

Identification of Gender Roles and Family Values in Divorce Cases from a Socio-Economic Geography Perspective

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Abstract

This study aims to identify gender roles and family values in divorce cases in Minahasa using a socioeconomic geography approach. Through qualitative methods, data were collected from in-depth interviews and observations with former spouses and community leaders. The results showed that the transformation of gender roles, especially the increasing independence of women, has a significant impact on the decision to divorce. Traditional family values that have been upheld are being eroded by economic pressures and social changes, especially in urban areas. In addition, the geographical context influences the dynamics of divorce, with areas of high social mobility showing a greater tendency towards divorce. The findings indicate the need to strengthen premarital education, extended family support, and local culture-based approaches to maintain family resilience. The limitations of this study lie in the narrow scope of the region and do not include quantitative analysis. Further research is recommended using mixed methods and involving more demographic variations. In conclusion, divorce in Minahasa results from complex interactions between social structures, cultural values, and a changing spatial context.

Keywords: *Gender Role; Family Values; Divorce Cases; Socio-Economic Geography Approach*

Introduction

Divorce as a social phenomenon has been a major concern in socio-economic studies (Patoari, 2020) and human geography (Birta et al., 2024). Changing dynamics in family structure, gender roles, and traditional values increasingly influence couples' decisions to maintain or end a household (Bartley et al., 2005). In Indonesian society, which is full of family values and strong social norms, divorce is often considered a failure not only for the individual but also for the social community (Parker et al., 2016). In social and economic development, this phenomenon should be studied from various perspectives, including from the point of view of socio-economic geography.

Socio-economic geography provides a holistic approach to understanding the interaction between social structure, gender roles, local culture, and economic conditions surrounding a particular community (Yakovenko & Komov, 2016). One interesting context to study is Minahasa Regency, which is characterized by a patriarchal culture mixed with unique Minahasa traditional values (Pelealu et al., 2024). In this context, it is important to identify how family values and gender roles influence divorce decisions (Hu & Scott, 2016), and how geographical and local economic factors shape these patterns (DiFurio et al., 2012).

The phenomenon of increasing divorce rates in Minahasa reflects social dynamics that require in-depth understanding. Although the number of marriages tended to decrease from 2021 to 2023 (from 132 marriages to 101), the divorce rate showed significant variations. Divorce through the sue-for-divorce route increased from 51 cases in 2021 to 79 cases in 2022, declining slightly to 68 cases in 2023. Meanwhile, divorce through talak, which is identical to a lawsuit from the husband, dropped sharply from 29 in 2021 to only 12 in 2023 (<https://sulut.bps.go.id>). This pattern indicates a shift in gender roles and the increasing independence of women in household decision-making, including in terms of divorce.

This shows that behind the statistics are complex dynamics of social relations. In Minahasa society, family values, patriarchal structures, and local economic conditions such as employment opportunities, education levels, and urbanization influence personal decisions such as divorce. Therefore, a socioeconomic geography approach is important to unravel the interaction between space (location), social structure, and individual actions in understanding divorce as a complex social phenomenon.

Although divorce has been the subject of considerable study in the social sciences, there are still several important gaps in the literature that need to be further explored, particularly in the local Indonesian context. Research by (Dewi et al., 2023) shows that post-divorce family interactions can influence gender construction in children, but this study does not integrate spatial dimensions or local cultural contexts in its analysis. On the other hand (Puspitasari et al., 2022), highlights the decision-making process of divorce by Javanese women by considering social, child, and economic factors, but is still limited to the framework of personal decisions without exploring the relationship with cultural values and certain social geographies. (Wandi & Reflianto, 2018) Also raises the issue of gender equality and perceptions of divorce in matrilineal societies, but the main focus of the study is more on the general perception aspect and has not yet entered into a contextual reading of the relationship between family values, gender, and local structures in an integrated manner.

Thus, there is a gap in the integration between socioeconomic geography approaches and divorce studies that fully consider the interaction between family values, gender structures, and local spatiality. The lack of studies that address areas with distinctive cultural characteristics such as Minahasa reinforces the importance of this research. Previous studies tend to focus on sociological and legal aspects, without giving adequate attention to the geospatial context, the role of customary institutions, and local value systems that are unique and potentially affect divorce patterns. This research addresses this gap by offering an integrated socio-economic geography approach to examine divorce from a spatial, cultural, and gender perspective in a more comprehensive and contextualized manner. Thus, this research not only has empirical urgency but also theoretical contributions to understanding divorce as a result of complex interactions between gender, values, and local geography.

