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First Generation Married Pakistani Women's Perspectives on Paternalistic Dominance, Family Values and Traditional Gender Roles in Australia

Safia Iftikhar*, Vicki Banham, Elizabeth Reid Boyd, and Shajimon Peter

School of Arts and Humanities, Edith Cowan University, Australia

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ABSTRACT

This paper employs a case study using familial patriarchal framework to contribute to the literature of first generation married Pakistani women's experiences in Pakistani diaspora in Western Australia. Through a qualitative interpretive phenomenological approach, it highlights how these women navigate selective assimilation, striving to fulfill their marital aspirations while balancing familial and cultural expectations. Theoretically, this study builds on Gerda Lerner's Paternalistic Dominance (PD) concept. The study's aims were to: 1) emphasize on learned and cultural context of performing gender roles, 2) explain women's divergent perspectives on PD, and 3) stress the importance of culturally competent social services for Pakistani immigrant women in diaspora. The study employed Braun and Clark's (2021) thematic analysis to arrive at themes from the data that clustered in three sections: Traditional gender roles, Family values, and PD. The analysis was conducted from a feminist standpoint, which revealed that patriarchal ideologies, culture, and expected future and present securities through marital union influenced many women to reproduce gendered inequality. Women's narratives indicate that they consider themselves informed moral agents responsible for continuing traditionality and collective identity. The culturally learned patriarchal beliefs take shape as neopatriarchy after encountering Australian society. We argue that neo-patriarchy is like an old wine in a new bottle. Women reproduce patriarchal norms, giving privileges to male authority and legitimising institutionalised gendered domination through family and marriage. This case study aims to shed light on women's role in reproducing gender inequality in marital and family institutions. It also aims to present nuances about women's religiosity, personal attitudes and real practices and how religious and personal perspectives are culturally constructed.

*Corresponding author's E-mail address: siftikha@our.ecu.edu.au, safia.khann@gmail.com

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1. Introduction

South Asian women (SAW, henceforth) has been a focus of research in multicultural societies such as Australia, Canada, USA, and UK (Ahmad et al., 2009; Farah Ahmad et al., 2004; Anitha, 2010; Anitha, 2011; Bhandari & Sabri, 2020; Kalwant Bhopal, 2019; Chaudhuri et al., 2014; Dasgupta, 2007; Finfgeld-Connett & Johnson, 2013; Gill, 2004). The focus of research on SAW has been on issues that are recurrent, for example, cultural abuse (Bolognani & Mellor, 2012; Childress, 2013; Cohen & Palos, 2001; Erez, 2000; Gill & Brah, 2014; Kalra, 2009), gender norms (Afrouz et al., 2022; Ahmad, 2016; Boehnke, 2011; Charsley, 2007; Kalra, 2009), patriarchal bargaining (Ahmad et al., 2004; Chaudhuri et al., 2014; Smith, 1990a; Soman, 2009; Tonsing & Tonsing, 2017; Zulfiqar, 2022), and honour (Baxi et al., 2006; Gill, 2006; Gill & Brah, 2014; Gill & Walker, 2020; Khan et al., 2018; Moghadam, 1992). These studies mainly choose samples that combine Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi women as one group. However, although these countries have shared colonial historical experiences. Pakistan, India and Bangladesh had distinct political trajectories and ethnic diversities. Pakistani diaspora is predominantly concentrated in USA and UK which is the reason studies are undertaken in these countries. One such study posits that due to stereotypical identity image that is created by various oppressive systems in UK, Pakistani women need to deal with such discriminatory practices. The study also challenges the oversimplified and understudied perspectives that present women as economically inactive, ignoring informal economic contribution and filial and caring duties these women perform at home (Malik, 2022). In a special issue review paper about SAW, Pio and Syed (2013) discuss that due to rigid, structural, organizational, religious and cultural context women face multifaceted challenges to participate in work force. Syed and Ali (2013) in their study explored the concept of emotional labour, which they define as the suppression of cultural and learned feelings and behaviours to align with organizational rules in the workplace. They argued that Pakistani Muslim women have learned to be modest, feminine, and submissive, however, culturally learned values are challenged at workplaces resulting in emotional labour for women at workplace. The study's central argument is that due to western modernization process, women are at risk of emotional labour.

Despite overall generalization about SAW, a study on these women suggest that traditional gender roles are performed differently among Bangladeshi, Pakistani and white women in their households (Dale, 2008). The findings of this study also point to lower labour force participation of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in UK than Indian women. Similarly, Muslim women with Indian nationality participate less in economic activity than Hindus or Sikh women (Dale, 2008). Dale (2002) in her research on Pakistani and Bangladeshi women argues that whilst most women subscribed strongly to the centrality of the family, the majority follow very different paths through the life-course from their mothers.

There is little research on Pakistani diasporic women in Western countries, and majority of research is centred around key themes, including arranged marriage, honour killing and Muslim identity. Notwithstanding such dearth of research, there are some studies from Canada, Oslo, Norway, Sweden and South Africa on Pakistani women's perspectives about autonomy, gender and agency (Jibeen & Hynie, 2012; Kanwal, 2018; Predelli, 2004; Qasim, 2020). Pakistani women constitute a minority in Australia; additionally, the percentage of people who are affiliated with Islam are only 3.2% (ABS, 2021). The Pakistani community represents Australia's seventh largest immigrant community (ABS,2021; Department of Home affairs, 2024). The literature on immigrant and culturally and linguistically diverse women abounds, however, majority of the literature only focuses on certain ethnic minorities for instance Indian women, Afghani women and Muslim women highlighting their experiences and issues (Afrouz et al., 2020; Batchelor, 2020; Borges Jelinic, 2019; Murray et al., 2019; Satyen et al., 2018; Singh & Sidhu, 2020; Truong et al., 2022). This indicates a research blind spot, which

marginalises Pakistani women's voices and presence in Australian society as a minority group. The lack of literature also demonstrates a lacuna in academic rigour and presentation of Pakistani women's voices that can inform policy and social services not only for this ethnic minority, but also for immigrant women whose cultural values reflect Pakistani women's experiences. The literature on immigrant women has narrowly focused on certain issues for instance financial abuse, domestic abuse, and dowry.

