

Patriarchal Culture, Gender Relations, and Social Support in The Lives of Soldiers' Wives: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This article aims to examine the relationship between patriarchal culture, gender relations, and social support in the lives of soldiers' wives. **Method:** The research uses a literature review method with a qualitative descriptive approach to various books, national and international scientific articles, as well as scientific documents that discuss patriarchal culture, gender, social support, and military family life. The analysis was carried out using content analysis techniques through the process of identification, selection, thematic grouping, and synthesis of previous research results. **Results:** The results of the study show that the lives of soldiers' wives are still influenced by patriarchal culture which is reflected in the pattern of senior-junior partner relationships, namely the husband is the main determinant of social status and family decision-making, while the wife plays the role of a companion who supports the success of the husband's career. This condition causes wives to face various demands, such as following the husband's mutation, sacrificing personal career development, running domestic burdens independently when the husband is on duty, and reduced emotional support. Therefore, strengthening communication, a fairer division of roles, and developing organizational policies that are responsive to gender equality are important in improving the quality of life of soldiers' families. **Novelty:** The culture of military organization, the mobility of assignments, and the demands of the roles inherent in husbands and wives greatly colored the life of military families. The influence of patriarchal culture and gender construction is also inseparable from military family life.

INTRODUCTION

The welfare of individuals and communities is highly dependent on the family, which is the smallest social unit. Likewise, the quality of the relationship between husband and wife is also the main foundation for the creation of a harmonious, adaptive, and able family to face various life challenges. The husband-wife relationship is not only influenced by individual psychological factors, but also by the social and cultural values that develop in society. One of the cultures that still has a strong influence on family life in Indonesia is the patriarchal culture, which is a social system that places men as the main authority holders in various aspects of life, including in the family [1].

Patriarchal culture is closely related to the concept of gender as a social construct that distinguishes the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of men and women. In contrast to gender (*Sex*) biological in nature, gender is the result of social and cultural constructions that continue to develop in accordance with societal values [2]. In a society that is still influenced by patriarchal culture, men are generally positioned as the main breadwinners and decision-makers, while women are more directed to domestic roles as household managers and caregivers. This condition forms relationships that are not always equal so that it has the potential to cause the subordination of women in family

life and public spaces [3]. Various studies show that patriarchal culture not only affects the division of roles in the family, but also affects the quality of interpersonal relationships between husband and wife. Inequality in gender relations causes communication in the family to tend to take place in one direction, so women's emotional needs are often undermet.

This condition has become increasingly complex in the life of military families, military family life has different characteristics compared to civilian families because it is influenced by hierarchical organizational systems, high discipline, assignment mobility, and preparedness demands inherent in the military profession. Not only soldiers are required to adjust to organizational dynamics, but soldiers' wives are also expected to be able to carry out various roles as husbands, household managers, babysitters, as well as members of soldiers' wives organizations.

From a gender perspective, the life of a soldier's wife shows characteristics that are still influenced by patriarchal culture. The social status of the wife is often associated with the husband's rank, so the wife's social identity is formed more through the husband's position in the military organization than his personal achievements [4]. In addition, various organizational policies also tend to prioritize the career development of husbands over wives. When the husband gets a mutation or assignment, the wife is expected to follow the placement even though he has to sacrifice his job, education, and social network. This condition describes the pattern of relationships *senior-junior partner* as stated by Scanzoni and Scanzoni, it is a marital relationship that provides space for women to contribute economically, but still places the husband as the main determinant of the family's social status [5].

In addition to facing the demands of adapting to organizational dynamics, soldiers' wives also face psychosocial challenges when their husbands carry out assignments within a certain period of time. During the assignment period, the wife must carry out various family functions independently, ranging from childcare, household management, to solving various family problems without the presence of her husband. Various studies show that this condition can cause loneliness, *role overload*, anxiety about the safety of the spouse, as well as reduced emotional support received by the wife [6], [7]. If not balanced with adequate social support from the partner, family, and organizational environment, this condition has the potential to reduce the psychological well-being of the wife and the quality of the marital relationship. Husband-wife relationships built on open communication, mutual respect, and a fairer division of responsibilities have been proven to improve the quality of social support and marital satisfaction [8]. However, studies on the relationship between patriarchal culture, social support, and the lives of soldiers' wives are still relatively limited compared to research on the family in general.

