

Patriarchal Hegemony and Women's Triple Roles in Indonesia: An Integrative Review of Unpaid Work, Power Relations, and Agency

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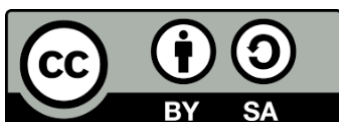
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Abstract

This article revises and sharpens an earlier discussion of patriarchal hegemony and women's triple roles in Indonesia by removing unsupported causal generalizations and replacing questionable references with traceable sources. The study uses an integrative literature review and thematic synthesis of 35 verified sources: 28 peer-reviewed journal articles (24 published in reputable international journals), three academic books, and four institutional reports. Empirical studies from 2019–2026 are prioritized, while foundational works are retained for conceptual purposes. The analysis combines Moser's triple-role framework, structural accounts of patriarchy and gendered organizations, and Kabeer's resources agency achievements approach. Four patterns emerge. First, women's participation in productive work does not automatically reduce reproductive and community responsibilities, producing time poverty and mental load. Second, inequality is sustained not only by cultural norms but also by childcare shortages, workplace design, urban mobility, and unequal household authority. Third, expanded access to education and employment does not necessarily translate into equivalent control over time, income, assets, and strategic decisions. Fourth, women exercise agency through household negotiation, economic resources, leadership, and digital counterpublics, yet such agency remains stratified by class, life-course position, and institutional support. The article proposes a redistribution control gap to explain why expanded access may outpace the redistribution of care and the equalization of decision-making power. Policy implications emphasize recognizing, reducing, redistributing, rewarding, and representing care work through childcare services, work family policy, time-use data, and survivor-centered protection.

Keywords: Patriarchy, Triple Roles, Unpaid Care Work, Power Relations, Women's Agency



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INTRODUCTION

Gender inequality in households and labor markets cannot be reduced to individual choices. It is produced through the interaction of norms, institutions, divisions of labor, access to resources, and power relations. In Indonesia, the historical project of state ibuisism institutionalized an ideal of women as wives and mothers and located domestic responsibility at the moral center of respectable femininity (Suryakusuma, 2011). This history does not imply that all Indonesian families reproduce identical arrangements, but it helps explain why women's educational and economic advances can coexist with persistent gender asymmetries in domestic and care work.

Moser's triple-role framework distinguishes productive, reproductive, and community-management roles (Moser, 1989). The distinction remains useful because women's work frequently exceeds what conventional labor statistics capture. Productive roles generate income or economic value; reproductive roles include childcare, eldercare, household maintenance, and social reproduction; community roles sustain local networks and collective well-being. The sociological issue is not simply role multiplicity but unequal allocations of time, recognition, and control. Hochschild and Machung (2012) famously described unpaid domestic work after paid employment as a second shift, while contemporary research demonstrates an additional cognitive dimension: remembering, anticipating, planning, and coordinating family needs the often invisible mental labor disproportionately performed by women (Reich-Stiebert et al., 2023).

Evidence from Indonesia shows why this issue remains consequential. Cameron, Contreras Suarez, and Rowell (2019) documented the long-running stagnation of Indonesian women's labor-force participation and its links to economic structure and life-course dynamics. More recent longitudinal evidence shows substantial employment exits following marriage and childbearing, particularly from formal-sector jobs; among women employed formally before a first birth, the probability of working in the following year fell by about 20 percentage points in the study estimates (Cameron et al., 2026). In Greater Jakarta, married women's decisions to remain employed, exit, change jobs, or return to work are also shaped by expectations of maternal primary caregiving, limited childcare and flexible employment, and long commuting times (Setyonaluri & Utomo, 2024). Hence, employment 'choices' are often choices made under institutional constraints.

Domestic inequality can also be observed directly through time-use evidence. Kiram (2026), studying Indonesian Muslim couples, found very large gaps in housework and childcare time. On weekdays, women in the sample spent roughly 251 minutes on housework compared with about 40 minutes for men, and about 223 minutes on childcare compared with about 26 minutes for men. These figures should not be treated as national estimates, but they provide strong micro-level evidence of a gendered division of domestic labor. At a broader level, UN Women (2024) reported that unpaid domestic and care responsibilities increased during the pandemic, with women more often reporting additional time in both domains. Miranti et al. (2022) similarly documented how the pandemic intensified women's productive, reproductive, and community burdens while exposing labor-market vulnerabilities and wage inequality.