There are some obvious gaps in research and literature about this ethnic minority as Pakistani women's experiences in Australia have not been the focus of current studies. One study was conducted by male researcher two decades ago, however, it could be argued that the women's responses in the study may have been impacted due to limited cultural competence of a male researcher (Fijac & Sonn, 2004). More importantly, it is noted that the literature to date has not explored the theoretical concept of PD about married Pakistani Muslim women in an Australian context. As little scholarly attention has been given to this ethnic minority in Australia, it is appropriate for a study to delineate ethnically constructed gender roles from first generation Pakistani women's perspective. This study aims to address the knowledge gaps of this understudied topic and will contribute to the knowledge of first-generation Pakistani women's diasporic experiences and presences in diverse Australian society. The study focussed on two main questions:

1. How is PD practiced among married Pakistani women in diasporic context?
2. What diverse perspectives exist among this ethnic minority about gender roles, family values and male dominance?

The focus of this case study is to empower women's voices and understand their perspectives and diversity of perspectives within this ethnic minority group without reproducing the stereotypical image of women. Pakistani women are not a monolithic group as the literature on SAW suggests. Representing their voices through this paper, the case study aims to notify their presence in Australian society. Extending the work of Naidoo (2003), we argue in this case study that patriarchal dominance changes in egalitarian western society of Australia to an extent that it can appear like an old book with a new cover. The political, social and economic platforms need to have a holistic knowledge about this ethnic minority's cultural construct of PD, familial and marital institutions, their significance for women, women's cultural psychology.

This paper is structured as follows: First, it offers an overview of theoretical framework. Second, it describes the methodology employed to undertake the study. Third, it presents the findings. Fourth, it discusses the findings with context of relevant literature, and finally, conclusions, limitation and the direction of future research have been discussed.

2. Theoretical Framework

Theoretically this study builds on Paternalistic Dominance (PD). The PD concept was introduced by Gerda Lerner (1986). She defines PD as a relationship between a dominant man who believes he is a superior being and a dominated woman who believe she is a subordinated being. In this kind of relationship, the dominance is agreed upon through mutual obligation and reciprocal right (Lerner, 1986, 217). In the context of Pakistani cultural family structure, the dominated women exchange submission for their sexual and emotional loyalty to their men, and trade off their unpaid domestic services in exchange of social and financial protection. In cases where women participate in the labour market, this new contract or interaction of women does not affect their submission or subordinated position (Lerner, 1986, pp. 217-218).

3. Methodology

3.1. Data Source

The evidence used in this case study is from 21 in-depth interviews with first generation Pakistani women in Perth, Australia conducted by the first author (Jiménez, 2014). The rationale for choosing a case study was to have in-depth, holistic, comprehensive, and detailed understanding of our topic, and contextual understanding of this ethnic minority in Australia. The interview guide was designed by the authors that comprised 17 main topics. All responses were open-ended, and women were given full opportunity to share their views and perspectives. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The analysis of this case study of Pakistani married women is based on women's response to the research these questions:

Since you have moved to a new place, new country with different cultural or societal expectations what change do you feel in terms of gender roles? (Give examples)

Do you think coming to this place has strengthened, weakened your position as a woman? Or it is the same.

What major changes have you observed after coming to this country that benefit you as a woman or not benefit you? (How, give examples).

Do you feel any change in your own household in regard to who has control (financial, physical, emotional)?

How has male domination in your household changed/not changed? What factors contribute to it?

3.2. Participants

The participants for this study were married Pakistani women who lived in Australia as first generation. Participants varied in age, ethnic background, and educational attainment. All women were Muslim. Participants were born and previously lived in Pakistan. We included both temporary and permanent residents. The participants were married for varying durations ranging from a maximum of 15 years to minimum of 4 years. The participants lived in Australia for varying durations ranging from 1 year to 14 years. A total of 21 first generation Pakistani married women belonging to a diverse immigration status and within the age bracket 29-47 were recruited, and categorised as: 4 full time working women, 5 part time working, and 12 homemakers.

3.3. Sampling

The study recruited 21 married Pakistani first-generation women through snowball sampling to participate in this case study (Heckathorn, 1997; Noy, 2008). Snowball sampling was used because of the ethical considerations and sensitive nature of the study, which made reaching out to more participants challenging. Additionally, this size is recommended for in-depth qualitative studies where the purpose is to explore diversity and nuances in perspectives (Boddy, 2016; Vasileiou et al., 2018). This sample size also ensured data saturation. Transcription, coding and data analysis all signalled no emergence of new themes and codes in the final 3 – 4 interviews., As no further new information was identified, the data saturation stage was identified as have been reached. We were interested to specifically choose Pakistani origin married women, unlike other studies where SAW are treated as a sampling universe. For initiating first contact, the first author, relied on her own contacts as she herself is Pakistani woman. She provided information about the project to her colleagues and friends who

introduced her to intermediaries who had strong connection with the Pakistani community due to their extended years of living in Australia. The first author also visited the places where Pakistani population was concentrated visiting mosques, shopping centres and cultural festivals to reach out to women. Through initial contacts, participants were asked to communicate and inform other potential women who could willingly participate in the research.

