

SUING PATRIARCHY: THE CATCALLING PHENOMENON AND ITS IMPACT ON WOMEN IN MADURA

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Abstract

The phenomenon of catcalling is a practice of gender-based sexual violence expressed through verbal speech and often occurs in public spaces. This action has serious implications for women's sense of security and dignity, especially in the context of social and cultural relations in Madurese society. In Madura's patriarchal social structure, verbal violence is considered part of ordinary social interactions so that its existence is legitimized by cultural constructions that position women in an unequal position. In essence, this action not only degrades women's dignity but also has a significant impact on psychological, social and cultural aspects. This study aims to answer two main formulations: what is the impact of catcalling in the social, cultural and psychological context on women in Madura? and how does patriarchal culture influence societal behavior towards women in the practice of catcalling?. This research employs a qualitative method with a literature review approach. The analysis was conducted on a number of relevant written sources, including journal articles, research reports, and other academic works. The theoretical framework used to analyze this research is the concept of hegemonic masculinity (Raewyn Connell), patriarchy (Sylvia Walby), and symbolic violence (Pierre Bourdieu). The results of the study indicate that catcalling in Madura is a form of symbolic violence reproduced through a patriarchal value system and socially accepted as normal. It has a significant impact on psychological, social, and cultural conditions. The patriarchal cultural system that views women as objects of sexuality reinforces this behavior and normalizes verbal violence against women. Therefore, educational and cultural interventions are needed that target the structural roots of gender inequality and the formation of more responsive public policies to ensure the protection of women in public spaces.

Keywords: Catcalling, Patriarchal Culture, Verbal Harassment, Women, Madura

INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence is an act that is contrary to moral values because it causes various serious impacts, ranging from psychological trauma, severe physical injuries, disruption of daily activities, to potentially leading to death. One of the terms for sexual violence that is quite popular is *street harassment*. This act of sexual violence is harassment carried out on the streets. One form is catcalling or commonly known as verbal sexual harassment.

The catcalling phenomenon is the most common form of harassment experienced in society. In general, it is carried out by a group of unknown men who harass women intentionally or unintentionally in public spaces. It usually shows symbols or gestures that are sexual in nature and seem degrading. In addition, catcalling can cause fear, anxiety and stress in the victim. The phenomenon of catcalling in Madura cannot be reduced only as a violation of moral norms but also as a mechanism for the continuation of hegemonic masculinity that gains legitimacy from patriarchal values and is reproduced as a form of symbolic violence. Some Indonesian people still interpret *catcalling* as a form of joke in social interaction, so they often do not realize that the practice can place a person as a victim or perpetrator of gender-based verbal violence.

The phenomenon of catcalling in Madura cannot be understood as an ordinary verbal act but as a form of operationalization of hegemonic masculinity that emphasizes the dominance of men over women in public spaces.¹ This pattern can also be explained by the patriarchal concept of Sylvia Walby which positions women as subordinates in value structures and social relations.² Then the practice of catcalling can be analyzed as a form of symbolic violence, namely a mechanism for perpetuating gender dominance through verbal discourse that is considered reasonable in the context of Madura.³ These

¹ R. W. Connell and Raewyn Connell, *Masculinities* (Polity, 2005).

² Sylvia Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy*, 1st ed. (Wiley-Blackwell, 1991).

³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination* (Stanford University Press, 2001), accessed June 22, 2025, https://books.google.com/books?hl=id&lr=&id=hnFPGvdwuCUC&oi=fnd&pg=PP9&dq=masculine+domination+by+pierre+bourdieu&ots=a9OeQdqOmS&sig=ldqRvpYenrfpgIJif_qFX1_xfxA.

three concepts allow for a more holistic understanding that catcalling is not only a matter of verbal speech but also a matter of value structures and the power relations that underpin it. In Madura culture, men are often in a dominant position and catcalling is considered a natural thing which causes many people to think that it is not a serious thing so that the behavior is normalized and the impact on the victim is ignored. Victims often feel a drop in confidence, anxiety and discomfort and even social stigma in Madura can make them feel isolated or embarrassed to talk about their experiences.

Research on catcalling in Madura is important to understand its impact both in social, cultural and psychological contexts. As well as how patriarchal culture affects people's behavior towards women. This research is expected to be able to encourage increased public awareness of catcalling as a form of sexual harassment and change the perception that such actions are normal. In addition, this research can provide insight into the need for psychological support for victims and encourage the development of educational programs aimed at reducing catcalling and improving protection for women.