The problem formulations in this study are: How do the interactions between family values, gender roles, and geographical-economic context affect divorce decisions in the Minahasa region? This question is based on the need for cross-dimensional understanding that has not been optimally explored in the existing literature. The purpose of this paper is to identify and deeply analyze the relationship between family value structures, gender roles, and spatial socio-economic conditions in influencing divorce decisions in Minahasa. The research is intended to produce a measurable, specific, and contextual understanding, which can be used as a basis for locality-based social policy, with a research deadline of one year.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to understand social transformation in local communities in response to changes in gender values and structures. During an increase in divorce by women, there is a need to understand how women respond to the pressure of cultural values and economic conditions through divorce decisions, especially in a society system that still holds patriarchal and customary values.

The contribution of this research is theoretically enriching the discourse of social geography by including gender and family issues in spatial-cultural analysis. Practically, the findings can be used as a basis for formulating social intervention policies that are more responsive to the local context and gender equality, and become an important reference for policymakers, academics, and social activists in the field of family and community development. This research used a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with individuals who experienced divorce, traditional leaders, and local policymakers. Data were analyzed thematically with an emphasis on patterns of relationships between social structure, spatiality, and individual actions.

Literature Review

Gender in Divorce

The phenomenon of divorce cannot only be understood as a personal problem in household relations but as a reflection of broader structural dynamics, especially in the context of gender roles (Smart, 2013). In Alice Eagly's social role theory, it is explained that differences in gender roles are social constructions that are formed and reproduced through the socialization process (Eagly & Karau, 2002). The imbalance between women's domestic roles and men's public roles is often a source of tension, especially when women also work in the public sphere without relaxation of domestic responsibilities, resulting in a double burden that can lead to divorce.

The feminist theory put forward by Rosemarie Tong highlights that the root of divorce in most cases is the patriarchal structure (Tong & Botts, 2024). This system not only creates male dominance, but also silences women's voices in household decision-making, including economic, sexual, and emotional. Under these conditions, women who experience mental and physical exhaustion tend to choose divorce as a form of resistance to structural injustice.

Furthermore, the social construction of gender approach by West and Zimmerman emphasizes that gender is something that is lived (performed) in daily interactions (West & Fenstermaker, 2016). In households, gender relations are a continuous process of negotiation. When this process stops due to unequal power relations, conflict becomes inevitable. Sylvia Walby reinforces this analysis through the theory of patriarchy that not only works ideologically (Walby, 2004) but also institutionally, such as in the distribution of economic and educational access that is often unequal.

Research results in Surabaya City show that the highest divorce rate nationally in 2021 correlates with education, women's public participation, and quality of life (Ruum & Chasanah, 2023). Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics and the Religious Courts show that the higher the education of the household head, the lower the divorce rate. Conversely, women's increased participation in the public sphere is positively correlated with divorce rates, as it increases women's awareness of their rights and ability to get out of unhealthy relationships. In addition, a better quality of life gives women greater bargaining power to make autonomous decisions.

This analysis shows that divorce cannot be separated from the context of socioeconomic geography, where women in vulnerable communities are more often victims of institutionalized gender inequality. Thus, a multidimensional approach is essential in understanding divorce: not just personal

relationships, but also social structures, cultural norms, and ongoing value transformations. Divorce, in many cases, is not an individual failure, but a manifestation of a struggle against systemic injustices.

Family Values

Family values are an important foundation in shaping the structure, roles, and relationships within the family institution. This value is not static but continues to transform along with the social, economic, and cultural dynamics of society. In this context, an understanding of family values needs to be reviewed from two theoretical frameworks: traditional value theory as described by Parsons and Bales, and modern family theory by Anthony Giddens. According to Parsons and Bales, families in traditional societies are hierarchically structured, with a functional division of roles (Bales & Parsons, 2014). The husband plays the role of breadwinner (instrumental role), while the wife assumes the expressive role of childcare and housekeeping. This structure emphasizes stability, social order, and the preservation of patriarchal values that give primary authority to men as the head of the family. These traditional values are also reflected in local norms that regulate the division of labor within the family based on tradition, religion, and customs. However, while these values are intended to maintain household harmony, they also contain the potential for power imbalances, especially as women begin to gain greater access to education and the economy.

