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Patriarchal Dynamics and Political Participation: A Comprehensive Analysis of Educated Women's Experiences in Urban Pakistan

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Abstract

The study draws on the theoretical frameworks of patriarchy and intersectionality. The theory of patriarchy, rooted in feminist thought, explores how familial power dynamics perpetuate male dominance and restrict women's agency. The study challenges the prevailing notion that patriarchal norms are the sole determinants of women's political participation. Intersectionality theory highlights the interconnectedness of various factors, such as education and marital status, shaping women's experiences in political participation. Additionally, the Resource Mobilization Theory enriches the analysis, emphasizing how educated women strategically leverage resources like education, economic independence, and urban settings to overcome barriers and actively engage in politics. This study adopts a mixed methods approach to investigate the relationship between patriarchy in the family and political participation among educated women in urban Pakistan. The quantitative component involves a cross-sectional survey of 400 female university students, focusing on political participation indicators. Simultaneously, in-depth qualitative interviews are conducted with 30 highly qualified teachers from selected universities, offering rich insights into the impact of patriarchy and the interplay of education, employment, and residence on political engagement. This mixed methods design ensures a comprehensive exploration of the research questions, enhancing the robustness of the study.

Keywords: Patriarchy in family, Political Participation, Educated Women, Male dominance, Gender equality, Intersectionality, Resource mobilization theory

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Introduction

Pakistani culture and society deeply entrench male dominance and patriarchal structures. These structures influence everyday social interactions and significantly impact women's roles and opportunities, particularly in politics. Patriarchal norms often dictate that men hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, and control over property. This male dominance within familial structures results in fathers, brothers, and other male household heads exerting control over the mobility and perspectives of women, especially regarding their engagement in political activities (Thomson, 2015).

This research study delves into the intricate relationship between patriarchy in the family and women's political participation in Pakistan. It seeks to unravel how patriarchal structures influence and shape women's involvement in conventional and non-conventional political participation (Jayachandran, 2015). Political participation in this context encompasses a wide range of activities. Conventional political participation includes voter registration, casting votes in elections, and affiliating with political parties. Non-conventional political participation involves demonstrations, protests, election campaigns, petition circulation, and support for political party members (Igwe, 2002). By comprehensively analyzing these dimensions, the study aims to provide insights into how patriarchal structures within the family impact women's access to and engagement in political processes.
To clearly define key constructs, this study operationalizes "patriarchal structures" as familial systems where male members exercise authority over women's mobility and decision-making processes. "Political participation" refers to the range of activities through which individuals engage with the political system, categorized into conventional (e.g., voting, party affiliation) and non-conventional (e.g., protests, campaigns) forms. Specific indicators such as mobility restrictions and influence on political choices are chosen due to their direct reflection of how patriarchal control manifests in everyday life. Mobility restrictions capture the extent to which women are allowed to move freely and independently, a critical factor in their ability to engage in public and political spaces. Influence on political choices reflects the degree to which male family members shape or limit women's political decisions, directly affecting their autonomy in political engagement. These measures are valid as they directly capture the tangible constraints imposed by patriarchal norms and reliable as they consistently reflect observed patterns of gendered control across diverse social contexts in Pakistan.

The central research question guiding this study is: How do patriarchal structures within the family influence the political participation of educated women in Pakistan? The hypothesis posited based on previous literature and theory is that there is an association between patriarchy in the family and educated women's political participation. Despite recent progress in young women's political participation in Pakistan, substantial barriers persist due to entrenched patriarchal norms and gender roles that often restrict women's roles in public life, including politics. Power dynamics in patriarchal societies like Pakistan favor men, granting them greater control over decision-making processes, resources, and social structures. Consequently, women often find themselves marginalized, their voices silenced, and their political aspirations hindered within their households. This pervasive gender inequality significantly affects women's ability to engage in politics and participate actively in democratic processes (Cole & Sabik, 2010).

Previous studies have underscored the inhibiting influence of patriarchal attitudes on women's political participation, particularly among those with lower education and socioeconomic status (Sathar, Rashida, Hussain & Hassan, 2015; Karami & Abbasi-Shavazi, 2018; Afzal, 2019; Rehman & Usman, 2019; Krook, Lovenduski, & Squires, 2009; Norris & Lovenduski, 1995). However, a notable gap exists in understanding the dynamics of women with higher education and socioeconomic status. This study seeks to address this gap by exploring how the intersectionality of factors influences women's political participation in Pakistan. Specifically, it aims to understand how women with advanced education levels utilize their knowledge and skills to actively engage in political activities, potentially challenging traditional patriarchal constraints.

