



## **FAMILY INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY NORMS AUTHORITY AND OBLIGATIONS**

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### **Abstract**

Family sociology examines how intimate ties are organized, justified, and contested as societies change. This article develops a normative theoretical account of contemporary family institutional change by focusing on three linked processes: diversification of household forms, renegotiation of gendered expectations, and shifting interactional patterns among family members. The discussion argues that institutional change is expressed through revised moral vocabularies, altered boundaries of membership, and new arrangements of authority and obligation. Attention is given to how caregiving, economic provision, and emotional labor are redistributed through bargaining, conflict, and reconciliation, producing new standards of fairness and respect. The article also explains how intergenerational duties are reframed when mobility, delayed marriage, and mediated communication reshape everyday coordination. Rather than treating the family as a fixed unit, the account presents it as a rule governed relational arena in which norms are continuously produced and tested. The proposed framework clarifies key concepts for scholarly debate and supports careful reasoning for social policy design concerning protection, support, and recognition within diverse families. It highlights ethical considerations for private decision making, public services, and legal interpretation while preserving pluralism and dignity in family life.

**Keywords:** family, gender, authority, obligation, intergenerationality, negotiation, norms.

## Introduction

The family as a social institution is persistently present through shared patterns of living that are recognized, expected, and valued by society. However, the way family is defined today is increasingly determined by shifting daily experiences, such as how individuals form households, allocate time, and negotiate obligations among members. The family is no longer understood merely as a stable and uniform unit, but rather as a relational space that continuously reorganizes the boundaries of closeness, authority, and responsibility. In contemporary life experiences, family relations are more frequently confronted with mobility, career shifts, relocation, and faster paces of communication changes (Ganiyeva, 2022). This situation drives a redefinition of what is considered a normal family, a good family, and a model family. Such transformations are closely related to how society evaluates marriage, parenting, the fulfillment of emotional needs, and the daily division of labor, which ultimately alters practices and expectations at the household level. The dynamics of daily mobility and urban expansion in its development also influence the level of social cohesiveness in suburban areas (Wisnujati & Mardikaningsih, 2021). Furthermore, changes in urban lifestyle patterns reveal a close relationship between the characteristics of the residential environment and the social determinants of population health in general (Warin, 2023).

In many societies, family structure is no longer determined by a single dominant form considered the most legitimate. The experiences of nuclear families, extended families, single-parent families, stepfamilies, and households united by non-biological bonds are increasingly discussed as social realities that demand serious understanding. This variation showcases a shift in how people care for, protect, and guide family members, including how decisions are made and moral legitimacy is constructed. As household boundaries become more flexible, the definition of family members often expands to include caregiver figures, relatives living separately, or other parties who are consistently present in daily life (Sharma, 2013). These structural changes demand sociological explanations that examine how norms, obligations, and expectations intersect within real relationships. The family exists as an ongoing arena of negotiation, a place where social order is produced through continuous consensus, conflict, and reconciliation. This fragmentation of social belonging poses a similar challenge

encountered in the process of integrating refugee groups into developed nations (Marzuki et al., 2023). Nonetheless, the formation of new social networks can still be accommodated through the presence of interest-based communities in urban areas (Rejeki, 2021).

Shifts in gender roles represent a vital dimension in the transformation of the family institution. The division of labor, once considered fixed, is now frequently questioned through lived practices that position women and men across a diverse array of economic, caregiving, and household leadership roles (Gouveia & Castrén, 2021). As access to education and employment opportunities shifts, the traditional authority tied to a specific gender undergoes reassessment within daily family conversations. This is reflected in how couples divide domestic labor, manage finances, and negotiate priorities for their children and aging parents. Changes in gender roles are also linked to how society conceptualizes independence, responsibility, and respect, which can strengthen egalitarian relationships or, conversely, spark tension when old norms persist. Consequently, contemporary families often become a meeting ground for competing values, balancing traditional ideals of propriety against new aspirations for relational justice. This assessment of non-profit propriety also intersects with social stratification and the lifestyle of a consumer society, where status is frequently expressed through the cultivation of taste (Sinambela & Halizah, 2023). These shifting values and divisions of roles demand a new equilibrium between individual liberty and collective responsibility to maintain social solidarity (Saputra & Darmawan, 2021).

The dynamics of contemporary relationships among family members are also marked by changes in communication patterns and the management of closeness. The widespread availability of communication technology accelerates the exchange of messages, yet it can alter the quality of physical presence, the intensity of attention, and the ways in which people interpret care (Wall & Gouveia, 2014). Closeness is no longer measured solely by physical proximity, but rather by the frequency of interaction, responsiveness, and a sense of being understood. At the same time, the demands of work and study can fracture family time, creating fragmented daily routines. Under these circumstances, families construct new forms of togetherness, such as through negotiated schedules, brief rituals, or commitments to alternate caregiving duties. These shifts carry implications for how conflicts emerge and resolve, including how guilt,

jealousy, and expectations are mutually discussed. Thus, family relationships must be understood as an ongoing interactive process that constantly tests the limits of patience, loyalty, and recognition. The complexity of these emotional relationships reflects the multi-generational dynamics of family harmony, which continue to be tested amid the currents of social change (Sulistyo, 2022). This condition also mirrors the process of how personal failures or obstacles can shape the aspirations and motivations of the younger generation across various learning environments (Rahman & Hariani, 2022).