In contrast, Giddens proposes the concept of a modern family through the pure relationship paradigm, which is a relationship built based on free choice, open communication, and emotional satisfaction. The modern family emphasizes equality of roles between husband and wife, with joint involvement in decision-making and the sharing of domestic responsibilities. This shift in values reflects more inclusive and democratic social change, in line with the struggle for human rights and gender justice (Chambers & Gracia, 2021). Within this framework, both men and women have equal opportunities to pursue careers and actively participate in childcare, shaping a more dynamic and flexible family identity.

However, social reality shows that the transition from traditional to modern values does not always go smoothly. When couples have different views on roles in the household, conflict becomes inevitable. This difference in values often triggers tension in the household and can lead to divorce. Anthony Giddens emphasizes that this clash of values is most likely to occur when one party is still bound to conservative norms, while the other party adopts modern values that emphasize equality and individual freedom.

Empirical studies by Cherlin corroborate that rising expectations of gender equality and personal autonomy within the institution of marriage are contributing factors to rising divorce rates, particularly when family structures remain conservative and unable to accommodate changing social values (Cherlin, 2010). This phenomenon is particularly relevant in communities undergoing socio-cultural transition, such as in eastern Indonesia. In these regions, divorce is not only caused by economic factors or infidelity but also as a response to value misalignment between spouses.

Women who have autonomy in education and the economy often experience friction with their spouses or social environment that is still based on patriarchal values. Under these conditions, divorce becomes an expression of the failure of value negotiations between the old rigid structure and new aspirations that prioritize equality in family relations. Thus, understanding the shift in family values from traditional to modern is key in analyzing the dynamics of household relations and the causes of divorce amidst changes in contemporary society.

Socio-Economic Geography Approach

The Socio-Economic Geography approach provides a strong conceptual framework for understanding divorce not simply as a personal decision, but as a response to structural dynamics involving social capital, economic conditions, and spatial factors (Kulu, 2012). In this framework, divorce

is seen as the result of unequal social and economic relations that occur in a particular geographical context.

Pierre Bourdieu through Social Structure Theory, emphasizes that individuals act in a social field that is influenced by various forms of economic, social, and cultural capital and habitus (Husu, 2013), which are patterns of thought and action shaped by life experiences. In the context of divorce, families with low economic capital tend to be more vulnerable to economic and social pressures. This pressure can trigger household conflicts that lead to divorce. On the other hand, strong social capital, such as support networks from extended family, community, or religious institutions, can help couples survive a crisis, or even facilitate a way out when the relationship becomes dysfunctional. The habitus dimension also plays an important role. Women raised in conservative patriarchal cultures tend to have a self-limiting perspective on leaving problematic relationships. In contrast, women with more progressive life experiences and access to higher education are more likely to demand equal and healthy relationships, and to make the decision to divorce when necessary.

David Harvey in his Critical Geography approach (Mahaswa & Riziq, 2025), expands the understanding by adding the dimension of space as a product of power and economic relations. He states that the unequal distribution of resources between regions creates differential access to education, health, employment, and legal protection services. Families living in marginalized areas of both remote rural areas and urban slums face greater structural vulnerability to family conflict, as they not only face economic pressures but also limitations in accessing psychological support and legal protection when facing household crises.

Socio-economic Geography theory generally focuses on the interaction between socioeconomic and spatial factors in shaping social patterns of society, including family dynamics. Within this framework, factors such as income level, social status, education, geographic location, as well as access to resources play an important role in determining the stability of family relationships. Gottman shows that couples with unstable economic conditions, such as unemployment or low income, more often face domestic conflicts that lead to divorce (Gottman, 2023). In contrast, couples from the middle and upper classes tend to have better access to social, educational, and health services that can strengthen family relationships.

Geographical mobility factors also have major implications (Chen et al., 2021). When couples have to move to a new social environment, they are faced with the need to adapt to different values, norms, and economic conditions (Ayika et al., 2018), emphasizing that migration affects family dynamics and intergenerational relationships. The authors found that differences in cultural values and norms between the country of origin and the country of destination can cause tension within the family. This situation can accelerate the disintegration of family relations.