Based on this description, this article aims to examine how patriarchal culture and gender construction affect the lives of soldiers' wives, especially in the formation of marital relationship patterns and the quality of social support. This study is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of the study of family psychology,

social psychology, and gender studies, as well as the basis for the development of policies that are more responsive to the welfare of soldiers' families.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses the literature review with a qualitative descriptive approach. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to synthesize the results of various published research and theories to gain a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between patriarchal culture, gender relations, social support, and the lives of soldiers' wives. Literature review is a research method that utilizes various scientific sources as the main data without collecting data directly from respondents [9].

The source of research data is in the form of secondary data obtained from scientific books, national and international journal articles, proceedings, and scientific documents that discuss the concepts of patriarchy, gender, social support, husband-wife relationships, family psychology, and the dynamics of military family life. Literature is selected based on several criteria, namely relevant to the purpose of the research, published by a publisher or scientific journal that has academic credibility, and provides a theoretical basis and empirical findings regarding the phenomenon being studied. In addition to classical theories, this study also accommodates more recent research results to provide an overview of the development of the concept of patriarchy and social support in family life.

Literature search was carried out through various scientific databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, Science Direct, SpringerLink, and Garuda using the keywords patriarchy, gender, social support, military family, military spouse, marital relationship, gender equality, patriarchal culture, social support, soldiers' wives, and military families. The literature obtained was then selected based on the suitability of the topic, the quality of the publication, and the relevance to the research focus.

Data analysis was carried out using content analysis techniques. The analysis stages include identification of literature, selection based on inclusion criteria, critical reading of each source, grouping based on theme, and synthesis of various research results to find patterns of relationships between patriarchal culture, gender relations, social support, and the lives of TNI Navy soldiers' wives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gender Culture and Patriarchy in Women's Lives

Gender is a social concept that distinguishes the roles, responsibilities, characteristics, and expectations of society towards men and women. In contrast to gender (*Sex*) which is biological, gender is a social and cultural construct that is formed through the process of socialization and inherited from one generation to the next [2]. Thus, the division of roles between men and women is not something that is natural, but the result of cultural processes that develop in society.

Various studies show that gender construction still puts women in a disadvantaged position compared to men. Sulaeman & Homzah explained that in many cultures,

women are often placed in lower social positions and therefore have limited access to resources, power, and decision-making processes [2]. Gender culture still has a strong existence in the lives of Indonesian people, so it affects the way people view the roles of men and women.

Walby defines patriarchy as a system of social structures that allow men to maintain dominance over women through various social institutions, such as family, work, state, culture [1], as well as religion. In patriarchal societies, men are positioned as the primary authority holders in the family, while women are more directed to carry out domestic functions. Fakihi explained that the patriarchal system produces various forms of gender injustice, such as marginalization [3], subordination, stereotypes, gender-based violence, and an unbalanced workload.

Patriarchal values in Indonesia are still part of the social life of the community. Men are perceived as the head of the family, the main breadwinner, and the decision-maker, while women are seen as responsible for household management and childcare. These values are inherited through the process of socialization from an early age so that it is considered something natural (*common sense*) in everyday life [2]. As a result, many women accept this division of roles as natural, even though it is actually the result of cultural construction.

Connell adds that patriarchy does not always appear in the form of real oppression, but is often present through social practices that society considers normal [10]. Male dominance can be realized through the division of labor, distribution of power, and decision-making that slowly limits women's opportunities to develop. Therefore, gender inequality often goes unnoticed because it has become part of a widely accepted culture.

In the family context, patriarchal culture influences how the relationship between husband and wife is built. The relationship is not only related to the division of domestic tasks, but also concerns decision-making, career development opportunities, and the quality of communication between couples. When family relationships are built on the dominance of one party, the couple's chances of obtaining emotional support, reward, and participation in decision-making are reduced. In contrast, families that implement more equal relationships tend to have more open communication and better relationship quality [8].

Thus, patriarchal culture is one of the factors that shape the pattern of relationships in the family. Despite changes as women's education and participation in various sectors of life increase, patriarchal values still affect the division of roles in many families in Indonesia, including in military families.

Relationship Patterns and Communication Patterns in Marriage

The pattern of the relationship between husband and wife is one of the important aspects in determining the quality of family life. Scanzoni and Scanzoni put forward four forms of marital relationship patterns, namely *owner-property*, *head-complement*, *senior-junior partner*, and *equal partner* [5]. The four patterns describe the level of equality in the relationship between husband and wife in carrying out domestic life.

