

# Gendered communication: Gender mainstreaming and gender differences in the age of gender equality

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## Abstract

The implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming (GM) policy in Indonesia has had a problematic impact on the advancement of women's resources. This is due to a discrepancy between the value system from the West (secular) which is the essence of GM policy and the value system in Indonesian society. This study was conducted to explain the impact of GM policy implementation in producing a transformation of women's gender identities and roles that are becoming more modern towards the phenomenon of gendered communication. By analyzing Van Dijk's critical discourse in three dimensions, namely discourse, cognition, and society, this study finds the potential for abuse of power in gendered communication. The factors include the structure of the mind, the structure of the text (conversation), and the meaning of the message, which works with the support of cultural forces and interpretations of religion. Understanding gender differences and how they operate is beneficial in equal and comfortable communication practices. Gender intelligence will form subjectivity based on the meaning of the coherence or togetherness of the relationship partner.

**Keywords:** *gendered communication, gender differences, gender mainstreaming policy, women's gender identities and roles, gender intelligence.*

## INTRODUCTION

An understanding of gender differences and their working mechanism can develop gender intelligence. It becomes the potential to eliminate gender-biased communication and achieve the comfort of interpersonal communication between men and women. Some parties consider that the communication gap due to the pressure of the gender value system is not a problem because it is considered a communication style. However, certain groups of society view the gender-biased communication gap as a problem that cannot be considered trivial, becoming a potential that causes counter-productive social actions. In this phenomenon, communication as a dimension of humanism can experience a "destructive" function - damaging social relationships. Friedmann (1998) asserts that divorce can be linked to gender issues. This view provides useful reflection.

Gender differences are essential because gender is considered a development requirement as stipulated in Presidential Instruction Number 9 of 2000 concerning Gender Mainstreaming (GM). Gender differences have been politicized into political interests - interpersonal and socio-cultural power aspects - and ethical interests (Payne, 2001). This policy's issue indicates and becomes a political acknowledgment that there is a problem of injustice in shared life related to gender. Gender equality is required for the fulfillment of human rights - women's empowerment - and demands for sustainable development (Friedman, 1998).

GM policies that are intended to socially engineer gender equality have complex implications. Women's empowerment produces progressivity. Women's identities such as education, economic income, health, and political control functions increase. Indonesia's gender empowerment index (IDG) increased from 71.39 in 2016

to 71.74 in 2017. IDG indicates whether women can play an active role in economic and political life (Kemenko, 2019). These attributive data show increasing gender equality indicated by economic income and participation in the public sphere. However, empowerment also creates problems. This empowerment fosters the subjectivity, autonomy, and critical power of women. This condition further raises ambiguity and confusion about identity, roles, and “new” relations due to status changes (Wood, 1994). In some societies, there are tensions due to the shift in traditional gender changes to a more modern one. The phenomenon of ambiguous social relations has potentially encouraged communication gaps (Galliano, 2003).

The scope of interpersonal communication between men and women may become a source of communication gaps ranging from unwanted acts of communication to violence which potentially damage relationships. Gender is essential for communication because communication is the heart of human life. Communication is important in cultural values and practices, concerning the continuity of social relations and affecting self-concept which can interfere with the purpose and function of communication (Payne, 2001). So, if communication is problematic between parties, it will have an impact on or disrupt the stability of life and can even be a source of problems.

The gender equality era is marked by the social phenomenon of divorce which can be attributed to the communication gap between husband and wife. Divorce is increasing not only in number but also in the number of lawsuits from women (wives). Divorce cases escalated. Divorce cases were 447,743 in 2021, increasing 53.50% compared to 2020 with 291,677 cases. The report shows that wives often sue for divorce rather than husbands, as much as 75.34% or 337,343 cases where the lawsuit is filed by the wife and the case has been decided by the court. A total of 110,440 cases or 24.66% were due to divorce, namely cases whose petition was filed by the husband and decided by the court (Annur, 2023). (Zakaria, 2020) explains that miscommunication is the root of divorce problems. The high number of divorce cases is due to the equality between women and men (Saadah, 2018).

Confrontational communication on the divorce phenomenon indicates that many people need to be aware of the pressure of gender norms on individual thinking structures (Galliano, 2003). Oppression of gender norms can become a thinking structure or norm in a social value system (Van Dijk, 2011). Gender ideology pushes men to suppress masculinity and women to oppress femininity (Veltman & Piper, 2014). This condition, in the social and situational context, is a source of communication gaps. Masculinity with a dominative character - can be a potential source of aggressive power to conform to its “privilege” as dominant in gender relations. The masculine character becomes a source of self-concept formation and self-development as dominant, assertive, rational, and a leader. The character builds his expectations and belief that masculine character is his self-worth. Women with feminine gender pressures often lead to being feminine, submissive, weak, indecisive, less rational, less capable of being leaders, and other stereotypes. This gender ideology or gender value system dynamically becomes the norms, beliefs, and expectations that shape self-concept and disposition of social relations (Galliano, 2003).

