of the "patriarchal bargain" highlights women's negotiation of constraints within gendered structures.³³ Kabeer further conceptualizes agency through resources, decision-making, and achievements.³⁴ These perspectives are complemented by Walby's structural understanding of patriarchy,³⁵ Scott's conceptualization of gender as an analytical category of social relations and power,³⁶ and Butler's view of gender as constituted through repeated social practices.³⁷ In Islamic feminist scholarship, Wadud and Barlas challenge

²⁹ Hairiyah, Hairiyah, Siti Sirait, and Muhammad Arif. "Islamic Education and Gender Equality." *DAYAH: Journal of Islamic Education* 7, no. 1 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.22373/jie.v7i1.21858>

³⁰ Arifah Nurfai. "Pendidikan Kesetaraan Gender Di Pondok Pesantren Sebagai Upaya Membangun Peradaban Bangsa". *Wawasan: Jurnal Kediklatan Balai Diklat Keagamaan Jakarta* 3, no. 2 (2022): 213-27. <https://doi.org/10.53800/wawasan.v3i2.162>.

³¹ Siti Mutmainah and Nur Khasanah. "Towards Gender-Equitable Religious Education: A Study of Thought on the Formation of Gender Equality in Islamic Education." *Tathwir* 3, no. 1 (2026): 87-97. <https://doi.org/10.70512/tatho.v3i1.157>

³² Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

³³ Deniz Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy," *Gender & Society* 2, no. 3 (1988): 274-290. <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124388002003004>

³⁴ Naila Kabeer, "Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment," *Development and Change* 30, no. 3 (1999): 435-464. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7660.00125>

³⁵ Sylvia Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

³⁶ Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053-1075. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1864376>

³⁷ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

patriarchal Qur'anic interpretations through justice, equality, and alternative readings of gender,³⁸ while An-Na'im and Mir-Hosseini emphasize the reinterpretation and reform of Islamic law in relation to gender and family.³⁹ Taken together, these perspectives frame patriarchal authority as a dynamic process in which women negotiate, accommodate, and reshape marital roles through religious, cultural, and relational practices rather than simply resisting patriarchal structures.

This theoretical framework is further situated within Islamic family law. In Islamic legal discourse, rights, responsibilities, and authority within marriage have historically been discussed through concepts such as *qiwamah*, *wilayah*, and *nafaqah*. Contemporary scholarship has increasingly questioned interpretations of *qiwamah* that reduce it to unilateral male authority and instead emphasizes its relationship to responsibility, justice, and the rights and obligations of both spouses.⁴⁰ In Indonesia, the regulation of Muslim marriage demonstrates how Islamic norms are institutionalized within a national legal framework, making the relationship between religious interpretation, state regulation, and everyday marital practice particularly important for understanding gender relations.⁴¹

From a socio-legal perspective, marital relations in *pesantren* communities cannot be understood solely through formal Islamic law. They emerge through the interaction of state-regulated family law,

³⁸ Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Asma Barlas, "Believing Women" in *Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002).

³⁹ Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, *Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Shari'a* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); Ziba Mir-Hosseini, *Marriage on Trial: A Study of Islamic Family Law: Iran and Morocco Compared* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1993).

⁴⁰ Abdul Bari Awang, Muhamad Mu'izz Abdullah, Amilah Awang, and Naimah Mohamad Nasir, trans. "An Analysis of the Justice of Faraid Law in Relation to the Concept of Qiwamah in the Sustainability of the Muslim Family Institution". *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 8 no. 2 (2025): 1160-83. <https://doi.org/10.22373/ujhk.v8i2.26431>; Mohamed Sulthan Ismiya Begum, Indriaty Ismail, Zul'azmi Yaakob, Ahamed Sarjoon Razick, and Mohamed Mahroof Ali Abdullah. "Gender Equity in Muslim Family Law: Modern and Contemporary 'Ulamā's View". *Al-Ahkam* 34, no. 2 (2024): 221-56. <https://doi.org/10.21580/ahkam.2024.34.2.20773>.

⁴¹ Eva F. Nisa. "The Bureaucratization of Muslim Marriage in Indonesia." *Journal of Law and Religion* 33, no. 2 (2018): 291-309. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jlr.2018.28>.

Islamic legal interpretation, *pesantren*-based religious authority, and Madurese cultural expectations. This interaction reflects legal pluralism, in which formal law, religious norms, and locally embedded practices may overlap or generate tensions. Accordingly, examining these normative dimensions alongside lived marital practices allows this study to identify not only whether patriarchal authority persists, but also how its meaning and exercise are negotiated in practice. Recent studies on patriarchal negotiation similarly suggest that women's agency may operate through accommodation, bargaining, and strategic adjustment within existing gendered structures, rather than solely through direct opposition to patriarchy.⁴² Against this background, the central research gap concerns the limited socio-legal understanding of how women negotiate patriarchal marital authority at the intersection of Islamic family law, *pesantren*-based religious authority, and Madurese cultural norms.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore how patriarchal values are negotiated within gender relations and marriage practices in *pesantren* communities. A case study design was selected because it enables an in-depth examination of complex social phenomena within their real-life contexts, particularly when the boundaries between cultural traditions, religious authority, and social practices are closely intertwined.⁴³ The research was conducted in Bangkalan Regency, Madura, East Java, Indonesia, during May–August 2025. Bangkalan was purposively selected because it maintains strong Islamic and local traditions and provides relevant *pesantren* contexts for examining gender relations, religious authority, and family practices.

The study involved five *pesantren*, including (1) RU at Klampis, Bangkalan, coded P1; DT at Kamal, Bangkalan coded P2; AH at Jangkebun, Bangkalan coded P3; AY at Kebun Anyar Pakong Modung Bangkalan coded P4; and DB at Tamberu Timur, Bangkalan coded P5, to protect institutional confidentiality. The institutions represent *salaf*–modern orientations, combining traditional *turats*-based Islamic learning with contemporary programs such as information technology, entrepreneurship, public speaking, *tahfidz*, and *qira'ah*. All participating

⁴² Farkhondeh Akbari and Jacqui True. “Bargaining with Patriarchy in Peacemaking: The Failure of Women, Peace, and Security in Afghanistan.” *Global Studies Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (2024): ksae004. <https://doi.org/10.1093/isagsq/ksae004>.

⁴³ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, 6th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2018), 15–18.

institutions were affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and were purposively selected because their combination of traditional and contemporary education provides a relevant context for examining the negotiation of patriarchal values.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling to represent different positions within the *pesantren* community. The study involved 28 participants: 3 *kyai*, 3 *nyai*, 5 *ustadz*, 5 *ustadzah*, 10 *santri*, and 2 married *pesantren* alumni, comprising 14 males and 14 females. Participants ranged from 16 to 70 years, with educational backgrounds from *pesantren* and secondary education to undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Marriage duration among married participants ranged from 1 to 40 years.

Table 1. Participants' Characteristic

Participant Category	Male	Female	Total	Age Range	Educational Background	Marriage Duration
Kyai	3	0	3	45–70 years	Islamic Boarding School (Pesantren); Bachelor's–Master's Degree in Religious/Islamic Education	10–20 years
Nyai	0	3	3	45–65 years	Islamic Boarding School (Pesantren); Madrasah Aliyah/Senior High School–Bachelor's Degree	10–20 years
Ustadz	2	3	5	25–50 years	Madrasah Aliyah/Senior High School–Bachelor's Degree in Religious/Islamic Education	3–20 years
Ustadzah	3	2	5	20–45 years	Madrasah Aliyah/Senior High School–Bachelor's Degree in Religious/Islamic Education	1–15 years
Santri	5	5	10	16–24 years	Madrasah Tsanawiyah/Madrasah Aliyah/Senior High School–Bachelor's Degree	Not applicable / unmarried
Married Alumni	1	1	2	20–40 years	Madrasah Aliyah/Senior High	1–15 years

					School–Bachelor’s Degree	
Total	14	14				

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and was conducted in a combination of Bahasa Indonesia and Madurese, depending on participants’ preferences. Interviews were audio-recorded with participants’ consent and transcribed verbatim. The interviews addressed gender roles, marital authority, household decision-making, religious expectations, division of responsibilities, and strategies for negotiating disagreement. Data collection continued until thematic saturation was reached through iterative comparison of emerging codes and themes across participant groups.