First, the owner-property pattern is the most traditional form of relationship, where the wife is positioned as the husband's property. The husband is responsible for making a living, while the wife is in charge of taking care of the household, giving birth, taking care of children, and meeting the needs of the husband. This relationship emphasizes the aspect of ownership rather than partnership, so that women's space to participate in decision-making is very limited. Second, the head-complement pattern places the wife as a complement to the husband's social status. In this pattern communication between couples begins to develop more openly, but the final decision remains in the husband's hands. Although there is respect for the wife's opinion, her position still depends on the husband's social position.

Furthermore, the senior-junior partner pattern provides opportunities for women to participate in economic and social activities, but the husband remains the main determinant of the family's social status. The wife can work and contribute to the family economy, but the husband's career development remains a priority. Therefore, women are often required to sacrifice personal interests for the sake of their husbands' career success. The equal partner pattern is a more egalitarian form of relationship. In this pattern, husband and wife have equal opportunities to develop as individuals, share domestic and economic responsibilities, and make decisions together based on deliberation. This kind of relationship is more reflective of the principle of gender equality because each party has balanced rights and obligations.

The pattern of communication in the family is the flow of receiving messages and feedback that occurs between family members. The pattern of family communication put forward by McLeon and Chafee in Reardon consists of laissez-faire, protective, pluralistic and consensual patterns. First, the "Laissez-faire" family communication pattern, characterized by low socially oriented communication between the parties who communicate. In this case, the husband and wife do not understand the object of communication, so it can cause wrong communication. Second, the family communication pattern Protective, communication in this family is characterized by low communication in conceptual orientation, but high in social orientation. Compliance and alignment are of paramount importance. Third, the pluralistic family communication pattern, in this pattern what occurs is open communication to discuss ideas with all family members, respect the interests of other members and support each other. The last family communication pattern is consensual, this pattern is characterized by consensus deliberation. The emphasis on communication patterns is socially oriented as well as concept-oriented. This consensual pattern encourages and provides opportunities for each family member to express ideas from different points of view, without disrupting the family's power structure.

Other forms of communication patterns between couples and families were put forward by Devito [11]. According to Deito, there are four family communication patterns, namely the equation communication pattern/equality pattern (each communicating party has equal and balanced rights, the role played is the same, has the same rights in decision-making); Separate balanced communication pattern/balance split

pattern (equality of rights remains, only each party who communicates holds control and power according to their respective fields), unbalanced communication patterns are separate / unbalanced split pattern (One person is considered to have control or control over the other, one party is often dominating or considered an expert. Separate unbalanced forms of communication/ unbalanced split pattern, among others advice and examples. The last form of communication pattern in the family is the monopolistic communication pattern/ monopoli pattern. Related to the understanding and understanding of the communication patterns above, the communication patterns carried out in the family have an important role in the resilient model of soldiers' wives. As with the pattern of marital relationships, each communication pattern will also have a different impact in relation to the social relationship between husband and wife.

Social Support

Cobb explained that social support can be in the form of attention, rewards, comfort and help that individuals receive from others [12]. Social support is the behavior of others who provide support in the form of emotional, guidance, practical help, financial assistance, and social interaction. Bastaman gives the definition of social support as attention to certain people, it can be in the form of advice, motivation, directing, and providing encouragement and showing a way out, when individuals are experiencing problems and also experiencing difficulties in carrying out activities in a directed way to achieve a goal. Kuncoro, explained that social support is verbal or nonverbal information, a form of real help or action by people closest to and who are familiar with individuals in their social environment, or in the form of presence and things that can provide emotional benefits or have an influence on the behavior of the recipient.

House explained that social support consists of four dimensions, namely emotional support, esteem support, informational support, and instrumental support [13]. These four forms of support are psychological resources that help individuals cope with the pressures of life while improving psychological well-being. According to Taylor, emotional support, is a form of social support that can be provided to individuals in depressed conditions, experiencing problems The purpose of providing emotional support is to make individuals feel calmer in the face of the stress they are experiencing. Emotional support can be done by family or friends, be it friends at school or co-workers. Emotional support provided by family or friends in the form of love, affection, appreciation, and full attention and concern for individuals who are experiencing problems.

