THE TRANSFORMATION OF GENDER ROLES IN THE HOUSEHOLD OF WORKING COUPLES: A FUNCTIONAL STRUCTURAL PERSPECTIVE, CONFLICT, AND FEMINISM

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the transformation of gender roles in the household of working couples in Purba Baru Village, Lembah Sorik Marapi District, Mandailing Natal Regency, with a functional structural perspective, conflict theory, and feminism. The study aims to analyze changes in the division of domestic and public roles, power relations, and gender equality practices between husbands and wives. The research uses a qualitative approach with a sociological design through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Data analysis was carried out thematically by examining the adaptation of family roles, distribution of responsibilities, and gender construction. The results of the analysis show that women's involvement in economic activities encourages changes in the pattern of role division in the family, but has not completely eliminated domestic inequality. Women still have the potential to bear a double burden because public work is not always followed by a proportional division of household chores. Inequality is also reflected in the limited recognition of reproductive work and the negotiation of authority in decision-making. A functional structural perspective explains the need for family adaptation, conflict theory exposes power relations inequality, while feminism highlights patriarchal constructions and demands for equality. This research emphasizes the importance of a fair division of responsibilities to realize equal family relationships.

Keywords: *Gender Role Transformation; Working Couples; Functional Structural; Conflict Theory; Feminism.*

INTRODUCTION

Social changes in modern society have brought consequences to the structure and pattern of relationships in family life, especially related to the division of roles between husband and wife. Households that previously tended to be built on the conventional division of labor, namely the husband as the main breadwinner and the wife as the manager of domestic affairs, are now undergoing changes along with the increasing involvement of women in economic activities. Women are no longer only placed in the domestic space, but also actively participate in the public sector through formal and informal work. This condition gives birth to the pattern of dual-earner households, which are families where the husband and wife both have work activities to earn income. This change not only shows a shift in women's economic activities,

but also changes the pattern of interaction, distribution of responsibilities, decision-making, and power relations in the family.[1]

The transformation of gender roles in the household becomes a sociological problem because the involvement of husbands and wives in the world of work is not always followed by a balanced change in the division of domestic labor. In some conditions, women face a double burden, namely carrying out work responsibilities in the public sector while still carrying out most of the household chores, such as childcare, cooking, cleaning, and managing family needs. Meanwhile, domestic work is still often understood as the main responsibility of women, even though women's economic contribution to the household is increasing. This situation shows that there is a tension between the change in economic roles and the sustainability of social construction regarding the obligations of men and women. Thus, the main issue is not only whether women have entered the world of work, but the extent to which these changes result in the redistribution of responsibilities and equality of relationships in family life.[2]

In the context of rural communities, the transformation of gender roles has its own dynamics because it is influenced by social values, culture, family habits, and societal constructions regarding the position of husband and wife. Purba Baru Village, Lembah Sorik Marapi District, Mandailing Natal Regency, is a relevant context to examine this issue. Domestic life in a community environment that still has social ties and local cultural values allows the division of domestic and public roles not solely determined by the couple's individual agreements, but also influenced by the expectations of extended families and the social environment. Under such conditions, women's involvement in productive work can result in changes in the family's economic contribution, but it does not necessarily automatically change the perception of husband authority, wife responsibilities, and the division of household chores. Therefore, it is important to understand how working couples construct, maintain, or renegotiate gender roles in daily life.[3]

Theoretically, the transformation of gender roles in the household can be analyzed through three complementary sociological perspectives. First, the functional structural perspective that views the family as a social system with interconnected parts and performing certain functions. In this perspective, the division of roles between husband and wife is related to efforts to maintain family order, balance, and sustainability. Talcott Parsons' thinking on social systems and family functions can be used to understand how working couples adjust to changing economic and social demands. However, this approach also needs to be criticized because the division of

[1] Syamsiah Badruddin, *Sosiologi Keluarga: Dinamika Dan Tantangan Masyarakat Modern* (PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia, 2023).

[2] Muhammad Falih Iqbal, Sugeng Harianto, and Pambudi Handoyo, "Transformasi Peran Perempuan Desa Dalam Belenggu Budaya Patriarki," *Jurnal ISIP: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik* 20, no. 1 (2023): 95–108.