Changes in family structures, shifting gender roles, and the dynamics of internal relationships are intertwined with evolving social values that govern family legitimacy. Contemporary society displays a diverse set of standards regarding marriage, divorce, parenting, and intergenerational obligations. In everyday experiences, families frequently confront questions about what is fair, who has the right to decide, and how responsibilities are distributed (Putniņa, 2020). These changing values can expand family lifestyle possibilities, yet simultaneously sharpen conflicts when different moral principles collide. For instance, the drive for individual autonomy can compete with the demands of family solidarity, causing personal decisions to be judged through the lens of compliance or betrayal. This tension creates a need to interpret the family as a perpetually negotiated institution rather than a merely given structure. Within a sociological reading, the family becomes a site for the production of norms, where social discipline operates, and where subjects learn to manage freedom alongside attachment. This conflict of values demonstrates how social conflict and cohesion remain anchored in normative social mechanisms within a pluralistic society (Sulistyo & Hartanto, 2023). In a broader scope, the role of cultural identity becomes highly crucial for building social cohesion and addressing such integration challenges (Oluwatosin & Rojak, 2023).

A prominent issue emerging in contemporary family studies is how changes in family structures affect the social legitimacy of diverse family forms, and how that legitimacy permeates daily practices. As variations in family structures become increasingly visible, social judgments often move faster than the capacity of social institutions to accommodate such diversity. As a result, family members can experience uncertainty regarding

their status, moral rights, and the obligations they must fulfill. This uncertainty is evident in recurring questions regarding who is recognized as the primary caregiver, who holds the authority to make decisions, and how intergenerational relationships are maintained when cohabitation or biological ties are no longer the sole determinants. This issue is not merely an administrative matter, but a question of social meaning that governs acceptance and rejection. When the definition of a family is contested, the affective experiences of its members are put at stake, as social recognition can influence security, self-esteem, and the continuity of bonds. The absence of protection and the presence of mental stigma, even within the domestic realm of the family, occasionally demand stronger civil law protection interventions (Zahid et al., 2022). In addition to social stigma, communities are also frequently confronted with the impacts of racial discrimination, which affect the psychological well-being and social engagement of individuals (Pakpahan et al., 2022).

The next issue concerns how shifts in gender roles reshape power relations and the division of labor within the family, and how this restructuring generates tension in communication and decision-making. As the division of labor becomes more flexible, families often face demands to formulate new internal rules; however, these new rules are not always accompanied by an agreed-upon moral language. Consequently, negotiations regarding housework, parenting, and breadwinning can devolve into conflicts over feeling valued and recognized. When an individual feels their burden is unbalanced, conflict is often framed as a personality flaw, when its roots actually lie in unestablished norms. Under certain conditions, shifting gender roles can give rise to newer, subtler forms of control, such as through idealized parenting standards or productivity benchmarks that pressure specific parties. This problem demands a sociological analysis that examines how families produce equality or, conversely, reproduce inequality through habits and symbols that appear natural. This subtle surveillance and behavioral standard-setting is similar to the critical analysis of surveillance capitalism, which impacts citizen autonomy and democracy (Rojak & Gardi, 2022). Furthermore, within the realm of cutting-edge technology, algorithmic bias and automated justice hold the potential to bring fundamental social transformations to community life (Mardikaningsih & Oluwatoyin, 2023).

Scholarly descriptions of the family and its institutional changes are important because the family remains the primary reference point for identity formation, moral education, and the daily distribution of well-being. When changes in structure and roles occur, the normative consequences touch upon how society evaluates mutual responsibility among members, the boundaries of obligation, and the best ways to care for vulnerable parties. A well-structured study can help clarify key concepts such as domestic authority, solidarity, negotiation, and conflict, ensuring that public discourse does not fall into oversimplified moral judgments. Moreover, a meticulous understanding can enrich the formulation of social policies concerning child protection, support for caregivers, and the strengthening of intergenerational relationships, without locking society into a single family model. This urgency is also academic, as the sociology of the family requires a framework capable of consistently explaining changes in meaning and practice, allowing theoretical debates to move beyond the traditional-modern dichotomy that often obscures the complexity of family experiences. A comprehensive understanding of this governance aligns with public perceptions of smart city initiatives in improving the quality of life for urban citizens (Rojak, 2022). Ultimately, such institutional adaptation requires the active involvement of citizens through participatory practices to resolve various strategic issues independently (Zulkarnain et al., 2021). This active participation is also reflected in citizens' political participation in electoral democracy and the dynamics of civil movements monitoring policy (Rojak et al., 2021). This synergy resembles the important role of local communities in natural resource management for ecosystem sustainability (Ramle et al., 2022). Thus, community adaptation strategies based on socio-cultural perspectives become essential instruments for responding to the macro-environmental changes taking place (Oluwatoyin & mardikaningsih, 2022).