3.4. Data Analysis

All transcribed interviews were converted into word documents, and then uploaded into NVivo software version 1.6. For thematic analysis, Clark and Braun method was used (Braun & Clarke, 2012, 2023; Byrne, 2021; Creswell J, 2013; Guest et al., 2011). Braun and Clarke (2023), thematic analysis is a widely used qualitative data analysis framework, comprising six main steps. Step one involves familiarization with data, this was achieved by transcribing interviews, reading, rereading and discussing the transcription with research participants and all authors. The interview was conducted by the first author which improved the familiarization of data, followed by transcription which was also conducted by first author. Step two required coding of data which was performed inductively and deductively or using both approaches simultaneously. For this study, authors decided to use both the deductive and inductive approach. Important and meaningful words and phrases were highlighted. At this stage a maximum number of codes were produced, which were reviewed by all authors. The third step included theme searching which was undertaken by drawing from the codes relevant meaningful concepts. The themes produced by the first author were discussed, analysed and then renamed and regrouped until a mutual consensus was made. The fourth step, focused on reviewing the themes and relating them to the study's questions and objectives. Step five entailed naming the themes, with the final step six focusing on reporting the final themes as findings. Each of the steps in this study were performed collaboratively amongst all authors until agreement was reached.

3.5. Truthfulness

To ensure truthfulness, a member check method was employed (Birt et al., 2016). All participants were contacted again and were asked to listen to the transcription for removing any misinterpretation and misinformation.

3.6. Ethical Consideration

The approval for this study was obtained from the Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committee with approval number REMS NO: 2022-03505-IFTIKHAR. The Guidelines of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (NHMRC, 2018), were followed and all participants were informed about the objectives, aim, and significance of the study. All participants were briefed that only oral informed consent would be received from them, and they could withdraw from the study at any time during and after the study for ensuring their rights. Participants were given pseudonyms to ensure privacy and anonymity (Nakkash et al., 2017).

4. Findings

4.1. Gender Roles

This section will analyse the culturally learned gender norms and expectations that women in our case study practice inside the domestic sphere normalising PD, in particular, relating to the

notions of mutual obligation and reciprocal right (Lerner, 1986, p. 218). As Lerner's theoretical framework suggests, and these finding indicate, in cases where women participate in labour market, such paid work does not affect their submission or subordinated position at home (Lerner, 1986, pp. 217-218). Women in the case study internalised rigid gender roles across two life spans, namely before and after marriage. The Pakistani community Muslim married women interviewed maintained deeply ingrained views that are part of their cultural milieu. Despite disagreement over how to perform cultural gender roles, participants repeated them as with choice, without choice, or as they had learned or internalised them as the only appropriate or optimum choices in their married lives.

The participants' stories demonstrated the existence of a gender-based hierarchy between women and men; hence, the family institution-maintained gender norms reflective of a patriarchal worldview in line with Lerner's model of a superior man and a subordinate woman (1986). The degree of patriarchal mindset differed from family to family and women's subjective experiences. However, gender ideologies assigned men a privileged status and women as subordinate. Age and gender were two significant markers of hierarchy within this case study, with older men and sometimes older women, including mothers and mothers-in-law, being assigned greater superiority in the family system.

Women reproduced gender inequalities irrespective of how they thought about performing those roles. Women in the case study endorsed traditional gender roles for different reasons, categorised as 1) practical, 2) religious, 3) traditional, and 4) childhood socialisation as indicated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Illustration of rationales for reproducing gender roles

Women who endorsed practical rationality for traditional gender roles in this case study believed financial responsibility, leadership, and decision-making were more challenging than performing female roles, evidencing Lerner's model about a belief in male superiority, in that the men were doing the more difficult tasks. Yusra's statement reflected this as a mutually agreed upon male dominated household where expectations, roles and responsibilities have clear boundaries that benefit both genders:

> For example, if a family has a financial burden, a male is under stress and burden. Females do not have any money-related stress. This is a positive of our system (Yusra).

Parveen and Asma supported practical rationales for men being in leadership reflecting a prudent choice and clear boundaries of roles within household confirming PD:

> Men should lead, as it naturally aligns with men's personality. Man is strong; what a man can do, a woman cannot. A woman is a woman, and a man is a man (Parveen).

> Before marriage, I never had a job. Even after marriage, I did not have any job. After my children were of school-going age, I started a job. I enjoy staying at home and doing house chores. I feel like men should earn (Asma).

Lareeb, 39 years old, was previously working, and after marriage, she left her job because she moved from the city to a rural town in Pakistan. She regretted that from being financially independent, she became dependent on her husband after marriage. She was forced to leave her job. Her husband and in-laws did not favour her job because it was not a government job. She became dependent on her husband. Lareeb's husband left for Australia for work, and she stayed with her in-laws. She narrated her story of feeling miserable when her in-laws monitored every movement in her husband's absence. In spite of this sense of increased subordination due to lack of financial autonomy, however, she endorsed the traditional gender philosophy as an Islamic structure created by God. Her perspective provides a faith-based justification to men's dominance which was also mutually agreed upon.

> From a religious perspective, men cover the women in a *chadar* (Urdu word meaning a big wide shawl). A father protects his daughter, a brother protects his sister, and a husband his wife. In our religion, Allah has covered the women in a veil *(purdah)* and protected them. She has a share in inheritance with her parents, and she has a share in her husband's inheritance. She has a share with her children as well.

Maryum, who is a stay-at-home mother and was working, also left her job after marriage. Maryum's husband earns well, and she thinks that women are emotional, so they should put the decision-making in men's hands. Maryum's choice also reflects an emotional preference for Paternalistic Dominance:

> When I compare myself to my husband, his decision-making power is way better than mine. Men's decision-making power is far better than women. Females are emotional (Maryum).