In the era of gender equality, miscommunication between men and women often occurs, as indicated by the divorce cases above. Changes that occur in women’s identity and gender roles are closely related to their communication acts because communication voices the social image of gender and tries to convince us about the correct behavior of men and women (Payne, 2001). Thus, there is potential miscommunication dealing with the “work” of binary gender identities and roles. Gender orientation seems to provide better insight into many communications (Reeder, 1996). So, the problem of gender bias communication is a real development along with the implications of women’s empowerment programs in the era of gender equality therefore it is important to study.

The explanation raises some questions: 1. How does the subject of gender differences play an important role in the perspective of potential communication gaps resulting in gender-biased communication in its cultural context, 2. What factors lead to the growth of dynamics of tension or unwanted actions - due to “abuse of power”? and 3. How to create opportunities to anticipate gender biased-communication to achieve comfortable communication and achieve its goals?

The arguments are: 1. The implications of GM policy implementation through women’s empowerment

programs produce gender differences (gender identity and gender roles) for women to become more modern (androgynous). There has been a development of new gender roles in the public sphere, the awakening of subjectivity, autonomy, and the strengthening of women's individuation or self-expression in making decisions about the best things in life. It has the potential to disrupt the "status quo" hierarchy of gender relations in social interaction with men (his partner). These identity and gender role changes create "confusion" and result in social tensions. The dynamics of this potential for tension gain the legitimacy of the community's cultural, including religious interpretations. 2. The factors that enable the emergence of potential communication gaps is the intertextuality between a. gender discourse - the transformation of gender identities and roles - dynamics of women's awareness and reflection on their gender cognition which shifts from traditional to more modern, b. cognition - social practice in the social order as sociocultural cognition with the legitimacy dynamics of cultural systems and religious interpretations, c. the society - regarding social practices or representations that indicate the socialization of gender discourse in society. 3. This analysis generates important opportunities to understand gender issues that can help individuals act wisely in communicating with their gender partners.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several views on the relationship between gender differences and communication. Galliano emphasizes that the problem is an ongoing controversy, whether the findings of differences in communicative actions of men and women are related to or caused by gender stereotypes and expectations or by differences in speech (social way of expressing an action) (Galliano, 2003). In its development, there are variations of thought. First, gender communication allows it to be viewed as gender-stereotyped communication - namely gender differences in communication (Dow, B.J., 2019 in Eadie, W.F.(Ed.), 2019 ). This thinking explains that people communicate with restrictions on gender stereotypes, focusing on the concept of masculine and feminine rather than male and female.

This notion of "cultural feminism" claims that women tend to hold values such as pacifism, cooperation, nurturing, and the like. Traditional masculine values such as aggressiveness, competitiveness, and individualism are viewed as superior. The male speech act is the standard. Such thinking considers gendered communication as the reflection of its gender identity, based on the recognition that gender differences deal with power as power relations. For example, the male communication style is perceived as more powerful and therefore more desirable. Communication patterns are understood as a "natural" growth of biological sex. These communicative practices reflect (and assume) gender differences.

Second, employing a sociolinguistic approach, (Tannen, 1991) asserts that there is a difference in growth between boys and girls. No one denies that men are the dominant class in society and try to dominate women in their lives, but the influence of dominance is not always the result of the intention to dominate. Gender differences exist in the act of interpersonal communication between men and women as a communication style - *genderlect* or gender dialect. Gender difference in communicative action is only a performative style. Tannen believes that adult men inhabit a subjective world, an experience where every man is "an individual in a hierarchical social order". For men, the conversation is an individual effort to achieve (hierarchy) and defend it. So, it is logical that conversations by men are interpreted that way from a masculine point of view.

Third, the thought of gendered communication utilizing a sociopolitical approach commits a feminist approach to communication (Dow, B.J., 2019 in Eadie, W.F.(Ed.), 2019 ). This thinking produces an approach based on the problem of how the understanding of gender and its relationship with power affects (and reflects) communication practices. Feminist thought acknowledges that feminist works always understand gender as a political concept that functions within and at the same time functions to create, defend, and challenge power relations. Other sociopolitical thought studies communication patterns in gender relations that cannot be reduced to biological sex (Dow, B.J., 2019 in Eadie, W.F.(Ed.), 2019). Sociopolitical thought questions about the socialization of gender roles, the relationship between power and gender in communication, and the problem of using male behavior as a standard for "good" communication. This thinking becomes a perspective where "gender" - a set of cultural constructions regarding norms, beliefs, and expectations for men and women- replaces

“sex” - a biological category as a variable in understanding communication. From the perspective of power, gender is defined as a system of power relations in society (Galliano, 2003). This system regulates who is the determinant- making or changing rules, controlling resources, and negotiating them. Power also operates on a personal level.