A useful explanation must avoid treating patriarchy as an individual male attitude. Walby (1989) conceptualizes patriarchy as a configuration of interrelated structures, while Acker (1990) demonstrates that apparently neutral organizations may be built around an 'ideal worker' implicitly freed from caregiving responsibilities. Ridgeway and Correll (2004) and West and Zimmerman (1987) show how gender beliefs and routine interaction reproduce inequality even without explicit commands. In Indonesia, Oktaviani (2024) demonstrates how women leaders negotiate hegemonic femininity, while Apriliandra and Krisnani (2021) illustrate the value of a conflict perspective for analyzing discrimination rooted in unequal

power. Gender conflict is therefore better understood as contestation over time, resources, authority, and legitimate role definitions than as a simplistic analogy of men as bourgeoisie and women as proletariat.

The original manuscript that motivated this revision identified an important topic but combined too many theoretical traditions, relied on several unverified statistical claims, and sometimes inferred causality from descriptive data. This revised article narrows the inquiry to three questions: (1) how are triple roles and unpaid work reproduced in contemporary Indonesia; (2) which structural mechanisms connect gender norms with inequalities in time, employment, and resource control; and (3) how do women exercise agency within these constraints, and what follows for policy? Its conceptual contribution is the redistribution–control gap: a condition in which women’s access to education, paid work, and public space expands faster than the redistribution of care work and the equalization of control over strategic resources.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research design. This study employs an integrative literature review because its purpose is to synthesize empirical findings, theoretical frameworks, and policy evidence generated through diverse methodologies. Integrative reviews can combine quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods, and conceptual sources when selection and synthesis procedures are made transparent (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005). The article does not claim to be a systematic review or meta-analysis because the search was not designed to enumerate every publication or estimate pooled effect sizes.

Search and selection strategy. Literature searching and verification for this revision were updated through 5 October 2026 using academic search engines and journal/publisher pages using Indonesian and English combinations including ‘patriarchy Indonesia’, ‘women triple roles’, ‘unpaid care work Indonesia’, ‘gendered domestic labour Indonesia’, ‘female labour force participation Indonesia’, ‘maternal employment Indonesia’, ‘household bargaining women Indonesia’, ‘women agency Indonesia’, and ‘digital feminism Indonesia’. Bibliographic metadata and DOIs were verified against publisher pages or traceable bibliographic indexes. Empirical work from 2019–2026 was prioritized for contemporary evidence; earlier publications were retained only when they were foundational theoretical contributions.

Inclusion criteria covered peer-reviewed research directly relevant to domestic labor, care work, women’s employment, household decision-making, gender norms, or women’s agency. Indonesian studies were prioritized, followed by comparative or Asian/LMIC evidence used to clarify mechanisms. Official reports were included where they supplied contextual data. Sources were excluded when their bibliographic identity could not be verified, when they were substantively unrelated to the research questions, when they were commercial/promotional materials, or when they duplicated evidence. This procedure intentionally removed several references from the original manuscript that focused on TikTok Shop consumer behavior and had no substantive relationship to women’s triple roles or gendered power.

The final analytical corpus contains 35 sources: 28 peer-reviewed journal articles, three academic books, and four institutional reports. Twenty-four items, or 68.6% of the total bibliography, are articles in reputable international journals, exceeding the requested 65% threshold. Indonesian sources are retained to preserve contextual validity. BPS provides broad gender statistics, Komnas Perempuan provides administrative documentation of gender-based violence, UN Women provides evidence on unpaid care, and the ILO provides the care-

economy policy framework (Addati et al., 2018; Badan Pusat Statistik, 2024; Komnas Perempuan, 2026; UN Women, 2024).

Analytical procedure. Each source was examined for evidence on time allocation; domestic and care work; employment and well-being consequences; access and control over resources; norms and institutions; negotiation strategies; and policy responses. Findings were coded into four themes: (1) role accumulation and time poverty; (2) institutionalized division of labor and labor-market consequences; (3) access–control gaps and power relations; and (4) agency, resistance, and digital spaces. Interpretation was guided by Moser (1989) on triple roles, Walby (1989) and Acker (1990) on structural mechanisms, and Kabeer (1999) on resources, agency, and achievements. Administrative case counts were not treated as prevalence estimates, and observational associations were not described as causal unless the source design supported causal inference.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

