



# The Portrayal of Marginalized Masculinity and Patriarchy in Laila Lalami's *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*

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## Abstract

This paper aims to explore the phenomenon of gender discourse depicted through the stories of Moroccan immigrants in Laila Lalami's *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* (2005). In detail, this paper will discuss the subordinate of masculinity and the patriarchal system's oppression of Muslim women with Walby's theory of patriarchy (1990). Walby defined patriarchy as a system of male-dominated societal structures and behaviors that subjugate women. This researcher uses the qualitative descriptive method to conduct scientific data analysis in order to interpret surrounding phenomena. It also focuses on challenging gender bias by utilizing the concepts of feminism through the lives of imprisoned female characters and the subordinate of masculinity in male characters. From this research, the researchers draw the result that patriarchal culture creates tension between the roles of men and women, where men's masculinity becomes marginalized due to their inability to meet society's demands and standards. On the other hand, women also become victims of the way men gain recognition from the standards imposed on them.

**Kata kunci:**

Gender,  
Maskulinitas,  
Patriarki,  
Fiksi perempuan  
Maroko

**Abstrak**

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji fenomena gender yang tergambar melalui cerita imigran Maroko dalam novel «*Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*» (2005) karya Laila Lalami. Secara spesifik, makalah ini akan membahas maskulinitas yang ter subordinasi dan penindasan sistem patriarki terhadap perempuan Muslim menggunakan teori patriarki Walby (1990). Walby mendefinisikan patriarki sebagai sistem struktur dan perilaku sosial yang didominasi laki-laki yang menempatkan perempuan dalam posisi subordinat. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dalam analisa untuk menafsirkan fenomena yang ada. Penelitian ini juga berfokus pada upaya menantang bias gender dengan menerapkan konsep-konsep feminisme melalui kehidupan tokoh-tokoh perempuan yang terkekang serta juga subordinasi maskulinitas pada tokoh laki-laki. Hasil penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa budaya patriarki menciptakan ketegangan antara peran laki-laki dan perempuan. Maskulinitas laki-laki menjadi terpinggirkan karena ketidakmampuan mereka memenuhi tuntutan dan standar masyarakat. Di sisi lain, perempuan juga menjadi korban dari cara laki-laki berusaha mendapatkan pengakuan berdasarkan standar yang diberlakukan pada mereka.

**ملخص**

الكلمات الرئيسية:  
النوع الاجتماعي،  
الذكورة،  
النظام الأبوي،  
الأدب النسائي المغربي

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة ظاهرة الخطاب الجنساني كما تصوره قصص المهاجرين المغاربة في رواية ليلي العلمي «الأمل ومساعٍ خطيرة أخرى» (٢٠٠٥). وبشكل مفصّل، سيناقش البحث تبعية الذكورة وقمع النظام الأبوي للمرأة المسلمة مستخدمًا نظرية والبي للنظام الأبوي (١٩٩٠). عرّفت والبي النظام الأبوي بأنه منظومة من الهياكل والسلوكيات الاجتماعية التي يسيطر عليها الرجال وتُخضع النساء. يستخدم الباحث المنهج الوصفي النوعي لتحليل البيانات علميًا بهدف تفسير الظواهر المحيطة. كما يركز على تحدي التحيز الجنساني من خلال توظيف مفاهيم النسوية عبر حياة الشخصيات النسائية المقيدة وتبعية الذكورة في الشخصيات الرجالية. يخلص الباحثون من خلال هذه الدراسة إلى أن الثقافة الأبوية تخلق توترًا بين أدوار الرجال والنساء، حيث تصبح ذكورة الرجال مهمشة بسبب عجزهم عن تلبية متطلبات المجتمع ومعاييرهم. وفي المقابل، تقع النساء أيضًا ضحايا للطريقة التي يسعى بها الرجال للحصول على الاعتراف وفقًا للمعايير المفروضة عليهم.

## INTRODUCTION

The relationship between Morocco and Spain has an interesting history. Although Moroccan and Spanish cultural beliefs are different, historically, they have often influenced each other. For seven decades, Muslims ruled Spain before being forced out in the late 15th century.

