

Gender Discourse in the Perspective of Comte and Durkheim's Structuralism

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze how social structures influence gender roles based on the structuralist perspective through the thoughts of Auguste Comte and Emile Durkheim. The study applies a qualitative descriptive method with a literature study approach, analyzing academic texts to identify the construction of gender roles through cultural norms and social institutions. Comte's three stages of societal evolution (theological, metaphysical, and positive) highlight the dynamic nature of gender roles shaped by dominant epistemologies. Meanwhile, Durkheim's theory of mechanical and organic solidarity frames the gender role transition from rigid traditional assignments to more flexible roles in modern society. The results show that although structural changes have occurred, gender inequality persists due to lingering patriarchal norms. Therefore, gender equity requires systemic reforms in policies and socio-cultural structures. Understanding the underlying structure of society helps to reframe gender roles toward a more egalitarian social order.

Keyword: Gender Roles; Structuralism; Comte; Durkheim; Social Structure

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana struktur sosial memengaruhi peran gender berdasarkan perspektif strukturalisme melalui pemikiran Auguste Comte dan Emile Durkheim. Metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan studi pustaka, menelaah teks-teks akademik untuk menelusuri konstruksi peran gender melalui norma budaya dan institusi sosial. Teori tiga tahap perkembangan masyarakat menurut Comte (teologis, metafisik, dan positif) menunjukkan bahwa peran gender dibentuk oleh sistem pengetahuan dominan yang berkembang seiring waktu. Sementara itu, teori solidaritas mekanik dan organik dari Durkheim menjelaskan transisi peran gender dari pembagian tradisional yang kaku menuju peran yang lebih fleksibel dalam masyarakat modern. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun telah terjadi perubahan struktural, ketimpangan gender tetap berlangsung akibat norma patriarkal yang mengakar. Oleh karena itu, kesetaraan gender membutuhkan reformasi sistemik melalui kebijakan dan transformasi budaya. Memahami struktur masyarakat memungkinkan perumusan ulang peran gender menuju tatanan sosial yang lebih setara.

Kata Kunci: Peran Gender; Strukturalisme; Comte; Durkheim; Struktur sosial

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1. Introduction

Gender inequality is one of the social problems that continues to take place in contemporary society. This problem is not only related to the biological differences between men and women, but also to how society shapes norms, values, and rules that determine social positions and roles based on gender. In various social contexts, the division of gender roles often results in unbalanced relationships, where men are more placed in the public sphere as leaders, decision-makers, and economic actors, while women are more often associated with domestic and reproductive responsibilities. These conditions show that gender cannot be understood solely as an individual characteristic, but rather as the result of social processes that are formed and maintained through the structure of society. Contemporary gender studies also show that gender inequality does not arise only through individual actions, but through social systems that govern how men and women are positioned in social life (Butler, 1990; Collins & Bilge, 2020; Smith, 1987).

In the Indonesian context, gender inequality is still seen in various fields such as education, work, family, and political representation. Various studies show that gender construction is influenced by cultural norms, religious values, social policies, and the structure of society that develops in a community (Maulida, 2021; Wati Alwi & Sofiatulhaq, 2024). Research Beti et al. (2023), for example, shows that patriarchal culture in the Naob Village community plays a role in maintaining the dominant position of men in the social structure of the family and community. Similarly, research Yulianti & Syahriyah (2023) explained that the social construction of parenting responsibilities attached to women still strengthens the unequal division of roles in the family. These findings show that gender inequality is not only a problem of relationships between individuals but also related to the social structures that shape the way society understands the roles of men and women.

To understand how social structures shape the division of gender roles, a structural approach is one of the relevant perspectives. In this study, structuralism is understood as an approach that sees society as a system consisting of interrelated elements, such as norms, values, institutions, and patterns of social relations that influence individual behavior. This perspective is in line with Levi-Strauss's view of structuralism which emphasizes that various social practices, including kinship systems, do not stand alone, but are shaped by structures that work behind social relations that appear on the surface (Munir, 2015). Thus, gender can be understood not as something natural and fixed, but as part of a social structure that undergoes a process of formation and change. Through this perspective, the division of gender roles can be analyzed based on how society creates certain social rules, maintains them, and transforms when the social structure changes.

In the study of classical sociology, the thought of Auguste Comte and Emile Durkheim provided an important theoretical framework for understanding the relationship between social structure and the division of roles in society. Although neither figure specifically developed a theory of gender, their thinking offers a basis for analysis of how social order is shaped through norms, institutions, and the division of social functions. Comte through the idea of positivism and the three-stage law explained that the development of society takes place through changes in the way of human thinking which then affects social organizations. Meanwhile, Durkheim through the concepts of mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity showed that changes in the complexity of society will affect the division of labor and social relations between individuals. Both perspectives provide room for analysis to understand that gender roles are not only related to personal choices but are also influenced by historically developed social structures.

