



## **Reconstructing the Concept of Nafkah in Islamic Legal Thought: Gender Reciprocity and Female Breadwinners In the Javanese Priyayi Society Culture, Java**

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**Abstract:** This article interrogated the phenomenon of female breadwinners within Javanese society, with a particular focus on priyayi women from both the royal court and the contemporary elite. It explores how evolving gender roles contest classical Islamic jurisprudential frameworks regarding financial responsibility (*nafkah*). The central aim is to reconceptualise *nafkah* in Islamic legal discourse, critically examine the impact of Javanese cultural paradigms on women's social positioning, and advocate for a more contextually nuanced and inclusive Islamic legal framework that accurately reflects the lived experiences of Muslim women in Java. Employing a qualitative methodology that integrates textual analysis, in-depth field interviews, and the theoretical lenses of individual resilience, *maqāṣid al-shariah*, and *mubādalāh* (reciprocity), the research elucidates the extraordinary social and spiritual resilience displayed by priyayi women as they navigate patriarchal stigma and the complexities of dual economic responsibilities. Cultural constructs such as *nrimo* (acceptance) and *laku* spiritual (spiritual practice) are not merely passive acquiescence but are reframed as adaptive strategies consonant with the values of *maṣlaḥah* (public welfare) and *iḥsān* (moral excellence). Drawing upon these insights, the study advocates for a contextual reconstruction of gender roles in Islamic law, anchored in three foundational principles: reciprocity (*mubādalāh*), public benefit (*maṣlaḥah*), and cultural contextuality. Ultimately, the article argues that Javanese female breadwinners should not be seen as anomalies within Islamic tradition, but rather as living manifestations of justice, equality, and humanistic values, situated within an evolving, culturally embedded understanding of Islam.

**Keywords:** Female breadwinner; *maqāṣid al-shariah*; Javanese Priyayi.

**Abstrak:** Artikel ini mengkaji fenomena perempuan pencari nafkah utama (*female breadwinner*) dalam masyarakat Jawa, baik di lingkungan priyayi keraton maupun priyayi modern, dengan menyoroti bagaimana perubahan peran gender menantang tafsir klasik hukum Islam tentang kewajiban nafkah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meninjau ulang konsep nafkah dalam perspektif Islam, menganalisis pengaruh sakralitas norma Jawa terhadap konstruksi sosial peran perempuan, serta menawarkan rekonstruksi hukum Islam yang kontekstual dan inklusif terhadap realitas perempuan Muslim Jawa. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif yang memadukan analisis teks keagamaan, wawancara lapangan, serta teori *resiliensi individu*, *maqāṣid al-sharīah*, dan *mubādalah*, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa perempuan priyayi menunjukkan ketahanan sosial dan spiritual tinggi dalam menghadapi stigma patriarkal dan beban ganda ekonomi. Nilai-nilai budaya seperti *nrimo* dan *laku spiritual* dipahami bukan sebagai kepasrahan pasif, melainkan sebagai strategi adaptif yang sejalan dengan prinsip *maṣlaḥah* dan *iḥsān*. Berdasarkan temuan ini, penelitian menawarkan rekonstruksi peran gender kontekstual dalam hukum Islam yang berpijak pada tiga prinsip utama: kesalingan (*mubādalah*), kemaslahatan (*maṣlaḥah*), dan kontekstualitas budaya. Dengan demikian, artikel ini menegaskan bahwa *female breadwinner* Jawa bukanlah anomali terhadap syariat, melainkan representasi nyata dari keadilan, kesetaraan, dan nilai-nilai kemanusiaan Islam yang hidup dalam konteks lokal.

**Kata kunci:** perempuan pencari nafkah; *maqāṣid al-sharīah*; priyayi Jawa.



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## Introduction

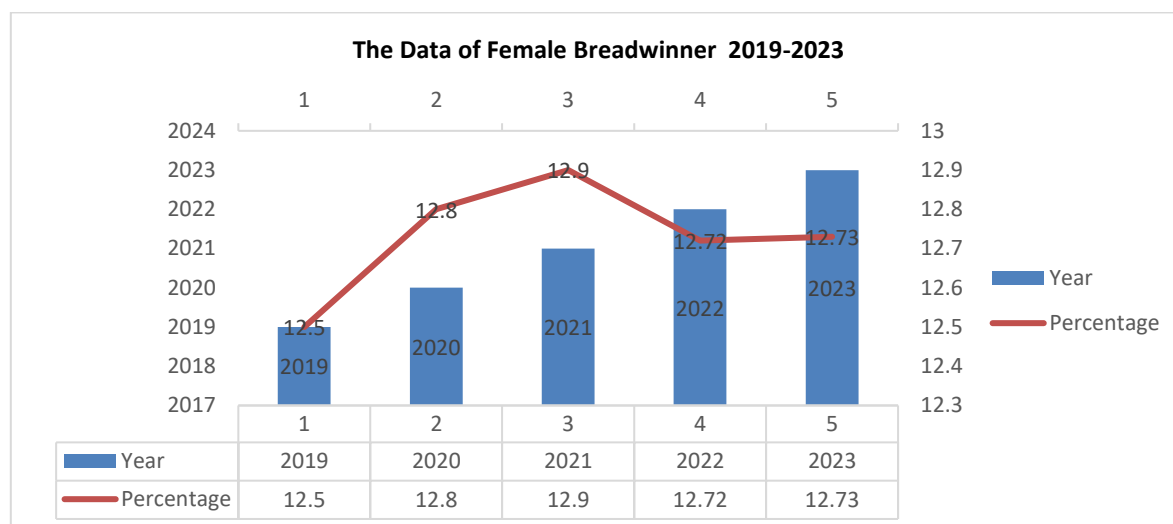
Javanese Muslim society is undergoing a profound reconfiguration in the structure and significance of gender roles. This shift has created a marked tension between the classical *fiqh* framework, which doctrinally assigns men the exclusive responsibility for family provision, and the contemporary reality, in which women are increasingly assuming the role of primary economic supporters.<sup>1</sup> Empirical data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) substantiates this trend: in 2022, 12.72% of Indonesian households were headed by women, a proportion that inched upward to 12.73% in 2023.<sup>2</sup> Despite minor fluctuations, these data reveal a persistent trend toward greater female participation as primary breadwinners. This development

<sup>1</sup> Khalilulillah and Kutsiyatur Rahmah, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan Dalam Lingkungan Keluarga Islam Perspektif Sayyid Alawi Al-Maliki Dalam Kitab Adab Al-Islam Fi Nidzom Al-Usroh," *Al-Manhaj: Journal of Indonesian Islamic Family Law* 3, no. 1 (2021): 22-39, <https://doi.org/10.19105/al-manhaj.v3i1.4211>.