To enhance trustworthiness, the study employed source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and member checking. Data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis, involving familiarization with the data, inductive and deductive coding, theme development and review, and interpretation in relation to the research questions and theoretical framework. The analysis focused on patriarchal authority, religious norms, gender roles, marital decision-making, negotiation, and women’s agency.

The researchers had no prior institutional, professional, familial, or personal relationship with the participating *pesantren* or participants. All participants voluntarily agreed to participate and provided consent. Given the sensitivity of gender, religious authority, and marital relations, participant identities were anonymized using codes. Reflexive notes were maintained throughout fieldwork and analysis to examine researcher assumptions, interactions, and potential power dynamics. This approach enhanced transparency and credibility without assuming that researcher influence could be completely eliminated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Patriarchal Authority and the Construction of Male Leadership in Marriage

The findings demonstrate that participants distinguish authority from domination. Although male leadership remains a dominant normative principle in marital relations among *pesantren* communities in Bangkalan, participants increasingly interpret *qiwamah* not as unrestricted authority but as a responsibility that must be exercised through consultation, fairness, and family welfare. Most participants

acknowledged the husband as the primary leader within the household, a position commonly justified through religious teachings concerning men's responsibilities as family providers and protectors. Both male and female informants generally accepted this leadership model as part of the moral and religious order governing family life.

However, participants did not perceive male leadership as an unrestricted form of authority. Rather, it was frequently associated with responsibility, accountability, and the obligation to maintain family welfare. A senior *kyai* explained that leadership in marriage should not be understood as domination but as a trust (*amanah*) that requires fairness, compassion, and service toward family members. Similar views were expressed by several female participants, who emphasized that a husband's authority becomes legitimate only when exercised with justice and mutual respect.

These perspectives reflect a broader understanding of marriage within Islamic teachings. Several participants referred to the Qur'anic ideal of family life as articulated in Surah Ar-Rum (30:21), which describes marriage as a relationship based on *sakinah* (tranquility), *mawaddah* (affection), and *rahmah* (compassion). For many informants, this verse provides the ethical foundation for marital relations, suggesting that family harmony is achieved not through coercion or unilateral authority but through mutual care and emotional partnership between spouses. Thus, the reinterpretation of male leadership appears to arise from an effort to reconcile inherited religious norms with an ethical understanding of marriage centered on mutual care and responsibility.

The findings reveal that patriarchal values continue to shape family structures within *pesantren* communities, where male leadership reflects the combined influence of Madurese traditions and Islamic teachings. This aligns with scholarship arguing that while Muslim families still recognize men as formal household heads, contemporary societies gradually shift toward a balanced distribution of responsibilities through contextual reinterpretations of religious teachings.⁴⁴ The present findings suggest that this reinterpretation is facilitated by social changes within family life, particularly women's greater involvement in household decision-making, education, and economic activities. These changes do

⁴⁴ Suud Sarim Karimullah, Aat Ruchiat Nugraha, Yokke Andini, and Ihda Shofiyatun Nisa'. "The Changing Role of Gender in Contemporary Muslim Families." *Martabat: Jurnal Perempuan dan Anak* 7, no. 2 (2023): 167–188. <https://doi.org/10.21274/martabat.2023.7.2.167-188>

not necessarily displace male leadership but alter the conditions under which such leadership is considered legitimate. Such negotiation aligns with Islamic mediation frameworks that incorporate ethical values like *musyawarah* and *islah* (reconciliation), explicitly providing space for women's agency even within formal religious legal systems that traditionally prioritize male authority.⁴⁵

Furthermore, while traditional male leadership remains a normative principle, contemporary interpretations of Islamic law increasingly carve out space for women's religious authority and reciprocal family relations from within the Islamic tradition itself. Rather than replacing patriarchal authority altogether, participants appear to accommodate and modify it through everyday practices. Women's participation in decisions concerning children's education, household finances, and family planning demonstrates that authority is increasingly distributed through practical cooperation while the symbolic position of the husband as household leader is retained. This pattern indicates that gender relations are changing through internal adaptation rather than through a direct rejection of religious authority or local traditions.⁴⁶

The coexistence of male leadership and shared decision-making suggests that patriarchy within *pesantren* families operates through continuous negotiation rather than rigid domination. While men retain symbolic authority as heads of households, women exercise significant influence in everyday family practices. The present findings also support a study who found that the concept of *mubādalāh* promotes reciprocal rights and obligations between husbands and wives.⁴⁷ In Bangkalan context, however, reciprocal decision-making is not simply a normative ideal. It is enacted through *musyawarah*, shared responsibilities, and practical negotiation over everyday family matters. This distinction is important because it shows how normative principles become embedded in lived marital relations. The significance of this finding lies in the

⁴⁵ Mhd. Yazid. "Between Peace and Gender Justice: Islamic Court Mediators' Perspectives in Divorce Mediation in West Sumatra." *Journal of Islamic Law* 7 no. 1 (2026):168–192. <https://doi.org/10.24260/jil.v7i1.2644>

⁴⁶ Mun'im, Zainul, Muhamad Nasrudin, Suaidi, and Hasanudin. "Revisioning Official Islam in Indonesia: The Role of Women Ulama Congress in Reproducing Female Authority in Islamic Law." *AHKAM: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 24, no. 1 (2024): 135–152. <https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v24i1.34744>

⁴⁷ Mahmudin Bunyamin, Siti Nurjanah, Agus Hermanto, Rudi Santoso, and Rochmad Rochmad. "Mubadalāh in Fulfilling the Rights and Obligations of Contemporary Husbands and Wives". *Jurnal Mahkamah : Kajian Ilmu Hukum Dan Hukum Islam* 9, no. 1 (2024):19-32. <https://doi.org/10.25217/jm.v9i1.4623>.

coexistence of symbolic hierarchy and practical reciprocity. Whereas the *mubādalāh* approach primarily provides a normative framework for reciprocal rights and obligations, the present study demonstrates how such reciprocity is negotiated within families that continue to recognize male leadership as a legitimate religious and cultural reference. This suggests that the transformation of patriarchal relations does not necessarily require the disappearance of hierarchy; instead, the meaning and practical boundaries of authority can change through everyday interaction.

These findings indicate that patriarchal authority within pesantren communities is increasingly expressed through negotiated partnership rather than rigid hierarchical domination.⁴⁸ This negotiated partnership is particularly significant because women do not appear to exercise agency by simply rejecting patriarchal norms. Instead, they work within religiously and culturally legitimate frameworks to influence decisions, redistribute responsibilities, and establish reciprocal expectations between spouses. Patriarchal authority therefore persists as a normative reference while its practical expression becomes more flexible and relational. This finding resonates with Saba Mahmood's (2005) concept of women's agency, which argues that agency does not necessarily emerge through direct resistance to religious traditions but may instead be expressed through women's active engagement with existing normative and religious frameworks.⁴⁹ Rather than rejecting the principle of male leadership, many women in this study reinterpret its practical implications by emphasizing *musyawarah* (consultation), reciprocity, and shared responsibility within family life. In this sense, agency is exercised through negotiation and participation rather than confrontation.

The timing and form of this reinterpretation can therefore be understood in relation to broader changes in family life. Women's increasing participation in education, economic activities, and household decision-making creates new practical expectations concerning shared responsibility, while religious and cultural norms continue to provide the moral language through which these changes are negotiated. The result

⁴⁸ Habib Sulthon Asnawi and Habib Ismail. "Discrimination against Wife in the Perspective of CEDAW and Islam Mubādalāh." *Ijtihad: Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam dan Kemanusiaan* 20, no. 2 (2020): 253–268. <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijtihad.v20i2.253-268>.