Divorce is not solely an individual choice, but a response to complex structural pressures. Socioeconomic and geographical inequalities are important factors that shape household vulnerability. Many divorce cases, especially in marginalized areas, arise as a result of prolonged socio-economic stagnation, limited access to employment, and poor quality social and legal services. When couples do not have sufficient resources to manage conflict and fulfill role expectations within the family, divorce becomes the only way out of the perceived stresses of life.

Methods

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a focus on an in-depth understanding of gender roles and family values in divorce cases in Minahasa Regency from the perspective of socio-economic geography. This approach was chosen to explore the social, cultural, and local economic dynamics that influence divorce decisions, and relate them to the spatial context of the region. This type

of research is a case study (Creswell & Creswell, 2014), which aims to examine contextually and comprehensively the phenomenon of divorce in a particular region, namely Minahasa Regency. The research location was purposively selected due to the unique cultural character of Minahasa and statistical data showing variations in divorce trends.

The research subjects were individuals directly involved in the divorce process (former spouses), traditional leaders, religious court officials, and community leaders. The technique of determining informants was carried out by purposive and snowball sampling, taking into account the informants' involvement, experience, and knowledge of the research theme. Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews with former divorced couples, traditional leaders, and relevant officials. Participatory observation of the social environment and patterns of gender interaction in families in the study locations. Documentation of divorce data at the Religious Court office, customary records, and local policies.

The method of data analysis was carried out in an interactive qualitative model of Miles and Huberman, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The researcher also used simple spatial analysis to explore the relationship between geographical location and divorce trends, based on the distribution of urban and rural areas in Minahasa. Data validity was maintained by triangulating sources and methods, as well as member checking with key informants to ensure the accuracy of the findings.

Results and Discussion

Identification of Gender Roles and Family Values

Divorce cases in Minahasa are not only influenced by domestic issues such as economic or spousal conflicts, but also by the social construction of gender roles, family values, and social geographical dynamics inherent in the region.

1. Changing Gender Roles in the Household

Changes in gender roles in the household, especially in a society that was previously very patriarchal, is one of the research findings. Gender change indicates a significant transformation in gender awareness, where women are beginning to take steps to change their lives. This courage not only reflects a desire for independence, but also signifies a major change in the way society views the role of women.

Judith Butler's gender performativity theory emphasizes that gender roles are shaped through social actions and interactions, not as innate traits (McShane, 2021). In other words, gender is the result of social practices that are constantly negotiated. In the case of Minahasa women, it began to renegotiate the position of women in the household, transforming from a position that was considered subservient to a position that was more empowered and decision-making. Many women who previously only played the role of housewives have now begun to engage in economic activities, be it through small businesses, entrepreneurship, or even working in the formal sector. By participating in the economy, women not only gain financial independence but also greater social recognition. This is a clear illustration that women are no longer just waiting for support from their partners, but are actively creating their path.

This change has also been accompanied by an increased awareness of women's rights. In many cases, women are beginning to realize that they have the right to live a happy and prosperous life, without having to rely on an unsupportive partner. This awareness is often triggered by better education and greater access to information.

However, this change in gender roles has not always been smooth sailing. While many women have successfully renegotiated positions, there are still challenges to be faced, such as the social stigma attached to divorced women or those who choose not to marry can be a barrier. Society often views

divorced women with a negative stigma, deeming them to have failed in their traditional roles as wives and mothers. Therefore, it is important to educate society on the importance of respecting women's life choices without judgment. In addition, although women are gaining economic independence, they often still struggle to be recognized for their contribution to the economy. This shows that despite the changes in gender roles, there are still views that need to change for women to truly be treated as equal in economic and social terms.

2. Family Values Suppressed by Socioeconomic Realities

Minahasa family values that are full of respect for the traditional family structure have begun to weaken due to socio-economic pressures. Family values in Minahasa society have long been the foundation of social interaction, where relationships between family members are not only measured by biological closeness but also by emotional bonds and social responsibilities. In the tradition of Minahasa society, the family is considered the smallest unit of society that has an important role in maintaining norms and values that have been passed down from generation to generation.