[3] Husnul Rizka, Muhammad Shuhufi, and Nabiha Amaliyah Iqbal, "Transformasi Peran Ganda Perempuan Perspektif Fikih Gender," *Jimmi: Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Multidisiplin* 2, no. 1 (2025): 1–8.

roles that are considered functional does not necessarily reflect justice for both parties.[4]

Second, conflict theory provides a different perspective by placing the household as a space of interaction that is not always free from the inequality of interests and power. Ralf Dahrendorf's thinking and the perspective of social conflict can be used to analyze how authority, access to economic resources, and the bargaining position of husband and wife affect the division of family responsibilities. In a working couple's household, women's economic contribution has the potential to change their bargaining position in decision-making. However, the increase in economic contribution does not necessarily eliminate the inequality of power relations, especially when traditional norms still place men as the main authority holders. Thus, work and income not only have an economic dimension, but also related to the legitimacy of power and the negotiation of position in the family.

Third, the feminist perspective is used to criticize social constructions that distinguish between male and female responsibilities based on gender. Feminist thought, especially liberal feminism and socialist feminism, is relevant to explain the issues of equal opportunity, the division of domestic labor, the recognition of reproductive work, and the inequality of burden experienced by women. This perspective affirms that domestic work has social and economic value even though it often does not receive equal recognition as paid work. In working couples' households, gender equality is not only measured by women's opportunities to obtain work or income, but must also be seen from the husband's involvement in domestic work, the distribution of parenting responsibilities, and equality in determining family decisions.

The three perspectives have different pressure points, but they can be used integratively to understand the transformation of gender roles. Functional structuralism explains the process of adaptation and family balance, conflict theory exposes the inequality of power and interests, while feminism critiques social structures that perpetuate gender inequality. The combination of the three allows this study not only to describe the changing division of duties between husbands and wives, but also to uncover the social mechanisms that cause these changes to take place, experience obstacles, or even produce new forms of inequality.

Based on these issues, this study departs from the argument that the involvement of husbands and wives in the world of work does not automatically result in gender equality in the household. Gender role transformation is actually a social process that involves adjusting family functions, negotiating interests, distributing power, and changing social constructions regarding the responsibilities of men and women. The issue of concern is how working couples build agreements about domestic work, childcare, meeting economic needs, and family decision-making, as well as the socio-cultural factors that influence the process.

On that basis, this study aims to analyze the transformation of gender roles in the household of working couples in Purba Baru Village, Lembah Sorik Marapi District, Mandailing Natal Regency. In particular, this study examines three main aspects, namely: (1) changes in the division of roles and responsibilities between husband and wife in the domestic and public spheres; (2) the dynamics of power relations and negotiations in household decision-making; and (3) the forms of adaptation and gender inequality that arise in the lives of working couples based on functional structural perspectives, conflict theory, and feminism. Through this approach, this

[4] Ermayanti Ermayanti et al., "Transformasi Gender Pada Pembangunan Pariwisata Berbasis Masyarakat Di Perkampungan Adat Nagari Sijunjung," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora* 12, no. 3 (2023): 508–17.

research is expected to contribute to the development of the study of family and gender sociology, as well as enrich understanding of changes in family structure in rural communities.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with field research and sociological design to analyze the transformation of gender roles in the household of working couples in Purba Baru Village, Lembah Sorik Marapi District, Mandailing Natal Regency. This approach was chosen because the research not only aims to describe the division of roles between husband and wife, but also to understand the experiences, views, interactions, and dynamics of power relations formed in domestic life. The focus of the research is directed at three main dimensions, namely changes in the division of domestic and public responsibilities, negotiation in family decision-making, and the construction of gender equality and inequality in the lives of working couples.[5]

Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with married couples who both worked, taking into account the variety of jobs, family economic conditions, marital length, and the presence of children in the household. In addition to married couples, interviews can also involve community leaders and other parties who have knowledge about family social life in Purba Baru Village. The selection of informants uses the purposive sampling technique, which is based on the suitability of the informant's experience and knowledge with the focus of the research, and can be developed through snowball sampling if needed to obtain more in-depth information. Observations are made on interaction patterns and responsibilities sharing practices in family life, while documentation is used to complete the data from interviews and observations.[6]

Data analysis was carried out interactively through the stages of data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification as developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. In the condensation stage, the data from interviews and observations were classified based on the themes of domestic division of labor, economic contribution, childcare, decision-making, and power relations. Furthermore, the data were presented in the form of thematic descriptions to identify patterns, similarities, differences, and contradictions of experiences between husband and wife. Conclusions were drawn by relating field findings with the theoretical framework used.[7]

The interpretation of the data uses three sociological perspectives. First, Talcott Parsons' functional structural theory is used to analyze the adaptation of the division of family roles and functions in the face of changes in the economic activities of husbands and wives. Second, conflict theory is used to identify power inequalities, differences in interests, and bargaining positions in the division of household responsibilities. Third, the feminist perspective is used to critique the social

[5] Nyangfah Nisa Septiana and Zulfatul Khoiriyah, "Metode Penelitian Studi Kasus Dalam Pendekatan Kualitatif," *Didaktik: Jurnal Ilmiah PGSD STKIP Subang* 10, no. 04 (2024): 233–43.