The findings of this study reveal that while most educated women acknowledge the existence of patriarchy in their families, this perception does not necessarily restrict their political participation. The data indicate that women who strongly agree with the presence of patriarchy in their families exhibit higher levels of political participation. Despite perceiving male dominance, educated women do not feel it limits their political engagement. By correlating the perception of patriarchy in the family with the level of political participation, this study aims to contribute valuable knowledge to the ongoing discourse on gender equality and democratic governance, emphasizing the need to challenge and transform gender dynamics within the family unit to promote gender equality and empower women in decision-making processes.

Review of the Literature

The persistence of patriarchal structures continues to be a central theme in understanding women's political participation globally and particularly in South Asia. Recent scholarship reaffirms the significant barriers created by these structures, which often manifest within family settings (Karami & Abbasi-Shavazi, 2018; Nyeck, 2016). These barriers restrict women's mobility, access to networks, and overall political engagement. However, recent work also expands upon these findings by exploring the intersectionality of these challenges with other factors.

Building on the foundation laid by Ibrahim and Said (2015), more recent studies highlight the importance of considering the intersectionality of gender with other social categories, such as class, caste, and ethnicity (Tripp, 2015; Goetz & Jenkins, 2019). For example, Tripp (2015), in her global analysis, demonstrates how women's political participation is shaped by a complex interplay of factors, including legal frameworks, economic opportunities, and socio-cultural norms, all of which vary significantly across contexts. Goetz and Jenkins (2019), focusing on developing countries, further emphasize that women's agency is not a monolithic concept and is deeply influenced by the specific power dynamics within their communities.

In South Asia, where patriarchal norms are particularly entrenched, studies have explored the nuances of these dynamics. Chaudhary (2018), examining Pakistan, reveals that women's political participation is not only constrained by familial patriarchy but also by the pervasive influence of community-level power structures and the lack of state support. Hossain (2017), focusing on Bangladesh, highlights the role of religious conservatism in further limiting women's political space.

Cheema et al. (2022) rightly emphasize the control men exert over women's mobility in Pakistan, a crucial aspect of political participation. This aligns with broader trends in research that highlight the importance of physical access and logistical support in enabling women's political engagement. Krook and True (2018), in their global analysis, argue that transportation and safety concerns are significant barriers for women, particularly in contexts where public spaces are not gender-neutral.

The gender gap in political ambition, as discussed by Lawless and Fox (2010), continues to be a relevant area of study. Recent work has focused on understanding the psychological and sociological factors that contribute to this gap. Clayton et al.

(2018), for instance, explore the role of gendered media portrayals in shaping women's perceptions of their political efficacy. Furthermore, research on electoral systems, building on Kunovich and Paxton (2005), emphasizes the importance of quotas and other affirmative action measures in increasing women's representation (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2016).

Present study's focus on the significance of the area of residence is a crucial contribution. Recent research supports the notion that urban and rural contexts present distinct opportunities and constraints for women's political participation. Agarwal (2017), examining India, demonstrates that urban women often have greater access to education, employment, and political networks, which can enhance their political agency. However, she also notes that urban settings can present new challenges, such as increased exposure to violence and harassment.

Present research diverges from purely patriarchal-focused studies by acknowledging women's agency and the complex interplay of factors that shape their political choices. By emphasizing the intersections of education, residence, and employment status, and provides a more nuanced understanding of women's political participation. The study builds upon the intersectional approach by examining how multiple factors interact to shape women's political participation. It diverges from solely patriarchal focused work, by emphasizing the importance of agency and contextual factors. It provides a localized view, which is essential to understand the South Asian context, and contributes to the global conversation.

Theoretical Framework

The study under consideration focuses on the intricate dynamics surrounding the political participation of educated women, with particular attention to the influence of patriarchy within the family. Sylvia Walby's (1990) theory of patriarchy is instrumental in this analysis. Walby divides patriarchy into public and private spheres, describing it as a system of social structures and practices in which men control women's choices, mobility, and thoughts, exploiting them across all fields, including politics.

The theory of patriarchy, rooted in feminist thought, seeks to analyze how patriarchal structures perpetuate male dominance and control in societies. This theory asserts that patriarchal norms, values, and practices are embedded in various

social institutions, including the family. Within the family, patriarchal norms often dictate traditional gender roles and expectations, establishing a hierarchical structure where men hold positions of power and authority. At the same time, society relegates women to subordinate roles. This unequal distribution of power and resources within the family restricts women's agency and influences their life choices.

In Pakistan, patriarchal norms within families are particularly influential. As Sather et al. (2015) highlighted, men are traditionally seen as the primary decision-makers, restricting women's autonomy and agency. This control limits women's ability to participate fully in political processes, reinforcing traditional gender norms that position them primarily in domestic roles.

Cultural theory further argues that traditional gender roles assigned to women as caregivers and homemakers create barriers that restrict their political engagement. As primary caretakers of children and the household, women bear the burden of domestic responsibilities, often leaving them with limited time, energy, and resources to participate in politics actively. Several studies show that perceiving politics as a masculine domain further excludes women from active participation (Romer, 1990; Rudman & Fairchild, 2007; Curell, 1974; Debnath, 2015). These traditional roles and societal expectations reinforce the notion that politics is not a suitable field for women.