However, in recent years, male informants admitted that the increasing economic demands have caused family relations to become strained. Many family heads have to migrate to big cities in search of better jobs, leaving family members behind in their hometowns. This situation creates significant physical and emotional distance, where communication is limited and interactions that usually occur in a family context are reduced. This suggests that economic pressures affect not only the material but also the social and emotional aspects of family life.

This phenomenon can be related to the theory of structuration proposed by Anthony Giddens, which states that structures and agents influence each other in the practice of daily life, (Akalili & Sari, 2021). In the context of Minahasa society, the structure in question is the traditional family values that have existed for centuries, while the agents are the individuals who play a role in carrying out family functions. When the economic structure does not support household stability, the value structure is also disrupted.

Globalization is another factor that contributes to changes in family values. Globalization has brought in various foreign cultural influences, some of which conflict with traditional values. Minahasa society, which used to be very strong in family values, is now exposed to modern lifestyles that are more individualistic. Despite the challenges faced, there is still hope to restore and strengthen family values in Minahasa. Communities can play an active role in creating programs that encourage interaction between family members, such as arts and cultural activities that involve all family members. Thus, although socioeconomic pressures can weaken family values, some efforts can be made to strengthen these ties.

3. Urbanization and Mobility as Geospatial Factors of Divorce

Informants mentioned that urbanization or moving to urban areas, such as Manado, causes disorientation of values and relationships that were previously strong in the community of origin. This phenomenon reflects profound changes in individual social and cultural structures. Urbanization is often defined as a process in which people move from rural to urban areas, hoping to find better opportunities, both in economic and social terms. However, this process does not always go smoothly and often leads to a variety of complex impacts.

One of the most obvious impacts of urbanization is the loss of social relationships that were previously tightly knit in the community of origin. In rural areas, individuals usually have strong social networks, where everyone knows each other and supports each other. However, when individuals move to big cities like Manado, they are often separated from these social networks. Social interactions become more limited and often transactional. Urban society tends to focus more on personal achievement and individual success, which can result in a shift in values from community solidarity to individualism.

The social ecology theory proposed by Bronfenbrenner in 1979 provides a relevant framework for understanding this phenomenon. This theory emphasizes that individuals cannot be separated from the social and environmental context in which they exist (Navarro & Tudge, 2023). Changes in the social and geographical environment, such as a move to the city, can greatly affect an individual's behavior and values.

Urbanization can also affect family dynamics. In rural environments, family structures are usually more traditional, where the roles of each family member are clear and defined. However, in cities, family structures often become more flexible and diverse. This can be seen in many families consisting of members who are not related by blood, such as roommates or coworkers, living together to share rent. These changes can bring positive impacts, such as increasing cultural diversity and perspectives, but can also result in confusion of roles and responsibilities within the family.

Moving to a city can also affect an individual's mental health. The loneliness and isolation experienced by many newcomers in big cities can lead to an increased risk of mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety. The inability to adapt to a new environment, coupled with the loss of social support from the home community, can create a negative cycle that is difficult to break. In many cases, individuals may feel trapped between two worlds: feeling not fully accepted in the new city, but also missing the comfort and familiarity of the home community. However, it is important to note that not all urbanization experiences are negative. For some individuals, moving to the city can open doors to opportunities that were previously out of reach. Better education, access to better healthcare, and wider employment opportunities are often the main reasons why people choose to leave the village. Urbanization can be a catalyst for personal and professional growth. In an in-depth analysis of urbanization, it is important to consider the various factors that influence individual experiences. Government policies, economic conditions, and cultural changes all play a role in shaping how individuals adapt to new environments.

4. Gender Awareness and Women's Divorce Lawsuits

The increase in the number of divorces through female litigation is an important indicator of increased gender awareness. This phenomenon not only reflects changes in social dynamics but also indicates a transformation in the way women perceive their rights and position within the institution of marriage. The theory of liberal feminism provides a relevant framework for understanding this shift. This theory emphasizes the importance of equality and individual freedom in achieving social justice, which is particularly relevant when discussing women's rights within the household.