Following their exile from Spain, many Muslims relocated to Morocco. Spain and Morocco battled two military conflicts in the nineteenth century, and Spain conquered a minor area of the desert on the west coast of Morocco in the mid-century, and until 1978 they did not release it. Morocco was a Spanish colony from 1921 until 1956, in the present Spain retained control of two cities in North Africa that bordered Morocco. Throughout the twentieth century, Morocco and Spain had multiple confrontations. 9,000 Spaniards were massacred in one fight (the "disaster of Annual"). As a result of their historical interaction, Moroccan immigration to Spain constitutes an intriguing variety of immigration from an impoverished to a wealthy country (Stephan et al., 1998). The lengthy history has developed animosity links between the two nations, those who illegally migrated from Morocco to Spain did not get a proper place and were shunned.

Laila Lalami's novel *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* tells the narrative of a group of Moroccans attempting to illegally enter Spain. It is important to note that each character in this story has absolutely no relationship with one another, they are migrants who each have different purposes, that is why the four of them come from diverse backgrounds and don't know each other, but they all want to move to Spain to find work and a better life. Therefore, the writer wants to highlight the challenges and hardships of two female characters who cross the nation, Halima and Faten. Halima is a mother of three children with a drunk and violent husband, while Faten is a young adult who did not finish college and is having difficulty finding a job in Morocco. Due to Morocco's patriarchal structure, both of them face oppression from the males around them. As a Moroccan Muslim woman, Lalami chooses to inform readers around the world about the oppression of women in her homeland through her writing. Laila Lalami believed that her story could be a tool to demonstrate social change in a male-centered society. According to Djohar (2021), minority writers have an important role in understanding other communities in different parts of the world such as Chinese, Arab, and African cultures by telling people their stories differently from mainstream (white) readers' traditions. Furthermore, the writer wants to explore the subordinate of male masculinity as a consequence of the country's economic recession. This decline in gender roles was addressed by Mourad and Aziz who attempted to cross into Spain illegally. Since males began to lose their employment and became dependent on women in Morocco, they have been anxious and restless because their dominant position in society and the family is being threatened.

As stated by Connell (2005) Hegemonic masculinity has a position as a set of gender behaviors that are manifested in the form of mainstream recognition of the problem of patriarchal authority, which guarantees the position of dominance of men and hegemonic subordination of women. However, domination does not necessarily function by aggressive violence, but rather through persuasion, culture, and institutions. Connell (2005) also mentioned that hegemonic masculinity operates through the recognition and approval of the dominant party.

Arab patriarchy is a male-controlled and dominated power structure that arises from the family. In the 20th century, gender equality was still being fought for by many women in all parts of the world, especially in Arab countries. It is because Arab countries still occupy the

lowest position in terms of gender equality. As quoted by Hagk and Kholilah (2018), gender is still discussed today because gender has given rise to differences in roles, responsibilities, rights, functions, and spaces for different activities between men and women. This can be known from pre-Islamic nations had cultural norms and beliefs that deeply influenced women's roles in marriage before Islam swept throughout Egypt and the neighboring regions. Hence, one institution in particular that is most impacted by patriarchal culture in society is marriage. As quoted by Rasyidi and Azizi (2024), it is not surprising that nations related to the Arab world also adopt this culture, as cultural phenomena that emerge in a nation, particularly social issues that are open to debate and have the potential to be absorbed from other nations, like patriarchy, are easily spread and absorbed.

Nevertheless, patriarchy is also created independently throughout social life, because male and elder privileges are justified in ways that are unrelated to kinship. Males and seniors are regarded to be financially responsible for women and younger relatives, and patriarchal affinity is the major source of economic stability. As explained by Joseph (1996), Even though women and children are economically productive, their contributions to their homes are sometimes viewed as meaningless so their contributions are frequently not reflected in national statistics. The significance of Islamic feminism is that it strives to uncover the roots of problems in Islamic teaching while also challenging the reason for male dominance in the interpretation of hadith and the Quran. In terms of women's duties in the community, no passage of the Quran or hadith prohibits them from participating in society. On the contrary, the Quran and hadiths repeatedly state that women are permitted to actively embrace several careers. As cited by Saiful (2020), gender equality is a fair position for both men and women to express and devote themselves to country and state development.