Intersectionality, a concept originating from Black legal feminist thought, considers the interlocking systems of oppression based on race, gender, and class, mainly focusing on the experiences of Black women. Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, intersectionality highlights how multiple dimensions of identity intersect and interact to shape individuals' experiences and opportunities within society. Crenshaw's work brought to light the unique challenges faced by Black women, who are often marginalized not only by their race and gender but also by the intersections of these and other identities.

Patricia Hill Collins, a prominent sociologist, further elaborated on this concept by introducing the notion of a "matrix of domination." This framework describes how intersecting social categories such as race, gender, class, and sexuality create complex systems of power and privilege. In her seminal work, Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment (2000),

Collins explains that these intersecting systems produce a matrix where multiple forms of discrimination and privilege coexist, influencing the social positioning and lived experiences of individuals. Collins emphasizes that power operates in various domains, including the structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal levels, constituting the matrix of domination (Collins, 2000).

In the context of this study on educated women's political participation in Pakistan, the intersectionality lens is crucial for understanding the nuanced experiences of these women. While patriarchy remains, a significant force shaping gender dynamics and political agency, it is essential to recognize that other factors, such as education, urban living, and employment/class, also play crucial roles. This perspective challenges the notion that patriarchy alone determines women's political participation and emphasizes the need to consider the intersectional nature of social categories in understanding their lived realities.

For example, educated women in urban areas with independent employment experience different opportunities and constraints than their rural counterparts. Education equips women with skills, knowledge, and confidence to assert themselves publicly, potentially challenging traditional gender norms. Urban living often provides better access to political networks, events, and diverse perspectives, enhancing political engagement. Employment status contributes to economic independence, allowing women to participate in politics without solely dependent on male-controlled resources.

This study also draws upon Resource Mobilization Theory to further enhance our understanding of how educated women navigate political participation. This theoretical framework emphasizes how individuals or groups mobilize various resources to attain specific goals. In political participation, the theory suggests that educated women can leverage resources such as education, social networks, and economic independence to overcome barriers and actively engage in politics (McCarthy & Zald, 1977).

Relating this to the context of patriarchy and political participation, educated women may use their educational attainment as a resource to challenge traditional gender norms and expectations. Education equips women with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to assert themselves publicly, challenging the conventional exclusionary narrative. Economic independence becomes another

crucial resource as it grants women autonomy and the means to participate in political activities without being solely dependent on male-controlled resources. Additionally, being situated in urban sectors may provide educated women with more opportunities for networking, access to political events, and exposure to diverse perspectives, further enhancing their political engagement.

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, this study aims to comprehensively understand the factors influencing the political participation of educated women in Pakistan. This approach acknowledges the complex interplay of patriarchal norms, cultural expectations, intersecting identities, and resource mobilization, offering insights into the multifaceted nature of gender, power, and agency in the political realm.

The study contends that transformative change in public and private spheres is necessary to enhance women's political participation. This change involves addressing patriarchal norms within families, challenging traditional gender roles, and leveraging education and economic independence as critical resources for empowerment. Additionally, recognizing the varying impacts of urban and rural contexts on women's opportunities and constraints is crucial for developing targeted strategies to support women's political engagement across different settings.

By understanding these dynamics, the study seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on gender equality and the need for transformative change in public and private spheres, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and democratic society.

- **Research Design**

This study adopts a mixed methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to comprehensively investigate the relationship between patriarchy in the family and political participation among Pakistani university female students. This approach is grounded in the need to capture the breadth and depth of the phenomenon under study. The study ensures a robust exploration of the research questions by integrating structured, open-ended qualitative data from in-depth interviews and predetermined closed-ended quantitative data from surveys (Creswell, 2018).

- **Cross-Sectional Survey and Participants**

The quantitative component utilizes a cross-sectional survey to explore the correlation between patriarchy in the family and political participation among female university students in Pakistan. This approach aligns with the positivist philosophy to systematically investigate and analyze empirical data. The researcher distributed a self-administered questionnaire to collect quantifiable data to female university students at their respective campuses.

This method allows for statistical analysis, enabling the identification of patterns and relationships within the studied demographic. The research was conducted in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, encompassing four universities: International Islamic University Islamabad, National University of Sciences and Technology Islamabad, PMAS Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi, and Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad. These institutions were selected to represent diverse academic environments and demographics, contributing to the richness of the research findings.

- **Sample Size Data Collection and Instruments**

The study focused on female university students, a pertinent demographic representing educated women in urban areas. A sample size of 400 female students was determined using Solvin's formula, considering the estimated total female student population of approximately 20,000 across the four universities. The survey utilized a self-administered questionnaire in English, the formal instructional language at Pakistan's graduate and post-graduate levels.