Galliano considers 3 (three) important things that can be used to predict gender patterns in communication: a. hope, when influencing and developing gender behavior, b. self-concept, leading a person to adapt to gender, and c. situation, providing dynamic pressure to display gender behavior. There is a dynamic of the emergence of gender-stereotyped behavior in a certain context - in context. Personality qualities related to gender interact more complicatedly because they interact with behavioral norms related to age, ethnicity, and social class (Galliano, 2003). Gender differences - cannot be defended to explain a person's actions, but social and cultural factors work strongly. The oppression of gender norms makes it possible to use “different” language. When gender becomes a prominent factor in interactions, gender-related expectations and stereotypes can change and emerge strongly - becoming a potential abuse of power.

Wood (2009) presents a dynamic understanding of gender differences in communication. Using the approach of the “essential” concept, in the transitional era (traditional to modern), miscommunication between men and women often occurs. This misunderstanding is caused by the difference in understanding of “socialization function” in different gender conversations, so they learn different rules for communication. The difference is also in the ways that show support of interest and involvement as directed by gender identity. Communication reveals gender identity and produces and reproduces cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity that are transformed and show conformity to gender identity.

(Payne, 2001) utilizes a pluralistic perspective between both sexes in a “unique” way without any hostility between them. Gender reflects the interaction in which a person combines biological characteristics; psychological; cultural and religion. Gender ideology produces stereotypes of individuals, and leads to sexism - discriminating against a person based on gender, allowing the division of work and family responsibilities based on gender. Then, communication is viewed from two things at once: combining interaction on two levels, namely instrumental (task) and maintenance of relationships. Payne's thinking about communication and gender by exploring the similarities and differences between men and women provide a more accurate description of human communication behavior that exists (Payne, 2001). They are not focusing on the concept of masculine and feminine but on men and women. Increasing awareness and reflecting on the theory of gender roles and communication can improve one's ability to distinguish between “arbitrary” and “desired”.

The conceptualization indicates the complexity of gender differences in communication, a plural approach is required. Following T. Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis, the “essentialism” approach contributes to gender thinking as a thought structure that possibly influences a person's action system. This approach contributes to the idea that gender cognition becomes a dimension of discourse. The discourse dimension in the psychological-relational orientation emphasizes the importance of the social context in shaping human character, which cannot develop itself without the presence of others (Faturachman & Nurjaman, 2017). The gender-biased character tends to develop within the togetherness with others (the partner). Gender identity will be realized in the presence of other gender identities. This is due to the (binary) construction of masculine identity in men and feminine in women. People use communication to express or perform gender (Dow, B.J., 2019 in Eadie, W.F.(Ed.), 2019). Communication enables us to “operate” or “create” the gender identity.

The society dimension explains that gendered conversation is part of the discourse that develops in society. Gender performance is not a single issue but in the context of social meaning that transcends everyone, as stated by Wood (Wood, J.T. 2019 in Eadie, W.F., 2019). The intertextual analysis is needed by examining how gender discourse is produced, reproduced, and reconstructed in society. Media content socializes gender construction in society, institutions such as families, schools, and others (Ridgeway, 2011). In other words, individual cognition in gender discourse involves a mental model and constructive sociocultural cognition (Wahyono, 2018).

According to Van Dijk, sociolinguistics which prioritizes linguistic problematization is intertwined with social processes and structures. In speaking, language users follow effective rules and strategies that are not

personal but are shared socially, known implicitly, and used according to their cultural community. Interpretation becomes important because language users share ideological repertoires of socio-cultural beliefs that allow misunderstandings.

The sociopolitical perspective questions the socialization of identity and gender roles; the relationship between power and gender in communication, and the use of male behavior as a standard for “good” communication. Following Van Dijk (Wahyono, 2018), gender discourse as a social action plays a role in producing the social world including knowledge, identity, and social relationships to maintain certain patterns. Thus, it is relevant if “gender perspective” - a set of cultural constructions regarding norms, beliefs, and expectations for men; women, and society dynamically, becomes a variable to understand communication in the cultural context of society. The focus is on how communication practices create and shape a certain understanding of what gender means in a certain context. (Dow, B.J. 2019 in Eadie, W.F.(Ed.), 2019). So, gendered communication in this study can be interpreted as a communication practice that shows the formation of an understanding of the meaning of gender in the cultural context of Indonesian society. The communication acts in a gender perspective and produces gender-biased communication. Gender bias is a prejudice based on social construction that attempts to place women as weaker objects compared to men (Widyatama, 2006).

The critical perspective underlines the working power dimension where gender becomes a social value system with emotive criteria, and coercive in the support of the cultural belief system with ethical criteria (Payne, 2001). So, understanding gendered communication as a study is not just studying the combination of discursive sentences, coherence, and communicative actions but as a discourse, namely, as a social action. This social action is a process that begins within the framework of understanding. Then, it goes to the communication and interaction process where it becomes part of a broader social and cultural process and structure (Wahyono, 2018).

The complexity of gendered communication requires the use of message transmission and production of meaning, which are mainly about meaning and interpretation (Fiske, 2017). In line with the symbolic interactionism view (Goodman & Ritzer, 2004) communication includes physical and symbolic interaction. In short, gendered communication indicates the working: individual-social, sociocultural mind structure in the oppression of the gender value system with the support of the cultural system and the interpretation of religion. Progressive thinking that sees similarities rather than differences between men and women in gendered communication (Payne, 2001) provides opportunities for transformative analysis.

