Familial relationships and efforts in retention of marriage among atomistic families in Indonesia

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Abstract: The rise of globalization and the changing trends in the family structure have introduced a new form of the Atomistic family. An atomistic family is a type of family, in which after the marriage, husband and wife (couple) are not living together. This study revealed how interactions are being performed in atomistic families and how the efforts made by working husband or wife in atomistic families in maintaining marriage life. This study deployed qualitative methods through interviews with fifty-seven families/ couples (57) who did not live together in East Java, Indonesia. This study found that husbands or wives who work in the public sector are often living separately from their spouses because of the work demands. In many cases, this problem was experienced by couples who have children, in which family members live far apart. Many children are accompanied by grandparents because both father and mother work outside of the city. However, there are various ways to maintain household continuity in an atomistic family. The results found that, husband and wife must trust their partners, the interaction between family members must be conducted through face-to-face meetings, communication via telephone, and social networking websites. Although the frequency of face-to-face meetings is quite difficult due to their work routine, sometimes they have interaction once a week or once a month and even once in six months.

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT
The family institution among all social institutions is integral to the survival of any society. Every society is going through structural and functional changes where similar situation is witnessed with regard to family institution in Indonesian society. The changing dynamics and demands of the society have altered family structure from traditional (extended or nuclear family system) to modern (single parenthood and atomistic family system). This shift in family structure has not only changed the function of family but also has impacted this universal institution in manifolds. Indonesian society has also been affected by this family structure with particular focus on main stakeholders of this institution who are children. Children who are dependent on their parents, experience differently when they live without their parents or with one of the parents. Thus, the present study aims to analyse the familial relationships and explore coping mechanism for retention of marriage among couples in Indonesia.
months. This study concludes that atomistic families have a latent function in coping with conflicts and may strengthen the relationship.

**Subjects:** South East Asian Culture & Society; Gender Studies; Gender Studies - Soc Sci

**Keywords:** marriage; women rights; education; atomistic family; Indonesia

1. **Introduction**

The transformation of modernization and industrialization have dynamically affected the human life and social institutions. Similarly, it has affected family institution and its structure as well as functions. The change in family institution from traditional to nuclear structure towards individual living arrangements. However, economic independence is considered one of the major factors behind this phenomenon (Sudarso et al., 2019).

Wives who work in public sector are forced to live separately from their partners because of their official timings and distance from the house. In this way, couples are fulfilling their financial needs of the families, but at the same time, there is a negative impact on the fulfillment of husband and wife’s rights and obligations (Suratno & Suhasti, 2015). Another way of interaction among couples are digital communication, who are not living in the same residence (Fachrunnisa, 2018; Jensen et al., 2014; Liu & Leung, 2017). For couples who have children, and their other family members are often living away from their houses but due to traditional norms and culture grandparents usually stay with children. This way may affects parenting towards children, as well as children’s independence and cognitive development (Latifah et al., 2016). The care provided by non-grandparents affects a child’s self-help and locomotion in general (Bascal et al., 2016; Raikes et al., 2019; Wilson et al., 2019).

The family structure has experienced significant changes over the past decades, and now the concept of “family” has become more popular in the feeds. In the Western countries the system of having family has been decreased, and new relationships have emerged, such as cohabitation, living apart, divorce, and single-parenting. Families are no longer living under the same roof as nuclear families (Mortelmans et al., 2016). This change has increased since the 1960s due to socio-economic, technological, and cultural factors. In modern families, marriage is no longer seen as a part of legal and social contract, thus making cohabitation a common practice (Lundberg et al., 2016; Maslauskaite & Baublyte, 2014; Rhoades et al., 2015). The modern family is also associated with changes in the function and role of the family (Blossfeld, 2019). Similarly, Cliquet (2003) suggested three main groups of family characteristics: those related to relational behavior (partnerships), reproductive behavior (parents) and intergenerational behavior (focused on living conditions of parents). Another evident change for families and family structures in developing countries is increasing the number of women’s participation in the labor market. Women’s participation in the workforce reduces quality time with family (Tilly & Scott, 2016).

