A History of Patriarchy?

Bob Thomas Pierik, MA

MA thesis for Politics, Philosophy and Economics, Leiden University

Supervisor: Dr. Frank Chouraqui

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INTRODUCTION

Does patriarchy have a history? Of course, clearly, the concept 'patriarchy' has a history that can be subject to genealogical research or the subject of a *Begriffsgeschichte*. But there is also the process of the ubiquity or even universality of at least one of the meanings of 'patriarchy', namely that of a society that 'values men more highly than women.' The question is then if there is an ahistorical, perpetual or even metaphysical dimension to this type of patriarchy. Of course, this question is easier to raise than to answer. While we can easily assert that patriarchy under one of its many conceptions has a history, trying to answer the question if one of those specific constellations is universal rather ends up in a goose hunt for exceptions to universal rules. However, even before such work could be done, conceptual clarity on the different uses of 'patriarchy' is necessary. So, instead of assuming an answer to this question on the ubiquity of 'patriarchy' or trying to prove or disprove such a hypothesis of universalism, I will consider different conceptualizations of 'patriarchy'. This will lay the groundwork under which we may be able to answer the question 'does patriarchy have a history?'

The question that presents itself immediately is whether or not historians can distinguish between patriarchy, the historical condition, and 'patriarchy,' the concept used by historians. Some structuralist accounts that see gender construction as a closed-off system would say that the distinction is impossible: 'Since we are always-already constructed, we have no non-constructed point of view from which we are free from our already constructed conceptual schema.'[1] Trying to see a historical reality beyond the historical conceptions is then impossible, since the historical reality is constituted by the self-justification of those conceptions in the first place. And to complicate it further, we ourselves cannot see beyond our own historical prefiguration consisting out of the structures of our own language and structures of meaning-giving that we project onto the past.

On the other side would be a realist view in which patriarchy can exists without problem as independent entity from the 'patriarchy' of our conceptual schemes. It seems unnecessarily limiting to maintain that we cannot call a society patriarchal the definition of 'valuing men more highly than women' even if said society had no way of conceptualizing of gender differences in that way. We can

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[1] Ori J. Herstein, "Justifying Subversion: Why Nussbaum Got (the Better Interpretation Of) Butler Wrong," *Cornell Law Faculty Publications*, Paper 75, 2009, 52, http://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/facpub/75.

analyse groups of men and women as part of the serialities 'men' and 'women' and evaluate their positions even if the society they were part of did not have such analytical tools in the same way that we can say that the Thirty Years' War lasted thirty years, even though its participants could not know that during the war itself. The debate then moves to the level of epistemology and evaluation of the analytical tools that we use to capture patriarchy in our models.

To further complicate the matter of the history of patriarchy, one argument is that specifically one of patriarchy's lasting powers has been its own de-historicizing and its appearance as natural and inevitable.[2] Even in the realist view that maintains a distinction between patriarchy and historical conceptions of 'patriarchy,' there is room for these two to influence each other. Realist analysis then has to answer the epistemological question if and to what degree our conceptual schemes can escape the historical process we are trying to describe. Interestingly, even though a large part of the move to women's and later gender history and feminist philosophy has been to undo this process of de-historicizing, it has not (yet?) led to the 'radical new epistemology' once sought.[3] Although the grand narratives of gender history have all been challenged, no satisfactory alternative has been posed.

One of the few grand narratives of patriarchy still sometimes (often implicitly) accepted but more often critiqued is the teleological account of (Western) gender relations, in which a traditional conservatism was followed by a rather sudden rupture of emancipation at the advent of (liberal) feminism and political modernity. This teleological history of women's liberation conflates the defeat of traditional political authority (patriarchalism) and patriarchy as traditional paternal authority in the family. This is the distinction as Weber makes it, but it comes back to political liberalism's distinction between public and private good(s). I will argue that although powerful and appealing, those that maintain such a distinction between public and private good have too easily accepted patriarchy as dead. The distinction leaves too much room for inequalities on basis of *geslacht*.

In the context of the debate whether or not patriarchy was defeated at all and by extension, what exactly constitutes patriarchy, many theorists have dropped the concept 'patriarchy' altogether, in favour of formulations such as 'gender difference' or 'gender oppression.' Butler writes:

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[2] Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination* (Cambridge [u.a.: Polity Press, 2007).

[3] Penelope J. Corfield, "History and the Challenge of Gender History," *Rethinking History* 1, no. 3 (December 1, 1997): 245, doi:10.1080/13642529708596318.

'The political assumption that there must be a universal basis for feminism, one which must be found in an identity assumed to exist cross-culturally, often accompanies the notion that the oppression of women has some singular form discernible in the universal or hegemonic structure of patriarchy or masculine domination.'[4]

Defending themselves against charges of essentialism and Western theoretical hegemony, many theorists have moved to synchronic interpretation of gender relations at a more specific time and place. Sylvia Walby's version of patriarchy is somewhat of an exception. Challenging the liberal teleological emancipation view, she argues that (premodern) 'private patriarchy' was replaced by (modern) 'public patriarchy.' In her view, patriarchy consists of different structures that changed in relative significance over time, but the presence of patriarchal structures forming the aggregate of a patriarchal society was rather stable. Although her theory identifies abstracted structures that could be applied cross-culturally (and which I will discuss in more detail in the first chapter), her diachronic interpretation of 'public to private patriarchy' applies explicitly to England. At best, the diachronically applied version of her theory works to explain a long-term shift in Western gender relations, but applying it transculturally still has the danger of subordinating 'different configurations of domination under the rubric of a transcultural notion of patriarchy.'[5]

Butler would call the application of Walby's model to world history a 'colonizing epistemological strategy.'[6] But it is exactly the type of criticism that Walby aims to avoid by differentiating between different structures of patriarchy. Butler's charge against the use of the monolithic concept of patriarchy as a colonizing epistemological strategy only applies when patriarchy is conceptualized as a single universal structure. As several structures, it is much more flexible to fit different types of gendered orders. Butler – or more specifically, my above reading of her—would then conflate the inevitability and the universality of patriarchy. Universality and inevitability are not the same thing: All humans breathe air, but it is not inevitable that we do so. We have the (military) means to end all air-breathing within hours, but it is still a universal feature of human existence. By analogy, it is universally (or perhaps ubiquitously) the case that at least since the agricultural revolution, men have been structurally valued more highly than women in historical societies, but this does not necessarily make it the result of an inevitable determinism.

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[4] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York; London: Routledge, 1999), 6.
[5] Ibid., 46.
[6] Ibid.

However, the question of universality is only avoided –not solved- by differentiating between different structures. Although it does not rule out that patriarchy can be universal without being inevitable, there is still the question if there is some kind of 'centre', 'core' or (in Marxist terms) 'base' to it. Is there a level of abstraction possible where we develop a theory of patriarchy that accounts for the universality/ubiquity of patriarchy without leading to an inevitability of its specific constellations? If this is answered with 'yes,' then a speculative philosophy of gender history is possible, because it will then become possible to identify a 'centre' of patriarchy does not just move through time and across cultures, but makes such movement possible in the first place.

Perhaps the most-recent attempt to contribute to a speculative philosophy of gender history can be found in Yuval Harari's *Sapiens*:

> Since patriarchy is so universal, it cannot be the product of some vicious circle that was kick-started by a chance occurrence. It is particularly noteworthy that even before 1492, most societies in both America and Afro-Asia were patriarchal, even though they had been out of contact for thousands of years. If patriarchy in Afro-Asia resulted from some chance occurrence, why were the Aztecs and Incas patriarchal? It is far more likely that even though the precise definition of 'man' and 'woman' varies between cultures, there is some universal biological reason why almost all cultures valued manhood over womanhood. We do not know what this reason is. There are plenty of theories, none of them convincing.[7]

Harari discusses some of the potential options but stays away from identifying a biological core to patriarchy, other than making the move to a separation of (cultural) gender and (biological) sex. The main cause for 'the tremendous revolution' of gender roles since the last century however is (implied to be) because of the increasing awareness that biological sex does not have to dictate cultural gender and can be distinguished from it. I take this view to be a realist theory of patriarchy that would maintain that there is a universal and biological basis to patriarchy existing ontologically independently from our conceptions of it. As a model for historical change and historical narrative, this would entail a gender history of constant shifts in cultural gender against a potentially moving, -- but much more slowly if at all—bedrock of biological sex. The problem with such a view is that it relies on a division that conceptually separates gender and sex from each other, while not showing how such a separation actually works out in lived experience.

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[7] Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Mankind* (New York: Harper, 2015), 171–172.

In this thesis, I want to develop a (post)-structuralist theory of patriarchy that can take up the challenge of historical change. That is because knowledge of the abstracted structures of patriarchy has the potential of providing critical emancipatory knowledge, but this will only be effective if patriarchy's historical situatedness can be properly facilitated. I argue that there is a substantial problem of diachronic interpretation that many conceptualisations of patriarchy run into: Conceptualizing a structure or multiple structures of patriarchy synchronically is relatively straightforward, but as soon as we ask ourselves how different constellations of patriarchy move through time, we run into considerable problems that challenge the unity of patriarchy itself. No satisfactory grand narrative of patriarchy (or gender order) has been presented so far. Rather, different theories allocate different priorities to the different structures of patriarchy. Of course, one may say that the whole project of gender history and theory has been exactly to dispute the grand narratives of history and the speculative histories that provide a holistic perspective on human existence, in favour of 'distinct articulations of gender asymmetry in different cultural contexts.'[8] Although the awareness of the necessity of historical situatedness has led to better understanding of historical societies, it has in its rejection of the study of long-term change and preference of the study of synchronic gender asymmetries thrown out the baby with the bathwater. The bathwater, Enlightenment universalism and its correlative essentialist history of men and women, can be gotten rid of without losing the baby, the diachronic role of sex in the construction of political subjectivities. I want to argue that exactly the problem of diachronic interpretation of sex and the perceived universality of gender difference can be solved by presenting a speculative philosophy of gender history: the history of *geslacht*.

The prerequisite for diachronic development is a dialectics of generativity of the present: the present is producing the past but the past has produced the present. In the separation of past and present, generations are being forged: All generations of people exist as the present reproduction of past people. A genealogy of generations in Dutch is called a *geslacht*. (Latin: *genus*. German: *Geschlecht*), which is also the word to describe biological sex (but sometimes also social-cultural gender). I propose that the universal conceptual core to any valid speculative philosophy of gender history should be *geslacht*.[9] This is not biological sex as most of us understand it today (I will take Harari's

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[8] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 45–46.