Emotional support is a form of expression of affection, attention, trust, and also the feeling of being listened to, which can make a person feel accepted, understood for his existence and condition. Spiegel, et al., explain that one way to gain social support in difficult times is to make and establish social relationships with others. Social relationships can be in the form of social sharing, namely by being willing to talk to other people who are able and willing to play the role of a good listener, and are willing to give advice and advice. Individuals who get social support from the environment will be better able to survive in difficult times.

In married life, social support has an important role in building relationship satisfaction. Couples who give each other real attention, empathy, appreciation, and help tend to have better relationship quality than couples who lack support [14]. In contrast, relationships dominated by one party often hinder the emergence of emotional support because communication takes place in one direction.

Cohen and Wills explain that social support has a function *stress-buffering*, that is, protecting individuals from the negative impacts of various life stressors [15]. Individuals who receive emotional and instrumental support from their partner will have better adaptability in dealing with conflicts and changes in family situations. Conversely, a lack of social support increases the risk of stress, anxiety, domestic conflicts, and even mental health disorders.

Patriarchal Culture in the Life of a Soldier's Wife

The characteristics of military family life show that patriarchal culture is strengthened through a hierarchical organizational system. The life of the soldier is not only governed by the rules of the service, but also by the organizational culture that places the family as part of the successful execution of military duties. As a result, the soldier's wife not only performs the role of a partner, but also as a companion to the husband's career.

From the perspective of marital relations, the life of a soldier's wife is closer to the senior-junior partner pattern. Wives have the opportunity to work and develop themselves, but the interests of the organization and the husband's career remain the top priority. When the husband receives a mutation or assignment to another area, the wife is expected to follow the placement even though she has to leave her job, education, and the social network that has been built. This condition shows that strategic decisions in the family are more determined by organizational demands on husbands.

McGowan's findings suggest that the social identity of military wives is often formed based on the rank and position of the husband. Various facilities, such as housing, health services, and access to soldiers' wives organizations, are obtained through status as wives of active military members. Thus, the wife's social status is determined more by the husband's position than by her personal achievements. This phenomenon shows that the patriarchal system in the military family does not only take place at the family level, but is also strengthened by organizational structures.

In real life, patriarchal culture influences women's career development. When husband and wife both work as TNI soldiers, the husband's career interests often get a higher priority than the wife's career. For example, on the occasion of participating in development education or strategic assignments, wives often choose to postpone the opportunity so that the husband can develop his career first. It is not uncommon for work units to also give priority to husbands with the consideration that men are the main breadwinners of the family. This condition shows that patriarchal culture is not only maintained by the social values of society, but also by organizational mechanisms that indirectly reproduce gender inequality.

In addition, the life of the soldier's wife organization places the wife as a representative of the soldier's family in the official environment. This role has an important function in supporting the success of husbands' tasks, but at the same time reinforces the expectation that women's success is measured through the success of their husbands' careers. This perspective is in line with Walby's argument that social institutions can be a medium of reproduction of patriarchal values through an unequal division of roles and distribution of power.

Social Support as a Protective Factor in the Life of Soldiers' Wives

Military family life has different characteristics than civilian families because it is influenced by organizational demands, assignment mobility, job risks, and military culture that puts the interests of the state above individual interests. This condition is not only felt by soldiers, but also by wives as part of the military family system. One of the most common consequences is the reduced presence of the husband when carrying out surgery and education assignments for a certain period of time. This situation causes the wife to have to take over almost all family functions, ranging from childcare, household management, decision-making, to solving various family problems independently.

This phenomenon shows that soldiers' wives not only carry out domestic roles, but also carry out some of the roles that are usually carried out by husbands. This condition is known as role overload, which is a situation when a person has to carry out various role demands at the same time so that they exceed their capacity. This burden becomes heavier when the wife also has a job outside the home or works as a member of the TNI. In such conditions, women face a triple burden, namely carrying out the role of workers, mothers, and companions of soldiers.

Regarding the life of soldiers' wives, below are the results of another study that shows that wives or spouses of military personnel who are dispatched to assignments face many stressors, which are caused by the departure of their husbands on duty. The reaction of the spouse or wife to the husband's assignment appears in various psychological symptoms, including: feelings of numbness, shock, irritation, tension, distrust and increased emotional distance, as well as the appearance of feelings that almost resemble feelings of anger and complaints of physical pain [16]. Spouses of military personnel are also reported to be experiencing emotional distress [17] The Race of Kesepian [18], dysphoria [19], experiencing fear or sadness [20].