Maintaining relationships in a family are sometimes crucial for children’s development, as well as for their satisfaction (Andresen, Hurrelmann, & Schneekloth, 2012). There is still an assumption in the society that divorced families may adverse effects on children’s (Anderson, 2014). The ex-husband and ex-wife can feel happy after a divorce, but the children may not necessarily feel better in that way (Amato, 2010; Fagan & Churcill, 2012; Lamb, 2004). Children living in separate families tends to be less satisfied than those living in families with their parents. This trend is found in all countries, although it is less prevalent in Israel and Algeria (Dinisman et al., 2017). Children who do not find happiness in their parents’ divorce will look for other sources of satisfaction outside the house (Bjarnason, et al., 2012). Unfulfilled desires will form certain characters and personalities among children (Fabricius et al., 2010; Hetherington, 2014; Weaver & Schofield, 2015).
Few decades ago, Indonesia has witnessed a new form of family. The function of this type of family it that, where wife are not interested to take the domestic chores, but she also do a job outside the house. In this global era, many women are educated and they want to earn for their independence and prosperity (Badran, 2009). This value-shifting demands women to be more independent, creative, and allocate their time to family in a balanced manner (Kunin, 2012; Nilsen et al., 2016; Sandberg, 2015). Husband and wife who live separately are called atomistic families, as stated by Zimmerman (1970). Zimmerman introduced his view on family change in a cycle through three important family types, namely trustee families, domestic families and atomistic families. In societies where trustee families are dominant, the state is organized primarily in the context of family's obligations to regulate and supervise its members. As for the community where domestic families are dominant, the family shares power with government institutions. Despite the fact that the family is still a strong institution, the state now holds some power. In an atomistic family, family power is restricted because of the strength of state power and growing philosophy of individualism.

In Indonesia, the growing trend of married women to work determines the structure of a family. Indonesian traditional families, where wives are always in charge of household chores, increasingly put more pressure on women. The division of roles in the form of women working in domestic sphere is a product of patriarchal culture (Bhopal, 2019). When women work in public sector, they still have to do domestic work when they are at home (Ademiluka, 2018; Hadi, 2017; Kabeer, 2015). Women constantly feel that just living in the house makes them bored and losing their potential. Women demand equal rights as human beings with men. Such women's movements have emerged since the 20th century. The number of women entering the workforce has since increased compared with the growth of the male workforce. The feminism movement, which is associated with working women, was initiated by a trade union movement that voiced women's rights (Dominelli, 2019). The struggle of women from lower wages for women workers than for men, and from unfulfilled women's rights (Connelly et al., 2018; Dong et al., 2016; Oksala, 2016).

The role of the family in social life is very important. The sociological approach begins with the view that humans tend to live in groups. It further emphasizes the process of social interaction, in which there is a mutually influential relationship between individuals and groups. The interaction of groups performed with shared interests and connection of groups' culture and bring solidarity within social institutions.

The main concern for social changes is focused on the study of a family in the context of growing urbanization and industrialization. The study of families and their existing problems is important and related to community issues, both directly and indirectly. The family is an integral part of society, on which other institutions rely. In urban society, there are many families whose members live far apart. Husband, wife, and children do not live in one house. Obstacles in the atomistic families also exist in the relationship between parents and children who live separately from their house, thus compromising for their work and educational attainment (Srivastava & De Guzman, 2017).

The function of socialization in a family is a process in which parents and children shared their values and norms in order to be in harmony with social rules in the community (Grønhøj & Thøgersen, 2012; Ndoma & Simon, 2019; Ponthiere, 2013). There is variation in socialization provided by parents; sometimes it is active, passive, and radical (hard; Slavkov, 2016). Families who live separately need the support of married couples and children, as well as social support from extended families (Dargie et al., 2014; Hannaford & Foley, 2015; Vidal et al., 2015).

The above interesting fact shows that changes in family structure also changes family functions in the society. With the increasing number of atomistic families, the present study examined the social interaction between family members and the efforts made by husband or wife in atomistic
families in maintaining a marriage. This study is important and timely because the process of individual socialization starts from the family institution. Which is predict that, the individual learned the values and norms in society from the family. However, the function of socialization, leads individuals to become able to live in their social environment as social creatures.

2. Research methods

The present study opted for a qualitative study that was conducted in Java, Indonesia. Java is a central part of Indonesia where a greater number of couples lives separately due to increased participation of women in public spheres. The process of data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews with 57 (fifty seven) informants, including one of the spouses from each couple those who were living separately from their partners.

In this regard, initially five participants were selected purposively and then with the help of those primary informants, the researcher got access to remaining participants of the research as their data was not available officially. Thus, further informant was approached through referral basis by employing snowball techniques.

Furthermore, informants who were interviewed, indicated other informants who had characteristics similar to the characteristics of the informants. A proper written consent form was duly signed and recorded in the data collection documents. The researcher spent a time of six months in the field for the data collection. The interviews were then transcribed and the data was categorized into themes based on the focus of the study, and lastly the data was discussed with previous studies and interpreted and analyzed using theories relevant to the research objectives.

3. Results and discussion

The family is a fundamental institution in the development of an individual. In a family, an individual is prepared to be able to become a social creature and interact with the community (Garbarino, 2017). As social beings humans have ties and living together with others through interactions (Darnhofer et al., 2016; Perseguino et al., 2017; Sherif, 2005). Interaction among family members greatly affects individuals as members of a wider community. The implementation of family functions in the atomistic family is different from other form of family. It is unique in that it has biological and reproductive, procreative, socialization, economic, protection, reproductive, and status determining functions. Whereas, conflicts in atomistic family and their resolution efforts are very interesting to analyze.