<sup>2</sup> Central Statistics Agency, <https://www.bps.go.id/id/statistics-table/1/MTYwNiMx/persentase-rumah-tangga-menurut-provinsi-jenis-kelamin-kepala-rumah-tangga-krt-yang-bekerja-dan-daerah-tempat-tinggal-2009-2024.html>, 23 January 2025

signifies a fundamental reorientation of gender roles, evidencing not only significant strides in women's economic empowerment but also challenging the entrenched stereotype of men as sole providers. Such a transformation extends beyond the social sphere, raising profound epistemological and juridical questions that necessitate a more contextual and equitable reinterpretation of gender relations within the framework of Islamic law.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 1.** Data on Female-Headed Households Based on BPS (Statistics Indonesia)



Source: Statistics Indonesia (Central Bureau of Statistics), 2019–2023.

Comparable trends are evident globally. In Africa, a growing number of women are taking on the primary breadwinner role as awareness of familial economic responsibilities increases. Nevertheless, this shift is often viewed negatively, perceived as a challenge to masculinity and entrenched cultural norms.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, in developed countries such as the United States and Australia, the prevalence of female breadwinners is also increasing.<sup>5</sup> These women constitute between 5% and 12% of all couples. In most cases, they are classified as the primary

<sup>3</sup> Suud Sarim Karimullah et al., "Rethinking Gender In Islamic Law," *Musāwa Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Islam* 23, no. 1 (2024): 99–113, <https://doi.org/10.14421/musawa.2024.223.99-113>; Fadhilah Is et al., "The Concept of Family Resilience Towards The Issue of Infidelity in Households: Analysis of the Hadith al-Ifki," *TAJIDID: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 24, no. 1 (2025): 80–107, <https://doi.org/10.30631/tjd.v24i1.568>.

<sup>4</sup> Olayinka Akanle and Uzoamaka Rebecca Nwaobiala, "Changing but Fragile: Female Breadwinning and Family Stability in Nigeria," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 55, no. 3 (2020): 398–411, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909619880283>.

<sup>5</sup> Ruth Steinbring et al., *Characteristics of Male-Breadwinner, Female-Breadwinner and Equal-Earner Households in Australia: The Role of Couple-Level Human Capital* (2024), <https://doi.org/10.14264/f39e3d0>.

breadwinners, serving as the principal economic providers, while their male partner contributes less to the household income. This evidence underscores that the evolving role of women as breadwinners transcends local contexts, reflecting a broader global dynamic that is actively reshaping familial gender relations.

From a normative perspective, classical Islamic jurisprudence assigns men the duty of financial maintenance,<sup>6</sup> positioning them as the heads of their households.<sup>7</sup> This interpretation is deeply embedded within Fiqh texts, which construct a complementary marital relationship: men are charged with fulfilling economic responsibilities, while women are cast as recipients of protection<sup>8</sup>. This male obligation is derived from the Qur'an and hadith, particularly QS. An-Nisa [4]: 34, and is also reinforced by Indonesian positive law, such as Article 34 (1) of Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage and Article 80 (4) of the Compilation of Islamic Law.

Conversely, sacred and patriarchal Javanese cultural norms further reinforce the expectation that men must be the primary providers. This ideology is embedded in customary symbols, traditional expressions, and social structures that position women as domestic caretakers rather than as leading economic actors. Consequently, when women assume breadwinning roles, they often encounter significant social resistance, cultural stigma,<sup>9</sup> and identity conflicts that are difficult to reconcile.<sup>10</sup>

Various studies on female breadwinners confirm the shifting role of women in Muslim families. Yasin shows that this role can be justified through Maqashid Shari'ah<sup>11</sup>, while Zali et al. emphasise the husband's maintenance obligation even in

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<sup>6</sup> According to Imam Malik, providing for the family is the third obligation of a husband after paying the dowry and being fair to his wife. According to Imam Hanafi, fulfilling the wife's maintenance is the second obligation of the husband after paying the mahr in a marriage. According to Imam Syafi'i, the wife's right as an obligation of the husband to his wife is to pay maintenance. According to Hambali, the husband is obliged to pay or fulfil the maintenance of his wife if firstly the wife is an adult and has been married by the husband read more through <https://journals.fasya.uinib.org/index.php/moefty/article/view/540>

<sup>7</sup> M. Abi Mahrus Ubaidillah and Adi Setiawan, "Nafkah Perkawinan Perspektif Sistem Kekerabatan," *Minhaj: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 6, no. 1 (2025): 110–24, <https://doi.org/10.52431/minhaj.v6i1.3551>.

<sup>8</sup> Ahmad Alamuddin Yasin, "Tinjauan Maqashid Syari'Ah Dalam Kasus Perempuan Sebagai Pencari Nafkah Keluarga," *Oasis : Jurnal Ilmiah Kajian Islam* 7, no. 2 (2023): 79, <https://doi.org/10.24235/oasis.v7i2.13024>.

<sup>9</sup> Rahat Shah, "Navigating Non-normative Roles: Experiences of Female-breadwinning Couples in Pakistan," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 54, no. 1 (2023): 251–64, <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.3013>.

<sup>10</sup> Karin Jurczyk et al., "Female-Breadwinner Families in Germany: New Gender Roles?," *Journal of Family Issues* 40, no. 13 (2019): 1731–54, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X19843149>.

<sup>11</sup> Ahmad Alamuddin Yasin, "Tinjauan Maqashid Syari'Ah Dalam Kasus Perempuan Sebagai Pencari Nafkah Keluarga," 81–91.,

circumstances that require the wife to work.<sup>12</sup> Saleh et al. and Risbiyantoro et al. found that women often serve as the backbone of the family due to structural or emergency factors. Beyond the local context, Aziz highlights the social pressures faced by urban working women.<sup>13</sup> In Saudi Arabia, for instance, female breadwinners face a dilemma between economic demands and patriarchal norms.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, breadwinners in Pakistan encounter social stigma, isolation, and discrimination for defying traditional gender roles<sup>15</sup>. A comparable situation is faced by breadwinners in Morocco, specifically among Berber communities in the High Atlas Mountains, who are confined to patriarchal norms that result in restricted access to employment.<sup>16</sup> Collectively, this body of literature affirms the global relevance of women as breadwinners while also illuminating a distinct research gap: how Javanese Muslim women navigate and negotiate their identities as primary earners amid the intersecting pressures of patriarchal cultural norms, contemporary economic realities, and evolving interpretations of Islamic law.