The questionnaire included scales to measure political participation and patriarchy in the family. Based on Verba, Scholzman, and Brady (1999), the political participation scale covered conventional and non-conventional political activities using a 4-point Likert scale. The scale was adapted from existing frameworks to ensure contextual relevance and was pre-tested to assess clarity and applicability in the Pakistani context. The patriarchy in the family scale, developed for this study, measured male dominance that restricts women's political participation using a 4-point Likert scale. This scale was formulated based on theoretical constructs from gender studies literature and refined through expert reviews and pilot testing.

Both scales demonstrated high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.752 and 0.793, respectively. To further establish validity, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to confirm that the items effectively captured the intended

constructs. Additionally, content validity was ensured through consultations with subject-matter experts specializing in gender studies and political science. These steps strengthened the robustness of the scales used in this study, ensuring they effectively measure political participation and patriarchal influences within the family.

- **Qualitative Research Methodology**

The qualitative component adopted an interpretive stance, employing in-depth interviews with 30 highly educated women working at the four universities. The researcher chose this approach to explore the detailed standpoints of these women and gain insights into how patriarchy in the family influences their political participation within the sociocultural context of a developing country.

This study is grounded in Feminist Standpoint Epistemology, which provides a theoretical baseline for understanding women's lived experiences and their restrictions and concerns regarding political participation. This epistemology highlights the importance of women's perspectives in understanding social phenomena, emphasizing that their unique standpoints can reveal insights into power dynamics and gender relations that are often overlooked.

The mixed methods approach integrates quantitative and qualitative data, allowing for a comprehensive understanding that includes statistical analysis (positivist) and in-depth narrative exploration (feminist empirical). This combination enhances the robustness of the findings and ensures that both broad patterns and detailed personal experiences are captured. The qualitative findings are interpreted through Feminist Standpoint Epistemology, with substantial engagement with crucial theorists such as Sandra Harding and Nancy Hartsock to support this claim. The study demonstrates a solid understanding of Intersectionality (Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought) and Feminist Standpoint Theories (mainstream gender difference theories). It explains how these theories can be integrated to understand the multifaceted influences on women's political participation in Pakistan. The study identifies participants regarding class, social status, and urban location, focusing on university students and highly educated teachers in Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

The qualitative methodology facilitated an in-depth exploration of the subjective experiences of educated working women in urban Pakistan, helping to uncover

fundamental issues, standpoints, and challenges related to their political participation. This approach aligns with the principles of Feminist Standpoint Theory, which argues that women's participation in decision-making is essential for a gender-balanced view of the world (Hartsock, 1983; Harding, 2004). To analyze qualitative data, thematic analysis was employed using NVivo software, allowing for systematic coding and organization of data. A combination of inductive and deductive coding strategies was used, where initial codes were derived from the theoretical framework, while emergent themes were identified through iterative analysis. Thematic analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework: familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report.

Themes were validated through intercoder reliability checks, where multiple researchers independently coded a subset of the data and compared results to ensure consistency. Member-checking was also conducted by sharing emerging themes with participants to confirm accuracy and resonance with their experiences. Divergent or contradictory narratives were systematically analyzed and integrated to provide a nuanced understanding of the complexity of women's political participation. These conflicting perspectives were critically examined to challenge potential biases and strengthen the credibility of the findings. To further enrich the qualitative analysis, illustrative excerpts from interviews have been included to demonstrate how qualitative evidence supports or complicates the quantitative findings. These excerpts provide deeper insight into participants' lived experiences and highlight the interplay between individual agency and structural constraints in shaping political engagement.

- **Descriptive Analyses of Political Participation**

This analysis section focuses on unraveling the intricate relationships and dynamics surrounding the political participation of educated women. The exploration encompasses two key dimensions: descriptive and bivariate findings. The independent variable (IV) under scrutiny is patriarchy in the family, while the dependent variable (DV) is the political participation of educated women.

Table 1: Frequency distribution of respondents regarding political participation N= 400

Statements	SA f (%)	A f (%)	D f (%)	SD f (%)	Mean f (%)	Sd	Mod
I am registered as a voter	163 (40.8)	149 (37.3)	62 (15.5)	26 (6.5)	3.12	0.90	4.00
I cast a vote in the last election of 2018	46 (11.5)	40 (1.0)	191 (47.8)	123 (30.8)	2.02	0.93	2.00
Casting to a political party of my own choice is my constitutional right	231 (57.8)	122 (30.5)	31 (7.8)	16 (4.0)	3.42	0.80	4.00
I am a member of a political party	24 (6.0)	30 (7.5)	209 (52.3)	137 (34.3)	1.85	0.79	2.00
I take part in political campaign	28 (7.0)	45 (11.3)	201 (50.3)	126 (31.5)	1.94	0.84	2.00
I have organized/participated in any demonstration	29 (7.3)	58 (14.5)	192 (48.0)	121 (30.3)	1.99	0.86	2.00
I have donated money to a political candidate	36 (9.0)	54 (13.5)	187 (46.8)	123 (30.8)	2.01	0.89	2.00
I have circulated a petition	21 (5.3)	47 (11.8)	201 (50.3)	131 (32.8)	1.90	0.80	2.00