In investigating the issues of masculinity and patriarchy in Laila Lalami's novel *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*, it is important to see how other scholars doing such things. Many studies mainly focus on issues of oppression, patriarchy, and migration in literature. Here, we highlight two studies related to this research. First, *Patriarchy, Oppression and Illegal Migration in Leila Lalami's Collection of Short Stories "Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits"* by Walid Messaoudi (2019). The main objective of this research is to analyze how illegal migration becomes a tool to suppress subordinate groups, especially women. This study explores patriarchal structures formed by the Arab community to prioritize the rights of men and parents. Second, *The deterritorialized self in Laila Lalami's Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* by Rima Abunasser (2016). This study analyzes the construction of identity in diaspora and immigrants, revealing that the characters in the novel explore each other's trajectories and go through the processes that lead them to their final destination. In doing so, it challenges immigrant narratives as well as the cultures in which people travel.

In line with the previously described context, this study attempts to answer the research question: 1. How does the research challenge the subordinate of masculinity through the male character in Laila Lalami's *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*? 2. How does the depiction of a Moroccan Muslim woman who experienced patriarchal oppression in Laila Lalami's *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*?

This research explores the subordinate of male domination who is looking for a new identity. Then, the research concludes by challenging patriarchal oppression through the depiction of female characters. Thus, Laila Lalami's *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* reveals how gender issues see the problems faced by male and female characters.

## METHOD

This paper focuses on the marginalized masculinity of men and the subordination of women due to the patriarchal system in Lalami's novel *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* (2005). Patriarchy sets a high standard for ideals of masculinity, a man must be a provider, decision-maker, protector, and responsible for himself and his family. Meanwhile, the patriarchal system makes women constrained and become victims of dominant male behavior that oppresses women. This research uses the qualitative descriptive method as an approach to analyze the text in the novel. According to Basri (2014), data analysis was collected by critically reading the main texts several times by focusing on gender, women, and masculinity, taking notes for texts or dialogues, and using other relevant data for the study. This paper aims to identify the gender inequality that occurs between men and women who are Moroccan immigrants using Sylvia Walby's theory (1990) on patriarchy. In this novel, both female and male characters are victimized by the patriarchal system because they can not fulfill the demands and social roles that have been ingrained in society.

The primary text of this research data is Laila Lalami's *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* (2005). We also use supporting data from books, journal articles, and other resources related to the text to strengthen our argument in this paper. This research uses descriptive qualitative as an approach to analyzing the information about the topic. As explained by Basri (2014), the focus of qualitative research lies in the process and the meaning of the results. In qualitative research, observations are made of phenomena and the substance of meaning of the phenomena studied, where the analysis and acumen of the research are influenced by the strength of the words and sentences used. In line with that, Atmowardoyo (2018) explained that the purpose of descriptive research is to characterize an actual phenomenon as precisely as possible. This research method focuses on the relationship between gender issues that occur between men and women who become Moroccan immigrants with different urgency.

This paper analyzes how Gender studies dissect the presence of hegemonic masculinity in male characters along with the patriarchal oppression of stereotypes, violence, and discrimination against women in Lalami's novel. The data analysis was collected by critically reading the primary texts several times by focusing on gender, women, and masculinity, taking notes for the text or dialogue, and using other data relevant to this research. After the data have been collected, each part of the novel is examined for gender issues to conduct a more detailed analysis. It is important to look into the connection between the masculine attitude of demanding freedom and the positioning of women as weak objects to support analysis from a patriarchal perspective. In order to identify the marginalized masculinity and evaluate the patriarchal texts in this study, gender is used as an analytical tool.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Marginalized Masculinity in Morocco

Gender inequality affects the functioning of social roles in society which promotes power relations based on patriarchal structures that prioritize men over women. As pointed out by Yassar (2020), patriarchy is closely associated with idealized masculinity that has historically marginalized women's struggles. According to Walby (1990) in Naufina (2021), patriarchy is a set of social structures and practices dominated by men that oppress women. As argued by Naufina (2021), patriarchy has formed and manifested as one of the most recognized types of social construction in the world as a form of gender inequality. Sylvia Walby (1990)

in her book *Theorizing Patriarchy* divides patriarchy into two forms, namely private and public patriarchy. Private patriarchy is based on men who have full control over women at home such as a provider, decision maker, protector, and responsible. Meanwhile, public patriarchy is men who dominate the public sphere, such as the work community, politics, schools, and others. However, the ideal of masculinity shaped by patriarchy can be a challenge for men to meet the demands of society.