The challenges arising from the phenomenon of female breadwinners extend beyond disparities in household roles, encompassing complex intersections of legal, social, and cultural dimensions. Classical Islamic jurisprudence, as reflected in the perspective of *madzahibul arba'ah* (Shāfi'ī, Mālikī, Ḥanbalī, Ḥanafī), traditionally assigns the duty of financial maintenance to men.<sup>17</sup> This normative framework often contrasts with the social reality of Javanese women who act as primary earners. However, this shift in economic responsibility does not necessarily grant women greater authority in family decision-making; they frequently continue to bear a disproportionate share of domestic duties. This gap between the normative ideals of fiqh and the lived experiences of Javanese women raises essential questions about justice, gender equity, and the possible reinterpretation of Islamic law in light of local cultural contexts.

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<sup>12</sup> Muhammad Zali et al., "Analisis Hukum Islam: Kewajiban Nafkah Suami Dan Solusi Bagi Istri Yang Terpaksa Bekerja," *Journal of Gender and Social Inclusion in Muslim Societies* 5, no. 1 (2024): 25, <https://doi.org/10.30829/jgsims.v5i1.20716>.

<sup>13</sup> Abdul Aziz, "Peran Perempuan Dalam Nafkah Keluarga Perspektif Hukum Islam," *Dirasa Islamiyya: Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 1 (2023): 1-16, <https://doi.org/10.61630/dijis.v2i1.41>.

<sup>14</sup> Raya Alraddadi et al., "Empowering the Disadvantaged: A Perspective on Saudi Arabia's Low-Skilled Female Workers," *Journal of Gender Studies* 33, no. 7 (2024): 902-16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2024.2329647>.

<sup>15</sup> Shah, "Navigating Non-normative Roles: Experiences of Female-breadwinning Couples in Pakistan," 251-53.

<sup>16</sup> Claudia Eger, "Equality and Gender at Work in Islam: The Case of the Berber Population of the High Atlas Mountains," *Business Ethics Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (2021): 210-41, <https://doi.org/10.1017/beq.2020.21>.

<sup>17</sup> Pebriani, "Maintenance Rights for Career Women According To Fiqh Four," *Moefty: Perbandingan Mazhab Dan Hukum* 13, no. 1 (2024).

Accordingly, this study aims to: (1) critically examine classical and contemporary Islamic legal interpretations regarding the obligation to provide for the family in the context of female breadwinners; (2) analyze the influence of sacred Javanese norms on the social construction of gender roles; and (3) propose a more contextualized and inclusive framework for Islamic law that acknowledges the lived experiences of Javanese Muslim women.

This study employs a phenomenological qualitative methodology to explore the lived experiences and the nuanced meanings of resilience among Javanese women who assume the role of breadwinner within patriarchal social structures. Situated within a socio-legal paradigm, the research integrates textual legal analysis with the broader social context in which legal norms are enacted and contested. The phenomenological approach was deliberately chosen for its capacity to illuminate and document individual life narratives, elucidating how women construct meaning from their experiences as breadwinners, rather than merely presenting externally observable facts. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with female *santri* in *pesantren* settings, *priyayi* women within the palace milieu, and modern *priyayi* women residing in urban environments, all of whom, at the time of the study, were serving as primary earners. Narrator selection employed purposive sampling to ensure representation across these three distinct groups. The data were analysed using a thematic strategy that combined normative legal interpretation with cultural analysis to uncover the intersectional dynamics among Islamic legal discourse, Javanese local norms, and the everyday practices of women breadwinners.

### **From Classical *Fiqh* to *Maqashid*: Reinterpreting *Nafkah* in the Context of Female Breadwinner**

Classical jurisprudence affirms that the obligation of maintenance rests squarely upon men as stipulated in QS. an-Nisā' (4): 34.<sup>18</sup> This verse establishes men as leaders entrusted with the responsibility of safeguarding and supporting their wives through the provision of material provisions. The prevailing view among classical *fuqaha* maintains that the husband is both the head of the household and the primary provider, whereas the wife bears no obligation to contribute financially.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, the Indonesian Marriage Law mandates that husbands provide maintenance for

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<sup>18</sup> Wahbah al-Zuhaili, *Al-Fiqh al-Islami Wa Adillatuhu*, Juz 9 (Dar al-Fikr, 1989).

their wives, an obligation that persists even if the wife is employed<sup>19</sup>. In *munakahat fiqh*, the provision of maintenance from husband to wife is an implication of the wife's responsibility to obey and accompany her husband, manage the household, and educate the children.<sup>20</sup> In various ancient literary works in the form of fibres, puppet stories, and modern Javanese literature, there is a concept of true women. True women, who are defined by their obedience to their husbands, are a virtue intrinsically linked to the sustenance he provides.

Today, contemporary socio-economic dynamics reveal a significant shift, as evidenced by the fact that 12.73% of Indonesian households were headed by women in 2023 (BPS).<sup>21</sup> This statistic reflects the increasingly prominent role of women as primary breadwinners. One contributing factor is the growing opportunity for women to work as Indonesian Migrant Workers abroad.<sup>22</sup> BPS data notes that Indonesia is the second-largest sender of migrants in Southeast Asia, with women comprising 44% of Indonesia's 4.6 million international migrants.<sup>23</sup> An additional contributory factor is the increasingly accessible education and the expansion of equitable employment opportunities for both men and women. Nevertheless, a woman's adoption of the breadwinner role does not necessarily alter her domestic status or obligations. The Marriage Law unambiguously situates women as the companions of their husbands and assigns them the role of housewife, even when a woman serves as the household's primary provider.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, a considerable body of research positions wives who assume the breadwinner role as a contributing factor to the perceived fragility of family resilience.<sup>25</sup> Within the context of Javanese social norms, a wife's participation in primary income generation does not mitigate

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<sup>19</sup> Samsul Bahri, "Kewajiban Nafkah Dalam Keluarga (Studi Komparatif Hukum Islam Dan Undang-Undang Di Indonesia Terhadap Istri Yang Mencari Nafkah)," *Yustisi Jurnal Hukum Dan Hukum Islam* 11, no. 1 (2024): 63–80.

<sup>20</sup> Isniyatin Faizah, "Nafkah Sebuah Konsekuensi Logis Dari Pernikahan," *The Indonesian Journal of Islamic Law and Civil Law* 1, no. 1 (2021): 72–87, <https://doi.org/10.51675/jaksya.v1i1.142>.

<sup>21</sup> Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS), *Statistik Gender Tematik: Profil Perempuan Indonesia 2023* (Jakarta: BPS, 2023).

<sup>22</sup> Bambang Ismanto et al., "Istri Sebagai Pencari Nafkah Utama Dan Dampaknya Dalam Keluarga Perspektif Hukum Islam (Studi Kasus Kehidupan Keluarga TKW Di Kabupaten Lampung Timur)," *FITRAH: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 4, no. 2 (2019): 405, <https://doi.org/10.24952/fitrah.v4i2.950>.