Note f=number of female students, %=percentage
SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

Table 1 demonstrates that 78.1% of participants stated they were registered to vote, and 78.6% claimed they had not voted in the most recent 2018 election. Furthermore, the data depicts that 88.3% of respondents stated that it is their constitutional right to vote for the political party of their choice. However, 13.5% of interviewees indicated they were members of some political party, and 18.3% indicated they participated in political campaigns. Moreover, data shows that 21.8% of participants point out that they have organized/participated in any demonstration, while 22.5% of participants stated that they had donated money to

a political candidate. Only 17.1% of participants indicated that they had circulated a petition.

Overall, the results suggest that, although a significant majority of the respondents are registered voters and believe it is their constitutional right to vote for the political party of their choice. However, the level of conventional political participation among respondents is relatively low. A relatively low percentage of respondents indicated low traditional political participation. Significantly few respondents indicated they are political party members, participated in political campaigns, organized/participated in demonstrations, donated money to a political candidate, or circulated a petition.

The findings from the survey, where few respondents indicated their involvement in political party membership, political campaigns, demonstrations, donations to candidates, or circulating petitions, suggest a lower level of active political participation among educated women. The qualitative study participants highlighted the reasons for low political participation. The qualitative study reveals that security concerns significantly deter women from actively engaging in political activities. Given the prevalence of violence and harassment in politics, women fear for their safety and the safety of their families, leading them to refrain from joining political parties or participating in public demonstrations. The qualitative study participants mentioned male dominance within political parties as a discouraging factor. Patriarchal norms often marginalize women's voices and limit their opportunities for leadership positions and decision-making roles within political parties. This lack of representation and influence can deter women from seeking party membership. Another reason highlighted during in-depth interviews by the study participants is the scarcity of women in leadership positions within political parties. The lack of women's representation in higher-ranking roles reinforces the perception that party structures may not adequately address women's perspectives and concerns.

All 30 study participants expressed the importance of voter registration, and most interview participants cast votes in the last elections. They emphasized their recognition of voting as a fundamental right and their active engagement in exercising it. It indicates a positive attitude toward political participation and the belief that individual votes can make a difference in shaping the democratic process.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of respondents regarding patriarchy in the family

Patriarchy in family	SA f (%)	A f (%)	D f (%)	SD f (%)	Mean	S. Dev	Mode
My mobility regarding political activities is controlled by male members of my family	79 (19.8)	147 (36.8)	112 (28.0)	62 (15.5)	2.61	0.97	3.00
Male members of my family influence my political choices	53 (13.3)	143 (35.8)	126 (31.5)	78 (19.5)	2.43	0.95	3.00
Male members of my family control my standpoint regarding political participation	60 (15.0)	114 (28.5)	141 (35.3)	85 (21.3)	2.37	0.98	2.00
Male members of my family discuss political issues with me	88 (22.0)	183 (45.8)	91 (22.8)	38 (9.5)	2.80	0.88	3.00
Male members of my family have more liberty to participate in political activities as compared to me	93 (23.3)	159 (39.8)	85 (21.3)	63 (15.8)	2.71	0.99	3.00
Male members of my family are best suited for politics	71 (17.8)	157 (39.3)	111 (27.8)	61 (15.3)	2.60	0.95	3.00
The male relatives who are politicians or actively involved in political activities helped me to enter the political arena	72 (18.0)	126 (31.5)	130 (32.5)	72 (18.0)	2.50	0.98	2.00
Subordination of women (to male members of the family) is a hurdle to the political participation of women	67 (16.8)	152 (38.0)	126 (31.5)	55 (13.8)	2.58	0.92	

Note: f=number of female students, %=percentage SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

Table 2 presents the results of a survey that explores the influence of patriarchy on women's political participation. Most female respondents (56.6%) agreed/strongly agreed that male family members limit their mobility to participate in political activities. Nearly half (49.1%) of female respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement that male family members influence their political choices. 43 % of female respondents agreed /strongly agreed that male members of their family dictate their stance on political participation.

The findings of this study present a noteworthy contradiction to the theoretical framework of patriarchy as expounded by Walby. According to Walby's theory of patriarchy, men within the family, fathers, husbands, or brothers, wield significant control over the thoughts and perspectives of women, particularly in matters related to political participation (Walby, 1991). However, data collected from respondents in this study reveal that 67% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the notion that their male family members exert control over their standpoint concerning political participation. Several factors contribute to this discrepancy: respondents in this

study reported higher levels of education, which fosters independent thinking and self-reliance.