Masculinity is a male character that is socially constructed and maintained through a complex system of symbols, identities, and powers. According to Connell (2005), this practice legitimizes male dominance in society and supports the subordination of inferior men and women and other ways of being marginalized. The manhood characteristics are reinforced through codes and patterns of male behavior such as violence, courage, toughness, physical strength, competition, success, family leadership, and material dependability (Yassar, 2020). These masculine attributes are commonly employed to reinforce the patriarchal system, which claims men's superiority over women and is socially legitimized by this notion. However, in this novel, the inherited work assignments are tainted by the poor economic prospects in Morocco causing men to lose their masculinity characteristic. Thus, those who experience a decline in gender roles and do not associate with these dominant characteristics become a marginalized group.

In the current research, the writer explores marginalized masculinity which is a form of masculinity where groups of men become the target of hegemony. Marginalized masculinities are men who do not have access to dominant masculinities due to external factors such as class and race. Then, these men do not have a dominant position in society and are excluded from the social hierarchy (Connell, 2005). In contrast to women who work in the public sphere and have a salary, unemployed men just stay at home and do nothing. This position allows for subordination to men because women have economic capital and control income. Therefore, the men in this novel feel anxious and worried about their position as the head of the family and they try to maintain it by migrating to Spain in hopes of finding a better job and life.

In 2012 Morocco experienced dire economic times with rising prices of basic commodities, slow economic growth, and agricultural drought (Amanda, 2012). In addition, there was a political context and debt crisis in the European zone, Morocco's main trading partner. One of the causes of this economic crisis is Morocco's dependence on Europe which imports most of its commodities from Europe around 66%. Furthermore, Mustofa (2023) also stated that Morocco is still dominated by the king and his entourage who depend on tax as a monopoly for economic foundation. There are limited job opportunities due to political struggles and natural disasters compared to the increasing population of men who are jobless and have difficulty finding work. Therefore, social structures in societies that depend on men as providers and hold full control over decisions at home are in crisis. Consequently, Moroccan men are driven to withdraw and return to ancient forms of patriarchy such as violent behavior.

The economic crisis has mostly harmed the prospects of hegemonic masculinity because most men want to regain their fading status and reputation by oppressing women. In the novel *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuit*, Maati is portrayed as a violent and abusive spouse who kicks Halima and spends her money to get drunk. Since Maati was fired and unemployed, he takes his frustrations out by abusing Halima. This situation occurs because the collapse of economic power in Morocco causes men who are unable to meet the demands of society to take defensive and restorative actions. This reaction is

distinguished by a stronger attachment to the pre-existing image of masculine identity, which is portrayed as an authoritative and unconditional advantage based on patriarchal and historical interpretations of Islamic literature (Dialmy, 1970). Therefore, Maati tries to maintain his pride and manhood by behaving violently toward his wife to restore his former glory as a domineering man.

In the same way, Mourad and Aziz the two male protagonists in this novel experience a decline in their self-identity as the superior gender due to the difficulty in finding work. In this novel, Lalami depicts the lives of those who are left behind and excluded from the larger waves of prosperity that can only be accomplished through a better-qualified and interconnected society becoming more miserable and powerless against challenge. This unbalanced development continues to push some of the poor and the lower class like Aziz and Mourad to fantasize about living abroad and escaping from the terrible present (Alami, 2012). Aziz felt ashamed and guilty because Zohra's family always nagged him about being unemployed and their comments only intensified after Zohra got a job at a soda factory. Although Aziz attended a trade school and has a degree in automation, he should be able to work as a repairman. However, until now he has not found a job and is still unemployed (48). This means that his qualifications and degrees are not a requirement for obtaining work in a financially distressed environment. As cited by Abunasser (2016) on the International Monetary Fund, despite Morocco's significant progress over the last three decades, the number of unemployed young educated persons like Mourad and Aziz remains continuously high. Therefore, even though males are not subjected to direct discrimination like women, Aziz is regarded as socially and economically incompetent because he cannot meet the requirements of Moroccan masculinity.

Moroccan males have self-control and power over their wives and children. Being a man means he must be capable of providing shelter and comfort for his family by being willing and able to work anywhere and anytime as long as he gets paid. Furthermore, Moroccan men have high self-esteem and refuse to acknowledge their failure to fulfill the role of head of the family. As in the dialogue: "Just because I don't have a job you think I'm invisible? I'm her older brother. You should have come to me" (60). In this dialogue, Mourad is disappointed with his mother because she did not ask his opinion about his sister's marriage, instead, they went to their uncle to ask for help. After his father died, Mourad replaced him as head of the family. Her mother and sister should have asked for Mourad's approval since he was the leader of the family after his father died. However, they did not ask him because Mourad was not the one paying for the marriage. Therefore, this indicates that Mourad is not seen as the family's head by his mother because he fails to meet the expectations of Moroccan male masculinity, in which men are symbols of leaders who are relied on to make decisions.