<sup>23</sup> BPS Notes Indonesia Becomes The Second Largest Migrant Worker Sending Country In Southeast Asia, <https://vo.id/en/economy/340916>, 20 Desember 2023.

<sup>24</sup> Article 31 (3) and (4) of Law No. 1 of 1974 Concerning Marriage

<sup>25</sup> Sri Pujiati and Nur Hayati, "Pergeseran Peran Dan Fungsi Keluarga Buruh Perempuan Serta Implikasinya Terhadap Ketahanan Sosial Keluarga," *Sosietas* 13, no. 1 (2023): 57–70, <https://doi.org/10.17509/sosietas.v13i1.59644>.

her responsibilities and domestic duties, a phenomenon commonly termed the "double burden" experienced by women.<sup>26</sup>

Empirical observations within Javanese society reveal nuanced distinctions in gender relations between the *priyayi* and santri groups. In santri households, the allocation of domestic responsibilities is often guided by religious doctrines that emphasise the principle of family complementarity.<sup>27</sup> However, when women assume the role of primary breadwinner, the practical burden of household chores is typically delegated to domestic helpers. Conversely, in *priyayi* families, entrenched Javanese cultural norms such as the concepts of *konco wingking* and *sigarane nyowo* serve to reinforce the subordinate status of women. As articulated by Koes Moertiyah Wandasari, women of the *priyayi* Keraton are expected to maintain unwavering devotion (*bekti*) to their husbands, even when they are the primary contributors to the family's financial well-being.<sup>28</sup> Testimonies further indicate that wives have minimal agency in household decision-making, with domestic tasks largely managed by ndalem servants. Ultimately, the dual burden borne by women breadwinners in the palace context has been normalised as an inherent aspect of their lived experience.<sup>29</sup>

A distinct dynamic is observed among modern urban *priyayi*, as exemplified by ST and TK.<sup>30</sup> While they delegate domestic tasks to household assistants and drivers, their approach to parenting and spousal relations is more egalitarian. TK's husband, for example, plays an active role in taking the children and providing religious education. At the same time, ST managed to negotiate her exit from formal work to be more flexible in accompanying the children. This shows that there are variations in resilience: the palace *priyayi* group tends to be bound by traditional norms that limit negotiation space, while modern *priyayi* are more adaptive in building equal relationship patterns. Consequently, the resilience of breadwinner women in the contemporary *priyayi* can be categorised as high, as they can manage social pressure and develop internal and external strategies to preserve family harmony.

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<sup>26</sup> Nurul Hidayati, "Beban Ganda Perempuan Bekerja (Antara Domestik Dan Publik)," *Muwazah* 7, no. 2 (2016): 109, <https://doi.org/10.28918/muwazah.v7i2.516>.

<sup>27</sup> Nandang Qosim Evi Muafiah, Elfa Murdiana, Istiadah, *Resiliensi Breadwinner: Perempuan Jawa Yang Mendominasi Ditengah Tradisi Patriarki* (Malang, 2024).

<sup>28</sup> Koes Moertiyah Wandasari, a Female Breadwinner from the Muslim *Priyayi* Class in Solo, *Interview*, January 12, 2023

<sup>29</sup> Mrs. RRM, a Female Breadwinner from the Muslim *Priyayi* Class in Ponorogo, *Interview*, January 25, 2023

<sup>30</sup> Mrs. ST and Mrs. TF, Female Breadwinners from the Muslim *Priyayi* Class in Malang, *Interview*, January 20, 2023



This analysis demonstrates that social and cultural constructions significantly determine the bargaining position of the female breadwinner. Religious norms tend to facilitate relational harmony through the concept of "clothes for couples", while Javanese rules on *priyayi* reinforce male dominance. This fact shows that even though women have played a significant role economically, social and cultural legitimacy still restricts their negotiation space. The social pressure endured by Koes Moertiyah and the ridicule received by modern *priyayi* informants are clear evidence of the clash between economic reality and entrenched traditional gender norms.

From the perspective of *maqāṣid al-sharīah*, these conditions necessitate a more contextual reinterpretation of Islamic law. Al-Shatibi emphasised that the Shari'ah aims to protect religion, soul, offspring, mind, and property.<sup>31</sup> Jasser Auda develops systemic principles to make Islamic law more responsive to social change.<sup>32</sup> Through this lens, female breadwinners can be understood as guardians of the family's welfare rather than as violators of norms. The fact that modern *priyayi* women can negotiate with their husbands for a balance of roles, and that santri women relate their roles to the principle of spirituality, shows an adaptive strategy in line with the *maqāṣid*.

Ahmad Alamuddin Yasin's findings substantiate this analysis by demonstrating that the women's role as breadwinners can be justified through six main principles of *maqāṣid shari'ah*: protecting religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), soul (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), offspring (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*), and environment (*ḥifẓ al-bi'ah*).<sup>33</sup> For instance, women who maintain they fulfil their religious obligations and seek their husbands' permission emphasise that their economic activities are not contrary to the Shari'ah. Their involvement actually serves to keep family life when their husbands are sick or not working, ensure their children's education, secure their offspring's future, save and invest halal funds, and build a resilient family environment.

Within this study, the case of the modern *priyayi* breadwinner who continues to teach while serving as a caregiver in a pesantren exemplifies *ḥifẓ al-dīn* and *ḥifẓ*

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<sup>31</sup> Dale F. Eickelman and Muhammad Khalid Masud, "Shatibi's Philosophy of Islamic Law," *Journal of Law and Religion* 15, no. 1/2 (2000): 389, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1051530>; Moh Toriquddin, "Teori Maqāshid Syari'ah Perspektif Al-Syatibi," *De Jure: Jurnal Hukum Dan Syari'ah* 6, no. 1 (2014), <https://doi.org/10.18860/j-fsh.v6i1.3190>.

<sup>32</sup> Jasser Auda, *Maqasid Al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach* (International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), 2008).

<sup>33</sup> Ahmad Alamuddin Yasin, "Tinjauan Maqashid Syari'Ah Dalam Kasus Perempuan Sebagai Pencari Nafkah Keluarga," 85-88.

al-nafs, as his work supports the family without compromising his spiritual obligations<sup>34</sup>. Conversely, ST and TK's strategies in ensuring children's education through homeschooling and fathers' involvement in religious education reflect *hifẓ al-'aql* and *hifẓ al-nasl*. Meanwhile, Koes Moertiyah's reliance on courtiers to carry out public functions while maintaining her husband's honour illustrates the dilemma between the patriarchal Javanese principle and the principle of *hifẓ al-māl*, which demands the family's economic sustainability.