Although much of the study of gender has been done through the perspectives of feminism, social construction, and power relations, most research has focused more on how patriarchy and social domination produce gender inequality. This approach makes an important contribution to understanding women's experiences and power mechanisms, but there is still room for study of how classical social theory explains the formation and change of gender roles through the structure of society more broadly. Studies linking Comte and Durkheim's structuralism to gender issues are still relatively limited, especially in looking at how societal development, changes in social solidarity, and the division of social functions play a role in shaping gender constructions. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the division of gender roles through the perspective of Comte and Durkheim's structuralism. This research offers a contribution by viewing gender not only as a cultural phenomenon or power relations, but as part of a structural process influenced by social changes, norms, and societal institutions.

2. Theoretical Review

2.1. Gender Understanding

Gender is understood as a social construct that affects the role, nature, and function of individuals in society. In research Maulida (2021) that the gender difference between men and women is the result of the process of socializing values, norms, and culture accepted by society. This process functions on the formation of different social roles between everyone, so that it can lead to inequality in various aspects of life, including political, economic, and social. Research Hermanto (2017) It also argues that gender theory focuses more on equality and the improvement of women's position as part of the goal to achieve justice and well-being.

Butler (1990) in concept "*Gender performativity*" argues that "gender is not what one has, but what one does". Actions and ways of speaking shape individuals in the gender system. For example, pink associated with women and blue with men is a social construct, not a biological factor. The functional structure approach sees gender as part of a social structure that plays a role in maintaining stability and order. According to Parsons (1951) that "the division of roles by gender reflects society's need for balance". Men are often associated with instrumental roles, namely breadwinners and family leaders, while women carry out expressive roles, namely taking care of the household and caring for children. In this context, the family functions as an ideal social unit if these two roles go in harmony. However, this approach has been criticized for normalizing gender inequality, thus ignoring how this division of roles often disadvantages women.

R. W. Connell in his book *Masculinities* (1995) argues that "gender is not only about oppressed women, but also how masculinity is socially constructed to maintain male dominance in society". Connell introduces the concept "*Hegemonic masculinity*" or hegemonic masculinity, which refers to a dominant form of masculinity that suppresses other forms of masculinity and maintains female subordination. In patriarchal societies, hegemonic masculinity is often associated with physical strength, dominance, and assertiveness. This theory suggests that gender is not just about inequality between men and women but also involves power relations among men themselves.

Overall, gender theory aims to provide an idea of gender that should encompass both biological and social aspects, with an emphasis on the social changes necessary to achieve equality (Wibowo et al., 2022). Therefore, the understanding of gender must be more specific in order to be able to adapt to the patriarchal culture which is of course still inherent in society, so that it can easily find the right solution in improving the quality of life in society (Khanifah & Legowo, 2022).

2.2. Structuralism

In research of Manshur (2019), structuralism developed in the 20th century and has its roots in structural linguistics introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure, which later influenced various other disciplines. The term "structuralism" is used in a variety of fields with different meanings. In general, there are two main definitions of structuralism. First, as a method in the humanities that is based on the linguistic theory of Ferdinand de Saussure. Second, as a school of philosophy that analyzes the history of philosophy with a structural approach. Excerpted from the book *Literary Theory An Anthology* (2017) Claude Levi-Strauss, considered that "the fundamental structure of myth and folklore is universal due to the existence of a uniform human mindset". In Levi-Strauss's view, all cultures have the same structure behind apparent external differences. Furthermore, Roland Barthes in his book *Barthes Mythologies* uses a structuralism approach to analyze texts and highlight how meaning in literature does not originate from individual authors, but rather from pre-existing sign systems in culture. Barthes looks at how popular culture shapes modern myths that reflect social ideologies (Leak, 1994).

Jacques Lacan also gave a comprehensive view of structuralism in the field of psychoanalysis. Lacan reinterpreted Freud's theory by emphasizing that the unconscious has a structure like language. According to Lacan, individual identity is formed through the process of mirrors (*Mirror Stage*), in which a child recognizes himself in the reflection of a mirror and forms an ego based on an ideal image. But this method is incomplete because the unconscious continues to work behind consciousness. This shows that the structure of human identity is never stable and is always influenced by language and symbolism in culture (Alfionita, 2019).