[9] I am here inspired by and indebted to Geertje Mak, who coined *geslacht* as a key concept in which different layers of gender history converge. Geertje Mak, "Huishouden in Nederlands Nieuw-Guinea. Geschiedenis van Geslacht Op Geslacht" (Inaugural oration, Amsterdam: Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2017), 5, https://www.atria.nl/sites/atria/files/atoms/files/oratietekst_geertje_mak.pdf.

understanding of biological sex as the common view) but is exactly the ambiguous area between culture and biology that we can discover as soon as we collapse the nature/culture dichotomy (and by extension, the gender/sex dichotomy) as illusionary. Previous theories have often - to avoid charges of biological determinism and essentialism - separated the process of physical reproduction into its social-cultural and biological components. I argue that the distinction does not hold, and neither does any reduction of one side to the other, and that in the term *geslacht* both their (re)convergence and the potential for a philosophy of history will emerge.

By turning to *geslacht* I want to argue that gendered subjectivity and the sexual body cannot be separated but are part of a situated body that exists only in relation to its whole environment. There is no 'true' or 'untainted' sexuality or pure body looming behind a socially and culturally constructed sexual order. *Geslacht* is the system of sexual order which can only exist by taking both the physical functions of the body and the symbolic universe produced by that same body together. *Geslacht* allows us to describe how we experience and produce the world through which bodies with physical differences move. In this sense it forms a prerequisite for human history and future and an important prerequisite for power relations between people. I will of course expand on the above in the next chapters, and give 'patriarchy' a place in it, but that first requires me to turn to the question: how have theorists understood 'patriarchy'?

1. PATRIARCHY BEFORE AND IN FEMINISM

This chapter is the result of a first attempt at a genealogy of the concept 'patriarchy' and is meant as the foundation of the rest of the thesis. Two types of theories of 'patriarchy' are identified, which I will call 'traditional patriarchy' and 'structural patriarchy.' The first is more specific and is used to depict an organisational model of (both real and idealized) fatherly control in the family. The second is used to depict social systems that are characterized by structural male dominance over women and children. I will discuss both of them and show how they obscure each other's working when they collide with each other, and how the historical narratives that they are based upon can become problematic when applied more broadly.

1.1 PATRIARCHY BEFORE FEMINISM: TRADITIONAL PATRIARCHY

The word 'patriarchy', as derived from the Greek *πατριάρχης* (father who rules over a family) has immediate connotations of power, family-relations and social hierarchy. What it does not contain, in its rawest etymological origins, are connotations of oppression and domination that seem obvious to modern feminist usage of the term. An important achievement of feminist scholarship has been exactly to point out the oppressiveness of patriarchal power relations and to show that such social hierarchies are not inevitabilities, but constructed relations that can potentially be changed. It will seem obvious to most modern readers that using the term patriarchy is often a strategy of denouncing such power relations. For many modern feminists in everyday life, simply identifying a practice as patriarchal is enough to critique it, but it is important not to forget that this obvious link between patriarchy and (unjust) oppression is a relatively recent theoretical insight.

Before feminist usage, patriarchy as a concept was mostly used to describe authority of a father over the household and its members. Dialeti argues that such pre-feminist usage first 'focused on hierarchical relations among men in legal, political, and economic terms, whereas male authority over women holds a second place,' until feminist scholarship brought the structural domination of women in such systems to the forefront.[10] One reason for this may be that many authors considered the relationship between men and women of their time as a given, a natural state of being that was in a sense ahistorical and did not have the potential to change (which is crucially the thing that many

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[10] Androniki Dialeti, "From Women's Oppression to Male Anxiety," in *Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, by Marianna Muravyeva and Raisa Maria Toivo (Routledge, 2013), 20.

feminists object to). When Max Weber described patriarchy, he did so in the context of a related concept, patrimonialism. He did see both patriarchy and patrimonialism as forms of related domination, but that was hardly a critique. Rather, Weber saw patrimonialism as the extension of the natural relations within the household to political territories. Patrimonialism was the Weberian ideal type of the traditional form of government that existed until rational-legal bureaucracy with its impersonal rulers replaced it. In patrimonialism, there was a ruler whose political estate was analogous to the rule over his personal estate. Weber was interested in the change from patrimonial to rational-legal government, but not in any change in household relations that had initially shaped patrimonial rule. While patrimonialism could change into rational-legal bureaucracy, Weber did not investigate or discuss possible changes of patriarchy.[11] It was in this sense rather one specific social constellation in the background of narrative of historical institutional change.

Another revealing example of pre-feminist use of the term is Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*, published posthumously in 1680 during the English Exclusion Crisis. Filmer's theory was patrimonial-monarchical as he asserted that kings have a divine right to rule over a kingdom, without the need for the consent of the people. His main argument was derived from scripture, with the strong background assumption that what God had intended to be natural would also be the right social and political situation. Filmer saw all kings as descendants of Adam and argued that Adam had been the first king. Although Filmer's work has to be seen mostly as a political intervention in the 17th century English debate on the role of the sovereign, it it very revealing to look at his way of arguing for his case. His argument was basically historical and genealogical: since Adam had been the first king and fathers rule naturally over their households, monarchy was the natural political situation (and implicitly, patriarchy the natural social situation). To make his case, Filmer argued that patriarchy (and patrimonialism) was instituted at the moment of the creation of humankind. Filmer went through great lengths to present a theological and a classical history in which successful kings had been descendants of a patriarchal genealogy and in which other forms of government brought disorder, to defend a worldview in which the world was composed of families over which fathers ruled. Natural liberty and subjection were not exclusive, but in fact subjection to a father-king was

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[11] Julia Adams, "The Rule of the Father: Patriarchy and Patrimonialism in Early Modern Europe" (Russell Sage Foundation, 2004), 2–4.

necessary for liberty in Filmer's eyes: 'I see not then how the children of Adam, or of any man else, can be free from subjection to their parents.'[12]

Interestingly enough, Filmer's critics attacked him on his use of scripture and his conclusion that patriarchal power extended to matters of state. What they did not, however, was raise objections to the idea that subjection to one's parents was natural and divine, but merely to the extension of that point to the realm of politics. One such a critic was Baron John Somers, who tried to refute Filmer's historical account by giving examples of non-genealogical monarchical succession in English history. In a pamphlet that also reached the Dutch Republic and was translated into Dutch, he argues that '*patriarchs recht*' was an 'imagined' novelty, invented in the 17th century. Somers does not mention Filmer, but clearly refers to the subtitle of his book, when he wrote:

> Some raise to us a Divine and Patriarchal right, which kings as natural Fathers of their People inherit from Adam. This imagination, although it was first invented in this Last Age, is many times remarked in their Discourses and books, and has since some little time gained a great support, as novelties commonly do.[13]

Somers continues by claiming that no reigning monarch would be able to claim direct lineage to Adam, thus that the doctrine of patriarchal right would actually 'make the thrones of all Princes in the World shake.'[14] Somers would have a harder time objecting to Filmer's argument if kings would somehow be able to claim Adam as direct ancestor. What he objected to was the claim that all early modern kings and Adam were rightly family, because then there would be one king who could claim sovereignty over the whole world. He objected to the extension of patriarchy to the political realm, without so much challenging the rule of the father in the household itself. Somers tried to show that government was a process of negotiation without continuity of monarchical lineage, while Filmer would argue that Adam would always have an heir and that being an heir to Adam is evident in ruling over a people.

The question is if Filmer would himself have believed that government had always been the same from the moment of the creation of mankind up to his own 17th century. Rather, his argument in practice meant that anyone who ruled did so rightly and was naturally and divinely meant to rule.

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[12] Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha: Or, The Natural Power of Kings* (London: Printed for R. Chiswell, 1680).

[13] John Somers, *Een Korte Historie van de Successie, Ofte Erffenis Tot de Croon.* (London, 1681)*,* 23. English translation provided by me.

[14] Ibid., 23.

Once one ruled over others, subjecting others meant fulfilling your natural and divine right inherited from Adam. Filmer's argument is not remarkable for its theoretical strength for current-day political observers, but may have resounded strongly in early modern patronage networks. Its circular reasoning was no problem for those wanting to defend the status quo, but gave a fictive reason for *a priori* accepting the ruling power that many surrendered themselves to.

Let us now call this 'patriarchy' that focuses on the rule of the father over the family 'traditional patriarchy.' To clear up an ambiguity: I mean it here most importantly as a concept that is used to designate a form of 'traditional authority, ' rather than 'traditional' referring to the fact that this formulation of patriarchy preceded the traditional feminist concept of 'patriarchy.' Of course, in both cases, that 'tradition' or perhaps notion of originality caries no strength in itself. The historical narrative of 'patriarchy' in the Weberian definition is one in which it figures as some form of original societal arrangement that was later replaced by an invented structure. Julia Adams pointed out that Weber's use of the concept 'patriarchy' is still useful if we amend his understanding to include the fact that Weberian traditional rule was also constructed and subject to a form of 'invention of tradition.'[15] This move makes it clear that historical cases in which patriarchal relations were presented as natural or inevitable can be seen as a political effort whose implications extend beyond the household, but which were not theorized as the structural constrains on women's freedom that later structuralist analysis of 'patriarchy' were keen to point out. And of course, both Filmer and Weber were not out to critique the system, but rather saw it as a natural state. This fits the process described by Gerda Lerner who has argued that between 3100 and 600 BC, a gradual construction of patriarchy had created a situation in which 'the subordination of women comes to be seen as "natural",' hence it becomes invisible.'[16]

We shall see in the next section that theorists of later conceptions of 'patriarchy' tried to move beyond the patriarchalism of the family. By doing so, they open up the possibility of patriarchy as not a specific characteristic of premodern societies or as a form of original state of nature, but as a more constant aspect in historical development. The move then made was identifying the different structures of 'patriarchy' and family structure became only a subpart of the whole.

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[15] Interestingly enough, it seems that Baron Somers was able to make such a theoretical move in 1680 by calling the 'patriarch's right' invented.
[16] Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 7–11.

In this sense, Filmer can be said to have provided a version of 'patriarchy' that was better historically situated and had room for diachronic change. His 'patriarchy' as original natural state has a historical model of new generations always inheriting the original authority, generating a genealogy of political power that can be traced all the way back to Adam. His account can then be said to be a (by now of course discredited) speculative philosophy of history in the sense that the interminable inheriting of authority in the family connects the past, present and future and as such creates the 'past-present-future complex'. His account of course fails in the eyes of current (and also some of his contemporary) observers that do not accept the sovereignty of Adam as natural, but there is something to be found in his account of history as being constituted by the power struggle around the constant reproduction in and of the family.