## **METHODS**

The complexity of gender-biased communication is analyzed using Van Dijk’s critical discourse analysis in three dimensions: discourse, cognition, and society, emphasizing the micro-macro connection and the power dimension. The dimension of discourse discusses individual gender cognition (structure of mind) and its influence on the use of language. It is used in instrumental and performative in organizing ideas and messages to interpretation bases. The analysis focuses on how the use of language as a communication medium is influenced by and affects identity and gender roles dynamically. The perspective of Harding and Wood (Griffin, E.A, 2012) helps to understand gender communication more critically. One of the best ways to find out how the world works is to do research from the perspective of women and other marginalized groups.

The micro-macro approach and aspects of power at interaction levels become the basis of the analysis. The social cognition dimension analyzes how gendered communication reflects a social view of gender that becomes sociocultural cognition in a patriarchal society. Tajfel’s social identity theory (Faturochman & Nurjaman, 2017) helps to explain the working of gender social cognition in communicative action. Gender differences become standards of interpretation, norms, and the social value of it. The community dimension addresses the question of how gender discourse develops in society. Social practices and organizing that tend to use gender ideology as social representation in the media are indications of gender discourse development (Ridgeway, 2011).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### GM: Gender Discourse and Gender Difference in Cultural Context

GM policies that are intended to achieve gender equality make gender differences an essential dimension in societal life. Gender equality is part of the integrative orientation of development success, becoming a demand for sustainable development (Friedmann, 1998). The policy integrates gender in development, by empowering women in access, participation, control, and benefits in the fields of education, health and economic income, and politics. Gender equality is defined as equality of conditions for men and women to obtain their opportunities and rights as human beings, to be able to play a role and participate in political, economic, socio-cultural, defense, and security activities, and equality in enjoying the results of development (Inpres No. 9 of 2000).

GM policies are an effort to re-engineer society from traditional to modern by evaluating the basic structure of the gender power relationship system. Following Van Dijk's view (Wahyono, 2018) the GM policy is to socialize knowledge about gender value systems and differences in gender identity to maintain a pattern of social interaction in the perspective of power relations. Gender becomes the basis of social organization (Ridgeway, 2011). Gender discourse that considers equality of opportunity, women's access and opportunities with wealth standards, and the modernity of masculine values, becomes a source of inspiration, building prospects for women towards "equal" conditions with men in the public space (Dow, B.J., 2019 in Eadie, W.F.(Ed.), 2019).

Education can bring women to political awareness (Freire, 1999), making women aware of the social reality of inequality or injustice that has been "hidden" by the imposition of gender norms with the legitimacy of the patriarchal system and the interpretation of religion. Piliang state that almost throughout Muslim history, women were placed in an inferior position while men were in a superior position (Piliang, 2002). Education changes the cognitive perception of women who are oppressed by gender norms and become critics. Women become aware of their potential and abilities which are equal and just as important as men, a meaning of their existence. Knowledge, expertise, and skills in a certain field become capital for women to enter the public job market. Formal positions in the legislative show that women "have autonomy" in the life of the community and state.

This builds a progressive self-concept of women, raising the social value of women with the potential to meet the economic needs of themselves and their families. The impact of GM produces subjective definitions by women, the result of practical interaction with more modern gender identities and roles (Jauhari, 2012). Female subjectivity is a condition where women become subjects, and have conscious experience of perspective, perception, belief, desire, and others (Goodman & Ritzer, 2004). Women actively interpret their life experiences and understand the world of their gender development experiences as reality data with increased attributes.

This identity and gender role change leads to the formation of agency in women, developing "new" perceptions in a phenomenological view (Goodman & Ritzer, 2004). This modern gender identity and role influences the interpretation and meaning of life aspects on the self, self-concept, and relationship with other people. Strengthening individuation makes women more autonomous in determining things that are meaningful to them and organizing aspects of personal life related to "new" tasks in the public realm. Empowerment makes women subjectively define their role, being autonomous in various aspects of their lives. In the context of gendered communication, these changes have a dynamic effect, especially on the actual and symbolic meaning of the message and its structure.

The GM implementation is "going beyond" its essence. It encourages the growth of female individuation shaking the "status quo" of the social hierarchy. Female individuation becomes confrontational potential in interpersonal communication. Confrontation also occurs at the community level. Gender discourse in GM socializes gender knowledge as a social construct that is strictly differentiated from "natural". This "social convention" is differentiated from rational legitimacy - the standard of modern (secular) thinking. In social practice, the distinction is not coherent with the cultural belief system of the community and the interpretation

of its religion as a source of legitimacy. The belief system does not recognize this conceptualization of gender and generally considers that social conventions are “natural” because until now the convention is experienced and practiced in society life.