Adopting a *maqāṣid*-based perspective elucidates that women's roles as breadwinners align fundamentally with the paramount objectives of the Shari'ah, specifically the attainment of *maslahat* (benefit). Accordingly, female breadwinners should not be perceived as deviating from Islamic norms; instead, they emerge as pivotal agents in safeguarding the continuity and resilience of both family units and broader society. The synthesis of classical fiqh, empirical realities, and the *maqāṣid al-sharīah* framework as articulated by Yasin demonstrates the dynamic adaptability of Islamic law in addressing evolving sociocultural contexts. Consequently, this convergence reinforces both the spiritual and sociological legitimacy of women breadwinners, affirming that Islam not only acknowledges their contributions but also elevates their participation as an integral component of legitimate and beneficial social solutions.<sup>35</sup>

### **Javanese Norm Sacredness and Social Resistance**

Within Javanese tradition, the status of women is delineated by a constellation of norms regarded as both sacred and obligatory. Women are frequently conceptualised as *konco wingking* (companions relegated to the background), *sigarane nyowo* (the soul mate of their husbands), or as the proverbial "missing rib." Such representations are enshrined in classical texts such as the *Serat Candrarini*, which emphasise the wife's role as a complement whose primary duty is to fulfil her husband's needs.<sup>36</sup> This perspective remains firmly entrenched, influencing both palace *priyayi* and their modern counterparts; consequently, when women assume the role of primary breadwinner, they often encounter significant social resistance. An interview with Koes Moertiyah Wandasari, a palace *priyayi* and council member, substantiates this view: "... *dados garwo niku enggeh kudu bekti nang kakunge*,

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<sup>34</sup> Observation and Interview with USM, a Modern Priyayi Informant, January 25, 2023

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Nyi Hartati, *Kias Lima Jari: Posisi Perempuan dalam Ideologi Jawa* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2017).

*amargi suami niku pimpinan ing dalem keluarga* (As a wife, you must be respectful to your husband, because your husband is the head of the family.) ...”

Koes Moertiyah asserts that the increasing prominence of *priyayi* women as breadwinners does not fundamentally alter the Javanese principle designating the husband as the head of the household, with all major family decisions requiring his approval. In a separate interview, she further emphasised: “... *kudu pinter-pinter bagi waktu mergo dadi wong wedok kuwi akeh tugase. Yo ngurusi ndalem, yo ngurusi garwo yo mergawe. Ojo nganti mergo meratapi lelah malah ora ono sing keurus* (You have to be smart about your time because being a woman means having a lot of responsibilities. You have to take care of your family, you have to take care of your wife. Don't be so tired that you don't even have anyone to take care of you...)”

The preceding interview excerpt illustrates that wifely devotion is regarded as a sacred obligation, despite the dual burden women shoulder as both breadwinners and domestic caretakers. The social stigma encountered by *priyayi* women, whether from the palace or modern contexts, is rarely perceived by the women themselves as an injustice. Instead, it is internalised as an inherent fate or destiny of Javanese women, necessitating respect and service (*ngeladeni*) to their husbands. This observation aligns with the research of Ade Irma Sakina, who underscores the pervasive strength of patriarchal culture in Indonesia, and Syahrul Amar, who notes that *priyayi* women are still often attached to the stigma of being the second sex, only functioning to help their husbands, not being the leading actor in the family. Javanese people believe that excellence must be evident in the king's radiant face. Consequently, the sanctity of Javanese norms has engendered a paradox; female breadwinners are simultaneously revered as economic saviours and constrained by persistent stigma and subordination, a dynamic that exemplifies institutionalised gender injustice.

The foregoing findings reveal a profound internalisation of patriarchal norms, firmly sanctioned by Javanese cultural traditions. Situated within Mansour Faqih's theoretical framework,<sup>37</sup> this condition embodies multiple manifestations of gender injustice, including subordination—where household authority persists with the husband despite the wife functioning as the primary economic provider; the double burden imposed on women, who are compelled to navigate both public and domestic spheres; pervasive stereotypes positioning women as *konco wingking* or the “second sex”; and marginalization, whereby their contributions are regarded as

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<sup>37</sup> Mansour Fakih, *Analisis Gender Dan Transformasi Sosial* (Edisi Klasik Perdikan) (2008).

merely supplementary. This analysis resonates with Silvia Walby's conceptualisation of patriarchy as a system of interlocking social structures and practices that sustain male dominance and the exploitation of women<sup>38</sup>. Within the sphere of the palace *priyayi*, private patriarchy exerts a predominant influence, as domestic relations are almost entirely governed by the husband, leaving the wife with minimal scope for negotiation or agency. Conversely, among modern *priyayi*, public patriarchy becomes more salient. Although women may access economic opportunities, they remain subject to stigmatisation rooted in gender ideologies that continue to position men as the central social actors. The synthesis of Faqih's and Walby's theoretical perspectives thus affirms that the social resistance encountered by women who serve as primary breadwinners is not merely a matter of individual circumstance but rather a manifestation of a patriarchal system deeply institutionalised within cultural norms and perpetuated by broader social structures.

Based on the findings above, the following table visualises the forms of gender injustice experienced by Javanese Muslim women from among the *priyayi*:

Table 1. Faqih and Walby Analytical Matrix

Forms of Gender Injustice (Mansoer Faqih)	Privat Patriarch (Walby)	Public Patriarch (Walby)
Subordination	Household authority is entirely in the hands of the husband; women have no room for negotiation (example: <i>priyayi</i> Keraton).	Women can work in the public sphere but are still controlled by social norms and the final decision of the husband (e.g., modern <i>priyayi</i> ).
Double Burden	Women are still expected to take care of domestic matters even when they are the breadwinners (e.g., <i>priyayi</i> in the Keraton).	Women must take on public work while still managing the household (e.g., modern <i>priyayi</i> ).
Stereotypes	Women are labelled <i>konco wingking</i> , so their contributions are considered secondary.	The stigma of the second sex is attached even though women have a significant role in the public sector.

Source: Adapted from Mansoer Fakih, *Gender Analysis and Social Transformation*, and Sylvia Walby, *Theorising Patriarchy*, as well as the author's field research data (2023).

The table illustrates the interrelation between Mansoer Faqih's framework of gender injustice and Sylvia Walby's concepts of private and public patriarchy,

<sup>38</sup> Sylvia Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

revealing how patriarchal structures continue to operate across different social spheres in Javanese society. Within the private sphere, patriarchy operates through the concentration of household authority with men, as seen in traditional *priyayi Keraton* families, where women possess minimal bargaining power in domestic decision-making. Meanwhile, within the public sphere, as exemplified by *modern priyayi* women, economic participation does not confer equal authority; instead, women remain constrained by social norms and the husband's dominant role in decision-making.

The persistence of the double burden and gender stereotypes, where women remain expected to manage domestic responsibilities and are perceived as *konco wingking* despite being primary economic contributors, demonstrates how both private and public forms of patriarchy continue to reproduce gender inequality jointly. This analysis confirms the theoretical proposition that patriarchy adapts rather than diminishes in modern contexts, maintaining its influence through the powerful synergy of cultural norms and structural relations.