Following that, only Aziz one of the two male characters who attempted to relocate to Spain arrived successfully. In contrast to his expectations, life in Spain was not as simple as he had imagined. Aziz works as a farmhand in Catalonia, and despite the difficult job he receives little pay. He tries to survive in Spain by seeking out a friend who works in a restaurant and might be able to help him (Lalami, 2005, pg.76). Thereby, men view migration as a way to achieve personal success and a promising future. By doing so, they are looking forward to the career chances that migration will provide, even if it's just a trivial job like being a bus driver, farm worker, restaurant waitress, and so on. This suggests that even abroad they do not have many choices and constantly remain a subordinate group of the hegemonic society. However, their condition is not visible to their community because they are away from their homeland, so this profession can be accepted without fear of

dishonoring themselves and their families. By doing so, they would be able to restore their shattered gender identity and regain their power and authority in the family and society.

Furthermore, Aziz and Mourad like to fantasize about their future when they successfully migrate and find work. Mourad imagines himself working in an office and living in a contemporary, well-appointed apartment. On the other hand, Aziz dreams about dressing up and driving his new car to their modern home after returning from Spain (75). However, in reality, they cannot achieve all of these dreams. Since Mourad has not made it to Spain and has been deported back to Morocco, Aziz only worked as a busboy and earned a low income. Eventually, fantasy becomes a symbol and an attempt to escape from their inability against the demands of Moroccan male masculinity. This demonstrates that the two male protagonists in this novel cannot perform the relations of power and relations of production that build masculinity. Power relations refer to the gender order of contemporary society which claims dominance over women. This provides an opportunity for men to show leadership in the family. Meanwhile, production relations are a division of labor based on gender in family institutions that require men to earn a living (Drianus & Dinata, 2019). Since they are unable to fulfill both of these demands they feel left out and anxious, likewise, they also lose their position within the family and society. Therefore, they create fantasies to reconcile with themselves, achieve freedom, and reduce guilt.

Male immigrants' chances of reaching their final destination in Spain are heavily influenced by their social relationships with other Moroccans who have already crossed the border. Those who had made it to the shore began to make plans to continue their journey. Those who were fortunate enough to survive at their destination were able to obtain shelter and jobs. Meanwhile, the unlucky ones were caught by the sea and on the side of the road by Spanish civil security guards and deported to Morocco (Juntunen, 2013). Even though the success rate was lower than the great danger that awaited them, Mourad and Aziz insisted on crossing to Spain illegally. This happens because they do not want to be trapped in the subordination of masculinity in their country and they want to perform their role as responsible and respectable men. Whenever Aziz enters a café in his hometown, he notices that there are no women but the place is full of unemployed men. This demonstrates how the economic downturn forced men to lay back and lose their passion for life.

Moreover, Mourad suffers from an inability to live up to the socially constructed expectations of male characters, he spends his days chasing foreign visitors of the Tangiers and guiding them to the homes of American and British immigrants. However, over time the number of tourists decreased and the number of guides continued to increase causing less work for Mourad. As in the following dialogue: These days, though, the guides outnumbered the tourists and Murad found little work (51). As a result, the number of unemployed people continues to rise, while job prospects are dropping. This motivated Mourad and other figures to migrate to Spain in pursuit of permanent employment. However, the idea serves as a cover to reclaim their lost prestige.

Moroccan immigration to Spain is an illustration of people migrating from underdeveloped to developed countries. This immigration took place primarily to satisfy the needs of the Spanish labor market. As quoted by Stephan et al. (1998), it is not expected that immigrant laborers would become legal citizens and blend with Spanish culture. Thus, most of the Spanish population rejects Moroccan immigrants and considers them insignificant.

He saw a pack of ten undershirts, still in their plastic wrapping. "Are you planning on reselling any of these?" he asked. Aziz knew the type. They harassed immigrants in the

hope that they would get a bill slipped to them. He did not want to play that game. His voice was cool and damaged when he revised no (77).