Some women in the case study supported religious rationales as divine structures created by God for men and women. In line with Lerner's model, these women believed that gender roles were religiously defined and that they should follow in a religious way. Many women commented that they performed gender roles in harmony with their religion. They believed that men are "*Qawam" or "Hakim*", which, according to participants' views, means leader of the household. Some women justified that men are one degree superior to women, while others disagreed because they were in abusive marriages and endorsed that Islam supported egalitarian gender norms.

Participant Asma quoted Quran verse 4:43, and other participants, such as Nausheen, Lareeb, Maryum and Urwa, endorsed the religious perspective. According to Asma, Qawam means leader. "Man is one rank higher than a woman because a man protects his family, wife, and provides for his family." Parveen and Nausheen also used the word *"mijazi khuda."* These women suggested that religion assigned a god-like status to men. As Nausheen, a homemaker, also utilised religious justification for male superiority:

> Man is a moral support for women. A woman is incomplete without a man. Allah has designed marriage because men and women are incomplete without each other. After marriage, they complete each other. She further added, "Yes, it is acceptable. Our religion, Islam, guides us that men are one degree superior to women "(Nausheen).

However, some participants, for example, Saima and Qurat-ul-Ain who had been in an abusive relationship, believed Islam supports egalitarian gender norms; however, women and men in the family interpret religion to oppress and control women. Saima believed that in Pakistan, Islamic texts are misinterpreted to encourage men to oppress and control women. Saima and Qurat-ul-Ain were critical of the way Islam was involved in the Pakistani community.

> People misinterpret Islamic teachings and justify wife beating. To those people, just searching someone's Facebook profile is cheating. People normalise it and encourage

> a man to treat his wife badly. Those in-laws and your husband need excuses to punish a wife. When they do not have any logical reasoning, they misinterpret Islam to justify their actions. They argue that a man can beat his wife if she is found guilty of cheating. Often, people do not say cheating; they use the word disobedient. People use Islam to control and punish women (??).

A man should lead and provide for the family. Considering this, – (insert name of participant.s) emphasised that gender roles do not imply superiority or control over women. Urwa, another participant, also endorsed that Islam is a progressive religion that allows women to be independent and take on financial roles. "Our *Malvi* interprets Islam in that way. Men are only meant for outside jobs. It is a false interpretation."

Some participants described how childhood socialisation was the predisposing factor in performing traditional gender roles. These women believed that mothers teach male and female traits to their children. Women said mothers prefer their daughters to learn woman-related skills so that they become experts in homemaking. One of the reasons for this rationale is that women are conditioned in roles that emphasise homemaking excellence. Homemaking is considered the ultimate destiny for women. Pameela, a working woman, recalled how her mother taught her cooking, cleaning, dishwashing, stitching and laundry, so she became prepared for *'Agley Ghr'. Agly ghr* means the house that a woman lives in after marriage. Pameela's mother was a working woman and could afford a maid. However, her mother decided to teach Pameela and her two sisters all women-related skills. She stated, "My mother had the mindset that I have only daughters, and I have to train them for another house *(agley ghr),* and if they do not have a maid, they should learn how to do dishes, cook, and sew." Adila believed that children learn by observing their parents, "My son will observe how his parents behave and when he grows, he will behave like that."

Some women showed affinity towards the traditional role of performing gender roles. According to them, a women's foremost identity is being a mother. While performing other roles, she might neglect her children and home. Evidencing Lerner's model in the Pakistani context, the traditional rationale recognises the man as the head of the family and woman as the household manager. These women accepted the hierarchy, considered it natural, and thought it maintained balance: or in Lerner's terms, reciprocal, if uneven, rights. Parveen, who is a housewife, explains how paternalistic dominance is a natural course of action which should not be undesirable or disputed:

> I think we should follow these roles. If a woman does not care for her home, her children will be neglected. Society will not flourish. Similarly, if men do not earn, how will society grow? It maintains a balance in the society. A man is the head of the family; he must think about how his wife will run the family and how children will get an education. A man is like the head of the state, and a wife is like a prime minister (Parveen).

As Lerner's model predicts, where women participate in the labour market, this does not affect their submission or subordinated position (1986, pp. 217-218). Working women's opinions on performing gender roles were more critical than housewives, but it did not substantially affect their position. Working women in this case study believed their men did not participate in domestic labour and it was they who faced a double workload. Adela talked about the mental load of working women. She thought that working women are mentally "over occupied." Hina, a working woman, complained about the "high expectations" sought from women. She commented that women cannot do everything. Talking about managing work and home, Pamela who despite her awareness narrated her strategic actions regarding how she continued to perform as a traditional woman to make her marriage successful,

> If you are a working woman and hire a maid because you cannot manage everything, you avoid conflict in the house and then your mother-in-law tries to make her run and does not like your maid. Being a daughter-in-law, you should never pretend that this is your house, or this is your preference. You have to pretend that your decision is good for the whole family (Pamela).

Rozeena, a working woman, reflected on her life struggles and confirmed that women continued to maintain the gender order in her household to keep her marriage contract workable:

> I am mentally occupied and have many things on my mind, for example, my job, office work, or I clean and care for my child. Why am I always supposed to do everything? I always worry that I must present fresh *rotti* when my husband arrives from work, no matter how busy I am in my professional life. I always prioritise my husband, home, and child before my own needs. I feel frustrated. Why am I not given breakfast? Why is no one looking after me? When I come back from work, I do the dishes. Before marriage, I hardly did any chores; now, I am living a maid's life. Why is it like that? It is everywhere in the world (Rozeena).