The objective of this writing is to formulate a coherent theoretical explanation regarding how the institution of the family is reshaped by changes in family structure, shifts in gender roles, and the dynamics of relationships between family members in contemporary society. The discussion is directed toward clarifying the relationship between family norms, daily practices, and the way domestic authority is negotiated, so that debates about the family can be placed on a more organized

conceptual foundation. This writing also aims to offer a normative reading that emphasizes relational responsibility, mutual respect, and justice in the division of obligations, as an orientation that can enrich academic discussion as well as social policy conversations related to the family.

## Method

This writing uses a qualitative literature study oriented toward conceptual reasoning and normative assessment, with primary materials consisting of scientific works discussing the sociology of the family, changes in social institutions, gender, and intergenerational relations. The working procedure begins with the formulation of a conceptual focus following the problem statement, followed by thematic tracing, the selection of key concepts, and a comparative reading of arguments that are either aligned or in debate with one another. The synthesis is constructed by grouping ideas into discussion units regarding family structure, gender expectations, and internal relationship dynamics, where each unit is then linked through conceptual bridges explaining shifts in norms, domestic authority, and relational obligations. This approach emphasizes logical consistency, precision of definitions, and caution in distinguishing between descriptive and normative claims, resulting in a coherent theoretical understanding without the need for field verification.

To maintain methodological discipline, the discussion is limited to inferences that can be accounted for through a critical reading of written arguments, while acknowledging the inherent boundaries of social research that does not perform primary evidence collection. Shipman (2014) reminds us that social research always has certain limits; therefore, the author needs to state the scope of the conclusions carefully and avoid generalizations that exceed the available materials. This principle of caution is combined with a qualitative method orientation that emphasizes the interpretation of social meaning, the sharpening of concepts, and the formulation of categories that can be used to read social practices, as explained by Berg and Lune (2017). Although surveys are not utilized, the logic of scientific reasoning regarding problem clarity, procedural regularity, and transparency in material selection is maintained, in line with the attention of De Vaus and De Vaus (2013) to the precision of research design in the social sciences. The result is a systematically

structured, consistent, and relevant theoretical description for academic discussion and policy consideration.

## Result and Discussion

The family institution in contemporary society can be understood as an arrangement of norms that is continuously updated through daily actions, rather than as a single form standing outside the experiences of its members. As household forms become increasingly diverse, the family institution reorganizes how it defines membership, propriety, and attachment. Membership is not determined solely by lineage or living under the same roof, but rather by recognition, a willingness to care, and the continuity of responsibility (Knapp & Wurm, 2019). This shift moves the measure of legitimacy from origins toward the practice of commitment. Within this framework, the family appears as a living set of rules, because regulations are maintained when they are deemed fair, and then challenged when they are seen to restrict autonomy or disregard the needs of specific parties. Thus, changes in family structure give rise to a new moral language that blends freedom of choice with relational responsibility. This explains why discussions about the family frequently become debates over obligation, loyalty, and respect, as the institution operates through evaluations attached to the actions of its members. On the other hand, the resilience and sustainability of these domestic functions also closely intersect with the dynamics of changing food consumption patterns and their consequences for overall household food security (Aisyah & Issalillah, 2021).

The diversification of household forms forces the family institution to redefine the boundary between the private and social spheres. Many decisions previously considered internal matters are now evaluated against public standards regarding protection, welfare, and justice. At the same time, the family retains an autonomous domain to determine its internal rules. This tension gives rise to more complex negotiation mechanisms, as family members must balance the demands for social recognition with the need to maintain internal dignity. Diverse family structures demand an explanation of how legitimacy is constructed without relying on a single standard model (Furstenberg et al., 2020). Legitimacy can emerge from the consistent fulfillment of obligations, the transparency of the division of labor, and the manner in which conflict is managed to avoid undermining security. In a

normative reading, a socially legitimate family is not primarily a matter of its form, but rather the quality of its accountable commitment. Consequently, the family institution moves from a logic of status to a logic of practice, so that the measure of acceptance becomes increasingly tied to the quality of relationships and the orderliness of obligations. This shift from status toward functional practice is also mirrored in the transformation of work design due to automation, which carries significant consequences for human resource management practices in the formal sector (Darmawan, 2023).

