

# Gender Role Shifts And Intergenerational Gaps In Family Structure

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## Abstract.

*The shift in gender roles within the family structure is an increasingly relevant phenomenon in the context of rapid social and cultural change. In the past decade, this shift has been evident in the increased participation of women in the public sector and decision-making, in contrast to prevailing traditional norms. However, gender inequality remains a challenge, particularly in the division of domestic duties and childcare. Furthermore, intergenerational gaps within families often exacerbate these issues, with older generations tending to maintain traditional views of gender roles, while younger generations seek greater equality and opportunities. This study analyzes the relationship between shifting gender roles and intergenerational gaps in family structure, as well as their impact on family relationship dynamics. Using a qualitative approach, the research explores the experiences of individuals from different generations to understand how these shifts affect family interactions and communication. The results suggest that recognizing more egalitarian gender roles can help reduce the intergenerational gap, creating a more inclusive and harmonious family environment. Overall, these findings emphasize the importance of education and intergenerational dialogue in raising awareness of gender equality, as well as the need to adapt family norms and values to meet modern challenges.*

**Keywords:** Gender Role Shift; Generation Gap and Family Structure.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Modern family structures are complicated by the interplay of changing gender roles and intergenerational gaps. Families now face new conflicts and compromises stemming from shifting conventional roles, with women being homemakers and men being the primary breadwinners. Differences in expectations and values across generations exacerbate this. More women entering the workforce and a more equitable distribution of domestic duties are two indicators of changing gender roles. However, this shift isn't always easy. While some families struggle to divide tasks fairly, others cling to conventional conventions. When family members' expectations and skills don't align with their new roles, conflict can arise. Generational differences can lead to intergenerational conflict within families, particularly over childcare, household chores, and financial management. While younger generations tend to support gender equality, older generations may hold traditional views about gender roles. Parents may struggle to adjust to changing expectations and values, and younger children may question their parents' authority in the division of responsibilities. The combination of these two factors can impact many aspects of family life, resulting in increased stress, conflict, and dissatisfaction. However, this combination can also encourage families to adapt, negotiate, and create more egalitarian and supportive relationships. Families that successfully navigate these changes often demonstrate increased communication, understanding, and respect between generations. According to family sociology, generation gaps and changing gender roles are interrelated processes influencing modern family dynamics.

These developments challenge traditional family structures and roles, presenting both new opportunities and challenges. According to family sociology, broader socioeconomic trends, including urbanization, industrialization, and increased female education, are driving changes in gender roles. The traditional gender roles of men as primary breadwinners and women as homemakers are two inflexible and increasingly challenged gender roles. This shift is driven by a more equitable distribution of roles and responsibilities, imbalances in the allocation of household and childcare tasks, and the creation of dual roles for women and the increased involvement of men in these activities. Differences in expectations, attitudes,

and life experiences between generations create a generation gap within families. This is exacerbated by changing gender roles, which can lead to intergenerational conflict related to issues such as perspectives on gender roles, disagreements in family decision-making, particularly regarding childcare, and disparities in communication and thought processes.

Empirical trends and demographic shifts indicate that changing gender roles and generation gaps are significant issues in modern Indonesian family dynamics. These two elements work together to create a dynamic and complex family environment. Empirical evidence shows that Indonesian women's participation in the labor market has increased significantly. This development indicates a shift away from women's traditional role as primary caregivers at home, although gender gaps in wages and job positions persist. There is a trend toward a more equal distribution of domestic responsibilities between husbands and wives, although disparities persist. Nevertheless, women still bear a greater burden of childcare and household chores. Changing gender roles is made more difficult by the generation gap. Younger generations, who are more inclined to embrace gender equality, may clash with older generations, who may still hold traditional notions of gender roles. Family decision-making can be controversial due to this disparity in expectations and beliefs, particularly regarding childcare and the division of household chores. For Indonesian families, the interplay between changing gender roles and the generation gap presents both opportunities and obstacles. Families must adapt to these developments, develop efficient communication skills, and achieve a new balance in the division of tasks and responsibilities. A family's ability to adapt will determine how well they navigate these social changes and build more equal and peaceful households.