Quratul-Ain, Sakeena and Pamela also shared similar views that a women choices to maintain PD:

> Home responsibilities are for females, and men are responsible for livelihood. Even if a woman works, she is still responsible for childcare and the house. She is responsible for in-law care and services; she must look after her in-laws. A man’s job is to earn; after that, he does not take any responsibility for his children and home. He also does not want to take responsibility for his parents and makes his wife responsible (Qurat-ul-Ain on women being critical).

If you are working with your husband, when your husband comes home, he does not participate in the household chores. Mostly in *desi families* (A word meaning families originated from South Asia), it is like this (Sakeena).

This theme suggests that women, despite the multiple logics and rationalisations, are performing gender roles that strengthen male dominance and maintain a hierarchical gender-based household environment. PD, regardless of individual paid or unpaid labour choices, remains entrenched.

4.2. Family Values

Married Pakistani women also demonstrated a mindful selection of assimilation practices. These women were enthusiastic about preserving cultural norms for maintaining and keeping identity intact which include child-rearing, marriage, family and their relationships. Women in this case study who were first generation married Pakistani women, were also adamant to retain their motherly roles. These values are interwoven with the upholding of Paternalistic Dominance along age and gender lines.

Mothers should sacrifice for the better future of their children Women in this case study described at length, the values they considered supreme. . Asma, Sakeena, and Nausheen shared their views on respecting their elders. They thought women should prioritise elders in the family. Women should sit with them, talk to them, and serve them. By elders, married women included the parents-in-law. These women criticised other women who were self-centric. These women also supported that daughters-in-law should spend time with their mother-in-law, listen to her, and sometimes obey signalling towards maintaining a family values.

Asma discussed how she would spend an entire day in Pakistan with her mother-in-law. She said she was not talkative, and her mother-in-law would complain about her behaviour toward her husband. While discussing the importance of elders' respect, she added that she could not talk back to elders at their level. Asma chose to be intentionally silent with her mother-in-law, as part of her value system.

Sakina married her uncle's son, and she would cook for her father-in-law and everyone in the family, so she did not want anyone to complain about her being "selfish". Another participant, Nausheen, was proud that she learned good values from her mother. She saw her mother doing the same. She said she would serve everyone in the family in Pakistan, including her young unmarried sister-in-law. She further elaborated:

> They (elders) want us to sit with them and have chit-chat. Because when their children(women) grow up and have their own families, the mother-in-law wants the company of her son's wife. It is a gesture of love. Apart from this, I would inform her if I were going anywhere. They (elders) think that a woman is giving respect.

Participants, Ushna, Asma, Qurat-ul-Ain and Urwa, believed that the broken family concept was a Western phenomenon. These women argued couples do not sacrifice for their children because of western values such as freedom, independence, and individualism. Many women maintained the belief that it was women's responsibility to keep patient and sacrifice for their children. Participants reported how their parents' divorce impacted their children's classmates. Qurat-ul-Ain stated that she desired a divorce from her husband when her daughter discussed with her, her friends whose parents were divorced. She noted that her daughter had an emotional bond with her father. She decided to stay in the relationship despite being beaten and mistreated for the sake of her children. She said, "We do not change husbands like Western women do."

Emphasising the importance of both parents in children's upbringing, Farzana said that children belong to both parents, which prevented women from leaving abusive husbands. "A woman who is financially dependent will continue to stay in an abusive relationship."

According to some participants in our case study, egalitarian gendered norms place women in a disadvantaged position financially. Participants thought they would financially participate equally in the mortgage if they followed Western culture. Ushna said,

> If we follow a Western culture, women will pay the mortgage equally. You do chores equally. We do not adopt Western culture completely. We have advantages of our values. I own a house; I am not responsible for this. My husband pays the mortgage.

In summary this theme, suggests family values also extend a hierarchical gender-based division of labour and roles within the household emphasizing a willingness to maintain cultural status quo and stability in the household.

4.3. Applying the Concept of Paternalistic Dominance in this Case Study

The data for this case study revealed that women in the case study maintained conventional male identity in households for several reasons, including being appreciative, experiencing a sense of security, having no escape, not being aware of their rights, and mutual understanding, as identified in Figure 2.

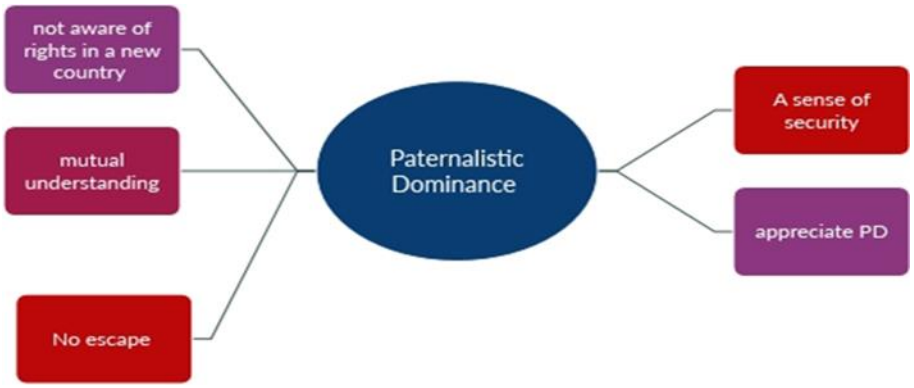

Figure 2. Illustration of women's rationales for PD

It became clear from the women's conversations in this case study that PD was still exercised in the households after coming to Australia. Why is there still a prevalence of paternalistic domination in families, even in societies with decreasingly patriarchal standards and increasingly egalitarian norms? Our analysis suggests that patriarchal dominance is deeply ingrained in the system, and women tend to idealise traditional notions of what males should be like. Women expressed gratitude towards the male-dominated familial system of Pakistan. "I still appreciate that my husband is leading," said Urwa when questioned about the reason. The participants, Ushna, Asma, Humaira, and Parveen, all expressed their appreciation for male dominance. These women stayed home to raise their children and economically relied on their husbands. Women appreciated the traditional masculine identity because their men were successful financially—these women's husbands were successful in their careers.