Consequently, the sanctification of Javanese demanding women's unwavering obedience and devotion to their husbands perpetuates gender injustice in manifold forms, a reality often internalised by *priyayi* women who serve as primary breadwinners and internalise this condition as an inescapable aspect of their social identity. A Comparative analysis, grounded in the theoretical frameworks of Faqih and Walby, substantiates that the social resistance confronted by breadwinner women is not merely an individual experience, but rather symptomatic of a broader, systematic patriarchal structure. These findings crystallise the central paradox of their experience: they are the economic sustainers of the family, yet they remain fundamentally constrained by normative boundaries that curtail their autonomy.

### **Resilience and Gender Role Reconstruction: A Contextual Approach to Islamic Law and Javanese Female Breadwinners**

The preceding analyses demonstrate that Javanese women who serve as primary breadwinners both within the traditional palace *priyayi* and the contemporary *priyayi* milieus continue to inhabit social environments permeated by patriarchal norms and stigmatisation. In the initial stages of their experiences, these women confronted cultural structures that largely denied acknowledging their capacity as principal economic providers for their families. Within the palace context, for instance, Koes Moertiyah Wandasari encountered a pronounced legitimacy crisis, as customary norms rigidly ascribed leadership roles exclusively to men, a predicament exacerbated by financial constraints and intra-familial conflicts within the royal household. Conversely, modern *priyayi* women such as Mrs ST and Mrs TK contended with the social stigma of surpassing their husbands' earnings, as well

as the persistent threats of polygamy, restrictions on further education, and a debilitating double burden that depleted their emotional and psychological reserves.

Yet, from these tensions and acts of resistance emerges a distinctive form of social and spiritual resilience. This resilience highlights the capacity of Javanese women to negotiate their roles while steadfastly upholding the cultural and religious values central to their identities. It transcends individual psychological adaptation, evolving into an epistemological foundation for re-examining gender relations within the framework of Islamic law. Consequently, the experiences of priyayi women represent not merely narratives of social adjustment but also serve as critical reference points for the contextual reconstruction of religious norms.

Through the maqāṣid shari'ah approach, with its emphasis on beneficent justice and the protection of life, the concept is used.<sup>39</sup> As well as the concept of mubādalah initiated by Faqihuddin Abdul Qadir, husband-wife relations should be built on equality rather than subordination.<sup>40</sup> Accordingly, the social resilience demonstrated by Javanese women epitomises a vibrant and evolving religious praxis. This praxis compels Islamic law not merely to regulate, but to comprehend and affirm women's realities as integral expressions of divine justice within a transforming society.<sup>41</sup>

As experiential learning and environmental support progressed, the adjustment phase was characterised by the emergence of increasingly robust adaptive mechanisms. Within the palace milieu, Koes Moertiyah cultivated adaptive agency by preserving her symbolic status as heir, engaging her children in sustaining the family economy, and reinterpreting her struggle to safeguard the palace as an act of spiritual devotion. This dynamic is exemplified in the following interview excerpt from the researcher's interview with the informant, who remarked:

*"Kula lan para garwa ing dalem keraton niku mboten saged ninggal identitas kados putri raja. Sanajan angel, kula tetep ngajak anak-anak kagem bantu nguripi ekonomi keluarga, kados bisnis cilik lan usaha pribadi. Kula nganggep meniko dudu namung*

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<sup>39</sup> Jasser Auda, "Maqasid Al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach. London: The International Institute of Islamic Thought.," in *The International Institute of Islamic Thought*, preprint, 2007.

<sup>40</sup> Faqihudin Abdul Kodir, *Qiraah Mubaadalah; Tafsir Progresif Untuk Keadilan Gender Dalam Islam*, Cet Pertama (IRCiSoD, 2019).

<sup>41</sup> Wiwin Hendriani, *Resiliensi Psikologis: Sebuah Pengantar* (Prenadamedia Group, 2018).

*kerja, nanging amal kanggo njaga keraton lan nguripi abdi-abdi dalem. Kula yakin meniko dados laku spiritual, amal jariyah kula minangka pewaris budaya.”<sup>42</sup>*

*“Kulo pun mboten mikir perkoro pandangan tiyang, sing penting anak lan keluarga saged urip. Malah anak-anak niku sing nguatke kula. Kulo nganggep kabeh iki bagian saking tanggung jawab moral, mboten namung ekonomi, nanging ugi ngopeni warisan leluhur.”<sup>43</sup>*

In parallel, Mrs ST and Mrs TK reorganised their life strategies by cultivating support systems among their children and spouses and by employing a combination of emotional, problem-focused, and spiritual coping mechanisms to fortify their psychological resilience. As they transitioned into the strengthening phase, these resilience strategies became increasingly sophisticated: palace priyayi women achieved economic autonomy and expanded their political participation, whereas modern priyayi women deepened their emotional and spiritual self-reliance to sustain dual roles with equilibrium. This progression is illustrated in the following excerpts from the researcher's interviews with two modern priyayi informants.

*“Kulo mboten nate mbantah norma, nanging tetep kudu mikir strategine piyambak. Naliko penghasilan langkung ageng saking kakung, kathah tiyang sing nyawang miring. Nanging kulo tetep mlampah, anak-anak sing ndhukung kulo. Kulo nganggep punika cara nguatke keluarga. Yen kulo nglokro, sapa malih sing bisa ngopeni?”<sup>44</sup>*

*“Kulo saben dinten kerja wiwit subuh dumugi wengi. Nanging kulo tetep nrimo lan nyobi ngatur, nggolek strategi supados kabeh tugas saged mlampah. Suami mboten ndhukung, malah ngancam poligami. Nanging kulo tetep neruske kuliah anak lan ngurus rumah. Niku sing ndadekake kulo kudu sabar, nahan emosi, lan nyedek marang Gusti Allah.”<sup>45</sup>*

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<sup>42</sup> KMW, Priyayi Keraton, Interview, February 2023. Translated in English as: We, the wives within the palace, cannot abandon our identity as royal descendants. Although it is difficult, I continue to involve my children in helping sustain the family's economy through small businesses and personal enterprises. I see this not merely as work, but as a charitable act to preserve the palace and support its servants. I believe this is a form of spiritual practice, my ongoing good deed (amal jariyah) as a custodian of our cultural heritage.

<sup>43</sup> Female Breadwinner Traditional Priyayi, Interview, March 2023. Translated in English: I no longer worry about what people think; what matters most is that my children and family can live well. In fact, it is my children who give me strength. I consider all of this part of my moral responsibility, not only to support the family economically, but also to care for and preserve our ancestral heritage.