[6] Fahriana Nurrisa and Dina Hermina, "Pendekatan Kualitatif Dalam Penelitian: Strategi, Tahapan, Dan Analisis Data," *Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran| E-ISSN: 3026-6629* 2, no. 3 (2025): 793–800.

[7] Hanif Hasan et al., *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Yayasan Tri Edukasi Ilmiah, 2025).

construction of gender, the double burden of women, the recognition of domestic work, and the practice of equality in the family. The integration of these three perspectives allows the study to reveal whether the transformation of gender roles results in the balance of family functions, strengthens negotiations between couples, or instead maintains inequality in different forms.[8]

To ensure the validity of the data, the study uses source triangulation and triangulation techniques, which are comparing information from husbands, wives, and supporting informants and matching the results of interviews with observations and documentation. The research also pays attention to the ethical principles of research through informed consent, identity confidentiality, and the use of information only for academic purposes. With this procedure, the research is expected to produce an in-depth, contextual, and scientifically accountable analysis of the transformation of gender roles in the household of working couples in Purba Baru Village.[9]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Transformation of the Distribution of Domestic and Public Roles in Working Spouse Households

The transformation of the division of domestic and public roles is a form of social change that occurs in family life when husbands and wives are both involved in economic activities. These changes are not only related to the increasing contribution of women in meeting household needs, but also to changes in responsibilities in managing domestic work, childcare, and family decision-making. In the conventional household pattern, the husband is generally placed as the breadwinner, while the wife is positioned as the homemaker. However, when both spouses enter the workforce, the division of roles faces the demands of adjustment because family responsibilities can no longer be fully charged to one party.[10]

In the context of the household of working couples in Purba Baru Village, Lembah Sorik Marapi District, Mandailing Natal Regency, the transformation of gender roles is important to be analyzed by paying attention to the relationship between economic contributions, domestic responsibilities, and social values that develop in society. The involvement of wives in productive work can expand family sources of income, but at the same time it has the potential to cause problems when housework and childcare are still seen as women's main obligations. Thus, changes in women's economic status are not necessarily followed by changes in the division of responsibilities in the family.[11]

Normatively, the division of roles in the household has a legal basis in Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage as amended by Law Number 16 of 2019. Article 30 states that husband and wife bear a noble obligation to uphold the household

[8] Yurmaini Yurmaini et al., "Pendekatan Dalam Penelitian Kuantitatif Dan Kualitatif," *Hibrul Ulama* 6, no. 1 (2024): 83–90.

[9] Sri Yani Kusumastuti et al., *Metodologi Penelitian: Pendekatan Kualitatif Dan Kuantitatif* (PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia, 2025).

[10] Venny Pratisiya et al., "Perubahan Kontruksi Sosial Dalam Pembagian Kerja Domestik: Studi Hubungan Antara Suami Istri Keluarga Modern," *Yinyang: Jurnal Studi Islam Gender Dan Anak* 18, no. 2 (2023): 197–222.

[11] Asrul Hamid et al., "Pergeseran Makna Mahar Dalam Tradisi Perkawinan Adat Mandailing: Perspektif Hukum Islam Dan Nilai Sosial," *Familia: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 6, no. 1 (2025): 22–41.

which is the basic joint of the structure of society. This provision emphasizes that family life is a shared responsibility that must be carried out by both couples.[12]

Furthermore, Article 31 paragraph (1) states that the rights and position of the wife are balanced with the rights and position of the husband in domestic life and cohabitation in society. Article 31 paragraph (2) also emphasizes that each party has the right to commit legal acts. This provision provides a normative basis that the wife has an equal legal position with her husband, including in determining economic activities and participating in public life.