Durkheim viewed structuralism as a rule in society that governs each individual. According to him, individuals do not act freely, but are always influenced by social facts,

namely norms, values, and rules that exist in society (Nayebi et al., 2017). Durkheim in his book *The Rules of Sociological Method*, affirms that society must be studied as a system, not just a collection of individuals. He rejected the idea that human behavior is determined solely by personal choice, but rather by the rules that make up the social structure (Nayebi et al., 2017). In line with research Seduced (2016), Durkheim argued that the individual is inseparable from society, and that human behavior is often influenced by the prevailing norms around him.

In Comte's structuralistic thought, he argued that society is a system composed of various interrelated elements. Society functions like an organism, in which each part has its own role to ensure the balance and survival of society. Comte placed more emphasis on the development of society through historical stages and the positivist approach (Rain, 2022). One of Comte's main ideas relevant to structuralism is his theory of social statics and social dynamics. Social statics describes the conditions under which social elements interact in a way that maintains stability and order in society. In this case, Comte argues that society is made up of various components, such as institutions, norms, and values that function interactively to support social balance (Rain, 2022). This is in line with the analysis of structuralism which emphasizes structures that remain functional and persist in the face of existing social challenges. While social dynamics focuses on the changes that occur in the structure of society over time. This process includes social transformations triggered by various factors, such as technological, economic, and cultural changes (Chabibi, 2019). In the context of structuralism, social dynamics suggests that even though elements in society seek to maintain stability, change remains an essential part of influencing existing patterns of interaction and social structure. Another important concept of Comte that is relevant to structuralism is the hierarchy of science, in which he places sociology as the supreme science that examines society. From the perspective of structuralism, this is in line with the idea that society can be understood as a system consisting of various interrelated elements. Although Comte's approach is better known in positivism, his ideas exerted a significant influence on the development of structuralism in the social sciences (Emilio et al., 2022).

3. Method

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a library research design that aims to analyze the construction of gender roles through the perspective of structuralism of Auguste Comte and Emile Durkheim. Research data was obtained through searching relevant academic literature, both in the form of primary and secondary sources. The primary sources in this study include the main works of the figures on which the analysis is based, such as *The Rules of Sociological Method* and *The Division of Labor in Society* by Emile Durkheim, as well as the main literature on Auguste Comte's positivist thought and the development of society. In addition, this study also uses theoretical works in gender studies such as *Judith Butler's Gender Trouble*, R. W. Connell's *Masculinities*, and structural feminist works such as Dorothy Smith and Patricia Hill Collins to expand the analysis of the relationship between social structures, power, and gender construction. Meanwhile, secondary sources were obtained from national and international journal articles, academic books, and the results of previous research that discussed gender sociology, structuralism, social change theory, and gender division of labor.

The data collection process is carried out through a systematic literature search on several academic databases, such as Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, and relevant national journal databases. The search was conducted in the period January-April 2025 using keywords such as "gender roles", "social structure and gender", "Auguste Comte and positivism", "Durkheim social solidarity", "gender inequality", and "feminist structural analysis". The literature found was then sorted based on its relevance to the focus of the research. The criteria for selecting literature include: (1) having a direct relationship with the theme of gender roles and social structures; (2) discuss the thought of Comte, Durkheim, or relevant gender theory; (3) published in academic journals, scientific books, or works that have academic credibility; and (4) available in full-text form so that it can be analyzed in its entirety. Literature that is popular, does not have a strong theoretical basis, or is not directly related to the focus of the research is not included in the analysis. Through this process, the research obtained several key literatures that became the basis for building conceptual discussions.

Data analysis was carried out using content analysis with reference to the Berelson approach, namely through the process of identification, categorization, interpretation, and

synthesis of the main ideas in the literature studied. The units of analysis in this study are theoretical concepts related to social structure, division of labor, social solidarity, gender construction, and power relations in society. The analysis stage is carried out through three main processes: first, identifying the main concepts in Comte and Durkheim's thought regarding the development of society and social order; second, categorizing how the concept relates to the formation and change of gender roles; and third, make a critical interpretation by connecting it to the perspective of contemporary gender theory, especially regarding how social structures can maintain or change gender inequality. Thus, this study not only describes classical theory, but also analyzes how social structures work in shaping the dynamics of gender roles in society.