This research also has the potential to be the basis for formulating public policies that are more responsive to this problem. As well as urging local governments and non-governmental organizations to create more effective prevention and intervention strategies. Thus, this research is important to enrich the scientific literature on the phenomenon of catcalling, especially in local contexts in areas with patriarchal cultures such as Madura.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted using a qualitative method with a multidisciplinary approach in the social sciences, especially sociology and feminism to understand the catcalling phenomenon that occurs in Madura.⁴ This approach allows research to analyze the experience of Madura women from various perspectives, namely gender structure, patriarchal values and symbolic domination mechanisms related to catcalling

⁴ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (SAGE, 2014).

practices. The analysis in this study is based on three theories, namely the hegemonic masculinity of Raewyn Connell which is used as a framework for gender analysis in the context of sociology to explain how power relations and dominant masculine values form a pattern of catcalling behavior that places women as objects in the public space. Then the patriarchal theory of Sylvia Walby is used to understand the value structure and social relations that allow this act of verbal abuse to grow and continue to be reproduced in the context of Madura society. And lastly, the theory of symbolic violence from Pierre Bourdieu which is used to explain the mechanism of perpetuation of values and meanings that are inherited from generation to generation so that catcalling is accepted as something natural and not questioned by the perpetrator or the victim.

The data in this study was collected through a literature study by analyzing various scientific articles, reports and academic works related to catcalling, patriarchy and gender relations in Madura. The analysis is carried out using a critical interpretation method to understand the patterns of values, structures and social relations that underpin this phenomenon. This study combines three theoretical foundations with the aim of providing a holistic picture of catcalling as a form of verbal harassment that does not stand alone. However, it is closely related to social structures, patriarchal values and symbolic mechanisms that affect the experience of Madurese women in the public space.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Catcalling in Madura: A Social and Cultural Overview

According to data from Komnas Perempuan, it is noted that violence against women, including verbal sexual harassment (catcalling), continues to increase every year. In 2023, verbal sexual harassment was recorded as the second highest type of case, with 711 reports.⁵ The data findings indicate that the rate of sexual harassment in Indonesia is still relatively high. This is because some areas still think that catcalling is trivial or even funny so that many people do not realize that it is included

⁵ "Komnas Perempuan," accessed December 22, 2024, <https://komnasperempuan.go.id/catatan-tahunan>.

in the form of sexual harassment. As well as the lack of public understanding of sexual harassment in the form of verbal abuse. There are several factors that cause catcalling to still be rampant in society. One of them is socio-cultural factors such as patriarchy, sexism and the social environment.

The catcalling phenomenon in Madura is not only a matter of ordinary verbal speech but is a tangible form of the pattern of patriarchal relations that grows from hegemonic masculinity values and patriarchal value structures.⁶ In the context of Madura, this action gains legitimacy from cultural values that place women as subordinates and make their bodies and existence objects that can be controlled in the public space.⁷ This pattern not only has an impact on the individual level but also strengthens the value structure and symbolic relationships that make catcalling considered natural and acceptable as a form of daily communication.⁸ In other words, catcalling in Madura can be understood as a mechanism for perpetuating patriarchal values and a form of symbolic violence that positions women in a relationship of domination and gender inequality that is difficult to abolish.⁹

According to the perspective of sociology and feminism, catcalling in Madura can be interpreted as a form of symbolic and spatial violation that reflects patriarchal value structures and mechanisms of masculine domination.¹⁰ Public spaces in Madura are often a medium for the preservation of patriarchal culture, where access that should be inclusive turns into a space that represents power relations, with women reduced to objects of dominant verbal and visual expression.¹¹ This phenomenon is not only a matter of personal violations but also of collective values and meanings

⁶ Connell and Connell, *Masculinities*.

⁷ Diyana Mareta Hermawati, Aquarini Priyatna, and Amaliatun Saleha, "Damar Kambang: Madura Women's Resistance to Normative Culture," *Fon: Journal of Indonesian Language and Literature Education* 20, no. 1 (2024): 71–82.

⁸ Bourdieu, *masculine domination*.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁰ Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy*, 219.