⁴⁹ Saba Mahmood. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

is neither a complete reproduction of traditional patriarchy nor its straightforward rejection, but a process in which authority is continuously recalibrated in response to changing social realities.

Taken together, the findings suggest that patriarchal authority within *pesantren* communities in Bangkalan represents a dynamic arrangement where religious teachings, local cultural values, and women's agency continuously interact. Although male leadership remains an important normative principle, its implementation is increasingly shaped by partnership, consultation, and mutual respect, aligning with research showing that women in *pesantren* actively negotiate their positions through ethical, adaptive, and culturally legitimate strategies to gain recognition without openly rejecting prevailing religious norms.⁵⁰ Accordingly, this study conceptualizes these practices as negotiated patriarchy: a condition in which patriarchal authority remains institutionally and culturally recognizable but is continuously negotiated in its everyday application. This concept moves beyond a simple opposition between patriarchal reproduction and resistance by highlighting the processes through which authority is accommodated, contested, and reshaped. In Bangkalan's *pesantren* communities, negotiated patriarchy explains why male leadership can remain symbolically legitimate while women simultaneously exercise meaningful influence over family decisions. Gender relations are therefore neither entirely hierarchical nor fully egalitarian; they are produced through ongoing negotiation between religious norms, Madurese cultural expectations, and changing marital practices.

Negotiating Economic Responsibilities and Domestic Roles

Economic responsibility remains a primary domain through which patriarchal authority is constructed within *pesantren* families in Bangkalan. At the analytical level of Islamic law, providing family income is generally understood as the husband's principal obligation (*nafkah*). This normative principle should, however, be distinguished from the ways in which religious actors interpret the obligation and from how it is subsequently practiced within households. Islamic family law recognizes the husband as the primary provider, contemporary Muslim families increasingly negotiate domestic and economic responsibilities

⁵⁰ Bella, Sinta, Helmi Syaifuddin, and Jamilah. "From Subordination to Authority: Women's Negotiation in Pesantren's Patriarchal Order". *MUMTAZ : Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 5 no. 4 (2026): 1182-1205. <https://doi.org/10.69552/mumtaz.v5i4.3624>.

through spousal cooperation.⁵¹ Such collaborative strategies strengthen family resilience without negating the husband's obligation of *nafkah* [1]. Furthermore, the level of contemporary religious and socio-legal discourse, this principle has been critically reinterpreted. Ardiansyah et al. (2025) argue that patriarchal authority (*qiwāmah*) in Islamic family law is not fixed but socially constructed through interpretive traditions, which can be dynamically re-evaluated using justice-oriented hermeneutics such as *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*.⁵²

The distinction between legal prescription and religious interpretation is also evident in studies of *qawwām*. Nuroniyah (2023) found that *kyai* continue to interpret the concept of *qawwām* (Qur'an 4:34) as assigning men primary responsibility for family leadership and economic maintenance, but the interpretation varies according to textual, eclectic, or contextual approaches. More contextual interpretations encourage a more balanced distribution of rights and responsibilities between husbands and wives while preserving the normative principle of male leadership.⁵³ Thus, Islamic law provides a normative framework, whereas religious discourse mediates that framework through particular interpretive approaches.

The findings are further supported by Nur Hidayah (2023)⁵⁴, who argues that Islamic law recognizes women's participation in economic activities and entrepreneurship without eliminating the husband's legal obligation to provide *nafkah*. Consequently, women's economic contribution should be understood as strengthening household welfare rather than replacing the husband's primary responsibility for family maintenance. This represents the normative and interpretive level of the

⁵¹ Asrizal Saiin, Firdaus, Maulana Yusuf, Supani, Muchimah, and Anwar M. Radiamoda. "Walking Together: Dynamics of Muslim Wives' Dual Role in Rural Areas Pursuing Career and Household Responsibilities." *El-Mashlahah* 14 no. 1 (2024): 127–148. <https://doi.org/10.23971/el-mashlahah.v14i1.7827>

⁵² Al Fiqri Ardiansyah, Marhamah Annazah Tambunan, Randy Putra Alamsyah, Idrus Afandi Akbar, and Nuruddin Nuruddin. "Qiwāmah And Epistemic Violence: A Critical Socio-Legal Analysis of Gendered Authority In Islamic Family Law". *Mawaddah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 3, no. 2 (2025): 605-26. <https://doi.org/10.52496/mjhki.v3i2.100>.

⁵³ Wardah Nuroniyah. "Gender Discourses within Pesantren in Cirebon: Understanding the Typologies of Kyais' Interpretations of the Concept of *Qawwām*." *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 7, no. 2 (2023): 875-896 <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v7i2.15689>

⁵⁴ Nur Hidayah. "Gender, Economy, and the Law: Women Entrepreneurs in Indonesian and Islamic Legal Perspectives." *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 7 no. 2 (2023): 1171–1193. <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v7i2.17944>

discussion rather than evidence of how households necessarily organize their economic responsibilities in practice.

The empirical findings demonstrate how these normative and interpretive principles are translated into everyday household relations. Several participants emphasized that financial provision constitutes not merely a social expectation but also a religious responsibility. In their understanding, male leadership derives its legitimacy from the husband's commitment to safeguarding the family's material and moral well-being. Consequently, economic provision continues to function as a significant source of symbolic authority within marital relationships. This finding indicates that patriarchal norms remain influential in shaping expectations regarding gender roles and family responsibilities. Rather than treating these accounts as direct evidence of Islamic law itself, they are interpreted as participants' understandings of religious obligations and their implications for marital authority.

Nevertheless, the empirical data also demonstrate that the traditional model of a sole male breadwinner has become increasingly difficult to sustain in contemporary socio-economic conditions. Many female participants reported engaging in various income-generating activities, including teaching, small-scale entrepreneurship, trading, and other forms of paid work. In several households, women's earnings contributed substantially to meeting family needs, financing children's education, and enhancing overall household resilience. These practices illustrate a further analytical step: household members do not simply reproduce the legal obligation or religious interpretation but negotiate economic responsibilities according to their material circumstances. This finding corresponds with a study which demonstrates that contemporary Muslim families increasingly reinterpret *nafkah* through the perspective of *maqāṣid al-usrah*, whereby financial responsibility is adapted to changing economic realities without abandoning the ethical objectives of Islamic family law. Legal consciousness and socio-economic conditions encourage a more flexible understanding of financial responsibility while maintaining justice and family welfare as primary objectives.⁵⁵

Interestingly, female economic participation was rarely framed as a challenge to male authority. Instead, most women described their

⁵⁵ Fadhilah, Nur, Nuril Hidayati, Siti Aisyah, and Nurmahmudah. 2025. "Reevaluating Nafkah Obligations: Female Muslim Scholars' Insight and Ethics of Gendered Finance in Indonesian Families." *AL-IHKAM: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial* 20 no. 2 (2025): 458-489). <https://doi.org/10.19105/al-lhkam.v20i2.18461>

contributions as an extension of mutual cooperation and collective responsibility within marriage. As one participant explained, supporting the family economy was viewed not as a means of replacing the husband's role but as a practical strategy for maintaining family stability amidst rising economic demands. Such narratives suggest that women's economic involvement is generally understood within a framework of partnership rather than competition. This distinction is important because it shows that the participants' household practices may extend beyond the formal legal prescription while remaining compatible with their religious understanding of marital roles. It can be seen from the interview with the informant as below:

“A father is obliged to provide financial support for his wife and children, while the mother takes care of the children at home. Yes, some mothers also help by selling basic goods, working in the rice fields, and other activities. Islamic teachings have explained that providing for the family is the responsibility of the father. Even if the wife has been divorced, during the *'iddah* period the father is still obliged to provide material support, while the children remain the father's responsibility in terms of maintenance and education costs.”⁵⁶