1.2 PATRIARCHY IN FEMINISM: STRUCTURES OF PATRIARCHY

Besides traditional patriarchy that focuses on household authority in the family, there is the patriarchy as analytical tool of feminism that is used to describe a complete system of male dominance and female subordination that goes beyond the domestic sphere, but manifests itself in all parts of social life. In its most simple form, it could be seen as the dialectics of male domination in which men as group exploit women as a group. In many cases, patriarchy as a complete system is also used to describe a system in which men have a certain power over women with whom they do not have a family relationship. This patriarchy as structural male domination still has a close relation to traditional patriarchy of family authority, but they also differ and run different courses. Lerner defines it as: 'the manifestation of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general.'[17]

Radical feminist scholarship has used patriarchy as an analytical tool to look at the past since the 1970s, but this declined after the late 1980s, as post-structuralism was favoured over the idea of patriarchy as an all-encompassing structure. Dialeti writes:

Since the late 1980s, the use of the term 'patriarchy' has gradually begun to wane, as universal meanings and master narratives have been questioned, and a new interest in representation,

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[17] Ibid, 239.

identity construction, individual experience, and multiple subjectivities has emerged. The domination of gender as a fundamental analytical category in feminist post-structuralist theory in the 1990s and the parallel focus on the cultural construction of femininity and masculinity also challenged the idea of a common identity, experience, conscience and action among women (and among men) and transformed the terms of the debate.[18]

In many cases, critiques have focused on the limits of structural patriarchy, most famously intersectionality approaches that stress the need to consider categories of gender, class and race in their unique intersections of oppression (or empowerment). This idea that various form of power and oppression cross-cut, pioneered by Crenshaw, goes strongly beyond a narrative of men dominating women as it is mindful of how structures surrounding race, class and gender amplify each other and create unique positions.[19] The position of someone in the early modern Dutch Republic would for example be best understood at the intersection of their social capital/class and them being a man or a woman. The difference between an upper class lady on the Herengracht and a farmer's wife in Zeeland would probably be better understood through social and economic capital than through some appeal to a 'shared womanhood,' but looking only at their social status would not capture their experience as women of a specific social status. For a theory of patriarchy, this complicates any simple model of men oppressing women.

This may explain the process that Dialeti described in which the term patriarchy is no longer used. Another example of dealing with the need for specificity without giving up analysis through structures can be found in Iris Marion Young suggestion to look at gender as a seriality. Rather than constituting one's identity and creating stable group identity's for individuals (e.g. womanhood or brotherhoods of men), she suggests that 'membership in the group called "women" is the product of a loose configuration of different structural factors.'[20] This way, she moves beyond using gender as a concept for (individual) self-identification towards gender as a way of understanding (collective) societal structures. 'On this account, what it means to say that individual persons are "gendered" is

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[18] Dialeti, "From Women's Oppression to Male Anxiety," 21.
[19] Kimberle Williams Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. (Women of Color at the Center: Selections from the Third National Conference on Women of Color and the Law)," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241, doi:10.2307/1229039.
[20] Iris Marion Young, "Lived Body vs Gender: Reflections on Social Structure and Subjectivity," *Ratio* 15, no. 4 (December 1, 2002): 421, doi:10.1111/1467-9329.00200.

that we all *find ourselves* passively grouped according to these structural relations, in ways too impersonal to ground identity.'[21]

The above shows that it will be hard or unsatisfactory to maintain that patriarchy is a solid structure that unites all men against women in two unified categories. Still, the idea of a hierarchy of gender as a recurring (although varying) theme in all human cultures may perhaps be seen as its poststructuralist reincarnation. Often, theorists moved away from the use of 'patriarchy' and employed other concepts such as 'gender inequality,' although there was a notable exception: Silvia Walby in her *Theorizing Patriarchy* (characterized by Dialeti as the 1990 'swan song of the radical notion of patriarchy'[22]) explicitly argues in favour of a complex structural understanding of patriarchy that can withstand charges of ahistoricity and is sensitive for variations through time and space.[23] In this realist framework, patriarchy consists of six partially-interdependent structures, of which fertility and reproduction (of ideas and labour power) are not an explicit part, but seen as effects of other structures. In this way, Walby moves away from traditional patriarchy, partly because she finds that 'the term "reproduction" is often used to cover several different concepts and they can be misleadingly conflated. In particular, the social process of the creation of the next generation of human beings is often conflated with the social re-creation of the social system and/or with the biological processes of fertility.'[24]

Walby proposes her six structures as an improvement of Foord and Gregson's preceding realist framework for understanding patriarchy that identified four structures: biological reproduction, heterosexuality, marriage, and the nuclear family.[25] These structures look more like a structural account of traditional patriarchy, and this seems to be what Foord and Gregson have in mind as they write: 'we would go as far as suggesting that this list includes only *two* forms of relations which have been shown to involve universally necessary relation between the genders. These are biological reproduction and heterosexuality.'[26] Marriage and the nuclear family are then seen as historically and spatially specific occurring instances of biological reproduction and heterosexuality. Although not exactly the same, this account of patriarchy is closer to the idea of fatherly authority,

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21 Ibid., 422.
22 Dialeti, "From Women's Oppression to Male Anxiety," 22.
23 Sylvia Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy* (Oxford, UK; Cambridge, MA, USA: B. Blackwell, 1990).
24 Sylvia Walby, "Theorising Patriarchy," *Sociology* 23, no. 2 (1989): 222.
25 Jo Foord and Nicky Gregson, "Patriarchy: Towards a Reconceptualisation," *Antipode* 18, no. 2 (September 1, 1986): 186–211.
26 Ibid., 202.

or at least fatherly authority can easily be seen as social institution related to biological reproduction and heterosexuality. In contrast, Walby's structures are (almost) decoupled from family relations. They are: the patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal relations in the state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality, and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions, such as religion, the media and education.

Both conceptualizations of patriarchy aim to go beyond traditional patriarchy in the sense that they use patriarchy to describe a complete system of male dominance and female subordination. Walby explicitly wants to leave issues of biological reproduction out of it, as non-reproducing males can also still be part of the system of oppression (think of celibate priests) and it could be covered by the other structures, while Foord and Gregson see it as a crucial starting point (they would probably argue that the priest is still concerned with biological reproduction and heterosexuality). Walby's rejection of biological reproduction is typical for a turn towards seeing gender as constituted in discourse, but it seems to me to may have been a reason for it becoming the swan song of patriarchy rather than a phoenix' song signaling patriarchy's rebirth. Because of the appeal to a distinction between sex (biologically constituted) and gender (culturally constituted) - as Walby locates 'patriarchy' in a mostly socially constituted realm – the materiality of physical bodies moves to the background exactly at a point in time when feminist theory started explicitly inquiring into bodies and embodiment.[27] The most striking difference between these two conceptualizations seems to be that Walby is more concerned with institutions that are not directly related to lineage and kinship, while the structures theorized by Foord and Gregson are focused strongly on the family.

1.3 A CLASH OF THE TWO 'PATRIARCHIES'

The type of 'patriarchy' in which men's dominance is institutionalized is different than the type of 'patriarchy' that focuses on the father's rule over a kinship family. These can clash when it is unclear which definition of 'patriarchy' one uses. Consider Martha Howell's *Women, Production and Patriarchy in Late Medieval Cities*. Howell argues that the urban family in late medieval Northern Europe was 'the most important center of economic production,' and that this gave women more

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[27] I will discuss the 'lived body' in chapter 3.

opportunities in the late middle ages, although only for a brief time.[28] She argues that late medieval women were able to access jobs with 'high labor status' through the family production unit as they enjoyed the status of their husbands and families. Looking at late medieval Leiden's textile industry (among others), Howell shows that this access to high labor status jobs during the 15th century and steadily declined throughout Europe. Howell noted that corporative urban institutions such as guilds and trades (*ambachten)*, launched efforts to reduce women's access to high status jobs, by setting regulations that made it impossible to combine family life and work, marking the beginning of a stronger differentiation between the workshop and private family life.

The interesting issue is that the patriarchal order that Howell describes was actually an 'artificial family' exercising its power over actual (kinship) family life. It was decisively not a form of traditional patriarchy in which a father rules over his sons and daughters, but rather a form of structural male domination in which (young) men felt their economic power threatened and organized institutional support to limit the opportunities of women who had wielded power because of their roles within families as productive units. The simple fact that artificial families from which women were dramatically more strongly excluded than from real families started exercising power again shows that the 'rule of the father of a family' model of patriarchy should be treated as something different than structural male domination of women. To complicate things even further, Howell's case shows that male domination of women was in fact closely related to family structures, but just not unequivocally to the rule of the father. There seems more continuity in the ideal of the household as analytical unit or point of reference for the early modern mind, than in the father as its head.

Male domination or systems in which manhood is valued more than womanhood may sometimes even be anti-patriarchal in the traditional sense. For example, the idea that women were to govern the domestic sphere flies in the face of a strong fatherly family head that rules over his family, while it is simultaneously an idea grounded in a strong gendered social role distribution. A well-known example consists out of the comments made by the English diplomat Sir William Temple on women in the Dutch Republic. Temple wrote how he spat on the floor at Amsterdam mayor Hooft's house and that Hooft remarked that his wife would surely have sent him out of the

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[28] Martha C. Howell, *Women, Production, and Patriarchy in Late Medieval Cities*, Women in Culture and Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 9.

door for that if she had been home, whether he was an ambassador or not. Temple then further writes on the governance of women at home:

> In the customs of his town [Amsterdam]; where that of the wife's governing was, I heard, a thing established. [Mayor Hooft] replied, 'Twas true, and that all a man could hope for there, was to have *une douce patronne* (an easy governess) and that his wife was so. (…) It had long been the custom; and whoever offered to break it would have banded against him, not only all the women of the town, but all those men too that were governed by their wives, which would make too great a party to be opposed.[29]

Although the question whether or not this description was meant as a serious reflection of gendered relations is very relevant, the main point for now is that the idea of the wife as governess over the domestic sphere is not unequivocally patriarchal. It is patriarchal from the viewpoint of structural patriarchy since it devalues female agency outside of the home, but it is not necessarily patriarchal in terms of traditional patriarchy as it assigns women some part of the traditional patriarch's authority. An arising 'domestic ideology' or the idea of 'separate spheres' for men and women in the 18th century gave bourgeois and higher class women stronger authority over servants. The early modern household itself also resembled an 'artificial family' as often, many people living under one roof did not share kinship. Again, the household as unit of reference is prioritized over the father as ultimate authority.

With the introduction of the home into the debate on patriarchy, an issue of spatial organization presents itself to our attention. Walby proposes that we can distinguish two forms of patriarchy, public and private patriarchy.[30] She argues:

> Private patriarchy is based upon the relative exclusion of women from arenas of social life apart from the household, with a patriarch appropriating women's services individually and directly in the apparently private sphere of the home. Public patriarchy does not exclude women from

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[29] William Temple, *The Works of Sir William Temple, Bar*, vol. 2 (London, 1757), 459. It has to be noted that the story was introduced with the remark that Temple enjoyed Mayor Hooft's humour. The theme of men being dominated by women was a recurring theme that can also be seen as a misogynistic trope that served to remind men and women of their position.

[30] Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy*, 173–174.

certain sites, but rather subordinates women in all of them. In this form, the appropriation of women takes place more collectively than individually.[31]

Walby shows how the two versions of patriarchy sometimes conflict: in private patriarchy, women's labor participation would be limited or spatially confined to the home, while under public patriarchy women are encouraged to work (but segregated from men and receiving low(er) wages). Thus, Walby identifies different social sites of exploitation: 'The forms of control are significantly less from a personal patriarch (the husband or father) and increasingly from a collective of public patriarchy.'