Gender discourse oppresses sociocultural cognition from traditional to modern with rational value standards. This transformation process produces confrontational in the community’s belief system that has been dynamically practiced throughout its life history. This confrontation occurs intertextually, namely at the individual, in interpersonal relations, and at the sociocultural value system. The differentiation of traditional conventions (“nature”) into new ones (“gender”) that underlies this ratio has wide implications on many aspects of individual and social life. This condition produces cultural clashes, giving rise the ambiguity and tensions.

Regarding the explanation above, GM has problematic implications, producing the simultaneity of progressiveness and potential confrontation. GM policy employing an objective approach is confrontational (Moser, 2012). The confrontation between men and their female partners is “provoked” by policy assumptions that “build the ability of women in the orientation of bargaining positions with men to produce “equality of conditions”. In addition, the substance of GM policy is sexist and reductive, focusing on the idea that gender equality is caused by the condition of women who are left behind. Gender is identified with women (Wood, 1994). Whereas the backwardness of women is related to the operation of gender ideology that limits women to developing optimally - shortchanged (Galliano, 2003), which also happens to men leading to masculine characters (Fakih, 2008).

Empirically, a reduction in the use of masculinity as a standard of social value results in an individual and social view that does not value domestic duties. This sexist thinking reduces the functionality of the togetherness of men and women in social reproduction duties. As a result, women’s empowerment programs that give rise to the perception of economic opportunities exist or are aimed at and to be able to “compete” in a bargaining position with men. Such a perception tends to evaluate marriage as a competition between men and women. This situation can produce tensions in oneself and social relations, manifesting in communicative actions. The transitional era of gender differences fosters confusion and tends to be a communication gap (Wood, 2013).

Thus, the basic character of GM policy as the basic structure of gender discourse based on gender power relations is actual. Control as a manifestation of the power operation occurs in the use of masculine values as a standard and the denial of the relational dimension of gender equality. Exploiting gender differences for social engineering shows “hidden” inequality. The operation of power on knowledge about gender through GM policy produces confrontational tendencies because there is pressure on individuals for the value system (gender) as social engineering that is not relevant to the traditional culture of society.

In short, the substance of GM policy is gender discourse, producing and or reproducing the social world: knowledge about gender; social relations based on gender; identity, and gender roles, to maintain certain social relations (gender) in society. GM policy has increased the quality of women’s resources with the identity and gender role of women becoming more modern. This transformation has impacted a complex system of social action that operates on the legitimacy of the culture and the interpretation of religion. All individuals, whether male or female, will initiate a conflict if they gain a change (Reeder, 1996).

### **Gender Discourse and Social Practice**

One of the social practices in the development of gender discourse is the establishment of women’s organizations by the state in institutions including *Pembinaan kesejahteraan keluarga* (PKK) or Family Welfare Program and *Dharma wanita* (DW) or Civil Servants’ Wives Association. Through DW and PKK the government (New Order) shows the state’s influence on the “women’s movement”, reflecting efforts to change society’s view of gender. DW is an organization for the wife’s activities in the institution their husband works, with hierarchical membership and activities. DW and PKK are “responsible mothers” intended to help them carry out their natural obligations. The state civil apparatus is a contingent in a society where the state plays its role as prominent (Blackburn, 2004).

The “state gender ideology” organizing produces the social world - DW and PKK as ways to influence or construct gender in society. The implication is that the maternity aspect of this gender ideological work becomes fundamental for the meaning of gender equality because it socializes “maternity duties” without the proportional balance of socializing other (public) social roles. The prioritization of women’s “maternity duties” also neglects the strategic value of social reproduction as a togetherness function of men and women. This thinking reduces the value of social reproduction functions. Factually, the main social reproduction function deals with humanist life sustainability.

The influence of gender construction shows the importance of socialization in the gender norm system. Members of DW or PKK are the main sources of primary socialization in the family. Socialized gender tends to be consistent in the formation of children’s personalities in the family. In educational institutions, the phenomenon of socialization of the gender value system is still strong. The number of female teachers at the Elementary Education level is higher than that of male teachers. Learning practices tend to be the embodiment of the gendered character of both teachers and participants in the learning process (Handayani, 2017). Gender is a universal frame factor that cannot be avoided in-class interactions (Einarsson & Granstrom, 2010).

In short, these social practices confirm that there is a strong socialization of the gender value system in society. The explanation is that gender conversation is a form of communicative action with a tendency to “abuse power” and get “energy” from socialization and social-institutional practices of gender bias in society. This socialization strengthens individual and sociocultural gender cognition. There is a fundamental problem, namely the structure of gender discourse resulting from GM (the modern one) which is not coherent with the patriarchal cultural structure of the local community. Social production - knowledge, social identity, and social relations that are conceptualized as characteristics of modern women’s culture (rational and secular)- contradict the sociocultural cognition of society. In a patriarchal society and line with traditional gender identity and roles, cultural belief systems and religious interpretations are legitimized. The working process of GM gender discourse (the modern one) is hindered and opposed by the patriarchal-traditional cultural imperative of society.