¹¹ Iva Yulianti Umdatul Izzah et al., "Political Participation of Women and Cultural Hegemony in Pamekasan Madura," *Talent Development & Excellence* 12, no. 1 (2020): 4530–4542.

that make room for acts of symbolic violence to continue without significant social sanctions.¹²

At the level of cultural values, catcalling can be seen as a form of perpetuating patriarchal values that have been rooted in the social structure of Madura. Madura has strong values with respect for customs and traditions, but this is often clashed with narrow gender perceptions.¹³ This pattern not only emphasizes the dominance of men over women but also forces women to accept and understand forms of harassment as normal in everyday relationships. In the theoretical framework of Bourdieu (2001), these values can be categorized as a form of symbolic violence, namely a value mechanism that is inherited from generation to generation and has a real impact on women in the form of restrictions on movement space and social recognition.¹⁴ Despite the positive shift in understanding gender-based violence, catcalling is still considered a part of social interaction that is inseparable from the tradition.¹⁵ Therefore, changes in values and mindsets require an educational approach and gender equality campaign that touches on the level of values, structures and symbolic relationships in Madura society.

The increase in awareness about the negative impact of catcalling in Madura shows a shift in public perception of gender-based violence. Despite efforts from various parties to educate the public about the importance of gender equality, the practice of catcalling is still widespread. In a patriarchal culture their actions do not get consequences, so they assume that such behavior is acceptable. Formal and non-formal education is one of the keys to reducing this behavior. Increasing

¹² Michael Burawoy, *Symbolic Violence: Conversations with Bourdieu* (Duke University Press, 2019), accessed June 23, 2025, <https://books.google.com/books?hl=id&lr=&id=dTe6DwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA1909&dq=symbolic+violence+bourdieu&ots=cHFzosupqN&sig=p27SbGm17MY2JYj1K-0ZSjVbVbQ>.

¹³ Ahmad Fatoni, "Interpreting the Violence of the Madurese People Overseas: A Social Study of the Religious Diversity of the Madurese People in Semampir East Java," *Harmoni* 19, no. 1 (2020): 115–131.

¹⁴ Bourdieu, *masculine domination*.

¹⁵ Mohammad Akmal Haris, "The Transformation of Women's Roles in Islamic Religious Education in the Digital Era," *Journal of the Faculty of Islamic Sciences UNISA Kuningan* 5, no. 3 (2024): 254–262.

understanding through gender equality education can help foster awareness that catcalling is a form of violence that must be stopped.¹⁶ With these considerations, the involvement of all components of society is important in an effort to encourage gender equality in Madura.

Significant social changes to catcalling practices in Madura require support from a more assertive public policy. The implementation of policies that support the protection of women, including strict action against catcalling, has not been optimal in some regions.¹⁷ The establishment of clearer regulations and counseling to the public about the legal impact of acts of sexual harassment in public spaces is an important step to address this problem.¹⁸ Because the patriarchal culture that is still thick in Madura affects the mindset of the community, the implementation of this policy must be accompanied by a continuous approach to local values. So that sustainable changes will be created in reducing catcalling and other forms of violence against women.

2. Tracing Trauma: The Impact of Catcalling on Madura Women

Catcalling or verbal harassment that often occurs in public spaces has a significant psychological impact on women, especially women in Madura. Bourdieu explained that the traumatic effects of catcalling cannot be separated from the value structure and symbolic relationship patterns that internalize harassment as a normality in public spaces.¹⁹ Many women feel threatened and unsafe when they become victims of catcalling.²⁰ In the context of Madura, patriarchal values that position women as subordinates make many victims accept these experiences as a risk

¹⁶ Anita Rosriyanti Sofia Ratu Edo et al., "Sexual Education in Preventing Sexual Violence for the Young Generation," *Pneumata: Journal of Community Service* 5, no. 2 (2023): 80, accessed December 22, 2024, <https://sttbi.ac.id/journal/index.php/pneumata/article/view/401>.

¹⁷ Dhea Januastasya Audina, "Gender Equality in Human Rights Perspective," *Nomos: Journal of Legal Research* 2, no. 4 (2022): 148–154.

¹⁸ Dwi Puspardini and Gede Made Swardhana, "The Urgency of Legal Protection for Women Journalists from a Gender Equality Perspective," *Udayana Master Law Journal* 10, no. 1 (2021): 187.

¹⁹ Burawoy, *Symbolic Violence*.