The private versus public divide is somewhat useful to show how changes in patriarchy may still lead to a consistency of oppression, but it is not very rigid or closely spatially defined. Walby mostly uses it to explain differences in the forms of patriarchy in modern British history: she argues that as first wave feminism opened up private patriarchy and new rights and access to the public sphere for women were gained, that same public sphere became more strongly patriarchal. The argument seems analogous to my differentiation between traditional patriarchy and structural patriarchy, but rather sees the two forms as alternating each other during the course of history. Its theoretical innovation is that it provides an argument that the 20th century emancipation of women changed gender relations decisively, but that this does not mean that patriarchy was gone. Rather, it changed form.

However, if we consider Howell's work or the other historical examples, the idea that only during modern times women gained access to a public sphere and were then collectively exploited does not hold. Fraternal institutions complicate a narrative that goes 'from public to private' beyond usefulness. Rather, the public/private distinction confuses more than that it clears up and confuses different types of 'patriarchy'. So instead of systematically looking at practices of 'patriarchy' and characterizing them either public or private, it makes more sense to consider the main transition as one of a 'patriarchy' clearly embodied by the head of a family towards a system in which male dominance is institutionalized in society in general, without a clear actor that acts as 'the patriarch'. What Walby then describes, is a historical narrative of the disembodiment of the patriarch as wielder of patriarchal power, a power that nonetheless persisted and was collectively wielded. The question is then not what the structure of 'patriarchy' is, but what patriarchal power is.

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[31] Walby, "Theorising Patriarchy," 228.

Such a view of patriarchal power and patriarchal structure are not necessarily mutually exclusive of course. Judith Bennett introduced 'the patriarchal equilibrium', the idea that there is considerable patriarchal continuity in the face of other changes. She is critical of "an overall assessment—women's status getting better or getting worse—instead of considering the possibility that, despite change, shift, and movement, the overall force of patriarchal power might have endured."[32] Key to the equilibrium is the idea that where women gained powers, patriarchal ideology sought to counter those, such as in Walby's example where women gained more access to work, only to encounter forms of public patriarchy such as a strongly gendered division of work or workplace sexism. This model allows for a theory of patriarchy that consists out of dynamic parts but still results in the nearly-universal outcome of societies that favor men and characteristics considered to be 'male', without actually resorting to a theory that (deterministically) declares patriarchy universal.

However, one issue with the above view of patriarchy as continuous-although-changing is of course that we may end up characterizing very different things under the header 'patriarchy'. The danger is then that it becomes a catch-all concept with no real meaning other than that (sexual) difference will always produce differences between people that can be seen as structural oppressions when those people are compared as serialities. Because 'we are continuously making something of what the world continuously makes of us: our subjectivity is always a becoming that neither precedes nor follows from the encounter with the Other,'[33] the continuous-although-changing conception of 'patriarchy' can feast upon an undying reservoir of human difference and proclaim the responses to it 'patriarchy'. But the fact of human difference and the existence of an Other is – I believe – not 'patriarchy', although of course it is a crucial precondition for its emergence. Still, 'patriarchy' needs more than simply the difference between people. To understand patriarchal power then, we should do more than assume its pre-existence but find out where and why it emerges, how one 'becomes' a 'patriarch'.

The use of this chapter was to introduce the two main strands of theories of 'patriarchy'. We have seen that the two models (of fatherly control in the family and structural male dominance) are not just two ways of thinking about patriarchy but in themselves also resemble a chronology of how

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[32] Judith M Bennett, *History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 63.

[33] Toril Moi, *What Is a Woman? And Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 117.

not just 'patriarchy' (the concept) but also patriarchy (the social constellation) moved through time. What is interesting is that 'the patriarch' moved out of view in later interpretations of patriarchy, so that theories could include more and different types of inequality and oppression. 'The patriarch' became something of the past, both in the sense that theory was no longer concerned with him as in the sense that he was seen as a historical figure. As the succeeding generation of poststructuralist feminist theorists turned closer to practices and bodies, patriarchy had just been reconceptualised as a structure without a body, as an equilibrium or as a subset of structures, as (nearly) perpetual oppression. It was strongest as critique that showed that despite some ease of strict sexual norms, oppression of women had not ceased to exist, but as abstracted structure remained more or less the same.

I hope the reader is not by now confused by the conceptual jungle that 'patriarchy' resembles. This thesis is of course my attempt to bring some clarity in that jungle in which patriarchy was overgrown and ceased to be a useful concept over the last decades. I think the above has sufficiently proven this and I will not tire the reader with more divergent and clashing ways of conceptualizing patriarchy other than my own. In its shifting use from fatherly authority in the family to structural male dominance, it gained more political practicability and could serve as a many-headed hydra that the feminist political project could employ to rally against, in the face of diverging political interests, allies and enemies. In that sense, Gayle Rubin prophetically rejected it her essay *The Traffic in Women* in favour of what she called 'the sex/gender system.' That sex/gender system was at the start of what later became a separation of cultural gender and biological sex that was meant as a description of sexual subjectivity and materiality, even though for Rubin the sex/gender system was an oppressive structure to oppose. 'Patriarchy' lost the battle for being the grand concept that was used to describe those oppressive structures, but also the new conceptual framework for resembling those oppressive structures ended up being reconceptualised as something entirely different.

The above is why I suggest that patriarchy still has a place as a useful concept, but that it should no longer be used to designate universal male dominance or the oppression of females.[34] Instead, by getting rid of the desire for it to be applied universally, it gains the possibility of having a history. In that sense, the definition of 'patriarchy' as fatherly authority is preferable as it is strongly historically

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[34] This is not to push the view that it cannot or does not exist, 'patriarchy' would just not be the suitable concept to treat it.

situated. Do not mistake this to a turn to a 'true origin' or a preference for an 'authentic' use. Rather, I am interested in what was lost when the turn from fatherly authority to structural male dominance was made. If there is still any use for a theory of 'patriarchy', we will find it in a more specific situatedness and in an understanding of what patriarchal power actually entails. In the next chapter, I intend to show that the invention of gender (as opposed to biological sex) can best be seen as putting a Band-Aid on the deep wound inflicted by patriarchal power when it deemed women's oppression natural and grounded in historical facts. Patriarchal power, I will argue, attaches itself to biological and physical processes and tries to make its authority appear natural and inevitable. By writing the body out of theories of 'patriarchy,' theories of 'structural patriarchy' have left room for theories that employ a sex/gender distinction that (perhaps tacitly or unknowingly) still accept a biological ground of sex as separated from cultural gender, while disputing the power of pure biology's over social relations. Thus, to further our understanding of 'patriarchy,' it is necessary to turn to the body. I will explore Toril Moi's existentialist concept of the 'lived body' that is understood as being a situation, because I believe it is a better solution than a disputed sex/gender distinction. It also allows us to conceptualize a universal category of *geslacht* as socio-sexual status that patriarchal power tries to appropriate.

2. PATRIARCHY AND *GESLACHT*

2.1 THE SEX/GENDER DISTINCTION AND THE LIVED BODY

Sex and gender are commonly understood to be two separate but connected entities. Toril Moi explains: 'Since the 1960s English-speaking feminists have routinely distinguished between sex as a biological and gender as a social or cultural category. The sex/gender distinction provides the basic framework for a great deal of feminist theory, and it has become widely accepted in society at large.'[35] In the introduction, I mentioned what I called the realist theory of patriarchy which presupposes that there is a universal and biological patriarchy existing ontologically independent from our conceptions of it. Yuval Harari then seemed to suggest that the patriarchal system has a biological rather than a cultural foundation, following this commonly understood distinction between sex and gender. Patriarchy for him then, is grounded in sex rather than in gender. Against potentially rapidly changing cultural conventions around femininity and masculinity, there is humankind's patriarchal nature that functions as a sort of societal default.

One may see Harari's account of patriarchy as essentialist because it seems to provide a biological determinism that leads to patriarchal societies, but this would be mistaken, since Harari sees cultural reasons for the drastic changes of gender relations over the last century. Rather, it is an account of humans liberating themselves from their biology. In the same vein, the general turn to accepting a sex/gender division should also be understood as a way to avoid biological determinism: because gender is now seen as socially constructed, it did not have to be dictated by one's sex and gender difference could no longer be used to justify social difference. In many theories as well as in general public understanding, sex became the biological bedrock on which a more flexible gender was built (the connection between the two was of course subject of controversial debates). In general, we have moved away from finding ethical and normative models grounded in biological facts. But that does not mean that there is no biological influence on social relations. Harari can find no reason for patriarchy in culture and finds it all over the world in different cultures, so he concludes that there must be a biological reason for patriarchy. He is then in a position to see patriarchy as a necessary outcome of our biology, although we can still morally condemn it and try

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[35] Moi, *What Is a Woman?*, 3.

to move beyond it. Although he does not say so explicitly, this suggests that we can mitigate the effects of patriarchy through changing our concepts and institutions, but to get rid of the thing we want to mitigate, we would need radical changes in our biological makeup to emancipate ourselves from patriarchy. But, what exactly those biological factors of patriarchy are, Harari cannot tell us. He presents it to us as a mystery.

One reason why Harari cannot tell us what the biological 'base' of patriarchy is, is that the opposition between nature and culture that he wields is committed to a false dilemma. Consider one of the 'biological reasons' he discusses (but ends up disputing):

> Another theory explains that masculine dominance results not from strength but from aggression. Millions of years of evolution have made men far more violent than women. Women can match men as far as hatred, greed and abuse are concerned, but when push comes to shove, the theory goes, men are more willing to engage in raw physical violence. This is why throughout history warfare has been a masculine prerogative. In times of war, men's control of the armed forces has made them the masters of civilian society, too. They then used their control of civilian society to fight more and more wars, and the greater the number of wars, the greater men's control of society. This feedback loop explains both the ubiquity of war and the ubiquity of patriarchy.[36]

In the above, 'biological' and 'cultural' reasons cannot be untangled. How can we speak of a biological reason of male control over civilian society? And does 'millions of years of evolution' comprise a cultural or a biological factor, considering social, biological and cultural aspects have influence on that evolution? How and why would we want to disentangle those aspects? When you press the biological factors, cultural and social factors come in, and the other way around.

Still, this goes against our common sense: a hormone is clearly a biological factor and a burial ritual clearly a cultural factor. This seems to me because the distinction between culture and biology can conceptually be made sense of only by looking at a snapshot of societal relations frozen in time. The distinction between nature and culture then exists synchronically, but as soon as the process starts moving in time, it blurs. The distinction between nature and culture is then perhaps sometimes descriptively useful, but becomes a false distinction when employed to investigate change over time.

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[36] Harari, *Sapiens*, 173–174.