The findings indicate that women's economic contributions have expanded their influence in household decision-making, where matters like children's education, expenditures, and family planning are frequently discussed through *musyawarah* (consultation) between spouses. At the level of household practice, however, economic contribution and decision-making are not organized exclusively according to the formal distinction between male provider and female dependent. Women's participation in income generation can increase their influence over expenditures, children's education, and family planning, while men may retain symbolic responsibility as heads of household. This empirical finding resonates with a study arguing that the fulfillment of financial support (*nafkah*) should be contextualized through reciprocal values (*mubāḍalah*), which strengthen Muslim families by promoting shared responsibility and mutual commitment rather than unilateral authority.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Interview with informant Ms Z

⁵⁷Devika Rosa Guspita, Ahmad Hasan Ridwan, Siah Khosi'ah, Ending Solehuddin, and Badriyah Badriyah. “The Principle of Family Resilience in Islamic Law and Its Relevance to Cilegon's Regional Regulation Number 1/2019.” *Al-Risalah*:

Nevertheless, decision-making practices often reflect a collaborative pattern rather than unilateral male control, suggesting that family authority is continuously negotiated through everyday social interactions. This empirical finding resonates with a study arguing that the fulfillment of financial support (*nafkah*) should be contextualized through reciprocal values (*mubāḍalah*), which strengthen Muslim families by promoting shared responsibility and mutual commitment rather than unilateral authority.⁵⁸

These dynamics resonate with the Qur'anic conception of marriage as a relationship grounded in *sakinah* (tranquility), *mawaddah* (affection), and *rahmah* (compassion), as articulated in *Surah Ar-Rum* (30:21). For many participants, the ideal Muslim family is not defined by absolute male control but by cooperation, mutual support, and shared responsibility between spouses. Consequently, economic collaboration is often perceived as a practical manifestation of these Islamic values rather than a departure from religious norms. This interpretation is also compatible with contemporary Islamic family law scholarship that views family harmony as being achieved through proportional rights and obligations, reciprocal cooperation, and the pursuit of *maṣlaḥah* in responding to changing social and economic realities.⁵⁹ Here, the Qur'anic and legal principles function as normative resources through which participants make sense of their practices, while the actual distribution of economic responsibilities remains situated within household circumstances.

The findings support Kandiyoti's (1988) concept of the patriarchal bargain, which suggests that women frequently negotiate their positions within existing patriarchal structures rather than openly resisting them.⁶⁰ In *pesantren* families, women do not necessarily reject the normative principle of male leadership; instead, they create spaces for influence

Forum Kajian Hukum dan Sosial Kemasyarakatan 25, no. 1 (2025): 20–32. <https://doi.org/10.30631/alrisalah.v25i1.182>

⁵⁸ Linda Firdawaty, Zuhraini Zuhraini, and Mokhammad Samson Fajar. "Contextualization of Reciprocal Values in the Fulfillment of Financial Support As an Effort to Strengthen Families". *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 9 no. 2 (2024):435-62. <https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v9i2.10215>.

⁵⁹ Firdaus, Firdaus, Mursal Mursal, Desminar Desminar, and Syaflin Halim. "The Principles of the Concept of Maslahah in Islamic Family Law of a Wife Looking for Living Husband Taking Care of Household Work". *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 9 no. 1 (2024):259-84. <https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v9i1.8464>.

⁶⁰ Kandiyoti, Deniz. 1988. "Bargaining with Patriarchy." *Gender & Society* 2 (3): 274–290.

through their economic contributions, educational achievements, and involvement in decision-making. This aligns with Kabeer's (1999) notion of agency, which explains how women actively shape family outcomes while operating within socially accepted frameworks.⁶¹ Consequently, everyday family practices increasingly reflect shared economic responsibilities and collaborative decision-making, producing a hybrid pattern where traditional male authority coexists with expanding opportunities for women's participation. This pattern is therefore best understood as an empirical negotiation of patriarchal norms rather than as a direct transformation of Islamic legal obligations.

This empirical pattern is consistent with recent developments in Islamic family law scholarship that emphasize the dynamic interpretation of family norms in response to changing social realities. Recent studies demonstrate that Islamic family law increasingly develops through processes of legal negotiation to address contemporary family issues,⁶² while reform in Muslim societies should harmonize classical jurisprudence with gender justice rather than replacing religious norms altogether.⁶³ These perspectives reinforce the present finding that patriarchal authority and women's agency coexist through continuous negotiation. Crucially, unlike previous theological or legal studies, this research demonstrates empirically that this reinterpretation occurs through everyday marital practices within Madurese *pesantren* families via *musyawarah* (consultation), reciprocal economic contributions, and shared decision-making.

Taken together, the findings demonstrate three analytically distinct but interconnected levels. First, Islamic family law establishes the normative obligation of the husband to provide *nafkah*. Second, religious discourse interprets and mediates this obligation through concepts such as *qiwamah*, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, and *mubādalāh*. Third, household

⁶¹ Naila Kabeer. "Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment." *Development and Change* 30 no. 3 (1999): 435–464.

⁶² Nasution, Hotnidah, and Ahmad Rifqi Muchtar. "Negotiating Islamic Law: The Practice of Inheritance Distribution in Polygamous Marriages in Indonesian Islamic Courts." *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 18 no. 1 (2024): 125–144. <https://doi.org/10.24090/mnh.v18i1.10921>

⁶³ Husain, Husain, Achmad Lubabul Chadziq, Fitri Sari Setyorini, Nur Faizah, and Siti Khadijah Abdullah Sanek. "The Dynamics of Family Law Reform in Muslim Societies: A Comparative Fiqh Analysis of Gender Justice and Legal Modernization." *Mawaddah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 4 no. 1 (2026): 143–172. <https://doi.org/10.52496/mjhki.v4i1.74>

practice translates these norms into context-specific arrangements in which women may contribute economically, participate in decision-making, and negotiate responsibilities without necessarily rejecting the husband's normative role. The significance of the present study therefore lies not in claiming that household practices replace Islamic law, but in demonstrating how Madurese *pesantren* families negotiate the implementation of religiously informed gender roles within changing socio-economic conditions.

Women's Agency and Marital Decision-Making

The findings reveal that women within *pesantren* communities in Bangkalan are not merely passive recipients of patriarchal norms but active participants in shaping marital and family decisions. Although male leadership continues to be recognized as a normative principle, women's narratives demonstrate that decision-making processes within families frequently involve consultation, negotiation, and mutual consideration. However, women's agency should not be understood as evidence that patriarchal authority has been eliminated. The empirical accounts reveal variation: some negotiations result in mutual agreement, whereas others involve disagreement, unequal bargaining power, or the acceptance of decisions initially preferred by husbands. This finding is consistent with a study on Muslim families demonstrates that marital relationships are maintained through *musyāwarah*, mutual accountability, and shared responsibility in responding to domestic and economic challenges. Rather than reflecting rigid patriarchal authority, family leadership is practiced through ethical negotiation and cooperation between spouses, thereby strengthening household resilience.⁶⁴

Several female participants reported that important decisions concerning marriage, children's education, family finances, residential arrangements, and social obligations were commonly discussed between spouses before any final decision was made. While husbands often retained formal authority as heads of households, wives played a significant role in providing opinions, evaluating alternatives, and influencing outcomes. In many cases, participants described marital decision-making as a collaborative process rather than a hierarchical one. Nevertheless, consultation did not always mean equal bargaining power.

⁶⁴ Hidayati, Tri Wahyu, Siti Robikah, Muhyar Fanani, and Ahmad Baha. "From Doctrine to Domestic Resilience: The Lived Meaning of *Mīṣāqan* Ghalīẓan Among Salafi Families". *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 20, no. 1 (2026): 99-114. <https://doi.org/10.24090/mnh.v20i1.15475>.