4. Results

4.1. Social Structure as the Basis for the Formation of Gender Roles

Gender in social life cannot be understood only as a biological difference between men and women, but as a system of meaning formed through social processes that take place in society. The division of roles based on gender arises through the interaction between norms, values, habits, and social institutions that determine how individuals are expected to act in accordance with a particular gender identity. From a structural perspective, society is not just a collection of individuals who act freely but is a system that has rules and patterns of relationships that influence human behavior. These social structures work through family, education, religion, economics, and culture that constantly produce a certain understanding of the positions of men and women (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2011; Soekanto, 2017). Thus, gender roles are not something that arises naturally but are formed through social processes that are inherited and maintained in people's lives.

The formation of gender roles through social structures can be seen from how society creates a division of functions between public and domestic spaces. In many traditional societies, men are more often placed as breadwinners, family leaders, and key actors in public spaces, while women are associated with reproductive functions, nurturing, and household management. This division has not only become a social practice, but has developed into a norm that is considered reasonable and even a moral standard in society. Smith (1987) explains that women's experiences are often shaped by the social structures that govern their positions in various institutions of life. This suggests that gender inequality does not always arise through discriminatory actions directly but can work through structures that make the division of certain roles seem normal and unquestionable.

This view is further clarified through the concept of gender social construction which sees that gender identity and roles are produced through repetitive social practices. Butler (1990) explains that gender is not an identity that is permanently attached to an individual, but is formed through social actions, norms, and expectations that continue to be carried out in daily life. This means that society has a certain mechanism in teaching, directing, and controlling individual behavior to be in accordance with the accepted gender category. In this context, social structures act as spaces that produce while maintaining an understanding of masculinity and femininity. Therefore, it is not enough to change gender inequality only through changing individual attitudes but also requires changes to the social structure on which it is formed.

In the context of Indonesian society, social structures have a great influence on the formation of gender roles because they are influenced by cultural values, family systems, religious interpretations, and social habits that develop in the community. Various studies show that patriarchal construction is still one of the factors that maintain an unbalanced division of gender roles. Research *Beti et al. (2023)*, for example, shows that patriarchal culture in certain societies still places men as the party who has greater authority in family and social decision-making. Meanwhile, research *Yulianti & Syahriyah (2023)* shows that the assumption of childcare as women's primary responsibility reinforces the unequal division of domestic labor. The findings show that gender works through social structures that link cultural values to everyday life practices.

In addition to forming inequality, social structures also can undergo change. Gender roles are not always fixed because changes in economics, education, technology, and social development can affect the way society understands the functions of men and women. *Connell (1994)* explains that the construction of masculinity and femininity is always in the process of social negotiation influenced by changes in power relations. In the modern context, the increasing participation of women in education and the world of work suggests that social

structures can open new spaces for changes in gender roles. However, these changes do not necessarily eliminate inequality because old norms can persist in the same social institutions. Thus, social structures have a dual nature, that is, maintaining a certain gender pattern while allowing the emergence of social transformation.

Patricia Hill Collins' perspective expands understanding of how social structures work through complex power relations. Collins & Bilge (2020) explains that the experience of inequality is not only influenced by one factor, but is formed through relationships between gender, class, culture, and various other social positions. This view suggests that the division of gender roles cannot be separated from the broader social context because each society has different mechanisms in determining who has access to resources and authority. In the framework of this research, thinking shows that social structure not only results in the division of roles, but also determines the value and reward given to these roles. Therefore, gender analysis through a structural perspective needs to look at how society builds social hierarchies through the division of certain functions.

Based on this description, it can be understood that social structures are an important basis in the formation of gender roles because they provide rules, values, and mechanisms that direct individual behavior in society. Gender is formed through the reciprocal relationship between individuals and social structures, where society shapes individuals through existing norms, while individuals collectively maintain or change those norms. This understanding provides an important basis for seeing Comte and Durkheim's thinking about society, since both figures place social structure as the main factor in explaining social order and change. Thus, the discussion of gender is not only related to the relationship between men and women, but also about how the structure of society creates, maintains, and transforms the division of social roles.

4.2. The Division of Gender Roles in Auguste Comte's Perspectives

Auguste Comte's thinking on the development of society through the three-stage law provides an important framework for understanding how the division of gender roles is formed and undergoes changes following the development of social structures. For Comte, society is not fixed, but develops through a change in the way of human thinking that moves from simple understanding to a more rational and scientific pattern of social life (Hasanah, 2019). In the context of gender, these developments show that the division of roles between men and women is not only related to individual differences, but is also influenced by the value systems, knowledge, and social organizations that develop in society. Each stage of social development reflects how society gives meaning to the positions of men and women and determines the social functions that are considered appropriate for both. Thus, Comte's thought can be used to see gender as part of an ever-evolving process of changing social structures.