However, Article 31 paragraph (3) states that the husband is the head of the family and the wife of the housewife. This provision needs to be read systematically together with Article 31 paragraphs (1) and (2), not separated from the principle of balance of rights and position of husband and wife. In the context of social change, this provision is important to be studied sociologically, especially regarding how the concept of the head of the family and the housewife is understood and practiced by couples who work together.

Furthermore, Article 33 of the Marriage Law stipulates that husband and wife are obliged to love, respect, be loyal, and provide inner birth assistance to each other. Meanwhile, Article 34 paragraph (1) regulates the husband's obligation to protect his wife and provide all the necessities of domestic life according to his ability. Article 34 paragraph (2) states that the wife is obliged to manage household affairs as well as possible. Article 34 paragraph (3) gives each party the right to file a lawsuit if one of the parties neglects its obligations.

The provisions of Article 34 show a normative construction of the obligations of the husband and wife in the household. However, in analyzing couples who work together, it needs to be placed in relation to Article 31 regarding the balance of position and Article 33 regarding the obligation to help each other. Thus, the division of domestic responsibilities can be studied as a matter of cooperation and family adjustment, not merely the imposition of duties based on gender.

In addition to the Marriage Law, the relevant legal basis is contained in Law Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights. Article 45 emphasizes that women's rights are part of human rights. Article 49 paragraph (1) provides protection for women's rights in work that is in accordance with their dignity and human dignity. Furthermore, Article 51 paragraph (1) states that a wife while in a marital bond has the same rights and responsibilities as her husband for all matters related to her marital life, relationship with her children, and the right to own and manage joint property. The provisions of Article 51 paragraph (2) also affirm equal responsibility between both parents for education, living expenses, affection, and future development of children.

From the aspect of employment, Law Number 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower provides a foundation regarding equal opportunities and treatment in employment. Article 5 regulates equal opportunities without discrimination to obtain employment, while Article 6 guarantees equal treatment without discrimination from employers. This provision is relevant to explain that women's involvement in the public sector is part of the right to equal employment opportunities and treatment. Thus, women's economic participation in the family should not be seen as a deviation from domestic functions, but as part of social, and economic rights protected by law.

[12] Bing Waluyo, "Sahnya Perkawinan Menurut Undang-Undang Nomor 1 Tahun 1974 Tentang Perkawinan," *Jurnal Media Komunikasi Pendidikan Pancasila Dan Kewarganegaraan* 2, no. 1 (2020): 193–99.

Based on the construction of the law, there are two dimensions that need to be distinguished. First, the normative dimension, which is the regulation of the position, rights, and obligations of husband and wife and the responsibilities of parents. Second, the sociological dimension, namely how these provisions are applied in domestic life. The difference between norms and practices is an important space to identify whether working couples have established a mutually supportive division of responsibilities or still maintain an unbalanced pattern of division of labor.

The involvement of husbands and wives in work activities results in changes in the pattern of meeting family economic needs. In a working couple's household, family income can come from two sources, namely the husband's income and the wife's income. These changes have the potential to create an economic partnership pattern, because the fulfillment of household needs no longer depends only on one party. However, a relatively balanced economic contribution does not necessarily result in a balanced division of domestic labor either.

This problem can be seen through three aspects. First, economic contribution, which is how husbands and wives provide income to meet family needs. Second, the division of domestic work, which is how the responsibilities of cooking, washing, cleaning the house, and meeting daily needs are distributed. Third, time management, which is how couples adjust their work schedules to family obligations.

From a sociological perspective, domestic work cannot be seen as an unproductive activity. It has an important function in maintaining the sustainability of the household, although it often does not receive the same economic recognition as work in the public sector. When the wife works outside the home, but still bears most of the domestic work, this condition can result in a double burden. On the other hand, when the husband begins to be involved in childcare and household chores, this situation indicates a change in the construction of family responsibilities.

Tabel 1. Dimensions of Role Sharing Transformation in the Household

Dimensions	**Conventional patterns**	**Forms of transformation studied**
Economy	Dominantly done by wives	Husband and wife contribute to income
Cooking and cleaning the house	Dominantly done by wives	Divided by deal and time availability
Childcare	Dominance is the responsibility of the mother	Implemented through the involvement of both parents
Financial management	Can be done through joint decisions	Can be done through joint decisions
Time management	More domestic responsibilities on the wife	Adapting to work and family needs

Source: *The researcher's analytical construction is based on the dimension of gender role-sharing. This table is an analytical framework, not the results of* field observations.