<sup>44</sup> Ibu ST, Interview, March 2023. Translated into English: I have never defied social norms, but I still need to think of my own strategies. When my income exceeds my husband's, many people look at me with disapproval. Even so, I keep going because my children support me. I see this as a way to strengthen the family. If I were to give up, then who else would take care of us?

<sup>45</sup> Ibu TK, Interview, March 2023. I work from dawn until night every day, yet I try to remain patient and find ways to manage everything so that all responsibilities are fulfilled. My husband does not provide support. Instead, he threatens

These empirical findings resonate with Wiwin Hendriani's conceptualisation of Individual Resilience, which delineates three principal phases: stress, adjustment, and reinforcement. Hendriani posits that resilience is a dynamic process that enables individuals to adapt constructively to adversity by drawing on both internal and external protective factors. The experiences of priyayi women exemplify this trajectory: they confront acute pressures, subsequently recalibrate their lives through familial and communal support, and ultimately enter the reinforcement phase, characterised by the deployment of active coping strategies. Such evidence underscores that resilience is not a fixed attribute but an ongoing journey continually shaped by cultural values and social relationships.

Further analysis reveals that the resilience demonstrated by priyayi women transcends mere psychological endurance, serving instead as a catalyst for reconfiguring gender paradigms within the framework of Islamic law to be more responsive to evolving social realities. While classical Fiqh normatively assigns the duty of economic provision to men, empirical evidence shows that women frequently serve as primary breadwinners in their families. This dissonance between prescriptive norms and lived experience necessitates a renewed hermeneutic perspective, one that bridges women's dynamic realities with the foundational principles of *maqāṣid al-shariah*. As Jasser Auda contends, *maqāṣid sharia* is anchored in core human values: justice, dignity, freedom, and welfare, which ought to guide all legal determinations.<sup>46</sup> From this vantage point, the resilience exhibited by women who serve as primary breadwinners can be construed as a tangible manifestation of *maqāṣid al-shariah*, notably in safeguarding life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), ensuring generational continuity (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and preserving wealth (*ḥifẓ al-māl*).

The convergence of empirical evidence and theoretical frameworks demonstrates that each phase of resilience, encompassing stress, adjustment, and reinforcement, is intricately linked to the core tenets of *maqāṣid shariah*. During the stress phase, priyayi women encounter profound social and economic pressures that frequently imperil their psychological equilibrium and sense of security, a challenge that aligns with the principle of *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (protection of the soul).<sup>47</sup> Such actions represent deliberate efforts to safeguard personal well-being amid external

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*to take another wife. Even so, I continue to pay for my children's education and take care of the household. This situation teaches me to be patient, to control my emotions, and to draw closer to God*

<sup>46</sup> Jasser Auda, *Maqasid Al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach*.

<sup>47</sup> Royan Utsany et al., "Women's Rights and Gender Equality: An Analysis of Jasser Auda's Thoughts and His Contribution to Renewal of Islamic Family Law in Indonesia," *JIL: Journal of Islamic Law* 3, no. 1 (2022): 54-73, <https://doi.org/10.24260/jil.v3i1.530>.



pressures and threats. In the adjustment phase, women initiate the reorganisation of their lives by fostering familial and environmental support networks, an embodiment of the principle of *ḥifẓ al-nasl* (preservation of progeny), as these strategies seek to uphold family cohesion and continuity.

During the strengthening phase, women cultivate both economic and spiritual autonomy. This development reflects the principle of *ḥifẓ al-māl* (preservation of property) as a manifestation of their responsibility to uphold family welfare. This multifaceted pattern underscores Wiwin Hendriani's assertion.<sup>48</sup> That resilience is not a static trait, but rather a dynamic process in which individuals continually adapt to life's pressures and challenges. Consequently, the experiences of priyayi women in confronting social adversity may be interpreted as tangible expressions of Islamic values of benefit, actualised in contemporary life.

Moreover, Faqihuddin Abdul Qadir's concept of *mubādalāh* underscores the centrality of reciprocity in marital relations, positing that Islamic injunctions and ethical mandates in Islam are inherently reciprocal, applying equally to both men and women, including responsibilities related to labour, maintenance, and caregiving.<sup>49</sup> Consequently, the resilience exhibited by priyayi women transcends mere survival, catalysing normative transformation toward a contextualised, egalitarian, and gender-just interpretation of Islamic law. The convergence of individual resilience (as articulated by Wiwin Hendriani)<sup>50</sup>, the foundational objectives of *maqāṣid* (as advanced by Jasser Auda)<sup>51</sup>, and the principle of reciprocal interconnection (*mubādalāh*)<sup>52</sup> collectively gives rise to a dynamic framework for Islamic gender reconstruction. Within this paradigm, women's social experiences are no longer construed as deviations from a norm but are recognised as tangible embodiments of divine justice and benefit.

A comparative analysis with both international and national scholarship reveals that the gender role reconstruction observed among Javanese breadwinner women exhibits both notable parallels and distinctive features. In the Pakistani

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<sup>48</sup> Wiwin Hendriani, *Resiliensi Psikologis: Sebuah Pengantar*, 34.

<sup>49</sup> Kodir, *Qiraah Mubaadalah; Tafsir Progresif Untuk Keadilan Gender Dalam Islam*, 55–56.

<sup>50</sup> Wiwin Hendriani, *Resiliensi Psikologis: Sebuah Pengantar*, 46–50.

<sup>51</sup> Jasser Auda, *Maqasid Al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach*, 25–27.

<sup>52</sup> Kodir, *Qiraah Mubaadalah; Tafsir Progresif Untuk Keadilan Gender Dalam Islam*, 55; Muhammad Saiful Khair et al., "Tafsir Mubādalāh: Addressing Gender Issue in Family Planning Programs From Qur'anic Perspective," *TAJ DID: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 24, no. 1 (2025): 219–47, <https://doi.org/10.30631/tjd.v24i1.555>.

context, Rahat Shah<sup>53</sup> and Asma Zulfikar et al.<sup>54</sup> document the pivotal role of women breadwinners in sustaining family stability, despite their confrontation with pronounced social marginalisation and pressures from conservative religious frameworks. In contrast, research by Jurczyk et al.<sup>55</sup> and Ute Klammer<sup>56</sup> in Germany highlights that households led by female breadwinners undergo a substantive redefinition of domestic roles, characterised by a flexible division of labour and the emergence of more egalitarian spousal relationships. Moroccan studies, such as those by Ginger Feather<sup>57</sup> and Katharina et al.,<sup>58</sup> underscore the agency of women breadwinners as catalysts for social transformation who actively challenge patriarchal structures. Nonetheless, their efforts remain circumscribed by the legitimisation of gender-biased religious laws and entrenched social norms. Overall, the trajectory toward gender equality is gradual and profound.