Theme 1: Role accumulation, unpaid work, and time poverty. The literature consistently indicates that women's entry into paid work does not automatically shift domestic and care responsibilities to other household members. The triple-role concept highlights the simultaneity of productive, reproductive, and community work (Moser, 1989). In Indonesia, Miranti et al. (2022) explicitly used the triple-burden idea to describe the intensification of women's productive and reproductive responsibilities during the pandemic. Kiram (2026) provides direct time-use evidence among Indonesian Muslim couples: women spent far more time on housework and childcare than men, even though men's participation increased somewhat on weekends. This pattern is consistent with international evidence showing that unpaid care remains deeply gendered and constrains women's labor-market participation, leisure, and well-being (Lightman & Kevins, 2021; Tripathi et al., 2022).

Time inequality also includes cognitive work. Reich-Stiebert et al. (2023) found in a systematic review that women perform a larger share of household mental labor anticipating needs, planning, remembering, and coordinating and experience related stress and lower life or relationship satisfaction. Evidence from other Asian settings helps clarify possible health mechanisms. In Japan, total work hours that included unpaid domestic and care work predicted nonrestorative sleep and mental health more effectively than paid working hours alone, with poorer mental health particularly evident among women (Morimoto et al., 2026). Portier (2023) further shows that the mental-health costs of caregiving vary by care intensity, relationship to the recipient, and gender. These findings are relevant to Indonesia because conventional employment indicators can systematically underestimate women's total workload.

Theme 2: Institutions, the life course, and labor-market consequences. Gendered roles cannot be explained by 'culture' alone; they are mediated by institutions. Cameron et al. (2019) show that Indonesia's stalled female labor-force participation reflects a combination of changing norms and economic structure. Setyonaluri and Utomo (2024) demonstrate that in Greater Jakarta, caregiving norms, limited childcare, limited formal-sector flexibility, and lengthy commuting raise the opportunity cost of employment for married women. Cameron et al. (2026) identify strong life-course effects: marriage and childbearing are associated with employment exits, particularly from formal-sector jobs, and many women do not return to their previous trajectories. Reproductive responsibility therefore functions not merely as an extra task but as a force shaping long-term employment pathways.

Childcare research reinforces the institutional argument. Halim et al. (2022) find that public preschool expansion increases women's employment, although a substantial share of additional work is unpaid family work, partly because short service hours are insufficient to enable full-time formal employment. Moorena (2026) differentiates daycare, playgroup, and kindergarten: daycare is especially important for mothers of infants, kindergarten is more consequential for mothers of children aged four to six, and combinations of services can complement one another for full-time work. Childcare policy therefore cannot be evaluated solely by the number of facilities; operating hours, affordability, continuity, and compatibility with employment schedules are central to redistributing care.

Table 1. Summary of key evidence in the Indonesian corpus

Study	Design/context	Relevant finding	Contribution to synthesis
Kiram (2026)	Mixed methods; 250 Muslim couples + interviews	Women in the sample spent far more time on housework and childcare than men.	Direct micro-level evidence of gendered domestic time.
Cameron et al. (2019)	Long-run Susenas/Podes analysis	Female labor-force participation remained relatively stalled; norms interacted with economic structure.	Shows constraints beyond individual preferences.
Halim et al. (2022)	Panel + triple differences	Preschool expansion increased women's employment, but much additional work was unpaid family work.	Care policy must also consider employment quality.
Setyonaluri & Utomo (2024)	Qualitative, Greater Jakarta	Care norms, childcare/flexibility shortages, and commuting shaped married women's employment decisions.	Links norms, urban space, and work institutions.
Kim & Williams (2021)	Indonesian household panel	Labor-market changes affected women's intrahousehold bargaining power in complex ways.	Economic access is not identical to control.
Cameron et al. (2026)	IFLS longitudinal >20 years	Marriage and childbearing triggered employment exits, particularly from formal-sector jobs.	Shows life-course effects on career trajectories.
Noer (2026); Hermanto (2022)	Digital ethnography/textual network analysis	Digital spaces enabled counterpublics, solidarity, and localized feminist agendas.	Collective agency expands but does not substitute for institutional reform.