The patriarchal community is a source of individual legitimacy for leadership and male dominance. The acceptance of male leadership indicates a submissive female gender identity conformity and fulfillment of the function as a wife based on the acknowledgment of the marriage’s noble value based on religious values (Handayani, 2020). This indicates the man’s perception and expectation of his leadership position as accepted by the woman. Thus, patriarchy becomes the working context of gender power relations. Patriarchal social legitimacy on the performance of the majority (patriarchal) in its relationship with the minority on the normative dimension and its confidence becomes an imperative force. Culture becomes one of the sources of political legitimacy (both individual and social) (Kleden, 1988). The dynamics of this cultural legitimacy source provide opportunities for the working of both categories of thought (stereotyped gender communication gap and gendered communication as a communication style).

In short, the discussion above shows that the implementation of GM policy results in the transformation of gender differences (gender identity and gender roles) of women from traditional to more modern. Modern gender cognition (androgen) develops the subjectivity, autonomy, and individuation of women. This condition has the potential to disturb the “status quo” of the hierarchy of gender relations. This change creates “confusion” and produces social tensions regarding the phenomenon of gendered communication dynamically.

### **Gendered Communication in The Era of Gender Equality: Gender Differences in Gendered Conversation.**

Gendered communication practices utilize the term “feminine speech” and “masculine speech” for the embodiment of the gendered community culture (Wood, 1994). Characteristics of feminine speech include: 1. Communication to build connection, self-sharing, closeness, and understanding of others; 2. Communication to build equality; 3. Expression of emotions to show understanding of other people’s situations; 4. At the relationship level of communication, the conversation focuses on feelings and on the relationship with the communicator, rather than the content of the message, often strengthened by the perception and feelings around the subject



of the conversation. 5. Responsiveness shows the tendency to learn to care for others and to be appreciated and involved. 6. Personal qualities, detailed conversation, personal disclosure, facilitating a feeling of closeness by connecting the communicator's life. Female speech is said to be tentative communication, women's speech reflects low self-esteem and socialization into a subordinate role. This is assuming the standard of masculine speech. Based on feminine standards, the conversation is to keep the conversation open and include others, not to show the helplessness of women.

On the other hand, masculine speech is a way to achieve concrete goals, implement control, and maintain independence. The conversation is often viewed as a medium of provocation, finding oneself, and negotiating persistence. Characteristics of masculine speech are: 1. establishing status and control by asserting their ideas and authority, informing, or challenging others, and tending to avoid revealing personal information because it will show weakness or vulnerability. One way to show knowledge and control is to give advice. 2. The speech contains intentions: the expression of problem-solving by getting information, finding facts, and suggesting solutions. The conversation between men and women often deviates from this path, namely, there is no agreement about the meaning of instrumental information. The mindset of a man is that women don't care about their feelings. For men, when women reveal a problem, it is considered something emotional only, rather than the content. 3. Masculine community, conversation is a command, men tend to interrupt, control, oppose the speaker, and take the stage. For men, it is normal and kind, for women interrupting is considered impolite, 4. Tends to be firm and straightforward. 5. more abstract, 6. less emotionally responsive, 7. less expressive, not expressing sympathy and understanding.

In this study, the information on gendered communication practices became data to analyze gender relatedness in the interpersonal communication of men and women in their gender relations.

### **Gendered Conversation: Structure, Text, and Social Relationships**

The data of gendered conversation practices were interpreted on 3 (three) aspects: status needs, self-esteem, and sense of belonging (Myers, 2014). In this study, gender relations are interpreted as interpersonal relationships, where actors (male and female) continue to be connected in interdependence to achieve their common goals (Faturachman & Nurjaman, 2017). This interdependent relationship will later create a power structure due to the inequality of resources between the parties in communication. The power that has an individual and social dimension at the same time has a negative (conflict) or positive (order) dimension. Following Foucault (Eriyanto, 2015), power becomes a source of structural dynamics of gender conversation. Gender discourse becomes a textual structure where hierarchical-structural gender relations operate.

The aspect of status needs is indicated in the masculine community speech in the way of "control implementation" and "maintenance of independence". Status is fought for by men because status contains prestige, rights, obligations, dignity, and the individual's position in the social life of his group and among the community (Abdulsyani, 2007). In everyday life, gender conversations often lead to confrontation because men "carry" a hierarchical public status (position) when interacting in the family (democratic nuance). Confrontation occurs because men "practice" their public status which is "high value" and at the same time expect their female partners to be submissive. While for women, the man's attitude harms her agency which strengthens (critically) the result of empowerment. This situation encourages the occurrence of conversations by coercive men. Based on the women's empowerment policy implications, Murdock hypothesizes that gendered-biased language will be evaluated with sexist behavior, due to the orientation towards androgyny of women in this contemporary time (Murdock & Forsyth, 1980).