Education equips women with the knowledge and critical thinking skills necessary to form their opinions about politics, making them less susceptible to the influence and control of male family members (Htun & Weldon, 2012; Kabeer, 1999). Greater exposure to information through education and media allows women to be more informed about their rights and the importance of political participation. This access helps women to develop a more autonomous stance on political issues. As women become more educated and economically independent, they gain confidence in their abilities and are more likely to assert their viewpoints. This empowerment reduces their reliance on male family members for guidance and support in political matters (Kishor and Gupta, 2004).

Patriarchy is not a monolithic construct and can vary significantly across cultures and contexts. In some families, traditional patriarchal norms may still prevail, while in others, particularly those with higher education levels, these norms may be challenged and redefined. Broader societal changes, including increased advocacy for gender equality and women's rights, may influence family dynamics and reduce the extent of patriarchal control. (Htun & Weldon, 2012). Different layers of identity, such as class, education, and economic status, intersect to shape women's experiences of patriarchy. Women from more privileged backgrounds with access to education and resources may experience less patriarchal control compared to those from more marginalized groups. Women's agency and capacity to resist and negotiate patriarchal constraints also play a critical role. Educated women may find more ways to navigate and challenge patriarchal norms within their families (Kishor and Gupta, 2004). When women are included in political discussions and express their opinions, they are more likely to become interested in politics and participate in political activities. (Inglehart and Norris, 2003) (Tripp & Kang, 2008; Siim & Skjeie, 2008).

The study reveals several significant findings about women's perceptions and experiences in political participation, highlighting persistent gender biases and obstacles. A substantial majority of female respondents (63.1%) agreed or strongly agreed that male family members have more freedom to participate in political activities than they do. This finding aligns with Verba, Schlozman, and Brady's (1995) study, which found that women in developing countries face more obstacles

to political participation than men, including cultural norms and family responsibilities that restrict their mobility and limit their political engagement.

Additionally, more than half (57.1%) of female respondents agreed or strongly agreed that men are better suited for politics. This belief is consistent with findings by Rudman and Goodwin (2004), which documented gender biases in perceptions of political leadership. Society often views women as less competent than men in leadership roles, including political leadership. These findings suggest that gender stereotypes and discrimination significantly impact women's political ambition, making them less likely than men to consider running for political office. This finding aligns with research by Fox and Lawless (2014), which found that women are less likely to consider running for political office due to factors such as gender stereotypes and discrimination.

Overall, these findings highlight the enduring gender biases and structural barriers that limit women's political participation. Despite progress in education and empowerment, cultural norms and stereotypes continue to constrain women's roles in politics. Understanding these perceptions and barriers is crucial for developing strategies to promote gender equality in political representation. Addressing these deep-rooted biases and providing supportive environments for women can enhance their participation and representation in political processes.

Nearly half (49.5%) of female respondents agreed or strongly agreed that politically active male family members can help them enter the political arena. Research indicates that family support is crucial for women's political participation, especially in societies with strict gender roles and restricted women's mobility (Mukhopadhyay, 2002). In patriarchal societies, where male dominance is pervasive, female family members often rely on male family members to help them overcome barriers to political participation (Chowdhury, 2004).

These findings underscore the complex role of male family members in women's political engagement. On one hand, male family members can perpetuate gender biases and control, limiting women's political participation. On the other hand, they can also act as allies, using their resources and influence to support women in overcoming societal and structural barriers. This dual role highlights the importance of engaging men and women in efforts to promote gender equality in politics. By leveraging the support of male family members and addressing the structural and

cultural barriers that hinder women's political participation, it is possible to create more inclusive and equitable political environments (UNDP, 2012).

The survey results suggest patriarchal attitudes and practices are common in families and can negatively affect young women's political participation. While many women report discussing political issues with male family members, they also report feeling limited in their ability to participate in politics, having their political choices influenced by male family members, and believing that men are better suited for politics. These findings highlight the importance of addressing patriarchal attitudes and practices within families to promote women's political participation.
The numerical data gained depth and context through the in-depth interviews, which unveiled the reasons behind women's autonomy and independence in their decision-making processes. The interview participants explained that educated women exercised autonomy, confidence, and critical thinking in forming their political preferences. They based their choices on their judgment rather than external influences. These qualitative findings provided a more nuanced understanding of the empowered and agency-driven decision-making process of educated women, highlighting their ability to think critically and form independent political opinions.