At the theological stage, people's lives are still heavily influenced by religious beliefs, traditions, and supernatural explanations in regulating social relations. In these conditions, the division of gender roles is generally formed based on the understanding of the natural differences between men and women, so that men are more often placed as family leaders and social authority holders, while women are directed to domestic roles such as childcare and family moral guarding. The social structure at this stage tends to maintain a patriarchal pattern because religious norms and traditions are the main basis in determining the social function of individuals. However, this does not mean that women are completely devoid of social space. Research Muttaqien (2019) regarding the Sunda Wiwitan tradition in the Baduy community shows that women have an important involvement in the implementation of rituals and cultural sustainability, although they remain in a social structure that distinguishes functions between men and women. This shows that at the theological level, women still have a social contribution, but these contributions are within the confines of a structure that places men at the center of authority and decision-making.

The shift towards the metaphysical stage shows a shift in the way people understand social life from dependence on religious explanations to the use of abstract concepts, philosophy, and rational thought in explaining social reality (Anwar et al., 2023). In the context of gender, this stage is a transitional phase because the traditional division of roles is still maintained, but ideas are beginning to emerge that question the limitations of women's social space. Women began to gain access to education, although these opportunities were still directed towards supporting family functions and social morality, rather than as a form of full equality with men (Br Ginting & Soiman, 2024). Establishment *Seminary for Young Ladies* by Emma Willard in 1814 is one example of the emergence of educational opportunities

for women, even though it was still within the limits of the social norms that prevailed at that time (Willard, 1819). In the same period, Mary Wollstonecraft's thought through *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) began to challenge traditional views by asserting that women have the same rational capacity and need equal education in order to contribute to society. Social change is also seen through the development of industries that encourage women to enter the workforce, even though they still face discrimination in the form of wage differences and limited social positions (Engels & Untermann, 2021). This condition suggests that the metaphysical stage becomes a transitional space when the gender structure begins to undergo negotiation, but is still limited by entrenched social norms, as John Stuart Mill criticized that women's inequality stems more from social constructions than biological factors (Pramanick, 2022).

The positive stage in Comte's thought describes the development of society that began to make science, rationality, and empirical methods the basis for understanding social life. In relation to gender, this stage represents an important change as the positions of men and women begin to be judged based on social abilities and contributions, not just on the basis of traditions or assumptions about natural differences. The development of education, economic participation, and women's political involvement are indicators that social structures are beginning to undergo a transformation towards a more open pattern of relationships. Research Yunara et al. (2023) It shows that increasing women's participation in the economic and political sectors makes a positive contribution to community development through increasing women's independence and capacity. In addition, the development of labor regulations also shows the recognition of women's rights in the public space through the protection of biological needs and the prevention of employment discrimination (Rohmany et al., 2023). However, as emphasized Hooks (2000), gender equality is not only related to the granting of formal rights, but also requires changes to cultural structures and social institutions that still perpetuate inequality. Thus, the positive stage shows that social rationality can open opportunities for equality, but the transformation of gender structures still requires more profound changes.

Based on Comte's social evolution, the division of gender roles can be understood as a phenomenon that changes along with the development of the structure of society. At the theological level, gender is more determined by traditions and beliefs that result in a relatively fixed division of social functions. At the metaphysical stage, a rationalization process emerges that begins to open space for women to obtain education, enter the workforce, and question social restrictions that were previously accepted as natural. Meanwhile, the positive stage shows a greater possibility of transformation when society begins to use knowledge and the principle of equality as a basis in regulating social relations. Nevertheless, Comte's perspective also has limitations because increasingly rational social developments do not necessarily automatically eliminate the patriarchal structures that have been inherent in the institutions of society. Therefore, the main contribution of Comte's thought to gender studies lies in his ability to explain how changes in the way of thinking of society can affect changes in the social structures that shape the roles of men and women.

4.3. The Division of Gender Roles in Emile Durkheim's Perspective

Emile Durkheim's thought provides an important perspective in understanding the relationship between social structures and the formation of gender roles through the concept of social facts and social solidarity. Durkheim saw society as a system that has norms, values, and rules that are outside of the individual, but have the power to direct their social behavior (Maulidia, 2019). In *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1982), Durkheim asserted that society cannot be understood only through individual actions, but must be seen as a structure that has a certain pattern of relationships and order. This view shows that the division of gender roles does not arise solely from the personal choices of men and women but is influenced by social norms that develop in society. Through the concept of social solidarity, Durkheim explained that the form of social relations in society determines how individuals understand their functions and positions in common life. Therefore, social solidarity theory becomes relevant to look at how the structure of society shapes, maintains, and changes the construction of gender roles.