What does this mean for the gender/sex distinction? To avoid biological essentialism (among others), poststructuralists are critical of the gender/sex distinction itself. In most accounts of sex, it remains an immutable and ahistorical entity that is separated from actual meaning-giving experiences. Also, the process in which sex is categorized, measured and 'found' is put under scrutiny. Butler asks herself if sex has not been gender all along, and in this way, can also be seen as being performed in the same way that she understands gender. Moi, however, employs a forceful critique of the poststructuralist's (mostly represented by Butler and Harraway) ambiguity towards the gender/sex distinction and wonders why they critique the distinction at the same time as reiterating it. Moi finds that in the work of many poststructuralists the gender/sex distinction is subject to a strong critique, but never abandoned entirely. A difficult relation to materiality of bodies is the result. For example, Butler's treatment of the body in *Gender Trouble,* where it was seen as just as constructed as gender, led her to revisit the issue in *Bodies That Matter* and ask: 'Are bodies purely discursive?' Her answer is that materiality cannot be considered ontologically distinct from language. 'Hence, it is not that one cannot get outside of language in order to grasp materiality in and of itself; rather, every effort to refer to materiality takes place through a signifying process which, in its phenomenality, is always already material. In this sense, then, language and materiality are not opposed, for language both is and refers to that which is material, and what is material never fully escapes from the process by which it is signified.' [37] Moi argues, on the other hand, that this approach confuses types of materiality in a way that when used – 'without further specification' – renders it useless for feminist politics. She argues that 'Butler's intense labours to show that sex is as discursively constructed as gender are symptomatic of the common poststructuralist belief that if something is not discursively constructed, then it must be natural. (…) [N]ature is taken to be immutable, unchanging, fixed, stable, and somehow 'essentialist'.' [38] Moi argues that recognising biological factors is not essentialist as soon as you agree that biology does not have to ground social norms.

Instead, Moi suggests getting rid of the gender/sex division in the context of understanding the subjectivity of being a woman or a man. For her, it makes much more sense to turn to Simone de Beauvoir's understanding of the lived body as a situation. Existential phenomenology already had the means of theorizing sexual subjectivity in a way that biological reductionism or gender

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[37] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 67-68.
[38] Moi, *What Is a Woman?,* 51.

essentialism could be avoided that preceded the poststructuralists' critique of the gender/sex division. It turned out then, Moi's argument goes, that the gender/sex division is unnecessary. As Merleau-Ponty and Beauvoir show, the relationship between body and subjectivity is contingent.[39] What remains is a lived body with a sex that does much of the work that 'gender' does, but still takes seriously the physical and material aspects of the body as part of situated experience. It is a turn to interwoven historical situations in which biological necessities and social structures are accommodating each other.

What does this mean for the theory of patriarchy posed by Harari? Firstly, the idea of the lived body further exposes the false nature/culture dichotomy that I have already criticized. Secondly, it shows how the type of structural patriarchy (opposed to the pre-feminist use of 'patriarchy') that we have seen in the previous chapter and that is described by Harari describes a ubiquitous *outcome* of male domination, but it is not the lived experience of that domination. De Beauvoir (and Moi through her) distinguishes between 'detrimental social norms ('myths') incarnated in other people and in institutions, and the individual human being's lived experience.'[40] A social constellation that we may call 'patriarchy' then, does not start at its outcome. Harari is right however, that we should look at biological factors, but is wrong when turning to a root cause that forms both cause and outcome, rather than looking for a process of the social and biological that attach themselves to each other beyond disentanglement. Patriarchy in his description becomes some kind of all-encompassing biological construct, that we can still mysteriously not pinpoint. Instead, an analysis of lived bodies that are a situation can turn to concepts such as biological factors and cultural factors, but there is no reason to see them as excluding each other. Harari's way of employing patriarchy perhaps works as a (shallow) description, but cannot serve as a real philosophy of history of the sexes.

Although Moi's analysis of the lived body gives us a way of dealing with the body without falling into a sex/gender or nature/culture dichotomy, it is in itself only a conceptual framework for understanding subjectivity and experience, not a method to accessing the situations that it describes. Although it carries within itself a forceful critique of many of the conceptual approaches towards the body and situational experience and shows us a fundamental ambiguity of the historical body as a situation that allowed me to argue that 'patriarchy' *is not* a biological part of the historical lived body,

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[39] Ibid, 114.
[40] Ibid, 110.

we should find a way to tackle the synthesis of conceptual arrangements that the living body then is and how a category that we would call 'patriarchy' relates itself to it.

Christophe Bouton has suggested that the philosophy (or theory) of history should reflect on the categories employed to think about historical experience and suggests that we can distinguish three types of concepts (which he finds in the work of Reinhart Koselleck): singular concepts, general categories and universal categories.[41] Singular concepts refer to a 'single series of events over a single given period, of which it is a synthetic representation.'[42] (think: Reformation, Cold War, Batavian Revolution). Then, general categories can be applied across time and used for different events (think: 'nation', 'progress,' 'freedom'). Bouton suggests that more empirical entities that fashion historical experience can be included as well. He gives memorial sites as an example, but another great example would be the 'house,' existing both as concrete empirical structure and as symbol and idea that can be applied to almost all historical societies.[43] Then finally, universal categories form the condition for historical experience itself. In Koselleck's work, the concepts of 'space of experience' and 'horizon of expectation' perform this function. It would not be too much of a theoretical clash to see in this employment of 'experience' and 'expectation' a similar role taken up by 'situation' in Moi's lived body. Koselleck also sought to supplement Heidegger's existential analytic and proposed as basic anthropological structure of any possible history: 'Five oppositions: "capacity to die and capacity to kill," "friend and foe," "inside and outside," "generativity" (*Generativität*) (old generations and new generations), "master and servant."[44]

Some would be doubtful if we can ever comprehend the historical lived body, - that is to say, the body as it has lived and experienced the world - but we can surely submit the conceptual framework that we use to attempt to comprehend it to the type of analysis that Bouton suggests. Much of the tension that arises around 'patriarchy' precedes the actual analysis of the concept, but already appears when it is used interchangeably within all three categories that Bouton describes: we find 'patriarchy' as a specific episode in history when men seized power over women, 'patriarchy' as general term for a society in which males dominate and 'patriarchy' as a universal inescapable aspect of human life. I believe that especially the third use of patriarchy, as a universal and thus

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[41] Christophe Bouton, "The Critical Theory of History: Rethinking the Philosophy of History in the Light of Koselleck's Work," *History and Theory* 55, no. 2 (2016): 163–184.
[42] Ibid, 176.
[43] Ibid, 177.
[44] Ibid, 178.

metahistorical condition of human life, is the least useful use of 'patriarchy' that obscures proper analysis of universal categories that are actually at play. 'Patriarchy' then, serves no transcendental function in the sense that it enables historical experience or is a prerequisite of human life. Yet, patriarchy conceptualized as a general category can still be a 'metanarrative' that can be part of a speculative philosophy of history without being 'metahistorical' in the sense that it is universal and rooted in the nature of every human being.

Thus, by turning to Bouton's reading of Koselleck, 'patriarchy' can be retrieved as a useful historical category when employed as general category rather than a universal category. That does not mean that we should stay clear of looking at universal categories at all, but that 'patriarchy' should be positioned outside of those. I believe that Walby was right in turning to universally applicable structures, but was wrong by making 'patriarchy' itself central in that universality and was wrong when she rejected looking at the reproduction of generations as one of the substructures of 'patriarchy'. It is understandable from the feminist perspective of avoiding biological essentialism, whose difficulties I hope my treatment of the sex/gender distinction has demonstrated. Out of the fear of reducing all the world's women to a gear in the machine of reproduction, a broader definition of male oppression was sought so that women were not essentialized.[45] In a way, this broader definition of 'patriarchy' formed an etymological stretching: the 'father' was taken out of the concept when it was expanded to a more general form of male domination. With a certain twist of irony, it could be said that by rejecting reproduction as essentialist towards women, there is a danger of posing an essentialist idea of only women taking part in reproduction, rather than it being a process in which the sexes stand in relation to each other. I cannot see how a debate on universal structures can do without any notion of the reproduction of lived bodies. I believe that we should follow Koselleck in taking some form of 'generativity' (*Generativität*) as a universal category that shapes human experience and in fact, makes history possible.

Here is where I think *geslacht* should be used. *Geslacht* can initially just be used to designate what is now often called 'gender or 'sexual identity,' which is also one of the current uses of *geslacht* in Dutch. Simultaneously, the general use of the word already hints at the production of humans and

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[45] One would be very right in noting that describing 'patriarchy' as something that essentializes women, is not the same as essentializing women. But I think the argument or logic that has led theorists away from biological production was the following: if one focuses only on biological reproduction as the main site of women's oppression, one ignores the other types of oppression that are unrelated to reproduction and ends up prioritizing the biological functions of a woman's body too much to the extent that essentialism looms around the corner.

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lineages. That is why I think it will be an improvement of *Generavität* when *geslacht* is used as a metahistorical category that is presupposed by any historical experience. It does both the work that *Generavität* does by showing that human history can only take place if active agents are born to experience history and the work that gender or the lived body has done for many feminists by showing that engagement with one's sexual being is not a static process but one that is actively performed, (re)produced and has to be understood as a situation. *Geslacht* does both these things while at the same time pointing attention towards the very real process of biological reproduction, without taking it as determining outcomes, but rather by making human existence possible. What *geslacht* also does, and this is something that *Generavität* perhaps points towards but does not entirely clear up, is showing the interrelatedness of sexual relations, kinship relations and the possibility of history. *Geslacht* in itself also signifies that all humans have kinship relations and that in fact they come to exist as we come to exist. I want to stress that this is no biological inevitability: being related and sharing genes is no guarantee for certain social norms or social constellations, but it is not irrelevant either when considering both the biological outcomes and the meanings attached to those for the situated living body.

One might counter that kinship is not universal and that it could theoretically be the case that kinship relations as we know them disappear. Foucault speaks of the possibility of what he calls the *deployment of sexuality* at some point supplanting the *deployment of alliance*, which could be seen as a version of a kinship system. This may well be the case, but it will merely transform the situation of the lived body with a *geslacht*, in the same sense that the process that Foucault describes has already transformed *geslacht* (I will expand on this in the next section), but does not challenge the universal category of *geslacht* itself. My point is that *geslacht* cannot be supplanted by anything else as human existence presupposes *geslacht*. It is inevitable that there is a sexual order within which humankind reproduces and produces itself. That does not mean however, that it is static or unchangeable, as a quick glance at history will of course teach us. Infinite different constellations of *geslacht* are possible, but without *geslacht* itself, there is no future of humankind. Perhaps one day we can produce humans out of machines and/or kinship systems as historically incredibly important are deemed irrelevant, but then that will be the new situation of *geslacht* (with its own form of technological kinship and power relations). However, as it stands now - even if perhaps sometimes politically undesirable - kinship, sexuality and the production of new bodies are strongly connected. *Geslacht* should thus be

understood as a determinative nexus of our bodies, possibilities and subjectivities, but not as a deterministic core that controls us.