Changes in family structure also alter the positioning of unwritten rules that have historically governed who must compromise, who holds the right to decide, and who must bear the risks. When the extended family is not always present as the primary safety net, many households construct support networks that are more selective and fragmented. This can strengthen independence, yet it can also increase vulnerability when a crisis hits and support is unavailable. Institutionally, these changes challenge the assumption that family solidarity automatically exists through blood ties. Solidarity must be produced through maintained commitments, such as through parenting agreements, financial support, or tangible emotional accompaniment. From a normative standpoint, the primary demand is to ensure that the renewal of family forms does not diminish obligations toward dependent parties, particularly children, the elderly, and ill members. Thus, structural changes demand a set of values that prioritizes protection and responsibility, while remaining respectful of diverse life choices. The need for adaptive protective frameworks is similar to the importance of adaptive approaches in crisis management to face economic uncertainties at the organizational level (Arifin & Darmawan, 2022).

Shifts in gender expectations become a primary pathway demonstrating the way the family institution changes through the revision of domestic authority. When salaried work and housework are no longer strictly tied to a specific gender, authority can no longer rely on traditional claims of propriety. Authority must be built through negotiation capacity, reliability, and mutual recognition (Widmer & Ganjour, 2017). In contemporary families, fairness in the division of labor tends to be read as an indicator of respect, so that inequalities allowed to persist can be considered an ethical violation of equality. However, equality does not automatically appear just because tasks are divided, since division can

occur without recognition, without appreciation, or without balanced speaking space. Therefore, the family institution re-tests its moral apparatus through the question: what is considered fair when individual contributions differ, when time is limited, and when the needs of children or parents demand priority. Here it becomes clear that gender changes are not merely a redistribution of tasks, but a transformation in the way families define the fairness of authority and obligation. This phenomenon is highly relevant given the current reality of career women who frequently face double burdens within the perspective of contemporary feminist sociology (Fauzi, 2023). Despite facing a double burden, the role of women as agents of transformation in social movements and societal change continues to show great significance (Aisyah, 2023).

Gender negotiations often take place through a language of mutuality that emphasizes deliberation, yet deliberation is not always equal. The party controlling economic resources, social networks, or caregiving knowledge can influence decisions without needing to command openly. Because of this, changes in the family institution must be read through the ways power operates subtly, such as through idealized parenting standards, home cleanliness standards, or child achievement standards that pressure one party. In a normative reading, what is important is to distinguish agreements born out of free consent from agreements born out of fear of conflict, guilt, or the threat of abandonment. When families update gender rules, they require a communication ethic that protects each member's ability to express objections without facing stigma. This shows that gender changes transform the family institution through a shift in the principles of legitimacy, moving from compliance with traditional division toward an evaluation of the negotiation process and the quality of respect in decision-making. Efforts to minimize tension and psychological barriers in the domestic sphere align with the importance of overcoming manifestations of social stigma toward mental disorders, which often become primary barriers to the recovery process in society (Aisyah & Issalillah, 2022).

The distribution of caregiving labor becomes the most sensitive arena for shifting gender expectations, because caregiving combines physical work, emotional work, and cognitive work that is often invisible. When caregiving is divided, the normative question is not simply who does what, but how the

family calculates the hidden burdens, such as planning, reminding, and alertness to the child's needs. Many tensions emerge when invisible work is taken for granted, causing the burden to pile onto one party (Warmuth & Glockentöger, 2018). In a changing family institution, recognition of invisible labor becomes an essential prerequisite for justice. Furthermore, caregiving carries long-term consequences for careers, health, and social opportunities, so an unfair division can produce persistent inequalities. Thus, family change requires normative principles that evaluate the division of labor based on total responsibility, rather than just visible hours. This principle helps explain why contemporary families demand a new language to denote obligation, exhaustion, and appreciation, and why caregiving conflicts are often conflicts over recognition. Inequalities in the division of domestic burdens spatially also frequently intersect with patterns of poverty and social segregation that limit the accessibility of vulnerable groups in metropolitan areas (Fauzi, 2021).

Intergenerational relationships become another dimension showing changes in the family institution through shifting obligations. Responsibility toward parents and elderly relatives is increasingly negotiated amid job mobility, residential distance, and limited time. Under these conditions, the family institution cannot rely on the assumption that geographic proximity guarantees care. Obligations need to be managed through concrete agreements, such as dividing visitation schedules, sharing costs, or distributing service coordination tasks. From a normative standpoint, intergenerational obligations demand a balance between showing respect to parents and protecting the autonomy of spouses and children. When this balance fails, conflict can emerge as a struggle for loyalty. The changing family institution must prepare ways to evaluate obligations without positioning one party as a permanent victim. Therefore, the renewal of intergenerational norms needs to affirm two things simultaneously: that vulnerable parties have the right to receive proper care, and that the caregiving burden needs to be shared fairly and transparently to avoid severing relationships. The complexity of maintaining intergenerational support in urban settings mirrors the challenges faced by indigenous communities in preserving traditions amid the vortex of modern urban life (Amri & Khayru, 2022).