Within the national context, the evolving construction of women's roles as primary breadwinners in Indonesia reveals a profound nexus between social resilience and the imperative to reconstruct religious values in context. Risbiyantoro et al.<sup>59</sup> contend that a wife's status as the principal economic provider constitutes a form of *maṣlaḥah ḍarūriyyah* essential benefit because it safeguards familial survival and averts harm, thereby rendering her role both legitimate and imbued with moral-spiritual significance. Complementing this perspective, Agus Hermanto,<sup>60</sup> Linda Firdawaty et al.,<sup>61</sup> identify persistent inequalities in maintenance responsibilities as stemming primarily from the inadequate application of the *mubādalah* (reciprocity) principle, thus advocating for a reconceptualisation of family law that frames

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<sup>53</sup> Shah, "Navigating Non-normative Roles: Experiences of Female-breadwinning Couples in Pakistan," 252–54.

<sup>54</sup> Asma et al., "Homemaker or Breadwinner: Labour Force Participation of Pakistani Women," *Community, Work & Family*, April 17, 2024, 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2024.2336031>.

<sup>55</sup> Karin Jurczyk et al., "Female-Breadwinner Families in Germany: New Gender Roles?," 1739–40.

<sup>56</sup> Ute Klammer, "The Ambivalent Trajectory of the German Gender Regime: Are Female Breadwinner Families an Indicator of a Shift towards a Public Gender Regime?," *Women's Studies International Forum* 99 (July 2023): 102783, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2023.102783>.

<sup>57</sup> Ginger Feather, "The Conflation of Single Mothers and Prostitutes in Morocco," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 17, no. 2 (2021): 294–303, <https://doi.org/10.1215/15525864-8949513>.

<sup>58</sup> Katharina Prigge and Kressen Thyen, "Rural Women's Economic Empowerment in the Maghreb: A Materialist Critique," *Middle East Critique*, April 20, 2025, 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19436149.2025.2485690>.

<sup>59</sup> Hendro Risbyantoro et al., "Peran Istri Sebagai Pencari Nafkah Utama Dalam Perspektif Maqashid Al-Syari' Ah," *Sahaja* 2, no. 2 (2023): 198–211, <https://doi.org/10.61159/sahaja.v2i2.133>.

<sup>60</sup> Agus Hermanto, "Menjaga Nilai-Nilai Kesalingan Dalam Menjalankan Hak Dan Kewajiban Suami Istri Perspektif Fikih Mubadalah," *Al-Mawarid Jurnal Syariah Dan Hukum (JSYH)* 4, no. 1 (2022): 45–47, <https://doi.org/10.20885/mawarid.vol4.iss1.art3>.

<sup>61</sup> Linda Firdawaty et al., "Contextualisation of Reciprocal Alues in Fulfillment Aliqah as an Effort to Strengthen the Family," *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 9, no. 2 (2024): 435–62, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v9i2.10215>.

economic responsibility as a shared duty grounded in the couple's respective capacities. This argument is further substantiated by the work of Yasin<sup>62</sup> and Andi Wardana Putra,<sup>63</sup> which considers that women's productive work is part of the realisation of *maqāṣid* sharia in maintaining social benefit and justice. Coordinating this view, research by Zumrotun and Muna<sup>64</sup> indicates that households in Indonesia continue to confront structural discrimination perpetuated by entrenched patriarchal interpretations that marginalise women's economic contributions within the formal legal framework.

Drawing on this study's findings and a comparative analysis of diverse national and international scholarship, this research advances a contextualised reconstruction of Islamic gender roles. This approach is designed to address the persistent tension between classical fiqh norms and the lived realities of Javanese Muslim women who serve as primary breadwinners. This reconstruction is predicated upon three interrelated principles. First is the principle of reciprocity, which posits that marital relationships should be grounded in the equitable distribution of responsibilities relating to labour, provision, and caregiving. This is articulated in the concept of *mubādalah*, thereby recognising men and women as equal partners in the familial sphere. Second is the principle of benefit, which asserts that the legal determination of maintenance must be contextually responsive to the family's socio-economic circumstances rather than rigidly anchored to the gender of the provider, in line with the *maqāṣid shariah* framework that foregrounds justice, welfare, and the safeguarding of life and property. Third is the principle of cultural contextuality, wherein local values such as cooperation, harmony, and *tepa selira* are integrated into the interpretation of Islamic law, ensuring that reinterpretation remains firmly connected to their cultural heritage. In sum, this approach to Islamic gender reconstruction does not compel women to relinquish tradition; rather, it affirms their agency as dynamic agents of change, capable of negotiating religious norms, cultural traditions, and social realities in a manner that is fair, egalitarian, and consonant with the overarching objectives of Islamic law.

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<sup>62</sup> Ahmad Alamuddin Yasin, "Tinjauan Maqashid Syari' Ah Dalam Kasus Perempuan Sebagai Pencari Nafkah Keluarga."

<sup>63</sup> Andi Wardana Putra and Soediro., "Wife as Sole Breadwinner in Islamic Law Perspective," *UMPurwokerto Law Review* 2, no. 2 (2021): 126, <https://doi.org/10.30595/umplr.v2i2.9600>.

<sup>64</sup> Siti Zumrotun and Muhammad Yusril Muna, "Marriage Disrupted: A Sociological and Legal Examination of Women's Ascendance as Family Heads," *Juris: Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah* 24, no. 1 (2025): 85-100, <https://doi.org/10.31958/juris.v24i1.13382>.

## Conclusion

Drawing from these findings, this research confirms that the phenomenon of female breadwinners among Javanese Muslim women necessitates a psychosocial-legal reconstruction of Islamic gender roles that bridges the gap between classical *fiqh* norms and contemporary socio-economic realities. By integrating the principles of reciprocity, benefit, and cultural contextuality, this study proposes a framework that redefines nafaqah as a shared moral and social responsibility grounded in justice and communal welfare, rather than a gendered obligation. This reconstruction affirms women's agency as primary earners who uphold both economic and cultural continuity, while remaining faithful to Islamic ethical values. Practically, these findings contribute to strengthening gender-responsive and child-centred protection policies within Indonesia's plural legal system. Furthermore, this study highlights how female breadwinners embody resilience and adaptive strategies that challenge patriarchal norms without rejecting religious and cultural traditions. Their lived experiences demonstrate that economic leadership by women can coexist harmoniously with moral piety and social harmony, reflecting a dynamic reinterpretation of Islamic family ethics. Future research should further explore how the experiences of female breadwinners in other Muslim communities can enrich a broader psychosocial legal framework for equitable family relations in Islamic jurisprudence, thereby deepening the integration between law, culture, and gender justice.

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