

The Concept Of Patriarchy And Chronic Roots Thereof In Iran

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Abstract

Patriarchy, as a social system, is characterized by the preponderance of males in positions of power and influence. In this system, men are typically the ones who hold primary power and are predominant in various roles that shape society. These roles include political leadership, where men are often the decision-makers and policy-setters; moral authority, where men are seen as the arbiters of what is right and wrong; and social privilege, where men enjoy advantages in society simply because of their gender.

Moreover, in a patriarchal system, men often have control over property. This control extends not just to physical property, but also to resources and opportunities. This means that men often have more access to education, jobs, and wealth, further reinforcing their power and privilege.

This paper delves into the origins of such a system, tracing back to how and why patriarchy came to be. It explores the historical and cultural contexts that allowed patriarchy to take root and flourish. It also examines the implications of patriarchy, looking at how it affects individuals and societies. This includes an analysis of the inequalities and injustices that arise from a patriarchal system.

Finally, the paper discusses potential solutions to dismantle patriarchal structures. It looks at strategies and approaches that can be used to challenge and change patriarchal norms. This includes promoting gender equality, empowering women, and engaging men in the fight against patriarchy. The goal is to envision and work towards a society where power and privilege are not determined by one's gender, but by one's abilities and contributions.

Introduction

Patriarchy, as a term, finds its roots in the Greek language, with 'patria' translating to 'father' and 'arches' translating to 'rule'. This etymology provides a clear picture of what the term signifies - a system where power is primarily held by men, akin to a father figure ruling over a family. In this system, men are the ones who wield power, while women are largely marginalized and excluded from positions of authority and influence. (Pringle 2020)

This patriarchal system has not been confined to a particular region or culture but has been a prevalent social structure in societies across the globe for centuries. Its longevity can be attributed to various factors, including traditional gender roles, cultural norms, and religious beliefs, among others. (Hunnicut 2009)

The influence of patriarchy extends beyond the personal and familial sphere, shaping our social, political, and economic structures. In the social realm, patriarchy often manifests as gender inequality, with women facing discrimination and bias in various aspects of life. In the political sphere, it results in the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles and decision-making positions. Economically, patriarchy can lead to wage gaps and economic disparity, with women often having less access to resources and opportunities compared to men. (Feminism and Materialism (RLE Feminist Theory) 2013)

Despite advancements in gender equality, the remnants of patriarchal systems continue to persist in our societies today. It is crucial to recognize and challenge these patriarchal structures in order to promote a more equitable and inclusive society. This involves questioning traditional gender norms, advocating for women's rights, and striving for gender parity in all aspects of life. (Transitions 2020)

Origins of Patriarchy

The roots of **patriarchy** are shrouded in the mists of time, as it is a system that has been in place even before the advent of recorded history. This makes it challenging to pinpoint the exact origins of patriarchy with absolute certainty.

However, several theories have been proposed to explain the emergence of patriarchy. One such theory suggests that the rise of patriarchy coincided with the advent of **agriculture** and the concept of **private property**. Prior to this, societies were primarily hunter-gatherer in nature, where resources were shared, and roles were not rigidly defined by gender. (Smuts 1995)

With the shift to agriculture, societies began to settle in one place, and the concept of private property emerged. Land and livestock became valuable assets that needed to be protected and passed down to future generations. In this context, the physical strength of men, which was advantageous in farming and defending property, became a valuable asset. This could have led to men assuming positions of power and authority, thereby giving rise to a patriarchal system.

As societies evolved and became more complex, these patriarchal structures became deeply ingrained. Men continued to hold power, and women were largely excluded from decision-making processes and denied access to resources and opportunities. This system of male dominance has persisted through centuries and continues to shape our societies today. (Rifkin 1980)

It's important to note that these theories are not definitive explanations but rather hypotheses based on anthropological and sociological studies. The origins of patriarchy are a complex issue that is still a subject of ongoing research and debate among scholars. (Acker 1989)

Implications of Patriarchy

Patriarchy, as a social system, has implications that extend far beyond the immediate power dynamics it creates. These implications permeate various aspects of society and have profound effects on the lives of individuals, particularly women.