²⁰ Sophie Fisher, Danielle Lindner, and Christopher J. Ferguson, "The Effects of Exposure to Catcalling on Women's State Self-Objectification and Body Image," *Current Psychology* 38, no. 6 (December 2019): 1500.

inherent in their social status so that the effects of trauma are difficult to express or confront.²¹ This condition results in restrictions on women's movement space, both economically, socially and culturally and emphasizes the relationship of gender dominance that grows from deep-rooted value structures and patriarchal patterns.²² The results of this study reveal that catcalling has a significant impact on Madura women from three interrelated dimensions, namely the impact from psychological, social and cultural aspects:

a. Psychological and Social Impact

The impact of catcalling for Madurese women can also be explained from the perspective of symbolic violence put forward by Bourdieu, namely the mechanism of values and meanings that are inherited from generation to generation until they are firmly rooted in the pattern of social and gender relations.²³ In the context of Madura, which is thick with patriarchal values, catcalling is not only a matter of ordinary verbal speech but also a form of value structure that positions women as objects of symbolic domination. This pattern makes many women accept and even understand the form of verbal abuse they experience as natural or unavoidable in public spaces. They can only feel valued based on physical appearance, which can reduce their sense of self-worth.²⁴ In some cases, women feel only like objects rather than as individual subjects with rights and dignity. This can worsen perceptions and lead to

²¹ Muhammad Alridho Lubis and Dinny Rahmayanty, "Women And Catcalling: An Analysis of Contributing Factors and Mitigating of Verbal/Non-Verbal Communication," *Ath-Thariq: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi* 8, no. 1 (2024): 85.

²² Vincent Anderson Simanjuntak et al., "A Criminological Review of Catcalling in Tanjungpinang: Exploring Verbal Harassment Behavior and Its Impact on Women in a Criminological Perspective" (June 7, 2024): 13, accessed October 27, 2024, <https://zenodo.org/doi/10.5281/zenodo.11519218>.

²³ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford university press, 1990), accessed June 11, 2025, <https://www.google.com/books?hl=id&lr=&id=YHN8uW49l7AC&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=Pierre+Bourdieu+%E2%80%93+The+Logic+of+Practice&ots=0hXmMkxo3U&sig=NcFb-wy5PiszLpNbdJd98gtnhQo>.

²⁴ Meilisa Dwi Erwinda, Raselly Elfa Putri, and Moses Pandin, "Catcalling as a Representation of the Strong Patriarchal Culture in the Perspective of Feminism" (2021): 10, accessed October 27, 2024, <https://www.preprints.org/manuscript/202104.0789>.

feelings of worthlessness for themselves personally.²⁵ Research conducted by the American Psychological Association revealed results that verbal sexual harassment such as catcalling is strongly associated with low self-esteem in women who experience and can continue to more severe psychological disorders such as depression and anxiety disorders.²⁶

Over time, the internalization of these values can have a significant impact on women's psychological health and quality of life. They not only experience psychological disorders such as anxiety, stress and depression but also form the perception that their bodies and existence deserve to be targeted by dominating speech or gaze. In other words, catcalling is not just a matter of verbal speech but a matter of the mechanism of values and symbolic meanings that continue to be reproduced in the Madurese patriarchal structure whose effect can limit women's space of movement, erode confidence and reinforce gender relations that are unequal and difficult to abolish.

The mental well-being of women who experience catcalling is often overlooked. Some women who experience verbal sexual harassment have the potential to feel psychological pressure and alienation, especially in the context of Madura's social norms that emphasize the need to maintain personal dignity, family, and the surrounding social environment.²⁷ This verbal abuse often causes women to experience ongoing social anxiety, even some time after the incident. The impact can be much worse if the woman does not receive adequate and sustainable social support.²⁸ A study showed results that women who frequently experienced verbal

²⁵ Darmayanti Yuliana Surya Ningtyas and Iin Ervina, "The Effect of Catcalling on Self Esteem in Female Students," *Journal of Psychology* 1, no. 3 (2024): 7.

²⁶ Erika Carr et al., "Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Women with Serious Mental Illness" (n.d.): 35.

²⁷ Syamsul Alam and Andi Alfian, "Symbolic Violence Against Women in Patriarchal Culture," *Satya Widya: Journal of Religious Studies* 5, no. 2 (December 29, 2022): 31.