Changes in communication via digital media shift the way families maintain closeness and manage conflict. The speed of messaging can make attention feel constantly available, yet it can also alter expectations regarding immediate responses, such that delays are easily interpreted as rejection. Within the family institution, this interpretation shapes new norms regarding loyalty and care. These norms can support intimacy, but they can also give rise to excessive surveillance. Normatively, families need to establish healthy boundaries between connectivity and privacy, as privacy is a prerequisite for autonomy that allows members breathing room without feeling monitored. When boundaries are left undiscussed, digital media can become a source of jealousy, misunderstanding, and prolonged conflict (Smyth, 2016). Transformations within the family institution become apparent when internal rules regarding access, openness, and confidentiality are reorganized. Families capable of agreeing on a communication ethic will be better prepared to manage differences because they possess a shared standard regarding when, how, and for what purpose communication occurs. This structuring of virtual and physical space boundaries is also influenced by environmental comfort, including the role of urban forests in improving the environmental quality of urban community life (Dahar et al., 2022).

The family institution also changes through the way it structures the boundary between work and the household. Increasing demands for productivity and work flexibility transform the home into a space that accommodates both labor and caregiving. Consequently, the definition of presence within the family becomes more complex, as an individual can be physically present yet absorbed by work, or physically distant yet actively involved through coordination. In a normative reading, family presence should be measured by the quality of involvement—such as the ability to listen, the capacity to respond to needs, and the willingness to share responsibility—rather than merely the number of hours spent at home. However, the quality of involvement also requires material prerequisites, such as sufficient time and unexhausted energy. Therefore, changes in the family institution must be understood alongside shifts in how society values work, rest, and caregiving. When families are forced to bear the consequences of harsh work rhythms, internal conflicts can arise and be interpreted as moral failures, when the root of the problem actually relates to an inhumane division of time and attention. This demands norms that

protect the dignity of family members from pressures that weaken relationships. This structural pressure on the domestic sphere is often exacerbated by gentrification processes in urban renewal, which trigger the marginalization of low-income communities (Fauzi, 2022).

Domestic authority in contemporary families tends to move from a command pattern toward a pattern of dialogic legitimacy. Dialogic legitimacy means that decisions are deemed valid if the process can be explained, the reasoning can be tested, and objections can be voiced. However, dialogue does not always equate to substantive equality. Disparities in education, communication skills, or economic control can turn dialogue into a mere formality (Silva, 2018). Normatively, changes in the family institution require a dialogue ethic that encompasses access to information, a fair distribution of speaking opportunities, and protection against intimidation. This ethic is crucial because many family decisions are irreversible, such as decisions regarding a child's education, the distribution of assets, or relocation. When decisions are made without a dialogue ethic, the aggrieved party can carry wounds that damage long-term trust. Conversely, when the dialogue ethic is maintained, the family builds a stability that does not depend on fear, but rather on trust. It is here that the family institution changes through a renewed method of validating authority moving from inherited authority toward accountable authority. This inclusive dialogic construction at the micro-level becomes increasingly crucial amid macro-challenges, such as the rise of populist ethno-religious nationalism that challenges global governance and domestic social integration (Fariz, 2021).

Changes in family structure also demand a renewal of the concept of loyalty. Loyalty is no longer understood merely as unconditional obedience, but rather as a commitment aligned with self-respect and relational safety. In contemporary families, loyalty can mean maintaining commitment while firmly rejecting violence, manipulation, or demeaning control. This alters the family institution because old norms that demanded staying together for the sake of reputation are frequently challenged by new norms that emphasize dignity. Normatively, this shift requires a clear distinction between ordinary conflict and serious violations of a member's integrity. When this distinction is clear, families can cultivate the value of loyalty without justifying unnecessary suffering.

Furthermore, a renewed concept of loyalty requires ethical mechanisms for reconciliation, such as accountable apologies, the gradual restoration of trust, and a commitment to behavioral change. Thus, the family institution changes through a revision of moral standards that govern when enduring is praised and when enduring instead becomes a form of denying dignity. The formulation of moral standards and ethical internal conflict resolution resembles the function of internalizing organizational cultural values, which utilize ethical values as constructive instruments in tension resolution (Khayru et al., 2021).

The dynamics of contemporary relationships among family members are also marked by an increasing reflexivity in evaluating internal rules. Many families re-evaluate traditions, question the reasons behind habits, and formulate new rituals that are more suited to their needs. This reflexivity transforms the family institution because tradition is no longer accepted as absolute proof of correctness, but rather as material for dialogue. However, reflexivity can induce normative fatigue, as too many choices and excessive considerations can make it difficult for families to reach a decision. Therefore, the family institution requires simple yet powerful guiding principles, such as respect, justice, and protection for dependent members. Guiding principles allow families to simplify choices without ignoring diversity. From a normative perspective, healthy reflexivity does not mean endlessly questioning everything, but rather the capacity to weigh traditions selectively, retaining those that preserve dignity and changing those that restrict freedom (Ganiyeva, 2022). In this way, the transformation of the family institution becomes a process of moral learning rather than a mere change in form. This process of value selection and moral learning also intersects with efforts to instill character based on religious harmony in facing the currents of globalization to maintain social integrity (Hariyadi et al., 2023).