Let me expand a little bit more on how *geslacht* and the lived body interact. The lived body of anyone is subject to *geslacht* in the sense that it was once produced through a sexual order and itself carries the possibility to produce new bodies. Of course, not everyone is capable of producing other humans (and people are and have always been creative in preventing new humans from being born), but that process is also crucially part of the sexual order. So *geslacht* is not the actual reproduction, but should rather be understood in the context of our lived bodies' anticipation of generativity. The body-as-situation has to deal with generativity and *geslacht* is the resulting sexual order that is negotiated between bodies-as-situations. Generativity does not exist separately from the body that is itself the result of it, and *geslacht* captures that ever-continuing renegotiation of the sexual order constructed in the anticipation, appropriation and mutating of reproduction. That process over the long term in which new constellations of *geslacht* come into existence, replace each other, form lineages or break down lineages, can be called a history from *geslacht* on *geslacht*. It can potentially be uncovered through genealogy, in both meanings of genealogy as the study of lineages and genealogy as technique for historic philosophy (perhaps a history of *geslacht* on *geslacht* could be understood as a genealogy of genealogy).

2.2 PATRIARCHY AS PARASITICAL TO *GESLACHT*

Now it is time to start formulating my own theory of 'patriarchy' in more detail. The idea of the lived body forces one to look for the aspects, actors, environments and others that constitute the situation of the lived body. Being a patriarch then, is a lived experience. Just as in De Beauvoir's claim that 'One is not born, but rather becomes, woman', it can be said that one is not born a patriarch, but one becomes a patriarch.[46] Here I want to argue that much of the confusion over the biological component of patriarchy arises out of the process of appropriation of the reproductive functions of bodies. A crucial part of becoming a patriarch relies on intervention in the situation of other lived bodies, in (attempting to gain) control over their (re)productive capacities. The common view of the gender/sex distinction has left bodies as static and unchanging, while we have seen

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[46] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier, 2011, 330. The citation in the original French reads 'On ne naît pas femme: on le deviant.' In the first English translation by H. M. Parshley, the citation was 'one is not born, but rather becomes a woman.'

above that the body is an crucial site on which the history, present and future of humankind is shaped. The patriarch as embodied agent then, is the person that appropriates its possibilities.

The lived experience of the patriarch has to be found in the very act of claiming and using 'the right of death and power over life,' as Michel Foucault describes premodern sovereign power.[47] Of course, Foucault means something different with it and introduces it to discuss the profound transformation of the mechanisms of power since the classical age. Yet, the lived experience of pre-modernity that preceded the era of bio-power as Foucault describes it in which the space of existence was invested by political technologies, is worth further investigation. Patriarchal power should be understood as compatible with bio-power as Foucault describes it, but we do not have to be committed to his distinction between premodernity and modernity. However, there are two reasons to explore bio-power and patriarchal power further and make a distinction between the two. The first is to respect bio-power as a specific historical situated process. Absorbing patriarchal power in a broad definition of bio-power would otherwise declare patriarchy a regime of proto-bio-power. This has a relation to a point also explicitly argued by Foucault himself, that bio-power did not replace previous regimes of power over life and death. This means that those regimes of power can be understood independently of the specific amassed bio-power Foucault has in mind and justifies treatment of them as compatible but different processes.

Foucault tells us of the *patrias potestas,* the right of the father of the Roman family to dispose of his children and slaves. He uses it to discuss how the sovereign's power over life and death was asymmetrical: the sovereign father is a (potential) life-taker and only a life-giver in the sense that he refrains from taking life. Compared to modern bio-power, where life became part of explicit calculations and subject to knowledge-power, the sovereign's power over life was only weak. Foucault writes that as Western man discovered what it meant to be a living species in a living world, '[f]or the first time in history, no doubt, biological existence was reflected in political existence; the fact of living was no longer an inaccessible substrate that only emerged from time to time, amid randomness of death and its fatality; part of it passed into knowledge's field of control and power's sphere of influence.'[48] However, I believe that before the emergence of bio-power as Foucault describes it, the fact of living was accessible and appropriated and not just an inaccessible substrate. Patriarchal power in this sense, was parasitical to the power that I have suggested *geslacht*

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[47] Michel Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge. The History of Sexuality: Volume One*, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 133-135.
[48] Ibid, 142.

carries. Of course, it was a much more indirect power over life, especially compared to the later all-pervading power radiating onto and creating bodies. This is the crucial difference between bio-power and patriarchal power.

Foucault considers something along these lines when he writes of the *deployment of alliance*, the more traditional type of kinship relations that was slowly replaced by the *deployment of sexuality* in western societies from the 18th century onwards.[49] The deployment of alliance still lingers on. Although in Foucault's eyes it had to give up its throne to the deployment of sexuality, it never retreated completely. From his description of a society that went from 'a symbolics of blood' to 'an analytics of sexuality' we get a sense that this transformation had no clear-cut moment of alteration. Instead, the deployment of sexuality inserted itself firstly on the deployment of alliance and the family and kinship structures itself were at first important sites of the introduction of sexuality as Foucault understands it. 'Passage from one to another did not come about (…) without overlappings, interactions, and echoes.'[50] Kinship relations in Foucault's account of transformation of sexuality form an important site from which the new relations launched themselves, without entirely supplanting its point of emergence, rather colonizing it by psychologizing and psychiatrizing it. I think we can take this to mean that also for Foucault, modern bio-power and patriarchal power are close-knit but can conceptually be separated.

Because Foucault is interested in the sexual-scientific order that emerges out of, or rather from the base of the family, he treats its enduring form as somewhat of a half-empty shell that will perhaps one day finally be disposed of. The forbidding Sovereign-Father that could take life has been disembodied and its crude power over life through death was disarmed in favour of a decentralized penetrating power that is radiating onto bodies. Because even Foucault states that alliance and kinship still linger on, I believe it can be worthwhile to consider if there is such a thing as *pre-bio-power* 'power over life' and see if there is an embodiment of patriarchy to be found there. If the answer is yes, it must still have a relevance to contemporary society and the half-empty shell may – and perhaps exactly because it appears half-empty – form a determinative force in shaping *geslacht*.

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[49] Ibid, 106.

[50] Ibid, 149. It has to be noted that Foucault means somewhat different things when he uses the concepts 'symbolics of blood' and 'deployment of alliance' on the one hand and 'analytics of sexuality' and 'deployment of sexuality' on the other, but they are closely related and the general point here is that both cannot be pinpointed neatly on a chronology but overlapped considerably, so for the sake of the current argument I ask to be excused for using them more or less interchangeably.

So, where do we see such pre-bio-power? The first historical instance that I am familiar with in which we see men becoming patriarchs, by taking the *geslacht* that all humans have and crafting it into a political-economic apparatus, takes us to Dutch Republic in the 17th and 18th century. Julia Adams has argued that political power in the Dutch Republic was closely tied to family ties to the extent that we can speak of a 'familial state': 'When the reproduction of a ruling elite rests on gendered family principles (including marriage, inheritance, and paternal authority), then familial patterns are also constitutive of societal modes of politico-economic reproduction.'[51] Patriarchal power here goes further than the power to restrict, curb or confine: Adams describes how the regent-patriarchs used their family members as pawns in a political game of reproduction of political structures. Political dynasties were created in which state offices were reserved for family members and access to power flowed through the head of the body that the family was: the patriarch-regent. Adams' argument is that these politics were inherently gendered. What she does not explicitly describe but what is implicitly part of this process is the appropriation of biological reproduction of not just women but also of sons. The situational experience of marriage of the Dutch elite was the results of a complex synthesis of political, economic and biological constraints.

Here, my notion of *geslacht* is properly applicable, as it shows how the explicit and controlled structuring of kinship through systems of inter-marriage intersected with sexual and gender roles. What happened was the crafting of what these regents actually themselves called 'regents' *geslachten'* in its meaning of a genealogical family. What some would now call a gender identity or gender role could not be separated from the *geslacht,* as transgression of sexual norms or practices meant a direct political threat. Such a society in which patriarchal heads of households followed a *symbolics of blood* did not just take life and spilled blood, it also (tried to) create life and control the direction in which that blood flowed. We see a pre-bio-power form of power over life that went beyond the crude power over death, it was an attempt to appropriate *geslacht* itself.

So far, the above form of analysis of patriarchy's role towards *geslacht* functions a lot like Foucault's description of the 'deployment of alliance': '[I]f the deployment of alliance is firmly tied to the economy due to the role it can play in the transmission or circulation of wealth, the deployment of sexuality is linked to the economy through numerous and subtle relays, the main one of which, however, is the body - the body that produces and consumes. In a word, the deployment

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[51] Julia Adams, "The Familial State: Elite Family Practices and State-Making in the Early Modern Netherlands," *Theory and Society* 23, no. 4 (August 1, 1994): 512.

of alliance is attuned to a homeostasis of the social body, which it has the function of maintaining; whence its privileged link with the law; whence too the fact that the important phase for it is "reproduction."[52] Although I have argued that the deployment of alliance did not just have the function of maintaining and reproducing, but also produced its own constellation of situated bodies and their *geslacht*, this does not radically alter the narrative, especially since it is very much open to overlap. What is more interesting to explore further is that in both Foucault's account and in the above example of Dutch elites, the deployment of alliance's more explicit power over life had its influence on the lower classes mostly indirectly. It remained otherwise elite-focussed and later bourgeois-focused. In Foucault's narrative, the 'Christian technology of the flesh' was unlikely to influence the lower orders of society.[53] Although he recognises the role of the deployment of alliance in the sense that ideals and laws surrounding marriage influenced the lower orders' reproductive practices, he is mostly interested in how they initially escaped the deployment of sexuality but later were still subjected to it. His project is of course not that of uncovering the specific constellations of *geslacht* of ordinary people before the notion of 'sex' as fictitious unity appeared, but it is that appearance that he seeks to uncover. Yet, that means that the *geslacht* of the non-elite historical lived bodies still needs further inquiry. In other words, we know about their subjection to the deployment of sexuality but only little of what happened before. It also shows that the power relations distributed through family structures should be understood in a way that differentiates between different social classes and social statuses. It is an extension of Foucault's project of disputing the uniformity of the apparatus of power relations into a social field identified, but not further excavated by him.

Why turn to social status or class? This is important because when understanding patriarchy as parasitical to *geslacht*, we see wholly different sexual orders and logics operating for different social statuses. In the use of *geslacht* as lineage, the lower orders were even denied a *geslacht*. Of course this does not meant that they had no *geslacht* as I propose to understand it, but a different *geslacht* with a different logic. Social status and *geslacht* in the body-as-situation thus become indistinguishable. Uncovering the traces of different *geslachten* existing alongside each other may then further our understanding of sexual order and patriarchal power.

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[52] Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge,* 106-107.
[53] Ibid, 121.

We have seen how a patriarchal deployment of alliance with was not just as ideal, but also as practice very real for the Dutch regent-elite. Yet, it is not clear to what extent this was the case for 'ordinary people'. Furthermore, I take the view that although elites may have had great power both institutionally and discursively (and of course the institutional and discursive were influencing and creating each other) over family structures, it should not be understood as a top-down power relation.