In the concept of mechanical solidarity, Durkheim explained that traditional societies have social attachments built through a relatively uniform commonality of values, beliefs, and ways of life. In these conditions, collective consciousness has a strong influence in regulating individual behavior so that people tend to maintain inherited patterns of life. Research Cape

(2023) regarding the fishing community on Rempang Island, it shows that cultural values such as mutual cooperation and solidarity remain the basis of social relations of the community despite facing modernization changes. These conditions illustrate that societies with mechanical solidarity maintain order through adherence to the common values that have become part of the collective identity. In the context of gender, this kind of social structure tends to result in a more fixed division of roles because the functions of men and women are understood based on traditional norms that have been accepted together.

The division of gender roles in society with mechanical solidarity can be seen through how social responsibility is differentiated by gender and inherited as part of society's habits. Research Jumiati et al. (2023) About the tradition *Squirt* In the Bima Tribe society, it shows that the traditional social structure still maintains the division of functions between men and women, where men carry out more responsibilities in the public space, while women play a role in the domestic realm and family care. The pattern suggests that mechanical solidarity works through a uniformity of values that makes the division of gender roles part of social order. Individuals who deviate from predetermined roles often face social pressure because they are perceived as contrary to society's collective values. This is in line with research Widyasari & Suyanto (2023) which shows that despite the changes in the division of household labor, society still has a tendency to maintain traditional role patterns that have long developed. Thus, in mechanical solidarity, gender serves as one of the mechanisms that maintains social integration through the commonality of societal expectations and norms.

In contrast to mechanical solidarity, organic solidarity emerges in modern societies that have a higher level of social complexity due to the increased division of labor and specialization of social functions. In this condition, individuals are no longer bound primarily because of the similarity of values, but because of the interdependence with each other through differences in roles and expertise. These changes provide room for the transformation of gender roles because a person's social position begins to be determined more by their abilities and contributions than based solely on biological identity. Durkheim explained that modern society needs a more flexible division of functions for social systems to run effectively. In line with that, (Ridgeway, 2009) Explains that the development towards organic solidarity opens up opportunities for the reconfiguration of gender roles because modern society requires more diverse individual abilities in carrying out various social functions. In this context, women began to gain greater opportunities to enter the fields of education, employment, economy, and public spaces that were previously dominated by men (R. Connell, 2009; Lorber, 2010).

The transformation towards organic solidarity shows that changes in social structures can expand the space for women's participation, but the process does not take place without hindrance. Women's increasing access to education is one of the important factors that drives changes in women's social position because education provides the ability to participate in various professional fields (Chafetz, 1990). In addition, the increasing economic independence of women has also changed the way society views women's roles, which were previously often associated only with domestic functions (Archer & Lloyd, 2002). However, these changes do not completely eliminate inequality as women still face issues such as wage gaps, limited access to leadership, and the dual burden of public work and domestic responsibilities (Lorber, 2010; Murray, 1990). This condition suggests that organic solidarity does create new flexibility in the division of gender roles, but that old social structures can still survive through cultural norms and practices that have not completely changed.

Furthermore, the presence of women in the public sphere in modern society does not necessarily mean that the gender structure has been fully equal. Although women are increasingly involved in the world of work, education, and politics, there are still structural biases that limit them from achieving strategic positions in various social institutions. Connell (2009) explains that gender relations in modern society are still influenced by power patterns that produce inequality in the distribution of opportunities and authority. This suggests that the shift from mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity does not automatically erase patriarchal legacies but creates a new form of gender challenge. In this perspective, changes in economic and social structures need to be followed by changes in cultural values so that women not only have access to public spaces but also gain equal recognition in the structure of society. As affirmed Lorber (2010), gender equality requires institutional changes that are able to overcome social norms that still limit the position of women.

Based on Durkheim's perspective of social solidarity, the division of gender roles can be understood as part of the dynamics of social structures that change as society develops. Mechanical solidarity shows how traditional societies maintain gender roles through a strong

commonality of values, traditions, and collective consciousness. Meanwhile, organic solidarity shows that the development of social complexity opens possibilities for women to carry out more diverse social functions based on their abilities and expertise. However, these changes do not always result in equality because social structures still carry old values that maintain gender inequality in various forms (Giddens, 2009). Therefore, Durkheim's thought makes an important contribution to understanding that gender is not just a relationship between individual men and women, but part of a social system that is constantly undergoing negotiations between regularity and change. In the context of modern society, efforts to achieve gender equality require changes not only in the division of labor, but also in the values, norms, and social institutions that shape women's experiences in society. (Ningtyas et al., 2023).