The renewal of family norms is also evident in how families interpret finances and ownership. Finances represent a resource that directly touches upon autonomy, security, and power. When couples choose between joint or separate financial systems, that choice carries implications for trust and control. In a changing family institution, financial transparency becomes an essential value; however, transparency must still be distinguished from surveillance. Normatively, the sustainable principle

is sufficient openness to ensure fairness and protection, paired with adequate private space so that individuals do not lose their autonomy. Financial conflicts are frequently not about the amount, but rather about recognition and feeling valued. When one party feels their efforts are dismissed or their needs are deemed illegitimate, money becomes a symbol of rejection. Consequently, changes in the family institution require a moral language capable of legitimizing needs without shame, while simultaneously setting boundaries so that consumption does not erode collective well-being. Here, the family reorganizes ownership norms as part of its institutional renewal. In its development, domestic financial allocation decisions are also increasingly influenced by the rising involvement of women in decision-making related to sustainability-oriented green consumption (Halizah & Nuraini, 2021).

Family transformation is also related to how families perceive children as subjects rather than merely objects of caregiving. When children are understood as subjects, families develop communication norms that provide vocal space appropriate to their age, offer explanations, and respect emotions. This norm shifts authority from a unilateral pattern toward a guidance pattern. However, recognizing a child's voice does not erase the obligation of adults to establish boundaries. Normatively, boundaries are a form of protection that allows children to learn responsibility and safety. The changing family institution must balance two principles: respect for the child as a subject and firmness that protects. When this balance fails, the family can lapse into a silencing authoritarianism or a permissiveness that ignores the need for structure. Transformations within the family institution become visible when caregiving norms move toward models that emphasize reasoning, consistency, and role-modeling. This model frames authority as a trust that must be accounted for, so that decisions regarding education, discipline, and technology use are framed as moral responsibilities rather than absolute parental rights. This open interpersonal communication pattern between parents and children reinforces the crucial function of communication in building and maintaining relationship quality across structural boundaries (Gardi et al., 2021).

The relationship between partners in contemporary families is frequently influenced by an ideal of equality that demands emotional

openness. Emotional openness becomes a new norm that evaluates relationship quality based on the capacity to reveal feelings and needs. However, openness can turn into an exhausting demand when it is expected to be present at all times without considering individual capacity. Normatively, families need to develop an ethic of openness that respects each other's rhythms, distinguishes between honesty and venting, and preserves emotional safety. Emotional safety means that members can speak without fear of being humiliated or retaliated against with attacks. When this ethic is maintained, conflict can become a tool for clarification rather than a threat of dissolution. In a changing family institution, relationship quality is determined by the ability to manage tension maturely, such as through pauses, active listening, and a commitment to resolution. This demonstrates that the transformation of the family institution takes place at a micro-level, namely the way individuals speak, exercise restraint, and repair. These micro-changes ultimately shape broader norms regarding relationship fairness within the family. Micro-skills in nurturing emotional regulation within the domestic sphere are proven to contribute directly to enhancing individual psychological well-being in daily life (Irfan & Darmawan, 2021).

Structural and gender changes also influence how families perceive domestic labor as dignified work. When domestic labor is viewed merely as assistance, the party performing it is easily positioned as a secondary complement. Conversely, when domestic labor is understood as life-maintenance work, it acquires a moral value equivalent to salaried work. The changing family institution tends to lean toward this recognition, though the process is not always smooth. Normatively, recognition can be manifested through clear division, genuine verbal appreciation, and a fair allocation of rest time. Recognition also means accepting that domestic labor has quality standards that need to be mutually agreed upon rather than unilaterally imposed. When standards are forced, domestic labor turns into a tool of control. Therefore, changes in the family institution demand the principle that household standards are a matter of consensus, not dogma. This principle helps families avoid conflicts centered around minor details, which often mask hidden power struggles. Thus, families update the norms of domestic labor as part of reshaping their institution. This restructuring of domestic roles represents women's adaptation to

gender structures, where career women frequently negotiate double burdens within both domestic and public spaces (Khairi, 2021).

Contemporary families often build relationships with networks outside the home—such as close friends, communities, or social services—to support caregiving and well-being functions. This interconnectedness transforms the family institution because a portion of the functions previously borne internally is now shared with a network. This division of functions can strengthen the family, as burdens become lighter and access to help increases (Putniņa, 2020). However, sharing also brings normative questions about information boundaries, intervention limits, and boundaries of dependency. Families need to determine when external help is considered legitimate support and when it is viewed as a privacy violation. In a changing institution, the ability to manage these boundaries becomes an important moral competence. Boundaries that are too closed can leave a family vulnerable to hidden violence or neglect, whereas boundaries that are too open can damage internal security. Consequently, changes in the family institution demand a norm of selective openness, which is an openness that protects vulnerable parties without dismantling the dignity of members. Such a norm reveals that modern families combine autonomy and interdependence more consciously. This external dependence also reflects contemporary social identity dynamics, where group affiliations and environmental status further influence family resilience (Hariani, 2023).