Some participants indicated that the husband's preference could remain decisive when disagreement persisted, particularly in matters closely associated with religious expectations, household authority, or major family decisions. Thus, *musyawarah* may function both as a mechanism for shared decision-making and as a process through which wives negotiate within an existing asymmetry of authority. This finding also resonates with a study who argue that family resilience within Muslim communities depends largely on communication, consultation, and cooperation between husbands and wives in addressing economic and social pressures. Their study suggests that collaborative decision-making strengthens family stability and minimizes domestic conflict, even under difficult socio-economic circumstances.⁶⁵

This pattern was particularly evident in matters related to children's education. Female participants frequently emphasized their active involvement in selecting schools, determining educational priorities, and supervising children's religious and academic development. Given that women often spend more time managing domestic affairs and caring for children, their perspectives were considered essential in family discussions. Consequently, educational decisions were commonly reached through mutual agreement rather than unilateral authority. However, the degree of influence varied across households. Women's involvement in educational decisions did not necessarily translate into equal authority in other domains, particularly where decisions were perceived as falling within the husband's responsibility as family leader. This variation indicates that women's agency is domain-specific rather than uniformly distributed across household decision-making. Women's participation in educational decision-making can therefore be understood as a form of situated agency: women exercise influence within socially recognized boundaries while negotiating the extent of their participation with their husbands.

Women's agency was also visible in decisions concerning economic management and household expenditures. Although husbands generally remained responsible for providing financial support, many women reported having substantial discretion in managing household finances and allocating resources for daily needs. In some families, wives played a central role in budgeting, savings management, and planning

⁶⁵ Asman Asman and Resali bin Muda "Social Dynamics on the Increasing Divorce of Malay Communities During COVID-19 in Sambas West Kalimantan, Indonesia Perspective of Islamic Family Law". *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 17, no. 2 (2023): 153-66. <https://doi.org/10.24090/mnh.v17i2.8235>.

long-term financial goals. Such responsibilities enabled women to exercise influence over household priorities and family welfare. Yet, economic responsibility did not necessarily produce equivalent decision-making authority. Women's contributions could increase their practical influence while leaving the symbolic and normative authority of the husband largely intact. This distinction is important because participation and authority did not always increase at the same pace.

Unlike previous studies that primarily emphasize the normative dimensions of Islamic family law, the present research demonstrates empirically that women in Madurese pesantren families exercise agency through everyday financial management, educational planning, and domestic consultation. At the same time, the findings demonstrate that this negotiation has limits. Women may exercise considerable influence in everyday matters while accepting husbands' greater authority in decisions understood to involve religious obligations, family leadership, or major household choices. Agency therefore operates within, rather than entirely outside, the existing patriarchal framework. Practical decision-making to include the interpretation and negotiation of religious norms. Rather than viewing religious teachings as fixed constraints, many female participants actively engaged with Islamic values to justify their involvement in family affairs. Several informants argued that consultation (*musyawarah*), mutual respect, and shared responsibility are fundamental Islamic principles that support women's participation in decision-making processes. However, not all participants necessarily interpreted these principles in the same way. The coexistence of different understandings of religious authority means that women's attempts to justify participation may be accepted, negotiated, or constrained depending on the husband's interpretation and the particular family context. This finding resonates with a study who demonstrate that the *maqāṣid cum-mubādalah* methodology developed by the Indonesian Congress of Women Ulama (KUPI) places women's lived experiences at the center of Islamic legal reasoning. Their study argues that Islamic teachings should be interpreted through reciprocity, justice, and the realization of public welfare (*maṣlaḥah*), thereby providing strong religious legitimacy for women's participation in family and social decision-making.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, Nor Ismah, Samia Kotele, Wakhit Hasyim, and Fadzila Din. "Maqāṣid cum-Mubādalah Methodology of KUPI: Centering Women's Experiences in Islamic Law for Gender-Just Fiqh." *AL-IHKAM: Jurnal Hukum &*

The present study nevertheless contributes an important empirical perspective. The findings reveal that women do not merely invoke Islamic values as abstract norms but actively employ them to negotiate authority, justify participation in household governance, and strengthen collaborative decision-making through *musyawarah*. Nevertheless, religious discourse can function in two directions: it can provide women with resources for negotiating greater participation, but it can also reinforce expectations concerning obedience, male leadership, and gendered responsibilities. Religious discourse should therefore be understood not simply as a resource for empowerment but as a contested interpretive field within which women's agency is negotiated.

These findings resonate with Saba Mahmood's understanding of agency as a capacity that may emerge through engagement with, rather than resistance to, prevailing religious and social norms. Women in pesantren communities do not necessarily seek to overturn patriarchal structures; instead, they strategically navigate and reinterpret those structures to create meaningful spaces for participation and influence. Their agency is therefore embedded within religious commitments and cultural values rather than positioned in opposition to them. This interpretation is supported by Kodir et al. (2024), who argue that the *maqāṣid cum-mubādalāh* methodology places women's lived experiences at the center of Islamic legal reasoning.⁶⁷ Rather than treating religious texts as instruments of domination, they demonstrate that Islamic teachings can be interpreted through the principles of reciprocity, justice, and public benefit (*maṣlaḥah*), thereby providing religious legitimacy for women's active participation in family life. The present findings extend this perspective by showing that such interpretive resources do not automatically produce equal outcomes. Their effects depend on the interaction between religious interpretation, marital relationships, household circumstances, and existing distributions of authority.

The findings also support Deniz Kandiyoti's notion of the patriarchal bargain, whereby women negotiate opportunities and influence within existing patriarchal arrangements. Rather than rejecting the symbolic authority of male leadership, many women accept certain gender norms while simultaneously expanding their roles in decision-

Pranata Sosial 19, no. 2 (2024): 519-545. <https://doi.org/10.19105/al-lhkam.v19i2.16617>

⁶⁷ Ibid

making and family governance. Through this process, women secure greater participation in family affairs without disrupting the social legitimacy afforded by religious and cultural expectations. However, the patriarchal bargain also highlights the unequal conditions under which such negotiation takes place. Women's accommodation of male authority may provide access to influence in some areas while limiting their capacity to challenge decisions in others. Thus, successful negotiation should not be equated with equality, and accommodation should not automatically be interpreted as empowerment.

Importantly, the exercise of agency among women in *pesantren* communities should not be interpreted solely as an individual achievement. Instead, it is shaped by broader social transformations, including increased access to education, expanding economic opportunities, and greater exposure to diverse interpretations of Islamic teachings. These developments have contributed to a gradual reconfiguration of gender relations, enabling women to participate more actively in family decision-making while remaining embedded within the moral framework of *pesantren* life. At the same time, the findings do not suggest a uniform transformation across all households. Differences in husbands' attitudes, economic circumstances, interpretations of religious obligations, and the importance attached to traditional gender roles create different opportunities and constraints for women's agency. The present findings therefore extend previous studies by demonstrating that these broader transformations are reflected in everyday marital practices, where women actively negotiate authority through consultation, reciprocal responsibility, and shared decision-making while maintaining religious legitimacy.

Taken together, the findings suggest that marital decision-making within *pesantren* communities is characterized by a dynamic interplay between patriarchal authority and women's agency. While traditional norms continue to recognize men as family leaders, women actively contribute to shaping decisions that affect family life. However, the empirical evidence also shows that this process is neither uniformly collaborative nor consistently successful. Negotiations may produce agreement, partial compromise, accommodation, or the continuation of husbands' preferences. Conflict and unequal bargaining power remain possible within the same relationships in which *musyawarah* and cooperation occur. This indicates that gender relations within *pesantren* marriages are increasingly characterized by negotiation, collaboration, and shared responsibility but remain structured by unequal authority

rather than rigid being completely free from hierarchical control. Consequently, the findings reinforce the argument that patriarchy within contemporary *pesantren* communities is not a fixed structure of domination but a continuously negotiated social arrangement shaped by the interaction of Islamic values, local culture, and women's everyday agency. Women's agency should therefore be understood as relational and situated: it creates meaningful spaces for influence, but its realization remains conditioned by the patriarchal structures within which marital negotiations take place.