5. A Comparative Synthesis of Comte and Durkheim's Thoughts on the Distribution of Gender Roles

The discussion of Comte and Durkheim shows that the division of gender roles cannot be separated from the social structures that govern people's lives. Both have similarities in seeing society as a system that has order but differ in explaining how that order is formed. Comte explained society through the laws of social evolution which emphasized function and order based on the development of human thought, while Durkheim saw society through the concepts of social facts, solidarity, and the division of labour that made social change possible (J. H. Turner, 2003). These differences resulted in a different understanding of gender, in which Comte tended to see the division of male and female roles as part of a relatively fixed social order, while Durkheim saw it as a social phenomenon that could change as the structure of society evolved (Tiryakian, 2016).

In Comte's perspective, gender division is understood through a functional approach influenced by views regarding biological and moral differences between men and women. Comte saw the family as a basic social unit, with men performing intellectual and material functions, while women played a role in maintaining family morality and social harmony (Wernick, 2001). This view shows that Comte understood gender differences as a form of functional differentiation necessary to maintain the order of society. As explained Sydie (1994), Comte saw gender inequality not as a social problem, but as part of the natural order that creates social balance. Although women have an important role in the moral life of society, their position is still more limited to the domestic space than the public space (Pickering, 2009). Thus, Comte's theory helps explain how social structures maintain gender divisions, but it does explain the aspects of power and the social constructs that shape them.

Table 1. A Comparison of Comte and Durkheim's Thinking on Division of Gender Roles

Aspects	Auguste Comte	Emile Durkheim
Basic thinking	Social evolution and order of society	Social facts, solidarity, and division of labor
Gender formation	Based on biological and moral functions that are considered natural	Based on the development of social structure and the division of community functions
Women's position	Family moral guardian with limited public space	Individuals with social functions that can change according to the development of society
Gender change	Relatively limited as gender function is considered fixed	More open due to changes in solidarity and social institutions
Education	Forming men and women according to their respective social functions	Forming collective and individual social consciousness
Analytical contributions	Explain how structures maintain gender patterns	Explain how the structure undergoes changes
Limitations	Tends to be essentialist and doesn't see gender power relations	Lack of attention to female agency

Instead, Durkheim provides a more dynamic understanding of gender through the concepts of social solidarity and the division of labor. According to Durkheim, the development of society from mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity led to changes in the division of social functions, including the relationship between men and women (Durkheim & Halls, 1997). In this perspective, gender roles are influenced not only by biological factors, but also by social needs and the development of societal institutions. Changes in social structure, education, and division of labor allowed women to gain greater space in public life. In addition, the concept of anomie in *Suicide* shows that social change can affect an individual's experience differently

based on his or her social position, including in gender relations (Lehmann, 1994). Therefore, Durkheim's approach makes it more possible to understand gender as a social construct that undergoes historical changes.

Based on this comparison, Comte and Durkheim made distinct but complementary contributions to understanding the division of gender roles. Comte explains how social norms, values, and functions shape and maintain gender structures in society, while Durkheim points out that these structures can change through the development of solidarity, division of labor, and social institutions. Thus, gender can be understood because of the relationship between social order and the dynamics of societal change. This perspective shows that the division of gender roles is not only inherited through tradition but also continues to be negotiated through the social developments that occur.

However, both ideas remain limited from a feminist perspective because women are more often placed as objects in social systems than as subjects who have agency for change. Comte is stronger in explaining how social structures maintain gender divisions but tends to see gender differences as natural. Meanwhile, Durkheim provides more space to see gender change through social transformation, although it does not fully address women's experiences and power relations in society (Lehmann, 1994). In contemporary gender studies, Durkheim's approach is closer to understanding that gender norms are historical and can change through changes in social structures (Seidman, 2011). Therefore, the synthesis of these two ideas shows that social structures have two main functions in the formation of gender, namely maintaining existing relationship patterns while opening the possibility of transformation towards more equal social relations.

The results of this study show that the division of gender roles is part of the social process that is formed through structures, norms, and values that develop in society. These findings reinforce the classical structuralistic view that individual actions cannot be separated from the social systems that govern them. In Auguste Comte's perspective, gender division can be understood as a form of differentiation of social functions that are considered to maintain the order of society, especially through family institutions and moral values that govern the positions of men and women. Meanwhile, Emile Durkheim's perspective shows that gender structures are not fixed because changes in social solidarity, division of labor, and the development of societal institutions can result in transformations in the social roles of individuals (Durkheim & Lukes, 1982; Pickering 2009). Thus, this study shows that gender is in a dynamic relationship between the reproduction of social structures and the possibility of social change.