Labor-market inequality also intersects with unpaid work. Miranti et al. (2022) reported that women's raw average earnings were about 20% lower than men's in 2021, alongside women's concentration in vulnerable forms of employment. Cameron (2023) argues that Indonesia's gender progress must be interpreted together with persistent barriers in economic participation and opportunity. Evidence from India is useful for mechanism-building rather than direct extrapolation: Deshpande and Kabeer (2024) show that primary responsibility for domestic chores suppresses women's paid work, while Sinha et al. (2024)

find gendered well-being costs of caregiving. Comparable evidence supports the proposition that unpaid care is a constraint on paid work, but Indonesian-specific estimates remain essential.

Theme 3: Access control gaps and power relations. Expanded access to education and employment does not automatically mean equal control over income, assets, time, mobility, or strategic decisions. Kabeer (1999) conceptualizes empowerment through the interaction of resources, agency, and achievements: resources widen the field of possible action, but empowerment depends on the ability to convert resources into meaningful choice. Kim and Williams (2021), using Indonesian household panel data, show that labor-market changes can affect women's household bargaining power in complex and sometimes counterintuitive ways. Employment status and income should therefore not be used as stand-alone proxies for empowerment.

Three sociological layers help explain the reproduction of this gap. First, gendered divisions are enacted and normalized through routine interaction or 'doing gender' (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Second, gender status beliefs operate as interactional rules that shape expectations about competence and appropriate roles (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). Third, workplaces can be organized around an ideal worker presumed continuously available and unencumbered by care responsibilities (Acker, 1990). In Indonesia, Suryakusuma (2011) documents the historical institutionalization of maternal domesticity, while Oktaviani (2024) shows that contemporary women leaders still negotiate hegemonic femininity. Fakhri (2013) and Aprilandra and Krisnani (2021) further illustrate how marginalization, subordination, stereotyping, and unequal workloads can mutually reinforce one another.

Gender-based violence provides an important but methodologically distinct context. CATAHU 2025 documented 376,529 cases of gender-based violence against women during 2025 across multiple reporting sources, with approximately 89.76% located in the personal sphere (Komnas Perempuan, 2026). These are administrative/documentation counts rather than population prevalence estimates, so they cannot be used to claim that a corresponding share of Indonesian women experience violence. Nevertheless, the predominance of personal-sphere cases underscores the policy significance of power in intimate and family relations. The revised article therefore removes the earlier single-factor frustration aggression explanation of domestic violence and treats violence as a multi-level phenomenon involving norms, power, institutions, law enforcement, and survivor experiences.

Theme 4: Agency, negotiation, and digital spaces. The literature does not support an image of women as passive victims. Kabeer (1999) defines agency broadly as the capacity to define goals and act upon them, including decision-making, negotiation, bargaining, refusal, and less visible strategies. In organizational settings, Oktaviani (2024) shows Indonesian women leaders adopting, modifying, or rejecting forms of hegemonic femininity to sustain leadership legitimacy and room for action. At the household level, employment and childcare studies suggest that women strategically adjust job type, work hours, location, and care arrangements, although these adaptations may simultaneously reproduce women's concentration in flexible, informal, or lower-paid jobs (Cameron et al., 2026; Setyonaluri & Utomo, 2024).

Digital spaces widen collective agency but should not be romanticized as evidence that patriarchy is automatically eroding. Purwaningtyas (2021) shows that women's activism accounts on Instagram function as sites of knowledge production and empowerment; Hermanto (2022) demonstrates how Indonesian digital feminism connects global discourse with local agendas; and Noer (2026) shows how hashtags and online spaces can form

counterpublics for experience-sharing, solidarity, and institutional pressure. Yet digital agency depends on visibility, platform governance, digital safety, and organizational resources. It is best understood as an expanded arena of contestation rather than a substitute for changes in households, labor markets, and public policy.

Discussion

The synthesis supports one central argument: inequality in women's triple roles emerges when expanded access to productive spaces is not matched by a redistribution of reproductive labor and an equalization of resource control. This article calls the pattern a redistribution–control gap. The first gap lies between productive participation and time redistribution: women enter paid work while remaining primary caregivers. The second lies between resource access and control: women may gain education or income without equivalent authority over household decisions. The third lies between normative endorsement and institutional support: equality may be publicly accepted while workplaces, childcare systems, transportation, and leave policies continue to assume a worker who is free from care obligations.