The quotation above suggests that the Spanish population is unfriendly to Moroccan immigrants due to cultural differences and competition for jobs and other resources. This was also influenced by the two nations' historical animosity, which caused hostility amongst its citizens. In addition, Aziz also endured various humiliations that he did not share with his family, such as being suspected of thieving at a department shop, having his residency documents examined regularly, and even being treated as if he were invisible by the cashier. He attempts to conceal his weakness to avoid being perceived as a failure by his family and other neighbors. Therefore, His actions suggest a determination to reclaim his honor and dignity, thus he only narrates the pleasant things that happened to him in Spain. This is also a means for him to demonstrate his masculinity as a man who is responsible and capable of producing.

### **Portrait of Arab women in the patriarchal system**

Literary works are often used to dramatically describe the mistakes that women make both in the domestic and public environment, where women are required to play their roles. According to Horton, the thoughts and values expressed by an author in his works also influence the formation of an opinion or impression in the minds of the public, including gender biases and socialization. The gender biases referred to here are deviations or one-sidedness so that they tend to favor one particular party, which in this case is men, at the expense of other parties, namely women. This also encourages the occurrence of injustice or inequality in society (Nursida).

This can be seen from the many authors who raise issues regarding what women experience in carrying out their gender-related roles, as an example of several Islamic literary works that adopt women's issues in them, such as *A Thousand Splendid Sun* (2007) by Khaled Hosseini, *Hagar Poems* (2017) by Mohja Kahf's, and *Unnecessary Woman* (2012) by Rabih Alameddine. An author's clarification is describing the effect or impact of standardizing patriarchal values in society, by describing the other side of the story as a comparison of patriarchal values (Nursida).

Pinem defines patriarchy as a social structure in which men serve as the primary central authority in society. Men hold a more privileged status than women in all spheres of social, cultural, and economic life. In general, patriarchal attitudes among those who uphold a social order always portray males as factors that are significant in elevating the dignity of women. As cited by Israpil (2017), the patriarchal value is the fundamental belief that women are obligated to support males in upholding their identity and character respect for their authority, performing their responsibilities, and expressing their devotion to establish a more peaceful and balanced social order. Patriarchy is often associated with issues of gender equality which are quite widely celebrated by women. As long as gender differences do not result in gender inequality, they are not an issue. However, the problem is that gender differences have given birth to various injustices, both for men and especially women. Of course, this voice for gender equality arises because of the inequality of rights obtained between men and women (gender inequality).

The problem of patriarchy in the novel *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* (2005) by Laila Laila Lalami is seen in how Fatiha educates her daughter Halima so that she remains a wife who must obey and always serve her husband Maati, regardless of the treatment Halima gets from her husband. As in the following dialogue excerpt:

*"What happened this time?" Fatiha asked.*

*"He drank the rent money." Halima took off her jellaba, revealing her paisley-print dress and the blue belt encircling her small waist. She was twenty-nine, but the dark patches on her face and the stoop in her shoulders made her look much older. She sat down on a stool and let her chin rest in her hands.*

*Fatiha lit the Butagaz and put a kettle on it. "The Lord is with those who are patient," she said.*

*Halima wondered whether all the Lord ever wanted from His people was patience. Hadn't she suffered long enough? She was sure that the Lord also wanted His people to be happy, but she couldn't come up with a stock expression as a retort, the way her mother always did.*

*The kettle whistled. Fatiha made a pot of mint tea and served it on the low, round table. Halima took her glass and cradled it in her chapped hands. "If I don't give him money for drinking, he steals it from me."*

*"A woman must know how to handle her husband," Fatiha said reproachfully.*

*(Lalami, 2005, p. 35)*

In the dialogue that occurred when Halima decided to return to her mother's house after the umpteenth time, it shows that when a married woman is having feuds within her family, it is the woman who comes out of the house to relieve her boredom so that it can be said that the woman is the one who is being harmed. The writer dramatizes the common problems faced by women regarding the character Halimah, who can no longer stand the domestic violence committed by her husband Maati, she has nowhere else to go. However, instead of getting support, Fatiha did not like her daughter's actions, because Fatiha considered the act of leaving her husband in the household very wrong and contrary to her principle which was guided by that a woman must always be patient with her husband. After all, according to her strength and power, only the husband has to provide for the wife and children, even though Halima and her children do not get all of that. In this dialogue excerpt, it is also seen that women are positioned in a bad condition where they are not given the opportunity at all to defend their honor and dignity as oppressed women.