Women who choose to file for divorce often do so as an expression of dissatisfaction with the relationship. Women no longer feel trapped in traditional norms that require them to stay in the marriage, regardless of unhealthy or harmful conditions. Women who experience domestic violence feel that divorce is the only way to protect themselves and their children. In these situations, divorce is not just the end of a relationship, but also a bold step towards freedom and self-recovery. This increased gender awareness is also driven by better access to education and information. Education provides women with the knowledge necessary to understand their rights and how to fight for them. With higher education, women tend to be more confident and able to make decisions that impact their future lives.

However, despite progress in gender awareness, there are still many challenges that women face in the divorce process. In many cases, women may have to fight for child custody or a fair division of property. This shows that although gender awareness has increased, there are still structural injustices that need to be addressed. In addition, it is important to consider the emotional impact of divorce itself. The divorce process can be a very painful experience, and women often have to deal with the social stigma associated with divorce. Although society is becoming more accepting of divorce, there are still negative perceptions that can affect the mental and emotional health of women who file for divorce. Therefore, psychological and social support is essential to help through this process.

5. Economic Inequality and Women's Double Burden

Many women are not only involved in the informal sector, such as selling cakes or gardening but also have to take care of household chores without the support of a spouse. This reflects what is known in feminist sociology as the double burden theory (Baraokar, 2022). This theory highlights that women are often trapped in two conflicting roles: the public role as breadwinner and the domestic role as housekeeper. The imbalance between these two roles, which is often not recognized or valued, is one of the main triggers of domestic tension that can lead to divorce.

When a woman feels that she has to shoulder the entire burden of responsibility, it can lead to frustration and dissatisfaction. A partner who does not contribute to household chores can lead to feelings of disrespect in women, which in turn can lead to conflict. When communication between partners is poor, these tensions can escalate, and in extreme situations, can lead to divorce. However, it is important to remember that not all women are in the same situation. Some women manage to find a balance between work and household responsibilities with support from their spouse or community. Some women form joint business groups that not only help the family economically but also provide emotional and social support. By sharing experiences and resources, women can reduce the burden they face and create a sense of solidarity among fellow women.

This phenomenon points to the need for a change in the way society views the role of women. It is important to recognize that domestic work is no less important than work in the public sphere. Society needs to understand that women's contributions to the household should be valued and supported, both through more inclusive government policies and through education that educates all family members about a more equitable division of tasks. This change requires a collective effort from all parties, from individuals, and families, to communities and governments. Only in this way can we ensure that women are not only heroes in the household but also get the recognition they deserve in the public sphere.

6. Social Norms and Community Pressure

Marriage, as a respected social institution, is often a burden for individuals who feel trapped in unfulfilling relationships. Pressure from extended family and the surrounding environment is often the deciding factor in the decision to stay, even though inside, women feel unhappy. Women feel pressured to maintain the image of an intact family, so they stay in a marriage that is no longer harmonious, just to fulfill the expectations of those around them.

However, with the rise of individualism and the social acceptance of divorce, many individuals are emboldened to decide to divorce. In this case, individualism refers to values that emphasize personal freedom and rights, where individuals prefer to pursue personal happiness and satisfaction rather than being bound to rigid social norms. This suggests that changes in social views on divorce can provide the impetus for individuals to take bold steps in their lives. This phenomenon is in line with Ronald Inglehart's (1997) theory of value change, which suggests that postmodern societies tend to prioritize the values of self-expression and personal freedom over traditional values such as collective harmony (Karakai & Hatsko, 2024). Inglehart argues that along with economic development and increased education, individuals become more independent and value personal freedom more. Traditional values that emphasize the importance of family and harmony are being displaced by more modern values that value individual happiness. This is evident in many cases where individuals who were previously trapped in unhappy marriages eventually chose to divorce in pursuit of personal happiness.

This phenomenon shows that social and cultural changes in society play a significant role in influencing individual decisions regarding marriage and divorce. An increasingly open and tolerant society towards divorce provides space for individuals to explore options without fear of social stigma. On the other hand, it is important to consider the psychological impact of divorce itself. While divorce can be a positive step for many individuals, the process is often accompanied by pain and loss. Many

people experience feelings of sadness, anger, or even guilt after the decision to divorce has been made. This shows that while society is becoming more accepting of divorce, the emotional toll it takes remains a challenge to deal with.