## II. METHODS

This research uses a normative method to explore the intergenerational gap and shifting gender roles within families in the digital era. This research was chosen because it allows the author to fundamentally understand the meaning, causes, and social impacts that influence family structure. Through this methodology, the author hopes to provide a deeper understanding of the evolution of gender roles and how the generation gap can influence family organizational structure and social impact.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Gender Roles in Modern Families

Compared with previous models, gender roles in modern households have changed dramatically. While full equality remains a long way off, the general trend suggests a push toward greater equality, despite the persistence of considerable cultural and family diversity. (Dewi Gustina et al., 2025)

- **Breaking Free from Traditional Roles:** Rigid gender roles are often defined by the traditional family model. While women handle childcare and household duties, men are typically seen as the primary breadwinners and decision-makers. In contemporary families, this approach is increasingly being abandoned.
- **More Egalitarian Roles Are Emerging:** A strong trend toward a more equal division of labor is now taking place. Increasing numbers of men and women are working outside the home and doing household chores. Every family member is actively participating in decision-making, which also tends to be more democratic. However, the equitable distribution of family labor remains a major issue for many households.
- **Difficulties and Complicated Issues:** This change isn't always easy. Many families still find it difficult to balance childcare, work, and household responsibilities. Deviating from traditional gender roles can be challenging for individuals due to deeply rooted social influences and cultural conventions. Families can experience stress and conflict due to the unequal distribution of household duties. The process of changing one's gender role can also be made more difficult by generational differences in expectations and values.

Factors influencing gender roles in modern families include:

- **Education:** Higher levels of education tend to be associated with more egalitarian views on gender roles.

- **Income:** Women's involvement in the workforce and their increasing income can affect the division of household labor.
- **Cultural Norms:** Cultural norms and traditional values still have a strong influence on gender roles in many families.
- **Government Policies:** Government policies that support gender equality, such as parental leave and childcare support, can help reduce imbalances in the division of household labor.

Parent-child relationships are greatly influenced by the development of women's roles in several ways:

- **Changing Power Dynamics:** As women's involvement in tasks outside the home, such as working and contributing financially, increases, the balance of power within the family can shift. As a result, parent-child relationships can become more equal, and children's thoughts and voices can be more fully considered. Children may have more opportunities to participate in family decision-making. On the other hand, if parental duties and responsibilities are not distributed equitably, this shift can also lead to uncertainty and conflict.
- **Different Parental Involvement:** Parental involvement in childcare may shift as more women work outside the home. Mothers may have to balance work and family obligations, while fathers may be more involved in caregiving. As a result, parent-child relationships may become more varied, with mothers perhaps having less time to engage deeply with their children and fathers becoming more involved. The primary determinant of the health of parent-child relationships is the quality of interaction, not the quantity.
- **Changing Role Models:** As women's roles evolve, girls have access to diverse role models. They view their mothers as independent and successful professionals, as well as homemakers. This can encourage girls to pursue their desired education and careers by influencing their future goals and aspirations. Mothers serve as role models for boys, teaching them the value of gender equality and the division of household chores.
- **Work-Life Balance Challenges:** Women's evolving roles often make it difficult to strike a balance between work and family obligations. Parent-child interactions can suffer due to the associated stress. Overworked and stressed parents may lack the patience or stamina to participate in activities that foster their children's growth. Families should develop a plan to address these challenges and ensure that the parent-child bond remains intact and supportive.
- **Changing Expectations and Values:** As women's roles evolve, family expectations and values often change as well. Compared with previous generations, children may have different expectations regarding their parents' responsibilities. They may expect greater involvement and encouragement from their parents as they pursue their own goals. Parent-child interactions may become more transparent and communicative as a result, but if expectations are not met, it can also lead to conflict.