Non-elite family structure was not a crude (or unsuccessful) reproduction of elite family structure, but followed its own logic and reproduction of *geslacht*. Although idealized early modern society was perceived to be a network of families with at the head of those families a patriarch, social reality could not always live up to those ideals. If, as many including Foucault assert, matrimonial relations are central to the regulation of sexual practices until at least the end of the eighteenth century, much recent research into what is called the European Marriage Pattern (EMP) provides us with a challenge. The EMP shows a pattern in which people married at a relatively high age, in which many people never married at all and in which families are mostly nuclear (as opposed to extended).[54] A further addition to this landscape of many small families was that households often contained unrelated servants and apprentices. Marriage should thus not be understood as ubiquitous, but as a socio-economic situation that enabled legitimate reproduction and would ideally form the foundation of the household. Yet simultaneously, a lot of people fell outside of it or were only indirectly influenced by it. But as most people were part of a household in one way or another, the household was shaped by both blood in the sense of actual kinship relations, and by a deployment of alliance that included the 'artificial family.' *Geslacht* for most people then, was very much part of household structure that included a broader coalition of forces than for the regent-elite. The artificial unity of blood that the regents sought so hard to craft into their genealogies were not as much part of the lifeworld of ordinary people. Marriage was a way to funnel the history-and-future-forming possibilities of *geslacht,* (which explains a part of the early modern anxiety towards independent women) but in itself does not produce the patriarchs that parasitically appropriate *geslacht.*

So, where the regent-patriarch is a relatively easily-identified historical actor, the 'patriarch' for ordinary people is more elusive and seems to resemble a disembodied force. We can infer that patriarchal power has no central point from which patriarchs try to control *geslacht*. While regent-

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[54] Sarah G. Carmichael et al., "The European Marriage Pattern and Its Measurement," *The Journal of Economic History* 76, no. 1 (March 2016): 196–204.

patriarchs were sometimes able to 'become' patriarchs by gaining some control over the power of life and death (that is, through the anticipatory recognition of others of this power, rather than through the actual 'wielding' of that power), for ordinary people that same power was much more dispersed, chaotic and clearly 'exercised in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations.'[55]

I can demonstrate the complex web of power relations that radiated onto lived-bodies-as-situations with a case from 1726, recorded because a riot broke out in the town of Zwolle in province of Overijssel in the east of the Dutch Republic. The context was a complex political situation where local city authorities had to accept a new tax regime from the provincial political body. The main political body that local citizens could use to voice opposition had been coerced to accept the new system. When this meant that prices on liquor went up, some turned to subtle means of performed protest such as singing songs and the distribution of contentious poems. After some days, a night watchman tasked with the thankless job of breaking up a crowd of people that assembled was thrown into the water, and the city's elites lost the authority over public space. Somewhere during the three days of the riot, a militiaman shot a young man.[56]

The young man that was shot was member of a linen weavers' helpers guild (*linnenweversknechtengilden*). These can be best understood as a fraternal artificial family institution in which formally young men insured each other against illness, but as this case show in practice also banded together to protect each other's interest. As helpers (*knechten*) they were often part of the households of their masters and were on a low position of the social-economic hierarchy. But by banding together, they exercised considerable power that went far beyond anything recorded in their official guild regulations. In 1726, they went to the house of the man who shot one of the helpers and demanded money from his mother. She, a widow, was approached as the head of the household and held responsible for her son's action as a weapon-wielding militiaman. The widow defended herself by saying that her son had acted on behalf of the city magistrates and that the helpers would have to take it up with them. But they persisted, summoned a surgeon that attested that the victim had actually been shot and that the bullet entered the body of the victim, and finally got a signed piece of paper from the widow in which she promised a weekly payment.[57]

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[55] Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge,* 94.

[56] The whole episode can be found in Historisch Centrum Overijssel, Stadsbestuur Zwolle, archieven van de opeenvolgende stadsbesturen: inventory number 1884, 1726 tweede halfjaar, 107-257.

[57] Historisch Centrum Overijssel, Stadsbestuur Zwolle, archieven van de opeenvolgende stadsbesturen: inventory number 1884, 1726 tweede halfjaar, 107-257

The case, seemingly a rather banal contentious disagreement between people, actually reveals some of the complexity of family relations and *geslacht* in early modern Zwolle. The widow, acting as head of household, was pragmatically forced to 'become a patriarch,' taking responsibility for violence committed by her son and forced to compensate for the loss of productive capacities of a labourer. Considered pragmatically, it makes sense to turn to the person that shot the helper, but there were plenty of alternative persons that could be responsible for the helper other than the head of the perpetrator's household, such as the head of the household of the helper (his master), to the actual political representatives or simply to the guild (which had its very existence based on compensating helpers). The bonds of direct kinship were made more important than any political or institutional structures, but they were made more important by employing institutional structures (in this case a group of angry guild members). The widow's position as mother-patriarch emerged out of its relation to these institutions. One might be tempted to then say matriarch instead, but the crucial part is that a widow's position in early modern Europe could be relatively strong because she inherited the position as head of a household from her deceased husband. She was turned into a patriarch, as patriarchal values were projected and inscribed onto her, channelled through the existence of the household created through her union with her husband, which could still exist while he was already dead. The head-of-household position has to be understood not only as a way of asserting 'power over life and death', but also as power over death itself. The proper household could only be created through a very specific constellation of *geslachten*, a man and a woman fit for marriage, but as soon as it was created, it persisted despite the death of the husband. Household structure was an entity that could resist the death of the actual patriarch. This was an entirely different head-of-household position than that of the regent-patriarch of course, but it was also a position of power over life and death in the sense that an arrangement of *geslacht* was maintained despite death. The widow's position was different from that of a single woman, as she carried the authorities and responsibilities of her deceased husband.[58]

In other instances, we find that the creation of life was poorly controlled. Some men had to be held accountable and were pressured to take up the role of father. In Amsterdam in 1710, a maidservant called Hendrikje Jans was impregnated by Aron Abarbanel, the son of her former employer. Hendrikje returned to that house to say in front of the whole household to Aron 'good evening Daddy' ('*goeden avond Papa*'), forcing Aron to acknowledge that he was the father of her child.

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[58] Ibid.

Witnesses were brought to a notary to attest that this scene took place, which may mean that Aron was trying to get out of the responsibility that the creation of life brought, but also that legal measures were taken to pressure him to take up his role as a father and start a household.[59]

Above are prime example of how biological reproduction, political institutions, economic production and social anticipation all together create the lived body in situation. Taking only one or some of them separately instead of them all as forming the body-as-situation would not do justice to the complexity of these specific assemblages of early modern *geslacht*. We might even further investigate into the situation by looking at its material charactersitics. We have the specific context of the early modern city as stage of this conflict, which in the first place of course set the precondition of the larger conflict in which urban militiamen could shoot at their fellow city-dwellers. Then, the street before the widow's house formed an important site where the household had to represent itself and in this case, defend itself. The façade of the house and the door were not just an important site as actual stage of the conflict, but formed a signifier for the house and the household itself. This is not a chance occurrence: in other instances of the riot we see doors and windows being attacked, windows being taken away as to strip victims of the violence of their honour. The actual physical structure of the house then, formed part of the situation in which *geslacht* took shape. In the same sense, the house where the maidservant pressured Aron to admit his fatherhood is a crucial place that symbolizes a whole household. Also in the case of the regent-patriarchs, we find examples of estates through which *geslacht* (as genealogy) was explicitly presented to the world and where the inheritance of an actual physical building became an important form of handing down power to the next generation.

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[59] Amsterdam City Archive, inventory number 5075, Gerard van Esterwege 8068.

3. *GESLACHT,* SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY AND POLITICS

In this final chapter, I want to consider some of the consequences of the first two chapters. Firstly, I want to consider what a speculative philosophy of history as *geslacht* would look like and compare it to a historical materialist view of patriarchy. Secondly, I want to shortly consider the political consequences of my above theoretical inquiry and make more explicit some views that follow from it.

3.1 A SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY AS *GESLACHT*

I have rejected 'patriarchy' as a *universal* category in favour of seeing it as a *general* category that may apply to many societies, but is not a universal feature of human existence. I then moved away from a view of 'patriarchy' as an abstracted structure of societies towards an analysis of 'patriarchal power' over life and death that may in specific situations cause historical agents to 'become a patriarch' in the same sense that people 'become a woman' or 'become a man'; not as static identities contained in essential biological bodies but as situations, as coming into existence through a relational ontology. A 'patriarchy' then, is a society characterized by strong patriarchal power, although this view makes the question whether a society is patriarchal or not more or less useless. However, as we have seen, it is much more useful to look at practices of patriarchy between different social classes and in different locations, than assessing a whole society and characterizing it as patriarchal or not.

'Patriarchy' as a conceptual tool then makes much more sense when used to look at the household or specific living bodies than on a whole society. Of course, Julia Adams' work has shown that extending the analysis to the state level can be incredibly useful, especially when considering the state's elites' patriarchal practices, but the family and its close connection to *geslacht* remain the crucial starting point here. Because of the ultimate aim of patriarchal power to appropriate *geslacht* and take up control over history and the future through life and death, it has often been confused with *geslacht* itself.

What does this mean for a speculative philosophy of history? Firstly, it means that 'patriarchy' takes no direct part in it, but rather emerges on the scene through its engagement with

geslacht, of which a proper speculative philosophy of history is possible. My argument here is that the concept of *geslacht* as a *universal* feature of human experience helps us include our lived bodies and their physical reproduction into speculative philosophy of history, which 'patriarchy' does not. Any society can only have a history and a future through a pre-existing *geslacht* that has a facticity. This is universal. But the exact constellation of that facticity of *geslacht*, the meanings attached to it and even the biological form it takes is different as part of specific historical situations. History moves through time from *geslacht* to *geslacht* as humankind reproduces itself.

To advance my argument, let me contrast it to the diachronic historical materialist view of patriarchy proposed by Colin Farrelly. He advances the historical materialist argument that productive forces are the real driving force of human history and proposes to see biological reproduction as part of that process. Patriarchy then, is a superstructure required by a specific base of reproductive relations.[60] His account of patriarchy as a superstructure against a base of (re)productive relations is interesting, but the historical narrative he produces with this - in which industrialization is the main point of change – is plagued by a naïve equation of 'preindustrial' with 'feudal' social relations. However, I do not think it is very fruitful to engage in a full critique of Farrelly's historical narrative, since I am mostly interested in his theoretical argument.[61] That is why I will assume that his historical narrative is easily amendable to facilitate more diverse systems of production.