Strengthening Strategies to Reduce Divorce Rates

1.A Pre-Marriage Course Based on Local Socio-Cultural Contexts

One very important first step in preventing divorce is the implementation of a pre-marriage course that is not merely an administrative formality but carries an educational approach based on local Minahasa values. Minahasa society is known for its strong family culture, the value of cooperation in the *Mapalus* tradition, and respect for traditional and church leaders. Therefore, the pre-marriage course should include material on gender equality, conflict management, couple communication, and fair division of roles in the household. This approach draws on Bandura's social learning theory, which emphasizes that social behavior is learned through observation and social experience (Sabililhaq et al., 2024). Thus, a course that emphasizes positive local examples will be more easily accepted by prospective couples.

2.Pre-Marital Agreement as an Instrument of Rights Protection

Although still considered taboo by some Minahasa communities, pre-marital agreements play an important role as a preventive effort in safeguarding the rights and obligations of each spouse. In many divorce cases, especially when there is economic inequality and asset ownership, women are at a disadvantage. Therefore, the socialization of the importance of pre-marital agreements must be packaged wisely and educatively. This instrument is not intended to weaken the bond of marriage, but rather to be a healthy form of commitment and legal protection. Rational choice theory explains that individuals tend to make decisions to minimize future risks (Sodani et al., 2021), so this agreement can be a rational tool to build relational justice from the beginning of marriage.

3.Strengthening Trust and Communication in the Household

Lack of emotional support and lack of communication are often the main triggers for divorce, as found in various cases in Minahasa. Therefore, it is important to encourage programs to strengthen couples' communication, and emotional literacy training, and foster trust in the household. This can be done through guidance from religious leaders, traditional communities, and local women's organizations. Bowlby's attachment theory emphasizes the importance of healthy emotional attachment as the foundation of long-term relationships (Khadka, 2022). When couples can communicate openly and trust each other, potential conflicts can be resolved constructively, not destructively.

4.Extended Family and Local Community Support

In the collective social structure of Minahasa, extended family and community play a significant role in maintaining household stability. However, in many cases, the extended family becomes a source of pressure or takes sides, exacerbating the couple's conflict. Therefore, it is necessary to establish neutral and constructive family support mechanisms, such as customary or church-based family mediation programs. The family strengthening approach (Xazratkulova, 2023), will revive the values of “*baku-baku sayang* and *baku topang*”, namely mutual love and support between family members as a social force in dealing with household dynamics.

5.Positive Culture-Based Social Sanctioning

Minahasa culture places great value on reputation, self-respect, and family integrity. This aspect can be used as a social control to strengthen marital commitment. However, social sanctions should not be directed at stigmatization or punishment, but rather serve as an impetus for changes in attitude and

behavior. In cases of domestic violence, traditional and religious leaders can provide open rebuke or mediation with a restorative orientation. This concept is in line with Parsons' view of the latent function of social sanctions in maintaining the stability of the community value system (Trevino, 2021). With this approach, the Minahasa community remains a social fortress that is not repressive but builds collective awareness to maintain a healthy household.

Conclusion

Divorce in Minahasa is not only caused by domestic factors, but also influenced by more complex social dynamics, including changing gender roles, socio-economic pressures, urbanization, and shifting local cultural norms and values. Minahasa women have shown increased gender awareness and independence in making household decisions, indicating a shift in roles from traditional to more egalitarian. On the other hand, the persistence of the practice of double burden, economic inequality, and pressure from social norms indicate that patriarchal cultural constructs still influence household life. Minahasa's urbanized geographical context also plays a role in weakening traditional social controls and creating new tensions in family relations. The limitation of this study is that the scope of the research is still limited to certain areas in Minahasa and does not cover all ethnographic or demographic variations of Minahasa society at large. Secondly, the qualitative approach used is in-depth but not designed to statistically measure the magnitude of influence between factors. Thirdly, the limited time and number of informants led to potential subjective bias in the interpretation of the data, especially related to personal experiences that do not always represent collective conditions. For future research, it is recommended to combine qualitative exploration with data quantification to map the influence between variables in a more measurable way. In addition, comparative studies between regions, both within and outside Sulawesi, can provide a broader picture of how local culture interacts with gender and divorce dynamics. It could also delve more deeply into the role of customary, religious, and local government institutions in building support systems for households vulnerable to divorce, including in designing community-based policies and local wisdom.

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