- ❖ **Bivariate Analysis**
- **Association Between Patriarchy in Family and Political Participation of Women**

The present study assessed women's perceptions of patriarchy in their families and its potential effects on their political participation. The data shows that most women in this study agreed or strongly agreed that patriarchy exists in their families. However, it also seems that the level of agreement with patriarchy in the family did not necessarily restrict women's political participation. The mean score for women who strongly agreed with patriarchy was 2.50, the highest mean score across all groups, indicating that these women had the highest level of political participation. These findings suggest that despite perceiving patriarchy in their families, these educated women did not feel that male dominance necessarily limited their political engagement. To further explore the association of patriarchy in the family, the researcher correlates patriarchy with political participation.

Hypothesis: There is an association between patriarchy in the family and educated women's political participation.

Table 3: Correlation between Patriarchy in Family and Political Participation

Correlation Matrix

		MPP		PiF
Political Participation	Pearson's r	—		
	p-value	—		
Patriarchy in Family	Pearson's r	0.400	***	—
	p-value	< .001		—

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

This correlation matrix shows Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) and associated p-values between the two variables, political participation and patriarchy in the family. In this case, the correlation between political involvement and patriarchy in the family is 0.400, indicating a weak positive correlation between the two variables. The p-value associated with this correlation coefficient is less than .001, indicating that this correlation is statistically significant at the .001 level. These findings suggest that the degree of patriarchy in the family is a weak predictor of political participation.

The low relationship between patriarchy and women's political participation in this sample could be due to several factors. First, the women in the sample are from urban areas where access to education and employment opportunities for women is relatively high, which could give them more independence and autonomy in decision-making, including political choices.

Second, the women in the sample reported that their male family members permitted them to pursue higher education, suggesting a level of support and empowerment within their families that may not be present in more patriarchal households. Finally, the women in the sample did not report feeling their mobility

or political choices were entirely controlled by male members of their families, as most of the women stated that they could practice independent voting choices.

The interviews also suggest that women's education level and economic independence are essential in determining women's political participation. Women who are more educated and feel more empowered may be more likely to participate in politics as they have the skills, knowledge, and confidence to engage in political activities.

The current study highlights that support from educated male family members, particularly husbands, is crucial in facilitating women's political participation. This support is attributed to the more egalitarian attitudes towards gender roles held by educated men and their access to resources and networks that can help women engage in politics (Budig & England, 2001). This perspective underscores the importance of intra-family relationships and the transformative potential of educated, supportive male relatives. While earlier studies (e.g., Inglehart & Norris, 2003; Kabeer, 1999) acknowledge that patriarchal norms can hinder women's access to education and resources necessary for political participation, they do not specifically emphasize the pivotal role of supportive, educated male family members. Instead, they focus more broadly on structural barriers and women's empowerment through education and social change. Prior studies often emphasize broader sociocultural factors and institutional barriers that impact women's political participation. For instance, Verba, Schlozman, & Brady (1999) explore the more comprehensive social and economic resources necessary for political engagement but do not delve deeply into the specific influence of family dynamics and the educational background of male family members. The finding that educated men within the family can act as catalysts for women's political participation is a notable divergence from earlier research. This finding suggests a shift in understanding how patriarchal structures can be negotiated and transformed from within the family unit.

- **Research Findings**

The survey findings indicate that many female respondents feel their male family members limit their mobility and influence their political choices. However, most respondents disagreed that their male family members control their standpoint regarding political participation. The survey findings also indicate that educated women are more likely to have independent voting choices, participate in political

discussions, and receive respect from their families for their opinions. Many women also feel restricted from participating in demonstrations and perceive men as better suited for political activities. The survey also reveals the importance of family support in women's political participation. Some women reported that their male family members who are politically active help them enter the political arena by providing guidance, mentorship, networking opportunities, and resources. However, the survey also acknowledges that patriarchal attitudes and practices hinder women's political participation. Cultural norms and gender biases restrict women's mobility and reinforce the idea that politics is unsuitable. Women face restrictions on mobility and freedom of choice due to gender-based cultural norms and patriarchal values in their communities.

In-depth interviews with educated women participants further shed light on their experiences. Some women reported having supportive husbands who do not control their mobility but express concern for their safety. However, they also recognize the impact of these concerns on their autonomy and freedom of movement. Participants of in-depth interviews also cited that consulting with male family members on some issues does not necessarily imply subordination or lack of independence. In healthy relationships, partners often rely on each other for support and guidance and make joint decisions.

Based on the survey findings, it can be concluded that male family members attempt to control the mobility of young unmarried women regarding political activities, potentially due to concerns about their safety. Many young unmarried women agreed that male family members maintain mobility when participating in demonstrations. However, qualitative interviews highlight the reasons for controlled mobility in the demonstrations. Participants of interviews explained that male family members are concerned about the safety of these women and may attempt to limit their exposure to potentially dangerous situations. The qualitative study's findings indicate that most married women interviewed did not experience control over their mobility regarding political activities. Married women have more agency and freedom to decide about their movements and activities, potentially due to their status as adults and household decision-makers.