In contemporary households, gender roles continue to change. While progress has been made, many barriers remain to achieving greater equality. Individuals, families, and communities must work together to achieve this change by creating an environment that encourages fair and equal sharing of responsibilities. (Istiadah, 2023)

### **Intergenerational Value Conflict**

Intergenerational value conflict is a widespread phenomenon across all cultures and communities. This conflict arises from differences in worldviews, value systems, and life experiences influenced by various historical and social conditions.

Sources of Conflict (Andreas, 2022):

- **Differences in Beliefs and Values:** Traditional values that prioritize stability, hierarchy, and obedience are often held by older generations. On the other hand, younger generations prioritize social change and freedom of expression and tend to be more individualistic and progressive. These differences of opinion can lead to conflict in various areas of life, such as politics, religion, gender roles, and technology.

- **Lifestyle and Preferences:** Conflict can also arise from differences in lifestyle and preferences. Older generations may be more traditional and conservative, while younger generations may be more receptive to new experiences, technologies, and lifestyles. Misunderstandings and disagreements about the "good" or "right" way to live can arise from these differences.
- **Technology Use:** Generations accustomed to digital technology and those not are now separated by the rapid pace of technological development. Communication, information availability, and social relationships can be hampered by differences in perception and use of technology.
- **Political and Social Views:** Intergenerational conflict can also be exacerbated by differences in political and social beliefs. While older generations may be more cautious and tend to maintain the status quo, younger generations may be more active in social and political activism. These differences can lead to debates and disagreements on significant social issues.
- **Communication and Understanding:** Generational differences in communication and understanding can sometimes exacerbate conflict. Misunderstandings and misinterpretations can arise from intergenerational communication styles. Conflict can worsen if people are unable to hear and understand each other's perspectives.

Intergenerational conflicts over values are a normal aspect of social transformation. However, these disputes can be managed and even transformed into opportunities for development and learning if efforts are made to foster mutual respect, communication, and understanding.

### **The Impact of Inequality on Family Cohesion**

Whatever its manifestation, family inequality can have a significant impact on family cohesion. The emotional bonds, support, and sense of unity among family members are known as family cohesion. Family relationships can become strained by disparities that weaken these bonds. Differences in values between generations have a significant impact on the division of household labor. Conflict and inequality in the division of labor can result from differing attitudes and views on gender roles, family duties, and household efficiency. (Abdulloh & M. Yasin, 2024)

- **Gender Role Inequality:** Traditional notions of gender roles, which hold that women should be primarily responsible for childcare and housework, are often held by older generations. In contrast, younger generations typically hold more egalitarian beliefs, believing that husbands and wives should share responsibilities equally. Arguments and disputes over who should do what and how much time should be spent on housework can result from this inequality.
- **Different Standards and Expectations:** When it comes to childcare, home maintenance, and cleanliness, different generations also have different standards and expectations. While younger generations may be more accepting of clutter and prioritize efficiency over perfection, older generations may have higher expectations for neatness and order. Conflict can arise from this imbalance if one generation feels the other is not meeting their expectations.
- **Technology Use and Efficiency:** Younger generations are often more adept at using technology to improve household efficiency. They may manage household chores using apps, smart devices, or internet services. Due to their unfamiliarity with modern technology, older generations may have different approaches and ways of handling household responsibilities.
- **Communication and Negotiation:** Differences in values between generations can also affect a family's ability to appropriately discuss and negotiate how to divide household chores. Misunderstandings and conflicts can arise from differences in preferences and communication styles. To bridge the value gap and achieve a fair and efficient division of household chores, it is essential to have the ability to communicate honestly and freely and reach mutually beneficial agreements.

The division of household chores can be a source of intergenerational conflict. Family members can experience stress, disappointment, and dissatisfaction due to an unequal division of labor. Families must address this through honest communication, fair negotiation, and concessions to reach an agreement that reflects the expectations and values of each member.