In Arab countries, a survey revealed that only a quarter of men in Arab countries support gender equality, and most still believe that the main role of women is to remain at home (BBC, 2017). From the survey, it can be interpreted that awareness of gender equality is very low in countries in the Arab region, which can be because the people still hold on to the mindset of the previous (ancient) Arab people, which has been passed down for generations as a culture. Culture is the result of the thoughts and agreements of a society that is implemented into a habit, and lasts a long time until it is difficult to change, for example, traditions, customs, language, and art (Kasnadi). and one of the cultures of patriarchal Arab society, which places women in a disadvantageous position. Patriarchy in the scope of Arab society is formed by the order of priority rights of men or parents. The rationalization that forms the authority of the ruler in kinship is supported by religious facts (Joseph, 1996, p. 15). The fact of religion becomes a reference for people in the Arab region which is known as a Muslim-majority country, many of them do not have broad thoughts in terms of viewing religion and are based on only one thought so they strongly hold onto a patriarchal culture. Women in Arab Muslim culture are often placed between two extreme views, namely assuming women are oppressed by patriarchal culture and

believing that Islamic teachings give women a high position in various fields of life.

Islam is not a patriarchal religion. All human beings are equal and come from one source, namely Allah, the only difference between humans is the achievement and quality of piety. As stated in the Qur'an letter Al-Dzariyat 51: 56 which means: I did not create jinn and humans except that they serve Me. Islam does not teach that the position of women is below a man. Islam teaches that when a woman is married, the responsibility for her lies with the man who becomes her husband. Islam gives great respect to women because the best Muslim man is one who does good to his wife. Islam gives high honor to Muslim women. There is no obligation for them to earn a living. Instead of portraying women as weak and burdensome to men, this is Islam's respect for women for their very vital duties in the family home (Israpil, 2017). Therefore, it is the thick patriarchal culture in society that leads to discrimination against women.

As stated by Evelyn Shakir (2015) in *Syrian-Lebanese Woman Tell Their Story* Arab women must face a condition where their presence is considered no better than men (Shakir), plus a lack of knowledge about keeping up with the times. This is reflected in the mindset of Mrs. Halima whose thoughts are still traditional because Fatiha is not from the modern generation like her daughter. This can be seen from El Feki's statement, that young women are much more open than their mothers or grandmothers, but young men seem to be more conservative, maybe even more conservative than their parents. Therefore, in countries in the Arab region, the patriarchal system becomes very clear.

In the novel, the author reveals how patriarchy influences women's views and thoughts in viewing life in an environment dominated by men. Female characters who immigrate in order to get a better life like what Halima did when she tried so hard to get a divorce certificate, as well as Noura and Faten who wanted to have freedom of choice as women who have a future, but Noura's father, Larbi Amrani, prevented her from seeing her best friend Faten and made her wear whatever she wanted as well. As argued by Wali (2019), it is important to note that while among the Arab Muslim community donning the hijab is seen as a sign of sincere faith, this is not the case with Noura. It can be said that the author gives the impression of a "hero" to these characters as a motivation for readers and becomes a lesson in surviving the patriarchal culture that causes violence against women, because in fact, what happens to what women feel in social society is very contrary to what is in a fictional literary work. Talking about women, Nurcahyo (2016) revealed that the weaknesses of women due to patriarchal culture, including; women are less aware that they are individuals who have the same human rights, often feeling difficulty, ashamed and afraid of guilt, having a domestic workload, always considering family factors or family traditions that are active in organizations, always consider similarities religion, considering economic factors, less able to accept power (which is entrusted) and in seizing power prefer to give in, less able to control emotions so that their minds are less stable and easily influenced, and women are unable to forge a solid union so they are easily scattered and difficult to unite views (Nurcahyo, 2016).

In addition, patriarchal culture is motivated by the view and assumption that women are considered as beings who are more emotional and very weak than men so women are considered unable to lead, so women's position must be above men who are considered stronger and rely on logic. This view can be seen from the dialogue excerpts as follows:

"What's wrong?" Faten asks, her voice laden with anxiety.

Rahal doesn't answer.