Men's ability to control their home finances was the source of their supremacy. Women in our sample were raised in houses where gender roles were typically defined and hence had a greater appreciation for the traditional male identity. The wife and mother roles were the only or most significant identities that the women identified themselves in those households. Women chose not to work outside the home to raise children or manage a household. During the conversation, Parveen disclosed that her brothers' wives were argumentative; their tongues were like sharp blades, and they argued with my brothers on every subject. She mentioned:

> When a man gets home from a long workday, he needs time to relax. If you get into an argument with a male, it is obvious that he would behave aggressively (Parveen).

Based on their personal circumstances, women had different opinions about male dominance.

> Asma said: Men's shoes on the door make you feel secure.

Some women endorsed PD because it symbolised social protection. Two women supported such a statement. It is a frequent domestic idiom about the cultural construct of male dominance. It symbolises women's cultural perspective towards traditional masculine identity. It answers questions that could be about why women remain in violent marriages. Because we aimed to explain or present women's perspectives, we requested our participant Asma to explain the meanings. According to her, it indicates that having men in the house makes women feel safe. His shoes indicate the presence of males. It repels potential harm or is employed in reprisal for outside men who might consider posing any threat to the household in the family. It makes no difference whether your man is abusive, impoverished, or disabled; what counts is that you have a male in your home. That man could be your brother, father, husband, or father-in-law, but his presence deters the danger and hostility of other men and society. Divorced women are more vulnerable than married women in our culture because they have lost their men.

Qurat-ul-ain, 39, suffered physical and psychological abuse. She has been married for fifteen years. She considered ending her marriage several times. Her rationale reflects the preceding cultural idiom, which led this woman to assume she is safer with an abusive spouse than without one. "I feel safe when he sleeps in the house; I am not sure why, but I do."

Women had distinct viewpoints regarding paternalistic control in their homes. Some women reported wanting to keep the man in charge in their homes out of love, care, or respect. Respect for the men in their families is like putting their needs ahead of their own, considering them more worthy of love or care. Women thought that they should be the ones to show love and care.

Pamela is a career woman. She did well in her studies and job. In the following story, she gives a reason for PD. One on hand Pamela, enjoys the independence that Australian society has offered her, but on other hand she consciously performs like a traditional woman allowing a gender-based hierarchy in her household without any coercion indicating towards well-informed PD:

> We like to give our husbands, sons, or other males the best piece of chicken curry. I do it out of care, respect, or to show that my husband is the man. I do it because I respect, love, or care about my husband. I will ask him if it is time for tea, even though I do not want to drink, but I will make him tea. This is what we have learned to believe (Pamela).

Some women in this case study used to be successful and independent in Pakistan, and their fathers empowered them to be so. These women considered themselves remarkable individuals who could think for themselves and deserved to do well in life. Sharmeen said that her last job in Pakistan was as an 18th scale (indicating a higher ranked job). She could enjoy being on her own. She was 32 years old, which in Pakistani culture was too old to get married. Her parents arranged her marriage with a divorced man and had children from his first wife. She also preferred to enter into marriage contract forfeiting her independence for social security confirming that PD is mutually agreed contract.

Some participants indicated that, after immigration, they faced various challenges in navigating Australian society's legal and institutional environment. For those participants, moving to Australia did not positively change their life. For example, Sharmeen said that her life turned upside down when she moved to Australia. She asked the researcher (first author) how she could determine her choices in Australia. She was a solicitor by profession in Pakistan. She wanted to be independent and learn her rights per Australian law. Sharmeen says her husband is not bad but a typical Pakistani man.

One participant remarked that Pakistani women adjusted to a male-dominated patriarchal household because they had no escape. Farzana, a housewife, holds an engineering degree from one of Pakistan’s best institutions. She was twenty-two when she got married. Her father arranged her marriage. She did not have any career after marriage. She has recently started a childcare course. She is financially dependent on her husband. She has four sisters and no brother. Farzana said her father raised them well and put them in the best institutions. She was not happy in her marriage. She thinks that her husband feels more obliged towards his family than towards her children or her. She said she could leave the marriage if she were financially independent. She is staying for her children’s future. She said even in an argument, her husband threatened her to divorce her.

Other women believed that decision-making in their households was a collaborative effort. Ayesha was a working woman in Pakistan. Her father instilled a sense of self-assurance in her, and she went on to complete her schooling and marry a co-worker whose cast differed from her own. When she was in Pakistan, there would be some interference in the running of her

household. However, whenever her husband decides about anything—the children's clothing, furniture, or even an insignificant detail—he notifies her and asks for her input. She believed that women in Pakistan who were suppressed and had been taught to obey their husbands were acting similarly. She perceives herself as someone who is not easily influenced or manipulated by others. Hina, also a working woman expressed similar opinions, and her husband came with her to Australia on her dependence. Adeela also expressed a similar view.

The data from this case study suggests PD is a dialectical phenomenon, exhibiting duality and contradictions. Some women from their experiences enjoyed the fruits and benefits of male supremacy, while other women critically questioned the oppressive practices associated with adherence, conformity and unchallenged submission women experienced.