Palmer summarizes the risk and resilience factors that are predicted to affect military family life [21]. The five risk and resilience factors are: frequency of movement or relocation, husband's assignment, assignment to war zones and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and post-assignment or reunion phenomena. Boss puts forward theory ambiguous loss related to the husband's assignment [21]. In his theory Boss states that ambiguity loss experienced continuously will give rise to negative psychological symptoms, including depression, anxiety and sleep disturbances. Boss further stated that ambiguous loss arises because of three things, namely pressure or stress caused by changes or threats of changes in the composition of the family, persistent stress and experiences ambiguous loss It can be a traumatic experience.

Considering the condition high risk faced by soldiers' wives, social support will be very helpful and alleviating when facing various problems that may occur. The results of Jannah and Rohmatun's research stated that there is a positive relationship between social support and resilience in flood survivors [22]. Similarly, studies in individuals diagnosed with HIV-AIDS show a positive relationship between social support and resilience [23].

Cohen and Wills put forward on the Theory stress-buffering and explains that social support serves as a buffer against stress [15]. Individuals who receive adequate social support have better adaptability than individuals who face the pressures of life on their own. In the context of soldier families, social support does not only come from the husband, but also from the extended family, soldiers' wife's organizations, neighbors, and military institutions. The existence of this support network is a psychological resource that helps wives face the various demands of military life.

However, the results of various studies show that the social support that military wives receive often does not fully meet their emotional needs. So far, the organization's attention has been more focused on the readiness of soldiers to carry out their duties, while the psychological readiness of families has still received relatively little attention. Palmer revealed that most military wives are not adequately prepared to deal with the psychological consequences of their husband's assignment [21]. Many soldiers' wives consider the pressure they experience as part of the risk of being a soldier's wife, so they tend to hide problems without seeking professional help.

This condition shows that patriarchal culture not only shapes the division of roles in the family, but also influences the way women interpret their sacrifices. Many wives view that putting their husband's career first, taking care of the family alone, or leaving work is a form of devotion that must be accepted as a consequence of being a soldier's wife. This perspective shows that patriarchal values have been internalized into social norms that are accepted as something natural.

The patriarchal culture that develops in military life does not always produce negative impacts. In many situations, the husband's leadership is needed to support the implementation of official duties and maintain family stability. However, such leadership will become a problem if it develops into dominance that limits the wife's opportunities to participate in decision-making, develop her career, and obtain adequate emotional support [10].

The results of various studies show that families that practice open communication and more flexible division of responsibilities have better adaptability than families that maintain highly hierarchical relationships. Gottman and Silver explained that a marriage relationship built on mutual respect, cooperation, and positive communication can increase marital satisfaction and strengthen the couple's emotional bond [8]. The findings are in line with research by Bavik, Shaw, and Wang showing that partner support contributes to improved psychological well-being and quality of family relationships [24].

Studies have also shown that families with more egalitarian relationships tend to have a higher quality of social support. Gottman and Silver state that open communication, respect for the spouse, and a more equitable division of responsibilities can increase marital satisfaction and strengthen the emotional bond between husband and wife [8].

In the context of the military family, the application of equality values does not mean eliminating the leadership structure in the family or the organization. On the contrary, equality is understood as giving equal opportunities to husbands and wives to develop as individuals, express opinions, and gain support in carrying out various family roles. This approach allows military families to maintain organizational discipline without neglecting the psychological well-being of family members.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : The dominant pattern of relationships is senior –junior partners, where the wife has the opportunity to participate in various social and economic activities, but the interests of the husband's organization and career remain the top priority. Problems arise when leadership develops into dominance that limits the participation of wives in decision-making, self-development, and access to social support. **Implication :** This condition causes wives often to sacrifice personal career development, follow their husband's mutations, and carry out domestic responsibilities independently while the husband carries out assignments. In such situations, social support from spouses, extended families, soldiers' wives organizations, and military institutions play a protective role in helping to improve family adaptability, psychological well-being, and resilience. **Limitation :** This study shows that the lives of soldiers' wives are still influenced by patriarchal culture which is reflected in the division of roles, decision-making, career development, and the construction of social status inherent in husbands as soldiers. **Future Research :** Therefore, strengthening communication, more flexible division of roles, appreciation for wives' contributions, and organizational policies that are responsive to gender equality are important steps to improve the quality of life of soldiers' families.

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