Reinterpreting Religious Teachings and Gender Relations

The findings reveal that religious teachings constitute a central reference in shaping gender relations and marriage practices within *pesantren* communities in Bangkalan. However, the significance of religious discourse lies not simply in the fact that participants refer to the Qur'an, hadith, and classical Islamic scholarship, but in how these sources are interpreted and mobilized to negotiate competing understandings of gender and marital authority. The participants' narratives indicate at least two overlapping interpretive orientations: a textual orientation, which emphasizes established religious prescriptions concerning male leadership and differentiated marital responsibilities, and a contextual-ethical orientation, which emphasizes justice (*'adl*), reciprocity, consultation (*musyawarah*), compassion, and mutual responsibility. Religious discourse therefore operates not as a fixed set of rules but as an interpretive framework through which participants establish, negotiate, and sometimes contest the legitimacy of particular marital practices.

This interpretive diversity is evident in the different ways participants move between textual references and broader ethical principles. Participants who emphasized male leadership tended to read gender relations through a relatively textual and normative lens, treating differentiated roles as part of the religious structure of marriage. By contrast, other participants approached the same religious tradition through its ethical objectives, emphasizing whether a particular interpretation produces justice, dignity, reciprocity, and family harmony. The difference is therefore not simply a difference in religious belief; it reflects different interpretive mechanisms for connecting scriptural principles with contemporary marital practices.

Several participants referred to Surah An-Nahl (16:58–59), which condemns the pre-Islamic practice of devaluing daughters and treating women as a source of shame. Their interpretation moves beyond the

immediate historical context of the verse by drawing a contextual and ethical implication for contemporary gender relations. They read the condemnation of female devaluation as an indication of a broader Qur'anic commitment to human dignity. On this basis, participants reasoned that interpretations of religious teachings that produce the marginalization or humiliation of women should be reconsidered in light of the Qur'an's wider moral orientation. This represents a contextualizing mode of interpretation in which the historical meaning of the text is connected to its underlying ethical principle and then applied to present-day family relations.

Similarly, a number of informants emphasized Surah Al-Ahzab (33:35), which places men and women in equal positions regarding faith, devotion, moral responsibility, and spiritual reward. Participants used this verse to distinguish between equality in human and spiritual worth and differentiation in social or family responsibilities. Their reasoning was therefore not necessarily based on eliminating all gender distinctions, but on preventing such distinctions from becoming a justification for superiority or inferiority. This interpretive move resembles a *maqāṣid*-oriented reading because participants prioritized the broader objectives of dignity, moral responsibility, and justice when evaluating the meaning of differentiated gender roles. At the same time, their accounts suggest a relational understanding of gender in which responsibilities are interpreted through reciprocity rather than unilateral authority.

These interpretations stand in contrast to more conservative understandings that emphasize male authority as the defining characteristic of marital relations. Nevertheless, the data show that acceptance of male leadership does not automatically entail acceptance of unilateral decision-making. Participants who recognized male leadership frequently qualified its exercise through consultation, fairness, and mutual respect. This qualification is analytically important because it shows how participants negotiate the relationship between a textual understanding of differentiated authority and a contextual understanding of ethical marital conduct. In practice, *musyawarah* becomes an interpretive mechanism through which normative authority is translated into negotiated family decision-making. Such views were frequently linked to the Qur'anic ideal of marriage articulated in Surah Ar-Rum (30:21), which describes marital relationships as being founded upon *sakinah* (tranquility), *mawaddah* (affection), and *rahmah* (compassion). Participants did not merely cite these concepts as

theological ideals; they used them as evaluative criteria for determining whether particular forms of marital authority were considered legitimate. In this sense, *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* function as interpretive principles that mediate between scriptural norms and everyday family practices. A form of authority perceived as producing consultation, care, and family harmony could therefore be considered religiously legitimate, whereas authority exercised through coercion or disregard for the wife's interests could be viewed as inconsistent with the ethical purposes of marriage.

The findings further demonstrate that women actively engage in the interpretation of religious teachings rather than merely accepting dominant interpretations. Female participants frequently drew upon Islamic concepts such as justice (*'adl*), consultation (*musyawarah*), and mutual responsibility to justify their participation in family decision-making. This process demonstrates that women's agency operates partly through internal reinterpretation rather than explicit rejection of religious authority. Women strategically selected religious concepts that could legitimate their participation in decision-making while remaining within the accepted religious vocabulary of the *pesantren*. Their interpretive strategy can therefore be understood as a form of *mubādalāh*-oriented reasoning, insofar as marital rights and responsibilities are understood relationally and reciprocally rather than exclusively through a one-directional model of male authority. Rather than abandoning religious norms, women reconnected those norms to principles of reciprocity and shared responsibility.

This finding resonates with contemporary Muslim feminist scholarship, particularly the works of Amina Wadud and Asma Barlas, which argue that gender inequality often emerges not from the Qur'an itself but from patriarchal interpretations that developed within specific historical and social contexts. The experiences of women in *pesantren* communities similarly indicate that the meaning of religious texts is mediated by interpretive choices. Participants' use of contextual, ethical, and reciprocal reasoning demonstrates that the Qur'an can function simultaneously as a source of normative authority and as a resource for questioning particular applications of patriarchal norms. This does not mean that participants necessarily reject classical Islamic authority; rather, they negotiate between inherited interpretations and ethical principles that they consider equally authoritative within the Islamic tradition.

This pattern is consistent with Mustopa (2024), who demonstrates that the interpretation of Qur'anic verses on Islamic family law is neither singular nor static but is shaped by diverse exegetical traditions that influence contemporary understandings of marriage, family leadership, and spousal responsibilities. His study shows that variations in the interpretation of family law verses provide different legal and ethical foundations for regulating marital relations while remaining grounded in the Qur'anic tradition. This finding is consistent with Mustopa (2024),⁶⁸ who demonstrates that the interpretation of Qur'anic verses on Islamic family law is neither singular nor static but is shaped by diverse exegetical traditions that influence contemporary understandings of marriage, family leadership, and spousal responsibilities. His study shows that variations in the interpretation of family law verses provide different legal and ethical foundations for regulating marital relations while remaining grounded in the Qur'anic tradition.

The findings are further supported by Hakim, et al (2025), whose study of marriage practices within an Indonesian pesantren demonstrates that religious authority is constructed through the integration of Qur'anic teachings, hadith, and classical Islamic scholarship.⁶⁹ Their argument is particularly relevant to the present findings because it demonstrates that religious authority is mediated through processes of interpretation and transmission rather than derived automatically from the text itself. In the Bangkalan context, participants similarly transformed scriptural references into practical arguments about marital responsibilities. The interpretive process therefore occurs at the intersection of textual authority, pesantren traditions, and everyday family experience.

Unlike previous studies that primarily examine the doctrinal foundations of Islamic family law, the present research demonstrates empirically how religious teachings are mobilized by both men and women during everyday family interactions. More importantly, the findings reveal how participants move between textual and contextual reasoning. Scriptural references concerning male leadership and differentiated responsibilities provide a normative starting point, while

⁶⁸ Mustopa. "Qira'at Diversity in Islamic Family Law Verses: Implications for Indonesian Marriage Law". *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam*, 8 no. 2 (2024), 1257-1279. <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v8i2.23513>

⁶⁹ Abdul Hakim, Rifki Ahmad Fahrezi, Asmaul Husna, Abdul Majid, and M. Tahir A. "The Urgency of Understanding Hadith in the Islamic Family Law: Marriage in Pesantren Darul Istiqamah, South Sulawesi". *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 9, no. 3 (2025): 1619-44. <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v9.i3.29777>.

principles such as justice, compassion, consultation, and reciprocity are used to determine how those norms should operate within contemporary households. Religious interpretation therefore becomes a process of negotiation between text, ethical objectives, *pesantren* conventions, and lived family experience. The resulting practices cannot be explained adequately by a simple opposition between “patriarchal” and “egalitarian” interpretations because participants frequently combine elements of both.

