



## Woman in Development and Politics

### Women's Experience of Domestic Labor Division

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#### ABSTRACT

##### Introduction

The division of domestic labor or the distribution of responsibilities and necessary tasks for maintaining the home and family members has historically evolved since industrialization and has been important as a social phenomenon in academic discussions since the 1970s. Social and economic contexts have always influenced the relationships and interactions between men and women and their gender roles in the family. They have regulated the relationships between them throughout the history of family development. This paper describes the women's experience of domestic labor division with their husbands in the family. So, there are two crucial questions including: What kind of relationship do women experience from the point of view of the division of household work during their joint life experience with their husbands?

Analytical concepts such as gender equality in the division of domestic labor, economic dependency, and gender deviation neutralization (in gender roles) under the theory of relative resources have been used.

##### Methodology

The thematic analysis method and semi-structured interviews with 15 women, including employed women and homemakers in the age groups of 20 to 60 years, were used in this paper. Most female respondents were 40 to 50 years old (47%), and most of them, equivalent to 40%, had a bachelor's degree. Women were selected from different occupational situations, including homemakers, teachers, hairdressers, tailors, employees, university professors, and domestic workers. Also, 80% of the interviews were conducted with working women and 20% with homemakers. Then, interviews were analyzed using Max QDA 2018 software to extract the relationship patterns of couples in the division of domestic labor.

##### Results

The findings indicate the extraction of 2 main themes, seven sub-themes, and 228 concepts. The main theme refers to non-participation and participation in the division of domestic labor in the family. Also, between these two main themes, variation in the division of household work can be defined and categorized into seven sub-themes. The first main theme includes four sub-themes: Stubborn femininity, Hegemonic masculinity, Self-sufficiency, and Persuasion. Stubborn femininity or hidden feminism theme refers to the power and dominance of women in the family. That power is not necessarily achieved through women's participation in economic provision and work outside the home. Still, other relative capital sources for women refer to the type of marriage, whether traditional Intragroup or modern. The social class and economic status of the woman's paternal family affect the stability of families. The second one, Hegemonic masculinity, has a long history in the world and shows the apparent power that belongs to men. The woman does not accept such a division of labor between couples, and a feeling of injustice is seen in the woman from this unbalanced division of decision-making power, distribution of family resources, and unequal division of labor. Self-sufficiency means women are forced to take care of the family and play the role of breadwinner because of the absence of a man at home, the man's imprisonment, the man's incapacity, or his death. Persuasion is a legitimate acceptance of hegemonic masculinity by

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delegating men's duties to women. In this case, the woman may be the breadwinner of the house. However, by satisfying the man in areas such as her emotional needs and those of her children, she accepts that the man only fulfills those needs and does not expect him to participate in the division of household work. In relationships based on persuasion, women accept more tasks because of some reasonable evaluation of men's function in other areas. The economic triangulation of women is a form of the relationship between men and women when they are equal in strength and power. Economic triangulation is about Men and women who are similar in their strength and power; in other words, women, like men, have relative resources and financial, economic, and cultural capital. The second main theme also includes two sub-themes: The gradual participation of men and Equality in relations. The gradual involvement of men in household chores refers to women's resistance and how they choose to avoid housework. In this relationship between couples, the man initially believes in the traditional division of work, i.e., the man's bread-making and the woman's housekeeping. However, men become influenced by friends and reference groups and gradually participate in household chores. They play an active role as a spouse because of the observational learning and socialization process, which transfer new values in the family. Equality in relations refers to relationships based on extensive participation and equal division of work, understanding between couples in the division of household work. Of course, this understanding is not due to powerlessness or coercion but is based on marriage equality. The last theme of couples' relationships is based on the understanding or extensive participation of men and women in household chores, which ends in equal involvement. Both men and women try to participate intellectually, emotionally, psychologically, and behaviorally and experience gender roles as much as possible.

#### **Conclusion**

Interestingly, the Iranian family and the relationships observed between men and women are distinctly different from the other studies. The variety of types introduced in the Iranian family shows the change and evolution in the traditional Iranian society, the agency and rethinking of women in gender roles, and the division of conventional domestic work. However, regarding the causes and contexts of the formation of this ideal relationship between the studied couples, it is not possible to refer to foreign studies and the experiences of women in other countries, such as Eastern European countries and France, which are based on egalitarian ideas through the promotion of women's participation in the workforce or countries with family policies such as Norway and gender ideology, he said. Instead, the ethnic, cultural, and social diversity under the macro-policy strategies in the field of the Iranian family under Islamic thought and influenced by the characteristic of collectivism in the Iranian culture creates a different experience for Iranian women and can be a debatable issue in future studies. However, what can be accepted without a doubt is that Iranian women are entering a process of rethinking the division of work and power in the family and the beginning of the process of redistributing family responsibilities.

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