The interviews also shed light on educated women's experiences regarding their political participation and the influence of male family members. Some women reported having supportive husbands who respected their autonomy and

independence, while others experienced restrictions on their mobility and freedom of choice due to patriarchal norms. The interviews and survey highlighted that educated women made self-determined political choices, and the standpoint of their male family members did not significantly influence them.

The survey findings suggest that educated women are more likely to have independent voting choices and participate in political discussions. However, the qualitative interviews highlight that safety concerns may influence young unmarried women's mobility in political activities. Intersectionality theory emphasizes the interconnectedness of various social categories such as gender, race, and class. In this context, the intersection of gender and marital status demonstrates how different factors shape women's experiences in political participation.

The interviews also indicate that as adults and household decision-makers, married women may have more agency and freedom in political activities than young unmarried women. Intersectionality theory helps us understand how factors like marital status intersect with gender to influence power dynamics within families and communities.

The survey and interviews highlight the importance of family support in women's political participation. Male family members who are politically active play a role in guiding and mentoring women, providing networking opportunities, and sharing resources. Resource mobilization theory emphasizes the role of resources in facilitating collective action. In this context, family support acts as a resource that empowers women to engage in political activities.

Qualitative findings explain that the controlled mobility of young unmarried women in political demonstrations is a safety concern for families. Resource mobilization theory recognizes safety and security as essential for effective political participation. Male family members' attempts to control mobility can be seen as a strategy to safeguard the well-being of women, albeit with implications for their freedom of movement.

The study reveals that various factors influence women's political participation in Pakistan, including education, marital status, family dynamics, and safety concerns. While male family members may seek to control women's mobility and political choices, educated women often demonstrate independence in their political

engagement. Intersectionality theory guides the analysis by emphasizing how gender and marital status intersect to shape power dynamics within families and communities. Additionally, resource mobilization theory informs our understanding of the role of family support as a crucial resource empowering woman in political activities. Thus, the study's findings highlight the intricate interplay of these factors and underscore the importance of considering intersectionality and resource mobilization theory in analyzing women's political engagement.

Conclusion

This study investigates the complex dynamics of patriarchy within families and its implications for the political participation of educated women. Despite patriarchal constraints, many educated women exhibit agency and autonomy in their political choices, while others encounter restrictions imposed by patriarchal norms, cultural expectations, and safety concerns. These nuances underscore the diversity of women's experiences and highlight the complex intersections of privilege and oppression within patriarchal societies.

By offering a dialectical perspective on existing theories of patriarchy, the study challenges simplistic narratives of gender oppression. It acknowledges the multifaceted nature of women's experiences and the intersecting influences of patriarchy, education, and socioeconomic status, enriching our understanding of power dynamics within patriarchal systems. This nuanced analysis encourages scholars to reconsider and refine theoretical frameworks to capture better the complexities of women's lives in patriarchal societies.

Focusing on educated women provides valuable insights into the intersectionality of privilege and oppression within feminist movements. While education and economic independence may empower women to challenge traditional gender norms, persistent patriarchal attitudes, and structural barriers necessitate a more inclusive and intersectional feminist praxis. Educated women's voices and experiences amplify the call for inclusive feminist agendas that address intersecting inequalities across different social strata.

Moreover, the study underscores the importance of adopting an intersectional approach to gender equality initiatives. Policies aimed at promoting women's

political participation must address not only patriarchal norms but also the socioeconomic barriers that impede women's agency. Targeted interventions, such as educational initiatives and economic empowerment programs, can empower women to overcome structural inequalities and actively engage in political processes.

The findings of this study extend beyond the borders of Pakistan and resonate with patriarchal societies across South Asia and globally. Patriarchal structures and norms shape women's lives and political participation across diverse contexts. While the study primarily focuses on Pakistan, its relevance can be generalized to other South Asian countries and patriarchal societies worldwide.

In terms of future research directions, longitudinal studies could track changes in women's political participation over time, examining how shifting socioeconomic dynamics and evolving gender norms impact women's agency. Comparative studies across different cultural contexts within South Asia could provide insights into the contextual factors shaping women's political engagement.

Practically, the study's findings have implications for policymakers, activists, and practitioners involved in gender advocacy and development initiatives. Recognizing the diverse determinants of women's political participation enables stakeholders to design contextually relevant interventions addressing specific barriers women face in different sociocultural contexts. This tailored approach is crucial for fostering meaningful and sustainable global changes in women's political representation and empowerment.

In conclusion, this study contributes to ongoing conversations within transnational feminist scholarship by highlighting the need to embrace the complexity and nuances of women's experiences in political participation. This research acknowledges the intersecting influences of patriarchy, education, socioeconomic status, and cultural norms, and it offers a holistic understanding of women's agency and empowerment. It underscores the importance of adopting intersectional approaches to feminist scholarship and activism, providing insights that pave the way for promoting gender equality and social transformation worldwide.

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