In this way, the potential for the expectation of a dominant male status emerges when interacting with his partner, which manifests cognition, emotion, and behavior (Faturachman & Nurjaman, 2017). The social construction of the masculine and feminine binary produces the meaning of the masculine dominant status that is "embodied" when related to a woman (who is subordinate). This phenomenon explains the empirical question that why husbands often act like "enemies" towards wives in daily conversations at home (Tannen, 1991). Thus, gendered conversation possibly creates masculine characters that are binary with feminine. The

potential for gender-biased communication is due to the conformity of the gender identity of each sex, the dominant stereotype for men expecting female submissiveness. On the other hand, resistance by women is the conformity of their agentive character (identity and modern gender roles).

Status is a hierarchy between individuals based on self-esteem, influence, and respect (Payne, 2001). Because the public arena becomes the living space of men's self-esteem in their gender roles, self-esteem becomes a sensitive matter in interpersonal communication. Gender differences become a social identity, standards norms giving a social value to gendered communicative actions, as seen in social identity theory. As an individual attached to masculinity which becomes the standard of life, a sense of respect becomes the main capital to live the "gender duty". In a gendered conversation where male gender expectations of women are subordinate, opposition in the conversation is interpreted as an act of "disrespect". The reason is not only because of the woman's non-submissive attitude, but the resistance is also symbolic as resistance to her "ability to influence" as a person whose will must be followed.

Masculine is a social identity that becomes a "symbol" of influence and dignity. To keep it dominant, a person uses coercion (power) (Faturachman & Nurjaman, 2017). Following the view of Pratto and Walker, the structure of gender relations is like the structure of power which makes a person potentially act with power (Pratto, F., 2004 in Eagly et al., 2004). This kind of relationship tends to contain emotional aspects as a link between the relationship structure and behavior in the form of prejudice (Myers, 2014). The social orientation creates the importance of identity, self-esteem, status, and sense of belonging to defend his identity and all the masculine attributes of the man. Social practices with the opportunity to use this coercive potential produce a confrontational relationship in gendered conversation.

On the other hand, the women's attitude that conforms to the characteristic of the feminine speech tends to pay less attention to the content of the message, it is often reinforced by the perception and feelings surrounding the subject of the conversation. Thus, if there is an unpleasant gesture while a man delivers a message, the "symbol" is what the woman interprets and responds to and is considered more important than the content of the message itself. Thus, the masculine communicative action to "meet the status needs" shows the coercion towards his partner, instead encouraging a feminine-modern female response as a negative thing. Such an action can be a communicative action that is unpleasant for both parties or gender-biased communication.

Self-esteem is often considered an essential thing for men, self-esteem is part of the self-concept with the evaluation of a person's success (Payne, 2001). Aspects of self-esteem are analyzed from the character of masculine community speeches which tend to be firm and straightforward; more abstract; less emotionally responsive; less expressive. Firm behavior can show men's ability or mastery of a certain knowledge or skill. The men's abstract speech can be interpreted as an effort to maintain dignity by not conveying a detailed message because of its dynamics. If there is a dynamic of the message content (in the future), it will lower self-esteem due to the inconsistency of the message, likewise with the characteristic of communication "lacking self-disclosure". This becomes a strategy to maintain good quality by covering certain personal weaknesses.

The characteristic of communication practice "does not express sympathy and understanding" is considered to "lower" men's dominant position - because men must empathize and "align themselves" with the status of their hearer - who is considered subordinate. (Griffin, 2012) suggests that many men realize that the commitment to listen to women certainly involves the rejection of their privileged position. Tajfel's view of social identity theory (Faturachman & Nurjaman, 2017) states that group conflict (feminine vs masculine) contains prejudice that involves social identity. Social identification indicates the social practices of the collective culture in society. The characteristic of such gendered communication confirms that the care of men's "masculine self-esteem" apart from prejudice shows "a sense of pride" in defending their masculine identity because it becomes a standard of social value.

Gendered conversation for men with its masculine drive avoids "social rejection" (Myers, 2014). If there is a rejection from his partner, this rejection will lower the man's self-esteem because it can harm his dominant position. If the female partner opposes the idea of the conversation, it becomes fundamental for men. In the conversation, men do not expect rejection because their gender expectations require submissiveness from their

partners. This kind of attitude has the potential to be aggressive (Myers, 2014). So, what is fundamental in this conversation is not the substance of the message, but the hierarchy of meaningful relationships (Wood, 2013). Confrontation is not about what is said but how to say it (Tannen, 1991). Interpretation is very essential because masculinity is the standard of social evaluation. The rejection is difficult to accept by masculinity. Gendered conversations have the chance of using control over women (Wood, 2013) resulting in uncomfortable communicative actions.

The “sense of belonging” aspect of the partner can be explained by his position as the head of the family. Because the position is power, it has control (Faturochman & Nurjaman, 2017). This highest authority in the household requires resources to function in his leadership position. Thus, the partner must become “property” as a source of potential to function in the performance of life activities in the household and social environment. The “sense of belonging” towards his partner can also be linked to the fulfillment of the need for gender role rewards and his position as the head of the household. The reward includes respecting the performance of his duty of earning money, for his leadership position, confirmation of his privileges, and the fulfillment of expectations in many ways, such as service and submissiveness by his wife and others. If gendered communication involves some of these aspects and is not by masculine expectations, it can be a potential symbolic conflict.