This formulation clarifies why a conflict perspective remains useful but requires refinement. Conflict does not mean every relationship between men and women is inherently antagonistic. The analytical object is the unequal distribution of time, authority, resources, and risk. Walby (1989) shifts attention from identifying a single dominant actor to examining structures that reproduce dominance. Acker (1990) extends the analysis to organizations, while Ridgeway and Correll (2004) explain micro-level reproduction through status beliefs. This is more analytically productive than a rigid class analogy because it accommodates class, urban rural context, religion, life-course position, and family form. It also leaves room to analyze men's participation in change while retaining attention to structural inequality.

The findings also challenge the use of labor-force participation as a stand-alone measure of empowerment. Kabeer (1999) emphasizes that access must be converted into agency and achievements. In Indonesia, policies that simply increase the number of women working can produce paradoxical outcomes if new jobs are informal, insecure, low-paid, or incompatible with caregiving. Halim et al. (2022) show that preschool expansion can raise employment while leaving questions about job quality unresolved. Moorena (2026) demonstrates the importance of childcare type and operating hours. Gender policy indicators should therefore include domestic time allocation, job quality, control over earnings, health, and leisure alongside employment participation.

Policy implications can be organized around the care economy. The ILO advocates recognizing, reducing, redistributing, rewarding, and representing care work (Addati et al., 2018). For Indonesia, recognition requires more systematic time-use statistics and unpaid-work indicators; reduction requires time-saving public infrastructure and services; redistribution requires paternity leave, shared-care norms, and workplace design that does not penalize employees with family responsibilities; rewarding requires decent work and protection for paid care workers; and representation requires women and care workers to have a voice in policy design. BPS (2024) already maps gender across multiple domains, but more detailed time-use data would substantially strengthen monitoring of redistribution.

Government and employer policies should also avoid a flexibility trap. Remote or flexible work can help, but when unpaid care remains unequally divided it can lengthen women's total working day rather than reduce it. Evidence on mental labor and health (Morimoto et al., 2026; Reich-Stiebert et al., 2023; Sinha et al., 2024) supports measuring

total workloads rather than paid hours alone. In metropolitan areas, transport and spatial planning are also gender policies because long commuting times reduce the practical capacity of households to share care (Setyonaluri & Utomo, 2024).

Gender education and digital activism remain valuable, but they must connect to institutional change. Indonesian digital feminism expands learning, voice, and solidarity (Hermanto, 2022; Noer, 2026; Purwaningtyas, 2021), yet sustainable transformation requires safe reporting mechanisms, protection against gender-based violence, digital safety, and accountable organizational policies. Komnas Perempuan's documentation (2026) highlights the continued need for survivor-centered systems. Effective gender policy therefore combines cultural prevention with reform of public services, employment, childcare, and justice institutions.

Limitations. First, this is an integrative rather than systematic review, so it does not estimate pooled effects or guarantee exhaustive retrieval. Second, Indonesian time-use evidence is less developed than labor-market data, and several mechanisms are therefore clarified with international studies rather than treated as Indonesian estimates. Third, many empirical studies focus on metropolitan areas, married couples, or specific social groups; their findings do not automatically represent Indonesia's highly diverse female population. Fourth, the redistribution control gap is a synthesis proposition that requires direct empirical testing using national time-use surveys, household panel data, and qualitative research across class, region, age, disability, and family configurations.

CONCLUSIONS

Women's triple roles in Indonesia should not be framed simply as an ability to perform many tasks. The core sociological issue is unequal distribution of time, recognition, institutional support, and resource control. Women's productive work has expanded, yet domestic labor, childcare, and community work have not always been redistributed accordingly. The consequences include time poverty, mental strain, interrupted career trajectories, concentration in flexible or informal employment, and difficulties converting economic access into strategic control.

A conflict perspective remains useful when it analyzes empirically observable distributions of resources and authority rather than assuming that all men are oppressors and all women passive victims. Women exercise agency through household negotiation, employment strategies, leadership, and digital activism. Agency is most effective, however, when supported by institutions: adequate childcare, family-friendly work design, recognition of care work, protection from violence, and data systems that monitor both time allocation and control over resources.

The article's conceptual contribution is the redistribution control gap: women's access to education, work, and public space can expand more rapidly than care redistribution and equal decision-making authority. Closing this gap requires simultaneous change in household norms, workplace organization, public services, and social policy. Future research should test the model through national time-use data, longitudinal household studies, and urban-rural and intersectional comparisons so that gender equality is measured not only by women's presence in public life, but also by concrete changes in workload, well-being, and decision-making power.

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