The shift in gender roles is a complex and evolving phenomenon, seen in various forms in modern society. (M. Sholehuddin, 2023)

1. Increasing Women's Participation in the Workforce: Conventional standards that limit women's roles to the home are being challenged by the growing number of women entering the workforce and occupying professional positions. This is demonstrated by the increasing proportion of women in various fields of work, even in some previously male-dominated fields. (M. Sholehuddin, 2023)
2. Shifts in the Division of Household Tasks: While disparities persist, there is a trend toward more men helping with childcare and household chores. However, women continue to bear a heavier burden due to this unequal division of labor.
3. Challenges to Traditional Gender Roles: There is a growing movement to challenge traditional norms that limit gender roles, such as the idea that men should be the primary breadwinners and women should be the primary caregivers. The emergence of various family and relationship models that challenge these expectations is indicative of this.
4. Shifting Gender Expression: Gender expressions that transcend the male-female binary are becoming increasingly accepted. Acceptance of transgender and non-binary gender identities is part of this.
5. Shifting Leadership Roles: Women are increasingly taking leadership roles across industries, including industry, government, and social groups. However, to achieve full equality, gender biases and barriers still need to be addressed.
6. Technology Use and Role Change: The distribution of gender roles has been influenced by the way technology transforms work and home life. For example, women's responsibilities can be reduced by automating household tasks, and communication technology can help women enter the workforce.
7. Shifting Social Perspectives: While resistance persists, societal views on gender roles have changed. While implementing gender equality takes time and effort, more and more individuals are accepting and supporting it.

The form of generation gap is the difference in values, attitudes and behavior between generations which can give rise to conflict or misunderstanding.

1. Value and Belief Disparities: Due to varying upbringings in social, political, and economic environments, different generations develop unique values and worldviews. For example, younger generations may value individualism, innovation, and flexibility, while older generations may value loyalty, perseverance, and adherence to rules. These differences can create friction when it comes to social, professional, or family decision-making.
2. Different Communication Styles: Due to changing communication trends and technology, each generation has a unique communication style. Younger generations feel more comfortable interacting via email, social media, or text messages, while older generations may prefer in-person conversations or phone calls. These differences can lead to miscommunication and make it difficult to communicate clearly.
3. Diverse Perspectives on Technology: Levels of knowledge and proficiency in technology vary across generations. Older generations may be less familiar with or even reject new technologies, while younger generations are typically more adept at using them. When it comes to using technology in everyday life, in business, or at home, these differences can create tension.
4. Lifestyle Preference Variations: Entertainment, recreation, and leisure activities are lifestyle choices across generations. These differences can lead to miscommunication and make it difficult to organize family gatherings or spend quality time together.
5. Differences in Opinions about Work and Careers: Opinions about work and careers vary across generations. Younger generations may prioritize job happiness, flexibility, and opportunities for personal growth, while older generations may prioritize stability and job security. These differences can lead to conflict in professional decisions, relationships between superiors and subordinates, or career choices. (Nyoman, 2025)



**Impact on Family Cohesion**

- **Conflict and Dispute:** Imbalance and injustice can trigger conflict and disputes between family members.
- **Lack of Support:** Family members may feel a lack of support and understanding, which can lead to isolation and loneliness.
- **Decreased Communication:** Gaps can hinder open and honest communication between family members.
- **Weakness of Emotional Bonds:** Emotional bonds between family members can weaken, which can lead to division and disharmony.
- **Reduced Sense of Togetherness:** The sense of togetherness and family solidarity can be reduced, which can affect the well-being of all family members.