The diversity of family forms also triggers debates over symbols and rituals, such as holiday celebrations, religious rituals, or gathering habits. Rituals are institutional apparatuses because they affirm who is included, who is respected, and which values are prioritized. When families change, rituals are often renegotiated to fit the new structure, such as in cases involving stepfamilies, separation, or remarriage. Normatively, rituals need to be designed so that they do not produce subtle exclusions, such as ignoring children from previous relationships or prioritizing one family line while marginalizing the other. Transformations within the family institution are visible in the ability to formulate rituals that acknowledge a plurality of membership without losing meaning. This demands ethical sensitivity, as rituals touch upon emotion and identity. When rituals are managed fairly, they become a vehicle for internal integration because members feel seen and valued. However, when rituals are used to enforce

a hierarchy, they become a source of long-lasting wounds. Thus, the renewal of rituals constitutes an essential part of renewing the family institution. This inclusive structuring of rituals acts as an embodiment of accommodating social change within micro-scale practices to achieve justice at the community level (Halizah & Mardikaningsih, 2022).

The family institution is also tested by changes in how society evaluates marriage and divorce. When divorce becomes more widely accepted, families must reorganize their norms regarding commitment, faults, and healing (Abela & Walker, 2013). Social acceptance of divorce can protect individuals from destructive relationships, yet it can also trigger anxieties regarding the fragility of bonds. Normatively, what is required is a realistic and dignified standard of commitment. This standard emphasizes that commitment is not an empty promise, but a willingness to exert effort, repair, and nurture. At the same time, this standard recognizes limits; when a relationship violates physical or psychological safety, commitment must not be used as an instrument of justification. Transformations within the family institution become apparent when society and families develop a language to distinguish ordinary conflict from serious violations, as well as to separate rectifiable mistakes from actions that fundamentally shatter trust. Consequently, the family institution moves toward a more ethical understanding of commitment, positioning dignity as the primary measure. This reorientation of ethical values demonstrates the importance of aligning institutional policies with local cultural values to remain relevant in maintaining social stability (Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2023).

In a changing family, arrangements regarding names, status, and legal symbols become vital because these symbols influence social recognition. Although this text does not highlight specific regulations, normatively speaking, legal symbols often serve as a bridge between private relationships and public recognition. When legal symbols do not align with the realities of caregiving or closeness, family members can experience identity uncertainty. This uncertainty can foster a sense of insecurity, particularly for children. Therefore, a changing family institution requires the principle that recognition should follow actual relationships of responsibility. Within caregiving relationships, what matters most is the continuity of attention, the capacity to meet needs, and the willingness to bear consequences. If public recognition lags

behind, the family must seek internal methods to protect the security of its members, such as through the reaffirmation of commitment, consistent division of duties, and orderly management of relationships with external parties. This illustrates that transformations within the family institution take place at both symbolic and practical levels simultaneously, as symbols govern access to recognition while practices govern daily experiences. Disparities in accessing legal recognition and social safety nets for non-traditional family structures frequently prolong the chain of social exclusion and marginalization of vulnerable groups within macro-structures (Hartono, 2021).

The renewal of the family institution is also evident in how families evaluate mental health and emotional well-being. Many families are beginning to view emotional well-being as a basic need rather than a luxury (Putniņa, 2020). However, an increase in this awareness can be misused to evade responsibility, such as by using emotions as a justification to withdraw without communication. Normatively, families need to distinguish between self-care and the neglect of obligations. Self-care means preserving one's capacity to remain present for dependents, whereas neglecting obligations means severing responsibilities without an ethical reason. Transformations within the family institution are visible when communication norms develop, such as the habit of stating boundaries clearly, the habit of asking for help, and the habit of providing support without demeaning others. Healthy support respects autonomy, does not impose solutions, and does not humiliate. Thus, the family institution moves toward a more explicit ethic of care, where emotional well-being is considered part of a shared responsibility rather than a purely individual matter. This ethic helps explain shifts in how families evaluate relational maturity. Moreover, unmanaged psychological pressure within the household holds the potential to trigger prolonged stress, which clinically correlates with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease (Issalillah, 2022). This condition becomes even more complex when health crises, such as a pandemic, demand higher psychosocial resilience, particularly for vulnerable family members like pregnant women (Issalillah, 2021).