Although Comte and Durkheim's approach provides an important basis for understanding the relationship between social structures and gender, the analysis needs to be extended through a contemporary gender perspective that sees that social structures can also be spaces for the reproduction of power. Dorothy Smith's thinking explains that social institutions that are considered neutral are often formed based on the experiences of the dominant group so that women's experiences become less visible in the structure of society (Smith, 1987). This shows that the division of gender roles is not only related to social functions, but also related to access to power, public space, and decision-making. In addition, Patricia Hill Collins' perspective shows that gender experiences are influenced by various social factors such as culture, class, and social position (Collins & Bilge, 2020). Therefore, the results of this study broaden the understanding of structuralism by showing that social structures not only maintain order but can also maintain inequality.

This perspective is further strengthened through Judith Butler's thinking that sees gender as something that continues to be produced through social norms, practices, and repetition. In the context of this study, the division of gender roles persists not only because of formal rules, but also because of cultural acceptance of certain values regarding the positions of men and women. This shows that gender change is not enough to be done through policy or institutional changes but also requires a change in the way society understands and builds meaning about gender roles. In the context of religion and society, these findings show that religion has a complex position in gender formation. Religion can be an institution that maintains certain social norms, but it can also be a source of transformation when religious values are understood through the principles of justice, human dignity, and social change. Thus, the relationship between religion and gender needs to be understood as a process of social interpretation that continues to develop.

The findings of this study also have relevance to the condition of Indonesian society, where gender construction is still influenced by the interaction between culture, family, religion, and

social institutions. Previous research has shown that patriarchal culture still influences the division of roles between men and women, especially in family and social life (Beti et al., 2023; Maulida, 2021). The greater division of domestic responsibilities to women also shows how social norms continue to perpetuate certain gender patterns (Yulianti & Syahriyah, 2023). However, developments in education, economics, and public policy have opened up greater space for women to participate in the public sector and the world of work (Rohmany et al., 2023). This condition indicates a process of change from traditional gender structures to more flexible relationship patterns, as explained through Durkheim's concept of social solidarity change. Thus, Indonesian society shows a tension between the sustainability of old norms and the emergence of new social structures that enable gender transformation.

Based on the overall analysis, this study shows that gender equality is not only related to individual change but also requires a transformation of the social structure that produces these norms and the division of roles. The main contribution of this research lies in the effort to bring together the perspective of classical structuralism with contemporary gender studies to understand that social structures have two functions at once, namely maintaining order and enabling change. Although Comte and Durkheim provide an important basis for explaining public relations and gender, further studies need to develop analyses through approaches to gender political economy, intersectionality, and religious studies to look at the relationship between gender and power, economics, and culture more complexly. Further research can also be directed to empirical studies of how religious communities, educational institutions, and social policies play a role in maintaining and transforming gender constructs in contemporary society.

6. Conclusion

The division of gender roles in society is the result of social construction inherited by social structures. The structuralist approach highlights that the roles of men and women in work, education, and family are not natural, but rather influenced by norms and institutions that maintain gender inequality. Women tend to be attached to domestic roles, while men dominate the public space.

In Auguste Comte's perspective, the division of gender roles reflects the development of society through three stages: theological, metaphysical, and positive. At the theological level, gender roles are shaped by dogmas and traditions that place women in subordinate positions. The metaphysical stage brings criticism of this structure, but it has not yet explicitly evoked a change in role. It is only at the positive stage that rationality and science begin to open up awareness of gender equality, even though change remains limited by established social structures. Meanwhile, Emile Durkheim views the role of gender within the framework of social solidarity. In societies with mechanical solidarity, such as traditional agrarian societies in Indonesia, gender roles are rigid and divided based on biological functions. Women are oriented to parenting and householding, while men carry out production and social leadership functions. In more complex modern societies, organic solidarity began to emerge, where the division of roles was more flexible due to the need for specialization. Nevertheless, Durkheim noted that social structures still play an important role in maintaining stability, including in terms of gender role-sharing.

Therefore, change towards gender equality cannot be achieved through individual change alone, but requires a systematic and policy-based approach. Education reforms that integrate gender equality values into the curriculum can shape a more inclusive mindset from an early age. In addition, labor policies such as eliminating the wage gap, providing maternity leave for both parents, and increasing women's representation in the public and political spheres are concrete steps to dismantle patriarchal structures that hinder equality. Thus, the formation of a more just and equal society can only be realized through comprehensive changes to the social structure that underpin gender inequality.

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