²⁸ Gina Febriyanti and Mudiayati Rahmatunnisa, "Gender Injustice Due to Stereotypes in the Patriarchal System" (June 12, 2022): 16.

abuse had higher levels of stress and were therefore particularly susceptible to anxiety and depression disorders.²⁹

As a result of the catcalling that occurs in society, many Madurese women are changing their daily behavior to avoid the harassment that is received continuously. These changes are often reflected in the way they dress and interact with others.³⁰ Some women may very likely choose to dress more closed than usual or avoid going out at certain times to feel safer. This shows that catcalling impacts not only on mental health, but also impacts women's freedom to express themselves. According to impact research, women who experience frequent catcalling tend to feel that their rights to freedom are limited and tend to stay at home more or tend to avoid contact with public spaces.³¹

Catcalling not only impacts the mental well-being of individuals, but also reflects gender injustices in society. Madurese women are often faced with double discrimination both because of their perceived inferior gender status and because of societal customs that limit their social roles.³² Verbal sexual harassment such as catcalling is a form of oppression that starts from gender inequality in society. This action clarifies the view that women exist only to be seen and judged based on their physical appearance.³³ A study also states that verbal sexual harassment of women in

²⁹ Sarah A. Orban et al., "Verbal Memory Interference in Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: A Meta-Analytic Review," *Journal of Attention Disorders* 26, no. 12 (October 2022): 1554.

³⁰ Lenie Okviana and Shifa Audrey Avianti Setiawanto, "The Effect of Catcalling Verbal Communication on the Confidence of Hijab Women in Depok City," *BroadComm* 3, no. 2 (October 1, 2021): 20.

³¹ Michael A. Asensio et al., "Antibody Repertoire Analysis of Mouse Immunization Protocols Using Microfluidics and Molecular Genomics," *mAbs* 11, no. 5 (July 4, 2019): 883.

³² Geza Alkautsar and Zulfebriges, "The Effect of Catcalling Verbal Communication on Female Students' Anxiety Levels: A Regression Study of the Impact of Catcalling on Female Students of Fikom Unisba 2018," *Bandung Conference Series: Communication Management* 2, no. 1 (January 20, 2022): 28, accessed November 13, 2024, <https://proceedings.unisba.ac.id/index.php/BCSCM/article/view/292>.

³³ Ervinda, Putri, and Pandin, "Catcalling as a Representation of the Strong Patriarchal Culture in the Perspective of Feminism."

conservative areas tends to exacerbate gender injustices that can hinder women from reaching their full potential in education and employment.³⁴

To overcome the psychological impact of catcalling, especially in Madura, it is very important to involve the community in terms of education regarding respect for women.³⁵ Empowering women in society and educating them about their rights in the face of verbal harassment is very necessary to create a safe and respectful environment for every individual.³⁶ Social norms are still very strong in Madura so a cultural-based approach involving religious and community leaders is needed that can help change views of women and reduce the occurrence of catcalling behavior in society. Thus, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of awareness campaigns that can educate both men and women on the importance of mutual respect and avoiding harmful behaviors.³⁷ So that the mental well-being of women in Madura can be maintained and their sense of security can be restored.

b. Cultural impact

Catcalling or verbal harassment in public spaces can affect views on the role of women in Madurese society known for traditional and conservative values. In Madurese culture, women are often considered a symbol of honor in the family and behaviors that are considered to damage that honor have a major impact on women's social status.³⁸ Catcalling that often occurs in public spaces can worsen the view that

³⁴ Nadya Nikmah Wahyudi et al., "Psychological Well-Being Korban Pelecehan Seksual: Menguji Peranan Resiliensi Dan Dukungan Sosial," *INNER: Journal of Psychological Research* 3, no. 2 (2023): 320.

³⁵ Judy Marria Saimima, Elvira Liminanto, and Zacilasi Wasia, "Legal Education on Sexual Violence against Women and Children in Lateri Village, Ambon City," *Journal of Legal Dedication* 2, no. 1 (2022): 79.

³⁶ Erna Ermawati Chotim, "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Indonesia: The Desire and Inevitability of a Pragmatic Approach (Study of Cirebon Home Made SMEs)," *ACCELERATION: National Scientific Journal* 2, no. 1 (2020): 74.

³⁷ Nurul Ayu Andari Sardi, Hanifah Az Zahra, and Fransiscus Xaverius Sri Sadewo, "Representation of Female Virginity in TikTok@ Blood Video Content. Indonesia," *Al-Hikmah Media Da'wah, Communication, Social and Culture* 12, no. 2 (2021): 144.