One of the most significant implications of patriarchy is **gender inequality**. In a patriarchal system, women are often underrepresented in positions of power and authority. This underrepresentation is not limited to just political or corporate leadership roles. It extends to various fields such as academia, science, arts, and more. Women's voices and perspectives are often marginalized, leading to policies and decisions that do not fully take into account the needs and experiences of half the population.

This inequality is not confined to the public sphere but extends to the **personal sphere** as well. In many societies, women bear the majority of domestic work and child-rearing responsibilities, often in addition to their professional duties. This unequal distribution of labor is often overlooked and undervalued, further exacerbating the gender inequality. (Beechey 1979)

Patriarchy also perpetuates **harmful stereotypes**. One such stereotype is the belief that men are inherently superior or more capable than women. This stereotype can manifest in various ways, from the belief that men are better leaders to the idea that certain fields, like STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics), are 'male' fields. These stereotypes can limit opportunities for women and create a self-fulfilling prophecy, where women are discouraged from pursuing certain roles or fields, leading to their underrepresentation. (Fox 1988)

In conclusion, the implications of patriarchy are far-reaching and deeply ingrained in our societies. They contribute to gender inequality and perpetuate harmful stereotypes. Recognizing and challenging these patriarchal structures is a crucial step towards achieving gender equality. (Johnson 2004)

Dismantling Patriarchy

The task of **dismantling patriarchy** is not a simple one. It requires a concerted effort from all members of society, regardless of their gender. This is because patriarchy is not just a system that oppresses women, but also one that perpetuates harmful stereotypes and expectations for men. Therefore, everyone has a role to play in challenging and changing this system.

Education is a crucial tool in this process. It can be used to challenge traditional gender norms and promote equality. This involves not just formal education, but also informal learning experiences. For instance, schools can incorporate gender studies into their curriculum, teaching students about the history and implications of patriarchy. Media and popular culture can also play a role in challenging gender stereotypes and promoting diverse representations of gender.

Legal reforms are another essential component in dismantling patriarchy. Laws and policies must be put in place to ensure equal rights and opportunities for all, regardless of gender. This includes laws that promote equal pay, protect against gender-based violence, and ensure equal representation in political and corporate leadership. Legal reforms also involve challenging and changing laws that perpetuate gender inequality.

Moreover, it's important to note that men must be active participants in this process. As the beneficiaries of patriarchal privilege, men have a responsibility to recognize this privilege and use it to promote change. This involves listening to and learning from women, challenging their own biases and behaviors, and advocating for gender equality. Men can also play a role in

challenging other men, calling out sexist behaviors and attitudes when they see them. (Ortner 2022)

Iranian Patriarchy

The patriarchal system in Iran is deeply rooted in its historical, cultural, and religious fabric. Traditional Iranian society was organized around patriarchal norms, with men holding primary power and authority in both public and private spheres. (Maghsoudi et al. 2018)

The advent of modernization processes in the 20th century brought about significant changes in the societal structure. The Pahlavi dynasty, in particular, initiated a series of reforms aimed at modernizing Iran and reducing the influence of religious institutions in public life. These reforms, however, were met with resistance from various sections of society, leading to a complex interplay of forces that continue to shape Iran's socio-political landscape. (McDonough and Harrison 2013).

The concept of Iranian chronic patriarchy can be understood through the lens of various sociocultural and legal frameworks that shape women's experiences in Iran. This case study synthesizes insights from multiple scholarly sources to illustrate the complexities of patriarchy in Iranian society, particularly focusing on the intersection of gender, culture, and legal structures. Firstly, the patriarchal framework in Iran is deeply embedded in both familial and societal structures, as highlighted by Shakiba et al. (Shakiba et al., 2021). Their research on Kurdish women in Iran illustrates how patriarchal norms govern women's legal status and social positions, leading to perceptions of injustice and oppression. This is further supported by Sattari (Sattari, 2021), who discusses how hypermasculine work cultures in Iran create barriers for women, particularly in engineering fields, thereby reinforcing traditional gender roles and limiting women's professional opportunities.