*"Try again," Halima says.*

*Rahal yanks at the cable.*

*"This trip is cursed," Faten whispers. Everyone hears her.*

*Rahal bangs the motor with his hand. Faten recites a verse from the second sura of the Qur'an: "God, there is no God but Him, the Alive, the Eternal. Neither slumber nor sleep overtaketh Him—"*

*"Quiet," Scarface yells. "We need some quiet to think." Looking at the captain, he asks, "Is it the spark plug?"*

*"I don't know. I don't think so," says Rahal.*

*Faten continues to pray, this time more quietly, her lips moving fast.*

*"Unto Him belongeth all that is in the heavens and the earth ..."*

*Rahal yanks at the cable again.*

*Aziz calls out, "Wait, let me see." He gets on all fours, over the vomit, and moves slowly to keep the boat stable.*

*Faten starts crying, a long and drawn-out whine. All eyes are on her. Her hysteria is contagious, and Murad can hear someone sniffing at the other end of the boat.*

*"What are you crying for?" Scarface asks, leaning forward to look at her face.*

*"I'm afraid," she whimpers.*

*"Baraka!" he orders.*

*"Leave her be," Halima says, still holding her children close.*

*"Why did she come if she can't handle it?" he yells, pointing at Faten.*

*Murad pulls his shirt down from his face. "Who the hell do you think you are?" He's the first to be surprised by his anger. He is tense and ready for an argument.*

*"And who are you?" Scarface says. "Her protector?"*

*(Lalami, 2005, pp. 10–11)*

From the excerpts of the dialogue above, it is clear that in the excerpt, where the situation is in a rubber boat on their way to the coast of Spain, filled with men and women who have their urgency, women are considered unable to handle their emotional feelings in situations is critical so that for men the behavior and characteristics of women like that are very inconvenient and troublesome for them. The inequality of domination can be seen from the position of the male figure who is quite strong compared to the female. First, the capacity to swim, the fortitude to face the tremendous water flow of the Mediterranean Sea. so that women cannot be used as leaders, and instead, women have been considered creatures whose nature is protected by men as in the last quote above. To survive, the same thing is shown in the subordination of Farid's efforts to save his mother Halima who drowned when she wanted to land. If we look at it through the lens of gender power, Farid is a boy who is only 10 years old, but he must give up all his strength To save his mother who was no longer able to reach land, Farid was too young to take on this task. Thus, the

view of discrimination can lead to the subordination of women.

The assumption that women are irrational or emotional so that women cannot appear to lead, results in attitudes that place women in an unimportant position and view women as known as gentle, beautiful, often putting forward (emotional) feelings, shy, loyal, and motherly. Meanwhile, men are considered strong, dashing, often put forward (rational) reason, aggressive, unfaithful, manly, and mighty (Agustin et al., 2019). Male dominance can occur amongst brothers and sisters or even between brothers and mothers. Zahia Ismail Salhi thinks that the Arab Muslim community is insufficiently understanding and respectful of women. Islam provides for these rights, and as a result, this human legality is repressed (Walid, 2019)

In conclusion, Islam has never fussed over gender issues and questioned male leadership over women. However, the teachings that are spread and bestowed by Islam are equality of human dignity, human ethics, activation of human potential, fulfillment of the duties of each human being or each type of human gender by the gift of excess that God has given to them both women and men. However, the patriarchal culture that has developed in the Arab Region has opened our minds to the problems faced by women in the view of social society.

## CONCLUSION

The patriarchal system and the economic crisis in Morocco marginalize men's masculinity because they can not meet the demands of society that require them to be providers for their families. Thus, they oppress women to restore their honor and dominate the social hierarchy. The patriarchal system that demands men to have courage, toughness, success, provider, and material dependability reduces the opportunity for women to show their abilities and subordinate them. Halima and Faten, the female protagonists in this novel try to travel to Spain to escape the patriarchal system's oppression and restrictions. This patriarchal system expects Halima as a wife to obey and serve her husband Maati even though her husband is violent and can not provide for the family. In addition, Faten is a young girl who wants to escape from a forced marriage and the role she has to fulfill based on Moroccan culture, Faten is a woman who has ambitions and dreams. She tries to build a new life in Spain with the hope of freedom and the opportunity to pursue her dreams. This is a comparison that applies to women and men, even though men are not exposed to direct discrimination in the same way that women are, Aziz and Mourad, are considered as socially and economically inadequate because they fail to match the standards of hegemonic masculinity. They tend to despise themselves and feel rejected wherever they go. As a result, individuals develop fantasies to reconcile with themselves, obtain liberation, and relieve guilt.

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