**IV. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL REFLECTION****Micro Implications**

Shifting gender roles, marked by increased female participation in the workforce and changing social norms, demand a more equitable division of household labor. The traditional unequal division of labor, where women bear the primary burden of household chores, no longer aligns with today's social realities. The reasons for the need for a more equitable division of labor (Istiadah, 2023): First, Gender Equality: An unfair division of household labor violates the principle of gender equality. Women should no longer be burdened by the dual responsibilities of work outside the home and household chores, while men contribute only minimally to household chores. Second, Family Well-Being: An equitable division of labor contributes to the overall well-being of the family. Reducing the workload of one party and increasing the participation of all family members in household chores can create a more harmonious home environment and reduce stress. Third, Child Development: An equitable division of labor creates a more balanced role model for children, teaching them about gender equality and the importance of collaboration in household life. The shift in gender roles presents an opportunity to redefine the division of household labor. Achieving a fair division of labor requires awareness, communication, and commitment from all parties, including individuals, families, and society as a whole. This is crucial for achieving gender equality and creating a more harmonious and productive household environment.

Intergenerational awareness, namely understanding and appreciating the differences in perspectives, values, and experiences between generations, is key to building effective and healthy communication between parents and children. This becomes even more important as time goes by because parents and children live in different eras, have had different life experiences, and may have different values. A lack of awareness of these differences can lead to misunderstandings and conflict. For example, parents may struggle to understand their children's use of social media, while children may struggle to understand their parents' concerns about their online safety. Communication styles also differ across generations. Parents may prefer direct, face-to-face communication, while children may be more comfortable communicating via text messages or social media. Awareness of these differences in communication styles is crucial for choosing the most effective communication method. Parents and children may have different hopes and expectations for their relationship. Parents may expect obedience and respect, while children may desire freedom and understanding. Awareness of these differing expectations is crucial for avoiding conflict and building respectful relationships. Generational conflict can occur when differences in perspectives, values, and expectations are not understood and appreciated. Intergenerational awareness helps prevent this conflict by promoting empathy and understanding. By understanding and appreciating differences between generations, parents and children can build stronger, more supportive relationships. This creates a closer bond and allows for more open and honest communication. Intergenerational awareness is a crucial element in building healthy communication between parents and children. By understanding and appreciating differences between generations, parents and children can build stronger, more supportive relationships and avoid conflict.

### **Meso Implications**

Family education plays a crucial role in shaping individuals who are gender-aware and able to communicate effectively across generations. This emphasizes the importance of these two aspects in creating a healthy, equal, and harmonious family environment. Gender literacy refers to a deep understanding of the social construction of gender, how gender is shaped by social and cultural norms, and how this impacts individual lives. Family education should emphasize gender equality, that men and women have equal rights and opportunities. This includes teaching children to respect gender differences without creating hierarchies or stereotypes (Harnita et al., 2021). Children need to be taught to recognize and challenge gender stereotypes that exist in society. These stereotypes can limit individual choices and opportunities and create inequality. Family education should encourage children to explore their interests and talents without being limited by gender stereotypes. Boys and girls should feel free to pursue their interests, regardless of traditional gender norms. Children should be taught how to reach consensus and negotiate in a variety of situations, including the division of household labor or family decision-making. This is essential for creating a democratic and equitable environment. Parents and other family members should be good role models in practicing gender equality. Their behavior and actions will influence children's understanding and behavior. Intergenerational openness refers to the ability to communicate effectively and empathetically with family members from different generations. Family members must learn to listen and understand different perspectives, even if they differ from their own (Mira, 2018).