5. Discussion

The case study aimed to explore and understand Pakistani married women's perspective on gender roles, family values and PD after moving to Australia. It also sheds light on how these realities are fixed in social, religious and a cultural collectivistic paradigm rather than individualistic paradigm. The findings with this ethnic minority among immigrant women in Australia, suggest that how patriarchal philosophy has contributed to traditional gender roles performance, and how childhood socialization, religion, and cultural all converge on singular nucleus of PD. The findings suggest women are taught to be obedient, submissive, nurturing, and caring. Men are taught to be dominant, authoritative and provider of the family. Our findings support earlier research on immigrant women and also give another perspective on women's choices. The bulk of literature about Pakistani married women is about DV and help seeking behaviours. For example, Tosing (2014) propounds that SAW in Hong Kong are financially dependent on men for their smaller needs and are financially controlled by their husband. In our case study, some married Pakistani women shared that their decision to not work was a well-informed choice, and they had made this decision to have mutual rights and obligation in marriage. On the other hand, some women in this case study, disagreed to be financially dependent on their husbands, however, they had limited choices to change their circumstances due to filial roles and responsibilities. This is in congruent with the existing literature on less economic activity of Pakistani women in diaspora (Chowbey, 2017; Dale, 2008; Tosing 2014). Qureshi et al. (2014) in their article argued that divorce rate among young couples is increasing in British Pakistani community as marriage is seen as individualistic fulfilment rather than a familial obligation. However, our findings suggest otherwise, as we conducted research on first generation Pakistani women where cultural stigma about divorce is still prevalent and strong. Our findings are consistent with Tosing's (2014) study, who argued that cultural factors compelled women to not seek help while in abusive relationship and their rationale pertains to importance of marital life to one's social well-being and identity. Analysis of the data indicates that many women appreciated traditional feminine roles and were intelligent and thoughtful in making decisions. These women supported various arguments in favour of ideal femininity which is supported by Islamic doctrine of being a good girl (Clarke, 2016). However, women who worked full-time and made financial contributions did not negotiate with their husbands to perform roles differently. With their professional work commitments, all women performed the bulk of domestic responsibilities.

Malik (2022) in her study on British Pakistani women, found that most first-generation Pakistani women refrained from working outside their homes. The women did not consider religion to be a reason of not choosing to work or participate in an economic activity. Instead, these women mentioned many reasons which include less education, less knowledge of spoken English, the load of household responsibilities, and caring responsibilities for young, adult and

aging parents, for not choosing to work. In our case study, women cited the burden of housework, care of children, and care of husbands as constraining factors for not participating in work outside the home. The case study findings are congruent with previous literature suggesting that women from traditional non-Western societies participate less in income generating activities outside the home (Jibeen & Hynie, 2012).

This case study suggests that in traditional Pakistani households, the gender-based division of labour maintains the status quo of men's authority, which is in harmony with previous studies on Pakistani women. Qureshi (2013) in her study on middle aged British Pakistani women argued that *sabr* (patience) is a strong cultural reasoning behind a women's sacrificial choices that they make for their children, husbands and family at the cost of their personal wellbeing and health. In Qureshi's study the women preferred to silently suffer and not show their deep-rooted feelings to their families and husbands to commit to the familial cause than their personal well-being which resonates with our study's findings.

The impact of religion on violence against women has been documented in previous studies (Batchelor, 2020; Bradley & Saigol, 2012a; Rakoczy, 2004). According to such studies religion is used as a tool to perpetuate patriarchal and misogynist values. Our findings are in harmony with this argument. One group of women believed that Islamic beliefs justify men's superiority over women and that Islam propounds gender-specific gender roles. According to these participants, men are superior because of their leadership and financial responsibilities. Some women in the case study quoted the 4:34 verse of the Quran to justify their arguments (Batchelor, 2020; Eidhamar, 2018). These participants were of the opinion that Islam justifies gender specific roles and a man's authority over a woman for his religious assigned duties (Batchelor, 2020). In contrast, other participants argued that Islam was not a conservative religion. Instead, people gave multiple interpretations, and Islam is misinterpreted through patriarchal philosophies in a way that justifies women's oppression. For example, Saima narrated her personal experiences of how her husband physically abused her, which is consistent with the literature that suggests that familial patriarchy justifies wife beating if she does not conform to culturally accepted behavioural norms (Dobash & Dobash, 2014). One previous study with leaders and members of development organization in Pakistan concluded that leaders and ideologues of the faith-based organisations intend to strengthen the patriarchal division of labour that links women with the private reproductive sphere and men with the public productive realm emphasising household and mothering education for women along with religious values (Bradley & Saigol, 2012a). A majority of the women in our case study believed that raising children and managing the home were the biggest achievements rather than opting for careers. The popular discourse about bargaining is that women choose options between limited choices that undermine their well-being. However, as bargaining involves many subjective choices, our findings indicated bargaining with familial patriarchy sometimes involves intelligent and rational choice while at other times, women bargain due to limited choices in their lives. Participants wished to maintain their traditions and values, and the majority of women in the case study indicated that they were not in favour of western influences on their marriage and family values (Fijac & Sonn, 2004).

Our case study's findings are in agreement with previous research on Pakistani and SAW that patriarchal norms continue to impact women's worldviews and life choices even after migrating to a country with egalitarian gendered norms (Jibeen & Hynie, 2012). Previous studies suggest that South Asian immigrant women may continue to find themselves bound by patriarchal beliefs and norms within their marital families in their host country (Espiritu, 1999; Tonsing & Tonsing, 2017). In contrast to other studies, our findings suggest that some women endorsed male dominated patriarchal household due to affection, love and care. Patriarchy is not always undesirable as the women's perspective about familial patriarchy varied. This

maybe explained in terms of toxic masculinity and soft patriarchy (Van Leeuwen, 1997). Women who enjoyed the financial perks of their husband were more appreciative of patriarchal households than women who experienced toxic masculine behaviour by their husbands. It can also be explained that men used their financial superiority to reward women for their conformity. In the same vein, some women reported that they did not have male dominated patriarchal households because their husbands included them in all decision making and empowered them. This can be conceptualised in terms of soft patriarchy that suggest a husbands' "headship" in terms of a loving sacrificial service to one's family, and enacting this in terms of joint decision making (Tracy, 2007).