In contemporary society, the family often serves as a meeting ground between traditional values and modern ideals of equality (Putniņa, 2020). This intersection should not necessarily be understood as a consistently

sharp conflict, since many families combine elements of both through value selection. Normatively, value selection demands criteria; values are retained if they support dignity, justice, and protection, and are altered if they produce oppression or exclusion. These criteria help families navigate without losing their moral direction. Transformations within the family institution occur when these criteria become standards of justification, replacing old standards that relied purely on habit. In practice, a family may retain certain rituals for the sake of togetherness, yet alter the division of labor to make it fairer. A family may maintain respect for parents, yet reject control that stifles a partner's autonomy. This demonstrates that changes in the family institution do not always signify a complete break from the past, but rather a reorganization of values deemed worthy. From the standpoint of normative sociology, the family institution changes through ongoing moral assessments performed by its members, both consciously and through repeated habits. This negotiation between tradition and modernity parallels the cross-cultural reconfiguration of traditional medicine amidst the dominance of modern health systems (Khayru, 2022), as well as the educational determinants that shape public compliance with modern health recommendations in society (Khayru, 2023).

The way a family manages conflict serves as a primary indicator of transformations within the family institution. Conflict is not always destructive, as it can act as a corrective mechanism when inequality or injustice occurs (Knapp & Wurm, 2019). However, conflict can become destructive if it is carried out through humiliation, threats, or prolonged silence. Normatively, changes in the family institution point toward the development of civilized conflict rules, such as prohibiting degradation, enforcing the obligation to listen, and mandating the search for resolution. Resolution implies that concrete, agreed-upon steps are taken, rather than merely achieving temporary calm. In a changing family institution, an individual's legitimacy as a respected figure frequently depends on how they navigate conflict rather than solely on their status. This marks a shift from position-based authority to integrity-based authority. When integrity becomes the baseline measure, family members tend to demand consistency between words and actions, as well as a willingness to take responsibility for mistakes. Thus, the family institution renews itself

through a conflict ethic that establishes dignity as an inviolable boundary. In a broader context, failures to manage structural inequalities and domestic vulnerabilities are frequently exacerbated by external ecological factors, such as the structural impacts of climate change that burden the economies of poor households (Gani, 2022). These economic conditions place urban informal workers into a precariat situation that challenges urban governance (Mahmudah, 2022), while simultaneously increasing visible food vulnerabilities for poor households in densely populated areas (Mahmudah, 2021). Therefore, future public policy is required to formulate a fair balance between economic, social, and environmental dimensions to protect the stability of this smallest societal unit (Mardikaningsih & Hariani, 2021). This includes the readiness of legal instruments to respond to cutting-edge medical technologies, such as stem cell therapy, to ensure they remain grounded in ethical-legal perspectives that protect fundamental human rights (Issalillah, 2023).

Changes in family structure, shifting gender expectations, and mutating relational dynamics converge upon a single central process: the renewal of norms surrounding obligation. Today, obligations tend to be more explicit, more negotiated, and more dependent on consensus rather than assumptions. However, sound consensus requires principles that transcend momentary interests, particularly the principle of protecting dependents and the principle of fair burden distribution. In a normative reading, a healthy family institution is not one free of conflict, but rather one capable of processing conflict into fairer rule renewals. This process demands the ability to re-evaluate disadvantageous rules, the courage to alter habits, and the willingness to maintain commitment. Consequently, the answers to the core research problems can be summarized as follows: the family institution is reshaped through the revision of moral language, the reorganization of membership boundaries, and the renewal of domestic authority legitimacy, all manifested in daily practices concerning labor, caregiving, communication, and intergenerational solidarity. This renewal guides the family toward an institutional form that is increasingly reliant on accountability and mutual respect.

## Conclusion

The changes in the institution of the family in contemporary society can be understood as a renewal of norms, a renewal of the legitimacy of domestic authority, and a renewal of the system of obligations that bind family members. Changes in family structure shift the measure of recognition from status toward the practice of commitment, such that membership and obligations are increasingly determined by the sustainability of care, the fulfillment of needs, and the willingness to bear relational consequences. The shift in gender expectations demonstrates that justice in the division of labor and parenting becomes the benchmark for respect, meaning that the authority which persists is authority that can be accounted for through fair dialogue, rather than authority that relies on traditional justifications. The dynamics of internal relationships show that communication, conflict management, and the formation of boundaries between privacy and connectedness become the institutional tools that determine family stability. Thus, today's family institution appears as a relational arena governed by norms that are continuously tested through practice, and updated when the principles of dignity, justice, and protection demand a reorganization.

The implications and suggestions of this writing are directed toward strengthening relational ethics within the family and enhancing conceptual clarity in academic discussions and social policies. At the family level, it is necessary to develop the habit of creating clear agreements regarding the division of labor, parenting, financial management, and intergenerational care, accompanied by an ethics of dialogue that protects access to information and balanced speaking opportunities. At the social services level, the orientation of protection must follow the reality of actual responsibilities, so that social recognition and support can reach families of diverse arrangements without locking the definition of family into a single form. At the public education level, it is important to promote standards of civilized conflict, healthy communication boundaries, and appreciation for caregiving and domestic work as life-sustaining labor. At the academic level, the development of a conceptual framework that links shifts in norms, authority, and obligations within a single theoretical structure is recommended, so that debates about the family can move from oversimplified moral judgments toward more orderly and accountable arguments.

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