³⁸ Hasanatul Jannah, *Madura Women's Scholars: Authority and Gender Relations* (IRCiSoD, 2020), 57, accessed December 22, 2024, https://books.google.com/books?hl=id&lr=&id=wbj8DwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA5&dq=perempuan+madura&ots=-K9wd0b__w&sig=zFfX2a3pZnnd_3675tT0lxu-Ad0.

women are objects that must always be guarded and their honor maintained from the views of others. Women who are victims of catcalling can feel pressure to always maintain their self-image so that they are not considered to be violating social norms, even if they did nothing wrong.³⁹ A study shows that catcalling can contribute greatly to the reinforcement of gender stereotypes that limit women's freedom to interact with the outside world.⁴⁰

In Madurese society that is thick with patriarchal values, catcalling can reinforce restrictions on women's roles in social and public life. In some cases, women who are victims of verbal abuse tend to feel isolated and reluctant to participate in activities outside the home.⁴¹ This condition has implications for limiting women's roles in the domestic sphere, so that their activities are more concentrated in the home and tend to avoid social involvement. A study revealed that women who experience verbal abuse tend to feel less valued in society and prefer not to engage in activities in public spaces.⁴² This impact not only reduces women's freedom but also hinders the development of their social role in society.

Catcalling can also potentially worsen social stigma against women in Madura society.⁴³ When catcalling occurs, women are often blamed or seen as the main cause of the abuse they receive. This kind of view clarifies the stereotype that women who are in public spaces, especially those who dress attractively, have the right to be the target of harassment. In a Madurese culture that still strongly upholds eastern customs and norms, women are often caught in a dilemma between maintaining their own

³⁹ Ida Ayu Adnyaswari Dewi, "Catcalling: Jokes, Praise or Sexual Harassment" (PhD thesis, Udayana University, 2019).

⁴⁰ Harly Clifford Jonas Salmon and Amidan Zidan, "Catcalling as a Form of Non-Physical Sexual Violence," *SANISA: Jurnal kreativitas mahasiswa hukum* 2, no. 2 (2022): 49.

⁴¹ Ervinda, Putri, and Pandin, "Catcalling as a Representation of the Strong Patriarchal Culture in the Perspective of Feminism," 11.

⁴² Adesti Novita Sari et al., "Analysis of the Catcalling Phenomenon on Women's Mental Condition in an Islamic Perspective," *Journal of Education Tambusai* 7, no. 1 (2023): 1946.

⁴³ Annisa Nur Ramadhani, "Catcalling in Public Space (Phenomenological Study of IAIN Parepare Students" (PhD thesis, IAIN Parepare, 2024), accessed December 22, 2024, <https://repository.iainpare.ac.id/id/eprint/7191/>.

honor and being subjected to verbal harassment.⁴⁴ A study said that social stigma against women who are victims of abuse worsens their view of their role in society, making them more likely to withdraw and avoid wider social interactions.⁴⁵

3. Madura and Catcalling: Dissecting the Relationship Between Patriarchal Systems and Verbal Abuse of Madura Women

The role of women in the social structure in Madura is often limited to the domestic sphere and is often considered inferior to men. The norms that develop in Madurese society emphasize the importance of control over women through various means. One of them is through verbal harassment or catcalling. Catcalling is a manifestation of male dominance over women who are considered as objects of sexuality.⁴⁶ In a patriarchal society, this behavior can be accepted and even considered as a natural thing or just a form of attention. This research also shows that Madura's patriarchal values allow catcalling to grow and develop as a form of symbolic domination embedded in the pattern of daily gender relations. In the framework of hegemonic masculinity by Connell, it can be seen that catcalling can be understood as a form of male legitimacy to hold control and dominance in the public space that makes women's bodies and existence the object of superior masculine rights.⁴⁷ This pattern is also closely related to patriarchal structures that legitimize social and cultural values for men to continue to position women as subordinates who can be reduced solely as objects of speech and gaze.⁴⁸ In this context, catcalling has led to symbolic violence, which is a mechanism of nihilism and meaning that is inherited from generation to generation so that women accept and even understand this pattern of relationships as a normal in daily life.⁴⁹ Thus, catcalling in Madura is not only a matter of ordinary verbal speech but also a matter of value patterns, domination

⁴⁴ Jannah, *Madura Female Scholar*, 18.