Previous feminist studies found that women with less resources are less likely to leave abusive relationships than women who have more resources (Liang et al., 2005). Our findings also indicate as women who were financially dependent on their husbands stayed with their abusive husbands because they did not have means to survive on their own. In our case study, it was difficult to make a correlation between resources and leaving abusive relationships. Some women who were financially independent reported that staying with man ensured them social security. Gender ranks and hierarchical familial relationships are hall mark of patriarchal familial systems, and it continues to function as financial superiority of men rely on it. Our findings suggest that women in Pakistani community hold classical patriarchal worldviews that justify women's low and subordinated position in the family. In addition, a woman's decision to leave an abusive husband is not supportive by her marital family and community which can further exacerbate the oppression (Menjívar & Salcido, 2002). The findings in our case study suggest that an understanding of women personal context is important. After closer examination, the findings implied that women in difficult situations are further marginalised as they found themselves at intersection of gender, class, race and receiving societies legal and social fabric intensifying the vulnerabilities Such a position can be referred to as inescapable patriarchal vulnerabilities. Furthermore, the concept of intersectionality can be employed to highlight how women from diaspora communities suffer marginalisation because of their gender, ethnicity and race (Kohli, 2015). Some women in our case study wished to rebuild their careers, but they found it difficult to secure employment, due to factors raised by Casimiro et al (2007) being, their qualification was not recognized, lack of resources, and a poor understanding of Australian job network w. The findings in this case study are consistent with (Dasgupta & Warrier, 1996) who found that childhood socialization and adherence to cultural norms and traditions continued to influence SAW in their new environment.

In summary, the findings of this case study clearly highlight a diverse range of opinions from the participants about PD. However, the case study has provided an insight into how the married Pakistani women speak about their choices based on gender roles and family values and how these impact on their lives. The case study also adds to the discussion by providing an in-depth analysis, of Pakistani diasporic studies in general and in the Australian context in particular.

6. Conclusion

The dominant narrative of orientalism has stereotyped SAW as passive and oppressive (Gill & Brah, 2014). However, academically and scientifically assuming this generalization, can weaken the scholarly rigour that is hidden underneath the complex realities of these women. These ethnocentric assumptions gloss over the philosophical variation, diversities, and perspectives that underpin the notion that human civilizations and cultures are distinct yet equal.

This case study of married Pakistani women, on concepts of PD, gender roles and family values, suggests that the choices women make hinge upon their cultural norms that they do not

disapprove, as assumed by an ethnocentric narrative. Our findings contribute to the diasporic narrative about Pakistani women that gender roles, family values and male dominance should be viewed from a neutral point of view without creating stereotypes about women's choices that they think are rational. Our findings also suggest that difficult choices women made to make their marriage work, marginalise and disadvantage them individually but empower them socially and culturally. Hence, the study suggests that cultural competence is of supreme importance in delivering social services and practices.

Imposing ethnocentric or western philosophy of womanhood on immigrant women can create further conflicts in these women's lives. The findings also indicate that social, and community work should acknowledge these women's perspectives and provide culturally sensitive and informed care and solutions for women in marital conflicts. The analysis reveals that marriage is considered a sacred and unbreakable social contract that women wanted to remain intact, and modern progressive ideals should be meant for both men and women to avoid conflict escalation. Those organizations who are involved in working with Pakistani women should be aware that women's help seeking preferences can only be enhanced if these women are not stigmatised for their choices. Policy makers should be aware of cultural dependence of women on men and introduce policies affirming gender equity that enhance fair and just treatment of women through financial, social and cultural empowerment. The findings have offered a new insight to women's experiences on male dominance that is different to white women's ideologies calling to attention culturally relevant policies rather than universalistic ones.

The case study suggests that the most effective way to bring change within oppressive cultural practices is from within the community and that Pakistani community organizations should work on a social change in liaison with Pakistani men's community organizations. Besides, offering a new insight, this case study draws attention to include and accept women's diverse perspectives in matters concerning them. It argues that change only directed at women's behaviours can further marginalise and potentially put women at risk. This entails maximum involvement of people from the same community through cultural reforms and awakening movements by sensitizing people about the internal threats. It suggests change should be negotiated with the community and with men through awareness and education. One of the biggest contributions of this case study to the literature is to represent women's voice and not marginalise them by assuming expert or community spokesmen are true representation of women's choices.

6.1. Future Research

The study gives direction for future research. In the light of women's cultural perspectives, it is essential that future research is focused on how Western psychology of womanhood is discordant for immigrant women in Western societies. Women's dedication to familial values, how this impacts or benefits children in long run, so a longitudinal study including both western and South Asian families might provide more detailed understanding. There is a need to undertake a holistic and integrated research involving women, practitioners, lawyers, and health service providers to understand how culture effects women in public sphere of western societies, how culturally informed services help or do not help women when they are in abusive relationships. There is also a need to understand immigrant women's interaction with public patriarchy and their perspectives through an intersectional lens.

6.2. Limitations

This research was undertaken as a case study has some limitations which need to be considered while interpreting and generalizing the results on other contexts or population with patriarchal

norms. A small sample size was one of the limitations of our study, which may impact the results of our study. Future research with mixed methods and larger population is needed to further represent the nuances in analysis. The case study relied on snowball sampling and one of the possible limitations of this method is that participants might recommend further participants with similar circumstances. The case study only recruited married women, excluding divorced, single and senior women, which might impact the results. Men's opinions were not included due to aims and objectives of the study.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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