Childcare is one of the important aspects in the transformation of gender roles because it is directly related to the sustainability of family functions. In a working couple's household, limited time due to work activities can affect the intensity of parent-child interaction, educational assistance, fulfillment of emotional needs, and supervision of child development. Therefore, parenting is not sufficiently understood

as a biological responsibility of the mother, but needs to be analyzed as the social responsibility of both parents.

The legal basis can be found in Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection[13] as amended by Law Number 35 of 2014. Article 26 paragraph (1) emphasizes that parents are obliged and responsible to nurture, maintain, educate, and protect children; develop children according to their abilities, talents, and interests; and prevent marriage at a young age. This provision provides the basis that child care and education are the obligations of parents, not solely the mother's obligation. Thus, the father's involvement in parenting is part of the legal and social responsibility in the family.

In analyzing these changes, Talcott Parsons' thinking on functional structures can be used as a theoretical framework. Parsons views the family as a social system consisting of elements that are interconnected and have the function of maintaining the balance of the system.[14] To understand the household adaptation of working couples, the AGIL framework can be used as follows:

1. Adaptation. Families are required to adjust to changing economic and work conditions. When husband and wife work together, families need to manage income, divide time, and adjust domestic responsibilities so that household needs are met.
2. Goal Attainment. Families have common goals, such as economic welfare, children's education, and household harmony. Achieving these goals requires the involvement of husband and wife in setting priorities and making decisions.
3. Integration. The family needs coordination and agreement to manage differences in interests and share responsibilities. Integration can be realized through communication, deliberation, and cooperation between husband and wife.
4. Latency (Pattern Maintenance). The family functions to maintain and transmit values, norms, and behavioral patterns to children. In the context of gender transformation, this function also includes the formation of an understanding that domestic work, parenting, and economic responsibility are part of living together.

Through this framework, changes in the roles of husband and wife do not have to be understood as a threat to family stability. On the contrary, change can be a form of adaptation of the family system to social and economic development. However, family stability should not only be measured based on the fulfillment of economic needs or the absence of conflicts. Family balance also needs to be seen from the fair distribution of responsibilities, the involvement of both parents in parenting, and the fulfillment of the emotional needs of all family members.[15]

Power Negotiation and Conflict Relations in Household Decision-Making

Decision-making in the household is one of the important aspects to understand the power relationship between husband and wife, especially in families where both are involved in work activities. In traditional family construction, the husband is often placed as the main authority holder because he is seen as the head of the family and

[13] Republik Indonesia, "Undang-Undang Nomor 23 Tahun 2002 Tentang Perlindungan Anak," *Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun*, 2002.

[14] Muhamad Chairul Basrun Umanailo and Chairul Basrun, "Talcot Parson and Robert K Merton," *No. October*, 2019, 1–5.

[15] Umanailo and Basrun.

the breadwinner. Meanwhile, the wife tends to be placed as the party who makes decisions in domestic affairs. However, the increase in women's participation in economic activities has brought changes to the pattern of these relationships. When wives have their own income and contribute to family needs, their bargaining position in determining household decisions has the potential to change. The question is whether the economic contribution really results in equality in decision-making or only increases women's responsibilities without changing the family power structure.[16]

In the context of the household of a working couple in Purba Baru Village, Lembah Sorik Marapi District, Mandailing Natal Regency, power negotiations can be seen through various decisions related to income management, purchase of household needs, children's education, asset ownership, job selection, and relationships with extended families. These decisions are not always produced through equal agreements, but can be influenced by who has more income, who controls economic resources, and who has stronger authority in the family. Thus, the household is not only a space for fulfilling emotional and economic needs, but also a space for social interaction where interests, authority, and responsibilities between husband and wife are negotiated.[17]

Normatively, the power relationship in the household has its foundation in Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage as amended by Law Number 16 of 2019. Article 31 paragraph (1) emphasizes that the rights and position of the wife are balanced with the rights and position of the husband in domestic life and cohabitation in society. Article 31 paragraph (2) also provides the same legal position to each party to carry out legal acts. Although Article 31 paragraph (3) establishes the husband as the head of the family and the wife as the housewife, this provision needs to be read systematically along with the principle of balance of rights and position in the previous paragraph. Therefore, the position of the husband as the head of the family cannot be interpreted as unlimited authority to ignore the opinion and interests of the wife.[18]