These findings also support Mahmood's argument that agency within religious communities should not be reduced to acts of resistance against tradition. Instead, women may exercise agency through the selective appropriation, reinterpretation, and application of religious teachings in ways that expand their participation and influence. Within *pesantren* families, women often negotiate gender relations by appealing to religious values that emphasize partnership, compassion, and justice rather than confrontation or rejection of established norms. This interpretation is also consistent with Mustopa's study, which demonstrates that Islamic family law is shaped by diverse interpretations of Qur'anic family-law verses (*qirā'āt*), resulting in multiple legitimate understandings of marital responsibilities and family relations. His study argues that Islamic legal interpretation is dynamic rather than monolithic, thereby providing space for contextual understandings of marriage and gender relations that remain firmly grounded in the Qur'anic tradition. The present findings extend this argument from the level of exegetical and legal interpretation to everyday marital practice: participants themselves become interpreters who select, combine, and apply religious principles according to the circumstances of family life.

Taken together, these findings indicate that religious teachings function not merely as instruments for reproducing patriarchal authority but also as resources for negotiating and transforming gender relations. The interaction between Islamic teachings, local Madurese culture, and women's agency produces multiple interpretive positions in which textual norms, ethical objectives, and lived experience are continually reconciled. The analysis therefore suggests that religious interpretation within *pesantren* communities operates through several interconnected mechanisms: textual reference to Qur'an and hadith; contextualization of scriptural principles to contemporary family circumstances; *maqāṣid*-oriented reasoning through justice, dignity, and family welfare; and reciprocal reasoning reflected in *mubāḍalah* and *musyawarah*. These mechanisms allow participants to preserve the legitimacy of Islamic

authority while negotiating how that authority should be enacted in everyday marital relations

This finding is further supported by Fadil et al. (2024),⁷⁰ whose study on religious moderation and family resilience argues that Islamic legal values contribute to family resilience when interpreted through principles of moderation, dialogue, and social harmony rather than rigid textualism. Their findings suggest that religious teachings can facilitate adaptive family relationships capable of responding to changing social realities while preserving Islamic ethical values. Consequently, gender relations within *pesantren* communities are best understood as the outcome of an ongoing interpretive process in which scriptural authority is mediated by ethical principles, contextual considerations, reciprocal reasoning, and social negotiation. Rather than treating religious interpretation as a uniform process, the findings show that participants actively determine how religious norms should be applied to concrete marital situations. Patriarchal authority consequently remains present, but its meaning and practical operation are continually negotiated through competing interpretive frameworks.

Negotiated Patriarchy: Toward a Hybrid Model of Gender Relations in *Pesantren* Communities

The findings of this study demonstrate that gender relations within *pesantren* communities in Bangkalan cannot be adequately explained through a simple dichotomy between patriarchy and gender equality. While patriarchal norms continue to shape marital relations, family leadership, and social expectations, these norms are neither absolute nor uncontested. Instead, they are continuously interpreted, negotiated, and adapted through everyday interactions among family members, religious authorities, and the broader *pesantren* community.

The analysis reveals that male leadership remains an important normative principle within marriage. Husbands are generally recognized as family leaders and primary providers, reflecting both Islamic legal traditions and deeply rooted Madurese cultural values. At the same time, women actively participate in household decision-making, contribute to family economies, influence educational choices, and engage in the interpretation of religious teachings. Consequently, authority within the family is exercised through consultation and negotiation rather than

⁷⁰ Fadil, Fadil, Pepy Marwinata, Shofiatul Jannah, and A. Malthuf Siroj. "Religious Moderation and Family Resilience in the City of Malang, Indonesia: The Historical Perspectives of the Islamic Law". *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 8 no. 1 (2024): 236-56. <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v8i1.19821>.

through rigid hierarchical control. This finding is in line with Mustopa (2024),⁷¹ who argues that Islamic family law is characterized by interpretive plurality, allowing religious norms to be contextualized according to changing social realities while remaining rooted in the Qur'anic tradition.

This dynamic indicates that patriarchal structures within pesantren communities are undergoing gradual transformation. Rather than experiencing a direct confrontation between traditional values and modern notions of gender equality, participants negotiate new forms of marital relations that accommodate both continuity and change. Traditional norms concerning male authority remain socially significant, yet their practical implementation increasingly reflects principles of partnership, reciprocity, and shared responsibility.

The findings suggest that religious teachings play a dual role within this process. On the one hand, they provide legitimacy for existing gender arrangements, particularly regarding male leadership and family responsibilities. On the other hand, the same religious sources are frequently invoked to support women's participation, mutual consultation, and ethical equality within marriage. As demonstrated through references to *Surah An-Nahl* (16:58–59), *Surah Al-Ahzab* (33:35), and *Surah Ar-Rum* (30:21), many participants understand Islamic teachings as emphasizing dignity, justice, compassion, and mutual respect rather than male domination. This enables religious discourse to function simultaneously as a source of continuity and transformation.

The interaction between religion, culture, and agency produces what this study conceptualizes as *negotiated patriarchy*. Negotiated patriarchy is defined here as a dynamic process, and, analytically, a conceptual model, in which patriarchal authority remains institutionally and culturally legitimate but is continuously modified through negotiation, reinterpretation, and reciprocal participation within everyday family relations. It is therefore neither a theory intended to replace established theories of patriarchy nor simply a descriptive label for compromise. Rather, it is a mid-range analytical concept that explains how patriarchal authority can persist while its practical form, scope, and exercise are repeatedly renegotiated by women and men.

Three dimensions distinguish negotiated patriarchy. First, authority is retained at the normative level: male leadership may continue

⁷¹ Mustopa., Op.Cit.

to be recognized as religiously or culturally legitimate. Second, authority is negotiated at the relational level: its exercise is mediated through *musyawarah*, reciprocity, women's economic and educational contributions, and participation in household decision-making. Third, authority is reinterpreted at the normative-religious level: participants selectively draw upon Islamic principles of justice, compassion, dignity, and mutual responsibility to determine what legitimate authority should look like in practice. Thus, the defining feature of negotiated patriarchy is not the disappearance of patriarchy, but the separation between the recognition of authority and the manner in which that authority is exercised.

Negotiated Patriarchy and the Patriarchal Bargain

The concept of negotiated patriarchy builds on, but is analytically distinct from, Deniz Kandiyoti's concept of the *patriarchal bargain*. Kandiyoti's framework is particularly useful for explaining how women negotiate within patriarchal structures by accepting, accommodating, or strategically navigating gendered constraints in exchange for security, resources, status, or other benefits. The present findings share this insight but reveal an additional dimension that is insufficiently captured by the notion of bargaining alone: women do not merely negotiate the distribution of benefits within an existing patriarchal order; they also participate in redefining the meaning and legitimate scope of patriarchal authority through religious interpretation and everyday interaction.

Table 1. Comparison of the Concept of Negotiated Patriarchy and Patriarchal Bargain

Analytical dimension	Kandiyoti's Patriarchal Bargain	Negotiated Patriarchy
Primary concern	Women's strategies for navigating patriarchal constraints	Transformation of how patriarchal authority is understood and exercised
Position of patriarchy	Patriarchy provides the structural conditions within which bargaining occurs	Patriarchy remains legitimate but its practical authority is continuously renegotiated
Women's agency	Strategic accommodation,	Accommodation combined with

	compliance, and negotiation within constraints	reinterpretation, participation, and relational renegotiation
Role of religion	Not necessarily central to the analytical mechanism	Religious discourse is a constitutive resource for legitimizing and revising authority
Mechanism of negotiation	Bargaining over security, resources, status, and gendered expectations	<i>Musyawarah</i> , religious reinterpretation, economic contribution, education, and shared decision-making
Outcome	Reproduction or modification of women's position within patriarchy	Hybrid arrangements in which hierarchical legitimacy coexists with partnership and reciprocity
Analytical emphasis	How women navigate patriarchal systems	How patriarchal authority itself is reconfigured through everyday negotiation

The distinction is therefore important. Whereas the *patriarchal bargain* primarily explains women's strategic accommodation to patriarchal structures, negotiated patriarchy explains a reciprocal process in which both women and men participate in determining how authority should operate. The empirical evidence from Bangkalan shows that women are not simply bargaining for a better position within an unchanged hierarchy. Their participation in consultation, religious interpretation, education, and household economic activity contributes to changing the practical meaning of authority itself.