Farrelly introduces the thesis of basic materialism (Humans have basic needs, the fulfilment of which is a precondition for any other form of life). What follows out of this is the human need to labour for survival. In his account, the necessity arising out of lower life expectancy until the 18th century produced sexual division of labour that was stabilized by a patriarchal superstructure, that dictated the proper roles for men and women. Because of this vision, Farrelly ends up with a pro-capitalist feminist Marxism in which economic liberalization and a diversified economy are the right tools for women's emancipation. He states: 'Capitalism is unique in human history, for it is the first social system to place substantive control over a woman's reproductive capacities *in the hands of women themselves*.'[62]

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[60] Colin Farrelly, "Patriarchy and Historical Materialism," *Hypatia* 26, no. 1 (2011): 1–21.
[61] Among other simplifications of economic history, he asserts that women's entry into the labor force coincided with industrialization, ignoring the last decades of scholarship on (early modern) women's labor.
[62] Farrelly, "Patriarchy and Historical Materialism," 14.

There are some similarities between my account of a history from *geslacht* on *geslacht* and Farrelly's historical materialism: both take into account the (re)productive relations and material necessities of lived bodies to sustain themselves. However, Farrelly's account reduces the complexity of the lived body to its productive capacities. He is right in adding to the classic Marxist relations of production the actual production of human bodies, but any production of meaning is reduced to ideology that does nothing but keep the relations of production in place. His account borders on the tautological: the relations of production are necessary for survival and are accepted because a social-cultural-legal superstructure keeps it in place, because this is necessary for its own sustenance. It is not clear why productive forces create a certain culture of patriarchy and why this is a separate superstructure and not part of the relations of production. Are relations of production not a culture of production that come into existence simultaneously? In a view of the lived body as a situation, these two are not conceptually distinguished.

Where Farelly applauds western European developed nations for liberating women through a diversified economy and birth control, a view of the lived body can much more easily show that the situation of many women is indeed one of exceptional freedom compared to historical situations, but that there are still many restrictions that are unequally divided among women of different social, religious and ethnic groups that are not necessarily related to the relations of production. Looking at appropriation of *geslacht* of lived bodies takes together the physical capacity for reproduction and the cultural meaning attached to it, the ideals or norms of femininity and masculinity, that help explain why despite diversified relations of production in developed nations, as soon as a critical mass of women enter a certain economic sector (in many developed countries, this is the case for nursing or teaching), the salaries paid and the prestige associated with the jobs take a sharp drop. Furthermore, a history of *geslacht* of our lived bodies paints a canvas of bodies that produce their own meaning, produce new bodies and are themselves products of *geslacht*, rather than a history of economic relations on which later the actual historical actors that constitute that relations are placed.

3.2 POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF *GESLACHT*

'Gender' as a concept once exposed the anticipatory acceptance of a stable notion of what biological male bodies and biological female bodies were supposed to do. With this I mean not just that it showed that the situation could theoretically be different, but it also pointed attention towards the power relations behind accepting the situation as it was. But as it made that important critique possible, it left a biological body behind that was unsuited for gender theory to discuss, left over for medicine and biology departments. For some the answer was to dismiss the biological as irrelevant. To some degree I agree with this strategy: it constitutes a naturalistic fallacy to derive our social norms from biological features. Yet, not accepting biological features as a leading force in the shaping of our ethics and politics is something different than dismissing them altogether. In this final subsection, I want to explore some of the consequences of a turn to lived bodies, that I believe is symptomatic for a divide in political feminism and many political cultures in general. On the Western political left, there is a growing divide among those looking for politics along lines of the materialist division of resources on the one side and those that follow the lines of an identity politics on the other. Both have been reluctant to employ any notion of biology other than in political attempts to provide the necessity for adequate healthcare and reproductive rights.

Many people are justly sceptical of employing notions of biology in politics. Recent political controversy in the Netherlands over politicians that speculate about the IQ of people of different races and argue against 'repopulation' by people of different ethnicities show that a turn to the biology of bodies is not without problems and casts the shadow of the history of eugenics. At the same time, also these instances are demonstrations of how bound up any notion of 'nature' or 'biology' is with culture and social systems and cannot be separated. There is some kind of biological basis to ethnicity in the sense that the skin colours we use to signify different ethnicities exist, but what is signified is the idea of ethnicity that is a social-cultural construction in itself. Yet the political consequences of employing biology may be much greater than turning to culture as it presents its narratives as 'factial' rather than 'subjective'. The distinction between the two is of course, especially when politically operated, hard if not impossible to maintain in practice. To stay away from understanding our lived experiences as in part a biological process and articulating it like that, is to maintain a conceptual distinction between humankind and nature that will obscure understanding of political possibilities.

Turning our lived body into a political concept is – I believe – necessary for exposing the preconditions, situatedness and future possibilities of our lives. It allows us to turn to our actual lived experience and address the materiality of our bodies without turning to an essentialist view of those bodies. Rather than (pre)dismissing arguments on race and IQ that use suspicious notions of biology by rejecting a politics that turns to biology, we can also turn to the complexities of the entanglement biology and culture in our lived experience to refute those arguments, without losing the political appeal to our bodies. We should not hand over political knowledge over the body by trying to argue that it is irrelevant, but should try to understand it as constituted in situation. With the example of race, we should not argue that those characteristics that we understand as signifying race are irrelevant when we mean to say that they *should be* irrelevant. A specific skin-tone acts as a very real aspect in specific situations, e.g. crossing post 9/11 airport security, but it never exists in a vacuum or outside social context. In the contrasting of shifting contexts, different meanings attached to it and experiences facilitated by it become visible.

A biological body is something we are born with, but for it to become a lived body it needs a relational position. How others anticipate us and how we anticipate the other's anticipation is a perpetual loop in which *geslacht* is situated. It is not that their ideas of what masculinity, femininity, a male body or a female body ought to be are inscribed onto our body, but also that we anticipate those ideas and deal with them. In a feedback loop of mutual anticipation, someone performs their *geslacht*, with a certain script and the 'props' (such as clothing) to fulfil the part and make it intelligible to others, or sometimes obscures the anticipated norms and types of behaviour by breaking the 'rules' or being unaware of them. This point is of course articulated much more extensively in the work of Butler, but my argument has been that we have to extend it to biological processes to understand patriarchal power.[63] An extremely relevant point of *geslacht* is the capacity for reproduction. Not just anticipation of the fact that women can give birth, but of course also the aspect of men being able to impregnate women have in all cultures led to specific cultural norms, kinship systems, economic logic and institutions. These all produce scripts, performances and logics of *geslacht*. In early modern Dutch society for example, where starting a household was an expensive task that required marriage and relative economic stability, adolescence was characterized by non-reproductively, even though the capacity to reproduce was of course present. The capacity to impregnate or become pregnant then are even when actively avoided key factors in the social-

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[63] Butler, *Gender Trouble*.

cultural systems erected around *geslacht*. (In Dutch, sexual intercourse is translated as *geslachtsgemeenschap* which in a more literal translation can be 'interaction of *geslacht*' but also even 'community of *geslacht*')

The above shows that the mostly patrilineal family systems with nuclear households that are dominant in most developed nations are not apolitical states of being, but specific societal constellations established around relations of *geslacht*. Where in a liberal distinction between public and private, the private family is deemed off-limits for political intervention as long as there is no public threat, the above view exposes the distinction as difficult if not impossible to maintain. The precondition for history and future, *geslacht*, and the arrangements constructed around the power over life coming out of it, should be considered political. The institution of the family as a force in the distribution of wealth, social capital and power should be conceptualized at the level of *geslacht* and not as factors emerging out of a non-political sphere that serves as a mere unalterable background of politics.

On the one hand, this view of our (political) body is much more holistic as it is open to recognizing the influence of a wide range of factors on our experience. But it is also much more specific and requires to be situated more precisely. It may perhaps be hard to imagine its direct political relevance in modern developed societies, where a compartmentalization of specialized institutions and organisations has taken place. These all carry bits of responsibility over the lived experience of political subjects and then have to be taken into account when investigating the subjectivity of the lived body. However, its political appeal becomes clearer when we see this as creating different *situations* in which the body comes into existence. The power over life and death, of shaping history and future, has been subject to an unprecedented decentralization that creates ever-more complex situational experiences. On the one hand, this has been stabilizing and prevented arbitrary exercises of power, but on the other hand it subdued clear visions of future possibilities or alternatives. As anticipatory complexion of our subjectivities - with which I mean to describe the multiplicity of our situated experiences and those we expect to encounter - increased, most foundations for political alliance collapsed. A turn to understanding our lived body as a situation, its life-giving capacity as a shaping force of history, and the appropriation of that power as a political act, will open up possibilities for political futures and alliances.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have investigated the concept 'patriarchy', the meanings in its history and its political consequences. The main finding of surveying different uses of 'patriarchy' that the two main uses are (1) to describe a system of fatherly authority in the household and family and (2) to describe a system of structural male domination over women. Confusion and conceptual problems arise when (1) and (2) are used interchangeably, since in some occasions (1) can weaken (2). Fatherly authority is only one specific type of power relations that has an influence on (2) and can in some occasions even be employed by women. This initial survey – to stay with the archaeological analogy – may serve as a starting point for a more complete genealogy of the concept of 'patriarchy' and its different uses throughout time, space and history.

When we say 'patriarchy', we should be pressed to say more explicitly what type of power relations we actually mean. My position is that structural constrains on the lives of men or women as a group (as seriality) are certainly relevant and important, but 'patriarchy' is not the right concept to describe this. Instead, we still have a use for 'patriarchy' as a concept when not seen as a universal force of male domination, but as a specific category of fatherly household authority. A favour of 'patriarchy' defined as fatherly authority does not give us perpetual structures but a much more dispersed, mixed and decentralized history of power relations, with more imbalances, inconsistencies and dead ends. Alongside a genealogy of the concept of 'patriarchy,' a proper history of patriarchal power is then possible through an excavation of patriarchal practices. Of course, such a history would never be complete in the sense that one might aspire to excavate all that we can know about a specific event (and even of this I am sceptical), but rather would be a history of comparing different societies and persons and their approaches towards the life-giving power of one universal category of human existence, *geslacht*.

Where the last serious attempt (by Sylvia Walby) to theorize 'patriarchy' moved away from the body and biology because it found that 'the social process of the creation of the next generation of human beings is often conflated with the social re-creation of the social system and/or with the biological processes of fertility,'[64] the newly (re-)arising concern with our situated bodies aligns quite well with calls for intersectionality and understand the recreation of bodies and societies together, as

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[64] Walby, "Theorising Patriarchy," 222.

a non-separable process, without conflating it as exactly the same. The *lived body* as introduced by Toril Moi has helped us greatly with this.

The body understood as situation in which *geslacht* comes into existence while simultaneously we come into existence through *geslacht* can provide the conceptual bedrock for a historical anthropology that takes human reproduction and bodies seriously without falling into essentialism. I have explored some of the ways in which patriarchal power have attached itself to *geslacht*, perhaps even has tried to become *geslacht*. This is in part one of the crucial reasons why 'patriarchy' as a concept has so many different meanings and is by some still seen as a natural state: because it attached itself to notions of 'nature' and 'biology' and dresses itself up as 'true *geslacht*.' By becoming aware of this, we open up our own 'horizon of expectation' to the possibilities and alternate futures of *geslacht*.

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