Furthermore, Article 33 of the Marriage Law emphasizes that husband and wife are obliged to love, respect, be loyal, and provide inner birth assistance to each other. This provision contains the principle of partnership and mutual responsibility in married life. In the context of decision-making, this principle can be understood as an obligation to consider the interests of both parties. Decisions regarding the use of income, children's education, housing, and family needs should not only be based on the will of one spouse, but through communication and mutual agreement.[19]

In addition, Article 51 paragraph (1) of Law Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights emphasizes that a wife while in a marital bond has the same rights and

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[16] Muhammad Anwar, Bahar Sinring, and Imaduddin Imaduddin, "Pemberdayaan Perempuan Dalam Pengambilan Keputusan Ekonomi Rumah Tangga Di Desa Sikkuale Kecematan Cempa," *Center of Economic Students Journal* 6, no. 2 (2023): 276–81.

[17] Muhammad Ridwan, "Penetapan Mahar Bagi Perempuan (Studi Kasus Di Desa Purba Baru Kecamatan Lembah Sorik Marapi Kabupaten Mandailing Natal)," *Hukum Islam* 22, no. 1 (2021): 164–86.

[18] Aichel Jansmanta Ginting, "Implementasi Pasal 31 Undang-Undang No. 16 Tahun 2019 Tentang Perkawinandalamtradisitukur Untuk Mewujudkan Responsif Gender (Studi Kasus Masyarakat Modern Suku Batak Karo)" (Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha, 2024).

[19] Muhammad Sopiyan, "Perceraian Pada Keluarga Karier Di Pengadilan Agama Wilayah Pengadilan Tinggi Bandung Hubungannya Dengan Pasal 33-34 Undang-Undang Nomor 1 Tahun 1074 Tentang Perkawinan" (UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2025).

responsibilities as her husband for all matters related to her marital life, relationships with her children, and the right to ownership and management of joint property. This provision is important because it provides recognition of the wife's position in the management of family life, including in economic aspects and decision-making. In a working couple's household, the recognition is relevant to assess whether the wife's economic contribution is accompanied by recognition of her rights in determining the use of income, asset management, and the direction of family life.[20]

To understand these dynamics, Ralf Dahrendorf's conflict theory becomes a relevant perspective. Dahrendorf views society as a structure in which there are differences in interests and the distribution of authority. Power is not evenly distributed, but is attached to certain positions and social relationships. When this perspective is applied in family life, the relationship between husband and wife can be analyzed through the distribution of authority, control of economic resources, and the ability to influence decisions. Conflict in the household is not always in the form of open quarrels, but can be present in the form of dominance of opinions, restriction of choices, imbalance of responsibility, and dissatisfaction of one spouse with the decisions made.[21]

The wife's economic contribution can be one of the factors that affect the change in the bargaining position in the household. When the wife earns her own income, economic dependence on the husband has the potential to decrease, opening up more space for the wife to be involved in decision-making. However, these changes do not always occur automatically. Although the wife makes a significant economic contribution, decision-making authority can still be dominated by the husband due to the influence of social norms and cultural constructions regarding male authority. This condition shows that economic resources are not the only determinant of power in the family. Social legitimacy, habits, marital experience, and perceptions of the husband's position can also affect the distribution of authority.

Conflict relationships can also arise when there are differences of opinion about the use of income and the division of family responsibilities. For example, the husband considers his income as the main source that determines the direction of financial use, while the wife feels that he has the same rights because he works and contributes to household needs. These differences of view can develop into conflicts if they are not resolved through communication and agreement. Similar problems can occur in decisions regarding the wife's work, children's education, use of free time, and involvement in social activities. In such a situation, conflict is not only caused by differences in income, but also by differences in perceptions about the rights, obligations, and limits of authority of each spouse.[22]

In rural communities, family power relations can also be influenced by the social environment and cultural values that develop. Relationships with parents, extended families, community leaders, and customary environments can influence the couple's decision-making process. In the Mandailing community, kinship values and family relationships have an important position in social life. Therefore, certain household

[20] Undang-Undang Nomor, "Tahun 1999 Tentang Hak Asasi Manusia," 39AD.

[21] Puspita Rani Swari, "Budaya Patriarki Dan Tantangan Dalam Kebebasan Berekpresi (Analisis Menggunakan Teori Konflik Ralf Dahrendorf)," *Jurnal Dinamika Sosial Budaya* 25, no. 2 (2023): 213–18.