The concept also extends Mahmood's account of agency within religious traditions. Women exercise agency not necessarily by rejecting patriarchal norms, but by working through religiously legitimate categories and practices. Their agency is therefore simultaneously accommodative, interpretive, and transformative. This combination is

particularly significant in *pesantren* communities, where religious legitimacy constitutes an important condition for the acceptability of changes in family relations.

The originality of negotiated patriarchy does not lie simply in applying an existing theory to an Indonesian setting. Its contribution lies in identifying a specific mechanism through which patriarchal authority is simultaneously preserved and transformed. Existing approaches to patriarchy and bargaining tend to emphasize either structural domination or women's strategies for navigating that domination. The present study identifies a third analytical possibility: patriarchal authority may remain normatively legitimate while its substantive operation is transformed through religious reinterpretation, relational negotiation, and women's increased participation in family life.

This conceptualization explains an empirical pattern that would otherwise appear theoretically contradictory: participants may continue to recognize male leadership while simultaneously supporting women's participation in decision-making, economic contribution, educational influence, and reciprocal marital responsibilities. Negotiated patriarchy therefore explains how hierarchy and partnership can coexist without assuming that one necessarily eliminates the other. The concept is particularly useful for contexts in which religious and cultural legitimacy remain important, because it demonstrates that gender transformation may occur through internal negotiation rather than through an explicit rejection of patriarchal authority.

This study therefore proposes a hybrid model of gender relations within *pesantren* communities. The resulting hybrid model is therefore not a stable compromise. It is an ongoing process in which the boundaries of authority are repeatedly reconstructed according to changing family circumstances, religious understandings, and social expectation. The findings reveal a hybrid configuration in which continuity and transformation are mutually constitutive. Traditional recognition of male leadership provides institutional and cultural continuity, while women's participation in consultation, education, economic activity, and religious interpretation introduces mechanisms of transformation. The hybrid model should therefore not be understood as a midpoint between patriarchy and equality. Rather, it represents a distinct configuration in which hierarchical legitimacy and relational reciprocity operate simultaneously.

The model can be summarized through four interconnected characteristics: (1) normative recognition of male leadership; (2)

relational negotiation of authority; (3) religious reinterpretation through justice, reciprocity, and family welfare; and (4) women's agency exercised through culturally and religiously legitimate practices. These characteristics explain why changes in gender relations within *pesantren* communities may occur incrementally without requiring an explicit rejection of religious or cultural identity.

Accordingly, negotiated patriarchy should be understood as both a conceptual model and an analytical process. As a conceptual model, it identifies the coexistence of patriarchal legitimacy and collaborative marital practices. As a process, it explains how this coexistence is continuously produced through interpretation, negotiation, and everyday interaction. This dual status strengthens its analytical usefulness because it allows the concept to describe both the structure of the observed relationship and the mechanisms through which that relationship changes.

Taken together, the findings indicate that patriarchy in *pesantren* communities is neither simply reproduced nor straightforwardly dismantled. It is selectively retained, qualified, and reconfigured through religious interpretation and social negotiation. The concept of negotiated patriarchy therefore contributes an empirically grounded explanation of how gendered authority can remain culturally and religiously legitimate while simultaneously becoming more consultative, reciprocal, and responsive to women's participation. In the context of Islamic family law, this process suggests that the future development of marital authority lies not necessarily in eliminating the concept of leadership, but in reinterpreting its scope, ethical conditions, and accountability in accordance with justice, *maqāṣid*, mutual responsibility, and lived family realities.

Theoretically, this study contributes to three interconnected fields: gender theory, Islamic family law, and socio-legal studies. For gender theory, the concept of negotiated patriarchy challenges binary understandings of gender relations as either patriarchal domination or movement toward equality. The findings show that hierarchical authority and gender partnership can coexist, with patriarchal authority being retained but simultaneously qualified, negotiated, and partially redistributed through everyday family interactions. Negotiated patriarchy therefore shifts analytical attention from whether patriarchy exists to how authority is produced, legitimized, negotiated, and transformed in practice.

For Islamic family law, the findings offer implications for understanding *qiwāmah* not simply as unilateral male authority but as leadership intertwined with responsibility, provision, consultation (*musyawarah*), justice, and family welfare. The participants' emphasis on fairness, compassion, and reciprocal responsibility suggests that *qiwāmah* can be understood as normative leadership whose exercise remains subject to ethical and relational accountability. This interpretation also supports a *maqāṣid*-oriented perspective in which marital authority is evaluated not only through formal hierarchy but also through its contribution to the dignity, welfare, and justice of both spouses. Thus, the findings demonstrate how Islamic legal concepts are translated and negotiated within lived marital practices.

For socio-legal studies, the findings demonstrate that Islamic family-law norms do not automatically determine family behavior but acquire practical meaning through their interaction with Madurese culture, *pesantren* traditions, household conditions, and individual agency. Religious norms are selectively interpreted and negotiated within everyday family interactions, making the household an important site of lived law. Negotiated patriarchy consequently provides a framework for understanding how Islamic legal norms are simultaneously reproduced, adapted, and reconstructed through the interaction of religion, culture, and gendered agency.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that patriarchal norms continue to shape gender relations and marriage practices in *pesantren* communities in Bangkalan, Madura, particularly through male authority and provider roles. However, such authority is neither absolute nor static. Women negotiate and reshape marital roles through household decision-making, economic contributions, education, consultation, and religious interpretation. These findings demonstrate that gender relations extend beyond a simple opposition between domination and equality, revealing the coexistence of continuity and change in contemporary *pesantren* family life. The study proposes negotiated patriarchy as an analytical concept describing a social arrangement in which patriarchal norms remain important cultural and moral references while their implementation is continuously adapted through women's agency and changing social conditions. Rather than viewing patriarchy solely as reproduced or resisted, this concept highlights how marital authority can be accommodated, contested, and reshaped within religious and cultural frameworks. Thus, women's

agency may operate within existing patriarchal structures rather than necessarily requiring direct resistance to them.

The findings also have implications for Islamic family law. Religious interpretations emphasizing justice, human dignity, mutual responsibility, and consultation provide resources for negotiating marital roles. Concepts such as *qiwāmah* should therefore be examined not only as forms of authority but also in relation to responsibility, justice, and lived family practices. Negotiated patriarchy is not proposed as a new legal doctrine or replacement for *fiqh*, but as an analytical lens for understanding how Islamic legal norms are interpreted and practiced within changing social contexts.

For *pesantren*, these findings suggest the importance of religious education that engages critically with classical jurisprudence while addressing contemporary family relations, mutual responsibility, and contextual interpretations of marital authority. At the level of Indonesian legal reform, the study highlights the need to consider not only formal legal rules but also how Islamic family law is interpreted and negotiated within religious and cultural communities. This study is limited to *pesantren* communities in Bangkalan and therefore reflects a specific socio-cultural context. Future research should compare different *pesantren* traditions, regions, and Muslim communities to determine whether negotiated patriarchy operates across diverse settings. Further research could also examine younger generations, women's religious leadership, and digital religious learning to assess whether negotiated patriarchy represents a broader transformation in Muslim family relations or remains context-specific.

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