Moreover, the legal landscape in Iran significantly impacts women's rights and autonomy. Zavareh (2023) examines how Iranian law differentiates between the nationality rights of women based on their marital status, particularly when marrying foreign men. This legal distinction exemplifies how patriarchal norms are institutionalized, affecting women's rights and reinforcing gender inequalities. Such legal frameworks contribute to a broader understanding of how patriarchy operates not only socially but also through formal institutions.

Additionally, the health literacy disparities among genders in Iran, as discussed by Mahmoodi et al. (Mahmoodi et al., 2020), further illustrate the implications of patriarchal structures on women's health and education. The study reveals that social determinants of health are influenced by gender, indicating that patriarchal norms can hinder women's access to vital health information and resources. This aligns with the findings of Ferrant and Nowacka (Ferrant & Nowacka, 2015), who emphasize the role of discriminatory social institutions in perpetuating gender inequality and limiting women's empowerment. The cultural dimensions of Iranian patriarchy are evident in the experiences of women navigating societal expectations. Kiani et al. (2023) explore how Iranian women's travel experiences are constrained by patriarchal concerns, such as surveillance and social stigma. This highlights the pervasive nature of patriarchy in everyday life, where women's autonomy is continually negotiated against societal norms.

We can induce that Iranian chronic patriarchy is a multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses legal, cultural, and social dimensions. The interplay of these factors creates a complex environment where women face systemic barriers to equality and empowerment. The insights



drawn from the literature underscore the necessity for a nuanced understanding of how patriarchy operates in Iran, influencing women's lives across various spheres.

The Islamic Revolution of 1979 marked a significant shift in Iran's societal structure. The revolution led to the establishment of an Islamic Republic, which sought to fuse religious principles with state governance. This fusion has had profound implications for the status of women. The use of the veil in Iran has changed depending on who is in power. The veil as a symbol of oppression has once again moved to center stage in Iran, but it's important to know about the history of veiling – and mandatory unveiling. (Moallem 2005)

In the Islamic Republic, masculine identity is achieved through being a heterosexual man dominant both socially and sexually, and the male bread-winner still represents a preeminent element for the structuration of gender relations. (Sadeghi 2012)

It's important to note that the patriarchal system in Iran is not monolithic and has been subject to various internal and external influences. The dynamics of patriarchy in Iran are complex and multifaceted, reflecting the country's diverse cultural, religious, and political contexts.

Conclusion

In conclusion, **patriarchy** is a system that is deeply rooted in our societies. It is a system that perpetuates gender inequality by privileging men and marginalizing women. This inequality manifests in various ways, from the wage gap to the underrepresentation of women in positions of power and authority. Despite the progress that has been made in recent years towards gender equality, patriarchy continues to persist, indicating that there is still much work to be done.

Education is a powerful tool in this endeavor. By educating ourselves and others about the realities of patriarchy, we can challenge the traditional gender norms that uphold this system. This involves not just learning about the ways in which patriarchy operates, but also unlearning

the biases and prejudices that we may have internalized. Education can empower us to question and challenge the status quo, and to envision a more equitable society.

Legal reform is another crucial aspect of this process. Laws and policies play a significant role in shaping our societies, and it is therefore essential that they promote gender equality. This involves advocating for laws that protect women's rights, as well as challenging laws that perpetuate gender inequality. Legal reform can help to ensure that power and opportunity are not determined by one's gender, but by one's abilities and contributions.

Challenging traditional gender norms is also a key part of dismantling patriarchy. These norms, which dictate how men and women should behave, are often based on stereotypical and outdated views of gender. By challenging these norms, we can create a society where individuals are not confined by their gender, but are free to express themselves and pursue their interests and ambitions.

It's important to note that this is a simplified overview of a complex and multifaceted topic. Patriarchy is a system that has been in place for centuries, and it cannot be fully understood or dismantled without a comprehensive and nuanced understanding. For a more in-depth exploration of this topic, consider reading scholarly articles or books that delve into the various aspects of patriarchy, from its historical origins to its modern-day manifestations. These resources can provide valuable insights and perspectives, and can help to deepen your understanding of this complex issue.

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