[22] Alo Liliweri, *Prasangka, Konflik, Dan Komunikasi Antarbudaya* (Prenada Media, 2018).

decisions can involve the consideration of the extended family, especially in economic issues, children's education, housing, and social relations. This condition can be a source of support for the couple, but it also has the potential to cause pressure if the views of the extended family are more dominant than the agreement between husband and wife.[23]

However, not all differences in interests in a household have to end in dominance or conflict. Negotiations can be a social mechanism to build agreement and manage differences between husband and wife. Negotiations can be carried out through deliberation on the use of income, division of domestic work, childcare, and family prioritization. The success of negotiations is determined not only by economic ability, but also by open communication, appreciation for the partner's contributions, and willingness to share responsibilities. Thus, a relatively equal household does not mean that there are no differences of opinion, but rather that it has a mechanism for resolving differences that does not place one party as the party who always has to give in.

From the perspective of feminism, the issue of domestic decision-making needs to be analyzed further by paying attention to patriarchal constructions that can maintain male dominance in the family. Liberal feminism emphasizes the importance of women's equal rights, opportunities, and participation in determining family life and public activities. Meanwhile, socialist feminism pays attention to the relationship between economic inequality and the division of domestic labor that often does not receive proportional recognition. Both perspectives show that domestic equality is not only realized through women's opportunities to work, but also requires recognition of their economic contributions, the right to make decisions, and the fair division of domestic responsibilities.

Gender Inequality, Double Burden, and the Construction of Equality in Working Spouse Households

Gender inequality in the household of working couples can not only be seen from the difference in economic contributions between husbands and wives, but also from the often unbalanced division of domestic responsibilities. Women who work in public spaces are still faced with the responsibility of taking care of the household, taking care of children, cooking, cleaning the house, and meeting the needs of family members. This condition shows the existence of a double burden, which is a situation when women carry out productive work to earn income as well as reproductive work to maintain the sustainability of family life. From the perspective of feminism, this issue shows that women's involvement in economic activities is not necessarily followed by changes in the division of power and responsibilities in the household.[24]

This picture can be analyzed through the home life of Ahmad Fauzi and Siti Rahma (pseudonym). In this case illustration, Ahmad Fauzi works as a farmer, while Siti Rahma works as an honorary teacher. The difference in employment between the two shows that both husband and wife are involved in productive activities outside the home. However, the issue of equality is not sufficiently measured based on the involvement of both of them in earning income. What is more important is how

[23] Bunga Raudatin and S Supriadi, "Budaya Patriarki Dan Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga Terhadap Perempuan: Kajian Sosiologi Tentang Relasi Kuasa Dan Ketimpangan Gender Dalam Keluarga," *Jurnal Ekonomi & Bisnis* 14, no. 2 (2026): 441–53.

[24] Ivan Nurseha and Fashihuddin Arafat, "Ketimpangan Gender Dalam Keputusan Rumah Tangga: Studi Interseksi Ekonomi, Pendidikan, Dan Konstruksi Sosial," *MASADIR: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 4, no. 02 (2024): 947–67.

domestic work is distributed after each completes public work. If Siti Rahma remains responsible for cooking, cleaning the house, and taking care of children without balanced involvement from her husband, then women experience an increase in workload. From the perspective of liberal feminism, this situation shows that the principle of equality of opportunity and responsibility has not been fulfilled, because women bear a greater burden even though they both contribute to the family economy.

The issue of domestic division of labor can also be seen in the couple Muhammad Ilham and Nur Aisyah (pseudonym). In this draft case, Muhammad Ilham works as a self-employed person, while Nur Aisyah runs a trading business. Both of them have economic activities that are relatively equally demanding of time and energy. However, equality in the household does not automatically be realized just because the husband and wife work together. If domestic work is still considered the main responsibility of the wife, while the husband's involvement is only helpful when necessary, then the division of labor still shows gender inequality. The term helping the wife can even reflect the assumption that domestic work is basically a woman's obligation. Feminism views that domestic work should be a shared responsibility because the sustainability of the household is the result of the contribution of both parties, not solely the wife's obligation.

In the couple Abdul Hakim and Rina Marlina (pseudonym), the problem of gender inequality can be analyzed through the relationship between professional work and family responsibilities. Abdul Hakim in this illustration works as an employee, while Rina Marlina works as a health worker. Rina Marlina's job requires professional competence, discipline, and responsibility, just like her husband's work. However, when women who have professional jobs are still burdened with predominantly domestic responsibilities, the problem of injustice arises in the division of time and energy. This condition shows that the recognition of women's capacity in the public space does not necessarily eliminate the social construct that places women as the main managers of the household. Through the perspective of socialist feminism, this situation can be understood as a form of injustice in the division of productive and reproductive labor. Women generate economic value through their work, but at the same time continue to carry out domestic work that often does not receive economic or social recognition.