Empathy and respect are crucial in intergenerational communication. Despite differences, it is important to find common ground and build consensus in family decision-making. This will strengthen family bonds and foster harmonious relationships. Family education that promotes gender literacy and intergenerational openness will create a healthier, more equal, and more harmonious environment. This will prepare children to become gender-aware individuals, able to communicate effectively, and build positive relationships with others across generations. Furthermore, educational institutions and communities play a crucial role in promoting gender literacy and intergenerational openness, and can do so through a variety of educational approaches. Comprehensive parenting modules can be effective educational tools for parents and prospective parents. Educational institutions can use parenting modules as teaching materials for parents (Khodiyah, 2022). These modules can be used in family-based activities, providing practical guidance for parents in homeschooling (Jazariyah, 2020). Parenting programs help broaden parents' knowledge in supporting their children's growth and development. Intergenerational discussions can open up insights into the importance of education in today's era, regardless of age. These activities can provide an inspiring space to discuss the transformation of learning methods, the role of technology in education, and the importance of intergenerational collaboration. The concept of gender literacy explains how gender is socially constructed and how this impacts the lives of individuals and families. Modules should also provide practical examples of how to apply the principles of gender equality in parenting. They should also provide guidance on how to communicate effectively with children of different ages and backgrounds. This includes understanding different perspectives, respecting differences of opinion, and building respectful relationships. Values-based dialogue on gender equality is important for providing students with an understanding of the meaning of gender equality and minimizing discrimination. This dialogue can discuss religious and cultural values that support equality and address gender stereotypes that persist in society. (Fitria, 2022) Values-based dialogue on gender equality emphasizes the importance of moral and ethical values in building an equal society.

### **Macro Implications**

The issue of gender inequality within the family has a significant impact on structural inequality at the national level. The family is often the first place where gender norms and roles are formed. If the division of household and childcare responsibilities is unequal, women are often trapped in traditional roles. This prevents women from fully participating in the workforce, contributing to economic inequality. Gender inequality within the family can result in less access to education for women, especially in certain regions. Unequal education between genders exacerbates inequalities in employment opportunities and income, and reinforces the cycle of poverty. In many families, women have little or no say in decision-making, both at the family and community levels. The lack of women's representation in decision-making contributes to policies

that ignore women's needs, reinforcing structural inequities. A culture that places women in a subordinate position reinforces gender stereotypes and discrimination. This creates an environment that is not conducive to gender equality, affecting all aspects of life, from education to public policy. Addressing gender disparities within families is a crucial step towards reducing national structural inequalities. By creating an environment that supports gender equality, we can increase women's participation in various sectors, reduce poverty, and build a more inclusive and sustainable society.

The decline in women's participation in the workforce and public sector decision-making is often rooted in unequal roles that begin at home. Women often bear a double burden: work responsibilities outside the home, along with household chores and childcare. This unequal division of labor at home leaves women with less time and energy to develop their careers and participate in public activities. This hinders women's career advancement, reduces their participation in the workforce, and limits their representation in decision-making positions (Larashati, 2022). Deeply entrenched gender stereotypes position women as the primary homemakers and men as breadwinners. These social expectations limit women's choices and prevent them from pursuing higher education or challenging careers (Zusmelia, 2012). These stereotypes influence perceptions of women's abilities and undermine their contributions to the public sector, thus reducing their opportunities for leadership positions (Rizky, 2023). Lack of access to affordable, quality childcare services and support for families with young children makes it difficult for women to balance work and family. This forces many women to choose between career and family, often leading to decreased participation in the workforce. By addressing role inequalities at home and addressing discrimination in the workplace, we can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for women to fully participate in the workforce and in public sector decision-making.

## V. CONCLUSION

Shifting gender roles and intergenerational gaps in family structures are interrelated issues that significantly impact the dynamics of family relationships. In the context of rapid social change, women's roles in society have undergone transformation, with their increased participation in the public sector and in decision-making. However, despite this progress, many families remain trapped by traditional norms that limit gender equality. Generational gaps arise when older generations maintain conventional views of gender roles, while younger generations seek more progressive change. This creates tension in family interactions, which can hinder communication and understanding between family members of different ages. To address these challenges, it is crucial for families to foster open dialogue that encompasses an understanding of gender equality. Education that promotes gender literacy and intergenerational openness can be an effective tool in creating an inclusive and harmonious environment. Therefore, achieving a better balance in gender roles and reducing the intergenerational gap requires a concerted effort from all family members to adapt to changing times and more egalitarian values.

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