⁴⁵ Siti Mas'udah, "The Meaning of Sexual Violence and Society Stigma Against Victims of Sexual Violence," *Society* 10, no. 1 (2022): 10.

⁴⁶ Muhammad Kholis Hamdy and M. Hudri, "Gender Based Violence: The Relationship of Law and Patriarchy in Indonesia," *EMPATI: Journal of Social Welfare Science* 11, no. 2 (2022): 79.

⁴⁷ Connell and Connell, *Masculinities*.

⁴⁸ Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy*.

⁴⁹ Bourdieu, *masculine domination*.

structures and symbolic relationships that bind women to the experience of subordination and role restrictions in the public space.

The patriarchal norms that apply in Madura allow catcalling behavior by building an understanding that women must submit to male domination.⁵⁰ In this context, women's bodies are considered part of public property that is free to be exploited. Men who catcall feel entitled to public space and see their behavior as a way to show power or simply flirt.⁵¹ Madurese people, who are very thick with customs and traditions, often do not consider catcalling as a form of verbal violence, but as part of social interaction. But in reality, these behaviors can cause fear, shame and discomfort for women.⁵² This shows how patriarchal norms that are widely accepted in society reinforce gender inequality and degrade women's dignity. This habit continues because there is often no critical assessment of its negative impact on women.

It is important to understand that patriarchal culture has a great influence on the formation of catcalling habits because the social values that society adheres to view women as inferior.⁵³ In this system men are given the privilege of freely regulating public spaces. Meanwhile, women must adapt to the rules set by men.⁵⁴ In the patriarchal view, catcalling is considered a form of recognition of a woman's physical attractiveness that should be accepted with pleasure. This habit degrades the dignity of women by considering them only as objects of sexuality that can be

⁵⁰ Rebecca M. Hayes, "Theorizing Rape Culture: A Patriarchal Integrated Theory," in *Defining Rape Culture: Gender, Race and the Move Toward International Social Change* (Emerald Publishing Limited, 2023), 19, accessed October 27, 2024, <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/978-1-80262-213-320231002/full/html>.

⁵¹ Julia Sudbury and Margo Okazawa-Rey, *Activist Scholarship: Antiracism, Feminism, and Social Change* (Routledge, 2015), 17, accessed December 22, 2024, <https://books.google.com/books?hl=id&lr=&id=fEUeCwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Feminist+Activist+Scholarship:+Critical+Approaches+to+Gender+and+Social+Justice&ots=OvK6t60AZ9&sig=SDiK2rWafXSXTaigG51ocKXIDIU>.

⁵² Saskia E. Wieringa, Evelyn Blackwood, and Abha Bhaiya, *Women's Sexualities and Masculinities in a Globalizing Asia (Comparative Feminist Studies)*, 1st ed., 2007.

⁵³ Deniz Kandiyoti, "Bargaining With Patriarchy," *Gender & Society* 2, no. 3 (September 1988): 278.

⁵⁴ Nina Nurmila, "The Influence of Patriarchal Culture on Religious Understanding and Cultural Formation," *KARSA Journal of Social and Islamic Culture* 23, no. 1 (June 1, 2015): 12.

exposed and treated arbitrarily in public spaces.⁵⁵ At the same time, it is not uncommon for women to feel pressured to accept a narrow view of their role in society. The absence of firm action from society and the government against the practice of catcalling shows how strong the patriarchal culture plays a role in reducing the importance of women's rights to their safety and dignity.⁵⁶ Therefore, a change to the patriarchal culture that justifies catcalling must start from an understanding and education about gender equality.

In Madura, most people living in a patriarchal system consider catcalling to be a natural form of male expression. It is even considered part of social tradition. This phenomenon is further exacerbated by a lack of understanding of the importance of respecting women's personal space and their right to feel safe in public spaces. Some people think that catcalling is a way to show interest in or appreciate a woman's physical appearance even without consent or respect for their right to privacy.⁵⁷ Therefore, many women feel marginalized or even have no voice in voicing their discomfort with such behavior. This patriarchal norm that dominates social views creates a gap in the effort to counter catcalling because many people do not see it as a serious problem.⁵⁸ Therefore, a transformation in perspective and an increase in the collective awareness of the Madurese people towards the urgency of gender equality and the protection of women's rights are needed.