Another dimension of gender inequality can be seen in the couple Ridwan Nasution and Fitri Handayani (pseudonym). In this draft case, Ridwan Nasution works as a farmer, while Fitri Handayani runs a home-based business. Home business activities often have different characteristics from formal work because their implementation can take place at the same time as family care. This situation has the potential to cause the boundary between productive work and domestic work to become unclear. Women can be considered to be at home, while at the same time they carry out economic activities, take care of children, prepare food, and meet family needs. In the perspective of socialist feminism, women's work that takes place in the home should not be seen as an unproductive activity. It generates an economic contribution while supporting the sustainability of the household. Therefore, women's reproductive and productive work needs to be recognized equally, both in family relations and in the social assessment of society.

Meanwhile, the couple Irfan Syahputra and Dewi Anggraini (pseudonym) can be used to analyze the practice of gender equality in decision-making and the division of household responsibilities. In this illustration, Irfan Syahputra works as a self-employed person, while Dewi Anggraini works as a teacher. An equal relationship can be seen when husbands and wives have equal opportunities to express their opinions,

determine the use of family income, plan children's education, and make decisions about their respective jobs. Equality is also reflected in the husband's willingness to be directly involved in domestic work without viewing it as a job that only women deserve. From the perspective of liberal feminism, the practice shows recognition of women's rights and capacities as subjects who have autonomy. Thus, gender equality is not only realized through giving women the opportunity to work, but also through the recognition of their position in determining the direction of family life.

Based on the five illustrations of the couple, it can be understood that gender inequality in the household of working couples has several interrelated dimensions. First, women face a double burden when public work is not followed by a redistribution of domestic responsibilities. Second, an unequal division of labor can be maintained by patriarchal constructions that place domestic work as a natural obligation of women. Third, reproductive work such as childcare, caring for family members, cooking, and managing the household often does not receive recognition comparable to work that generates direct income. Fourth, the practice of equality requires a change in the pattern of husband and wife relationships, especially in the division of labor, appreciation of individual contributions, and family decision-making.

Theoretically, liberal feminism and socialist feminism provide two complementary perspectives in reading the issue. Liberal feminism emphasizes equal rights, opportunities, autonomy, and women's participation in decision-making. Meanwhile, socialist feminism criticizes the structure of labor division that causes women to bear both productive and reproductive work without adequate recognition. Both perspectives show that gender equality is not enough to be realized by giving women access to enter the workforce. Changes must also touch on the structure of relationships within the household, including the division of domestic responsibilities and the recognition of reproductive work.

Thus, the transformation of gender roles in the household of working spouses needs to be understood as a change that does not only concern women's involvement in economic activities, but also changes in the way the family builds fair relationships. It is not enough for the husband to be positioned as a breadwinner, while the wife as the household manager, because the two roles can be carried out and shared more flexibly based on the agreement, ability, and conditions of each partner. Gender equality in the household does not mean eliminating role differences, but ensuring that these differences do not become the basis for unfairly burdening responsibilities. Therefore, recognition of domestic work, proportional division of labor, and shared involvement in decision-making are important indicators in building more equal household relationships.

CONCLUSION

The transformation of gender roles in the household of working couples shows that the involvement of husbands and wives in economic activities has led to changes in the pattern of family relations, the division of responsibilities, and household decision-making. The functional structural perspective explains that the continuity of the family requires the ability of husbands and wives to adapt and divide roles flexibly according to the needs of the family. The perspective of conflict theory shows that differences in economic contributions, access to resources, and authority in decision-making can create tensions if they are not accompanied by a fair division of responsibilities. Meanwhile, the feminist perspective reveals that women still have the potential to experience double burdens due to unbalanced domestic and public responsibilities, as well as lack of recognition of reproductive work. Therefore, the

transformation of gender roles is not enough to be characterized by increasing women's participation in the world of work, but must be accompanied by a change in patriarchal construction, a proportionate division of domestic labor, recognition of economic and reproductive contributions, and equality in decision-making. Thus, a fair working spouse household is a household that places husband and wife as equal partners in carrying out family functions, sharing responsibilities, and building common welfare.

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