The potential confrontation is mainly because it concerns the meaning of labor division. In this era of gender equality, women’s gender roles in the public realm can be interpreted as violating the “convention” of gender division of labor. This becomes a source of symbolic confrontational communication. In the masculine perception of men, women’s public role implies the disruption or “neglect” of domestic duties by women. The woman’s public role is often interpreted as “competing” with the social position of her male partner. This means “lowering” the position of the household head in the community. Daily activities related to this become a source of symbolic meaning in gendered conversation.

The description of gendered conversation and gender differences shows that the conversation creates and forms a certain understanding of what gender means in the context of the cultural system and the interpretation of religion.

## Gender Discourse and Society

The community dimension of gender discourse based on V. Dijk’s view is a “triangulation” of discourse and cognition dimensions (Wahyono, S.B. 2018. Dalam Udasmoro, W. 2018). The development of gender discourse can be confirmed through the practice or social representation for instance through television. Based on the secondary data, (Makhfudoh, 2023) shows the number of viewers of soap opera entertainment which can be interpreted as a representation of the actual life of the community. From this data, a soap opera entitled *Bidadari*, *Cinta setelah Cinta*, and *Takdir Cinta yang Kupilih* ranked top based on the number of viewers. Social representation in the soap opera indicates the socialization of gender norms. The rating can be interpreted that many people are happy because it may resemble their representation of their daily life. TV shows embedded in patriarchal ideology can lead to cultural satisfaction for women (Atmaja dan Ariyani, 2018).

Examining 46 advertisements, (Widyatama, 2006) concludes that there is a dynamic of gender bias in the advertisement content which includes representation of the female body; male physical strength; the emotional aspect of women, the construction of women in the household role, men as breadwinners and others. This implies that nurturing and caring work is less considered. These representations are not only the domestication of women but of dominance - subordination, or subject-object relationships. Such an attitude denies the subjectivity of women as actors and agents in social interaction. This inhibits the optimum changes in women’s quality (Galiano, 2003). This phenomenon shows the practice of “power” in social relations.

The gender-based violence is increasingly rampant. Sexual violence involves sexual activity and an aggressive act to dominate and humiliate others (Wood, 1994). The phenomenon of sexual violence means the objectification of women by men where ideologically the male gender has a dominant position with “force” (Eagly et al., 2005). The phenomenon of sexual violence that still occurs and even increases indicates the widening value system of power relations in society.

The explanation above shows the factors that encourage the emergence of gender communication gaps, the process and structure of gender communication interaction which is the intertextuality of its dimensions. The transformation of identity and gender roles results in a more modern female gender structure of thought. It encourages women to be more critical, and autonomous with high subjectivity. This condition gives rise to confrontational interactions due to the binary meaning of identity and gender roles. The community dimension, social organizing practices, institutional practices, and media representations indicate the development of gender discourse socialization. Thus, gender conversation- interpersonal communication between men and their partners-tends to be a communication gap or gender-biased communication evaluated using the standard of the masculine social norm system.

### **Towards Gendered Smart Communication**

Utilizing a progressive perspective, some important things are considered for transformation. Conflict in interpersonal communication between women and men is inherent in gender differences. Confrontational potential needs to be “neutral” everywhere. It is important to understand the binary nature of masculine and feminine value systems related to the meaning of the message. Rational evaluation is required. All parties (men and women) need to know the gender oppression on the humanist expression of their individuality.

Then, it is essential to understand the similarity (mutual need) between the parties as factual. This understanding may develop the ego control attitude and the desire to have a comfortable conversation daily. It is necessary to increase rational evaluation, minimize emotional and mental attitudes, carry out empathetic thinking, act ethically and perform other progressive attitudes.

Critical perspective is essential in self-representation. Accepting and acknowledging the dynamics of subjectivity and individuality of each party. It means respect each other for their identities and contributions and minimizing the aspect of power in the relationship structure. With rational and non-rational (values) legitimacy alternative interpretations of the messages that are not oppositional but based on individuality and the functionality of togetherness can be produced. The understanding of gender knowledge is based. Thus, the transformation opportunity for everyone to change their communication strategy becomes progressive. The importance of individuation by caring for the community can balance the individual side with the spirit of the environment (Myers, 2014).

### **CONCLUSION**

In the gender equality era, the implementation of GM policy has resulted in the transformation of women’s gender identity from traditional to modern (androgynous) and the public role. It is an awakening of subjectivity, autonomy, and female individuation, but becomes the potential to disrupt the “status quo” of the gender relation hierarchy. This change creates “confusion” and produces social tensions, potentially producing gender-biased communication.

The factors in the process and structure of communication are women’s gender view structure that has changed to be modern, social practice on social order as sociocultural cognition. This is supported by the dynamics of the legitimacy of cultural belief systems and the interpretation of religion as well as social practices or representations that indicate the development of the socialization of gender discourse in society.

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