A more holistic approach is needed to overcome the impact of the patriarchal system that encourages catcalling in Madura. Education about gender equality starting from the family environment to educational institutions is very important to

⁵⁵ Muhammad Falih Iqbal, Sugeng Harianto, and Pambudi Handoyo, "The Transformation of the Role of Village Women in the Shackles of Patriarchal Culture," *IISIP Journal: Journal of Social and Political Sciences* 20, no. 1 (August 23, 2023): 99.

⁵⁶ Muhammad Alridho Lubis and Dinny Rahmayanty, "Women And Catcalling: An Analysis of Contributing Factors and Mitigating of Verbal/Non-Verbal Communication," *Ath-Thariq: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi* 8, no. 1 (July 3, 2024): 87.

⁵⁷ Alam and Alfian, "Symbolic Violence Against Women in Patriarchal Culture," 36.

⁵⁸ Anita Puspita and Wildan Nugraha, "The Influence of Patriarchal Culture on the Rise of Catcalling," *Widya Duta Scientific Journal of Religious and Socio-Cultural Sciences* 18, no. 1 (March 31, 2023): 60.

create a change in attitudes towards women.⁵⁹ In addition, the public also needs to be given an understanding of the impact of catcalling on women's psychological and emotional health. This change not only requires action on the part of women to speak up but also requires the full support of men and existing social institutions. In addition, strict law enforcement against verbal harassment practices must also be part of the steps to overcome this habit.⁶⁰ Without concrete steps to change the profound patriarchal views, catcalling will remain a part of the social reality that harms women. Therefore, collective awareness to create a more just and equal society is needed so that women in Madura can live free from verbal violence and sexual harassment in public spaces.

CONCLUSION

The catcalling phenomenon in Madura shows the dominance of patriarchal culture that is still strong. This action is often considered trivial or amusing. However, reality is actually a form of verbal harassment that degrades women and reinforces the view that women's bodies are objects that can be treated at will regardless of their rights and dignity. Catcalling reflects the view that women's bodies are objects that can be treated at will without regard to their rights and dignity. This practice not only disturbs women's comfort in public spaces but also shows the dominance of men who continue to reinforce gender inequality. Patriarchal social norms are still thick in Madura, making catcalling often left unattended and even considered reasonable without any firm action from the relevant parties.

The impact of catcalling on Madurese women is very diverse, ranging from insecurity to psychological trauma. Women who are often targeted by catcalling tend

⁵⁹ Dewi Ratnawati, Sulistyorini Sulistyorini, and Ahmad Zainal Abidin, "Gender Equality on Male and Female Education," *Harkat Journal: Gender Communication Media* 15, no. 1 (2019): 17.

⁶⁰ Zillah R. Eisenstein, *The Female Body and the Law* (Univ of California Press, 2024), 53, accessed December 22, 2024, <https://books.google.com/books?hl=id&lr=&id=jLcGEQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Feminism+and+Sexuality:+A+Critical+Reader+Eisenstein,+Z.+&ots=c-XcsYkGN9&sig=lz3PGouU3bMgZuNibGPTU2Xkwg0>.

to feel pressured and marginalized and even limit their activities in public spaces to avoid harassment. This phenomenon also worsens the mentality of society which tends to underestimate verbal harassment against women, making it difficult to change the pattern of unequal gender relations. Therefore, it is necessary to change the mindset and values at the collective level in society by emphasizing gender equality and the protection of women's rights. More intensive education and awareness efforts need to be made so that women can feel safe and valued in public spaces. This study emphasizes that catcalling is not only a matter of verbal speech but also a matter of value patterns and power relations that grow from the patriarchal structure of Madura itself based on an analysis carried out on the theoretical foundation of hegemonic masculinity by Raewyn Connel, patriarchal theory in gender studies by Sylvia Walby and the concept of symbolic violence by Pierre Bourdieu.

Further research can focus on the development of educational intervention methods and the involvement of local actors such as religious leaders, traditional leaders or local governments to formulate concrete strategies in preventing and tackling catcalling practices. In addition, research in other areas with different patterns of patriarchal values can also provide a broader picture of gender relations patterns and the effects of this verbal abuse. The results of this research can be used as a reference for policy makers in formulating relevant education rules and programs as well as as a means of developing assistance methods for catcalling victims for social practitioners. Thus, the implications of this research not only enrich academic studies but can also contribute to encouraging changes in values, policies and practices that support the creation of justice and equality for women.

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