3.1. Relationships between family members in atomistic families

The Preamble of the Convention on the Rights of the Child describes the family as a “fundamental group in society and the natural environment for all its members, especially children.” It goes on to state that “the complete development of child and his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding” (The United Nations, 1989). Bettmann et al. (2015) emphasized the importance of children’s emotional needs within the family. Without parental attention, children may suffer emotionally and negatively which can affect their behavior (Brazelton & Cramer, 2018; Cui et al., 2019; McLemore, 2019).

3.1.1. Interaction patterns

Atomistic families, where husband and wife live in separate homes, and even children live far away from each other, have certainly a negative impact on family interactions. There are various variations of interactions between partners. Their face-to-face meetings are quite varied, some once a week, some once a month and even once in six months.

In one case, the informant, a soldier’s wife, who lives in a city different from her husband, revealed that she and her husband interacted once a month via the husband’s travel home or the wife visiting her husband where he works. Similarly, another informant who is also a housewife
stated that the frequency of meeting with her husband is carried out when the husband is off work for two weeks (with the husband working for 5 weeks).

Another informant who works in the informal sector (self-employed) stated that he meets his wife once a month. In addition, some others added that, he returns home twice in one year. If there is any family emergency such as family illness, she immediately returns to her hometown. It is not possible for her to go home once a month because she has to first apply for leave permission from her work.

While working as a private employee, it may be difficult to interact with family, however, the informant said she meets with her husband once a week. Her husband, who works outside the city, returns home every week. During school holidays children visit the city where their father works. Another informant, who works as a lecturer at a state university in Surabaya, revealed that she meets her husband once a week when the husband returns home. Husband, who works in Jakarta, usually takes train or plane when returning to Surabaya. When measured by the level of happiness of both partners, interaction in marriage is one of the determinants of marriage quality (Li & Wickrama, 2014). Previous studies explained that high quality of marriage is obtained from the harmony of husband and wife with interactions that can create a conducive environment and good care for children (Li et al., 2019; Zamir et al, 2108; Dewi et al., 2018).

Informants in this study have multiple realities and responses regarding the quality of interaction with their partners. A housewife informant, who is a soldier’s wife, revealed that she and her husband usually spend time eating outside the house and watching a movie in the cinema. Another informant, who is also a housewife, stated that when the husband returns home, she often goes out with her husband around Surabaya or visits in-laws outside the city.

According to the informant, who is a private employee, she has no special time to return home with her husband. Her children are still young, and if she does not invite them along with her husband, they cry. As one of the informants, who is a lecturer, admitted that when the husband gets home, the family never goes out alone because the children also ask to go for a walk with their father. However, when the husband returns, the informant said that she often cooks the husband’s favorite food at the husband’s request. Interaction with a partner through all means, including hanging out together, will increase subjective feelings in both partners that can affect marital satisfaction (Schoenfeld et al., 2017). Interaction with a partner is important because, in interactions, there is emotional security, a sense of humor, which could prevent conflict with a partner (Bhagerzadeh et al., 2016; Gharibi et al., 2016; Korja et al., 2016; Minnotte et al., 2015).

In East Java, Indonesia, in an atomistic family, where husband and wife are not living in one house, there are various ways to maintain the continuity of the household. Apart from meeting face-to-face, the two communicate via phone and social media. The face-to-face meetings are quite varied, some once a week, some once a month and even once in six months. It can be inferred that for those who have more stable economic conditions, the frequency of meeting with partners is quite often compared to those who are economically weaker.

The type of interaction between the informants with their partners also varies greatly. A housewife, who is a soldier’s wife, expressed that she has a face-to-face meeting with her husband via WhatsApp or telephone calls, which are carried out almost every day. They usually talk about children during a telephone call. Additionally, the husband always updates his wife, even if he is busy with work. Another housewife informant revealed that she also communicates with her husband via WhatsApp and telephone. She admitted that she calls her husband at least 3 times a day. She and her husband always give the news to each other.

An informant, who works in the informal sector (self-employed), stated that she interacts with her husband via mobile phone when they cannot meet. When there was still no cell phone, the communication used was based on feeling like a married couple. She admitted that to find out the
condition of the family outside the city, she usually communicates via telephone every day so that when a problem occurs, the informant can immediately find out the problem. On the other hand, a lecturer informant admitted that she communicates with her husband via WhatsApp and telephone at least once a day. In addition, she rarely communicates via webcams and Skype because the internet network at home is often slow. The informant also communicates via e-mail and Facebookmessengers. Communication with partners in different residences is needed, even if marital satisfaction from sexual relations is not obtained. Therefore, verbal communication rather than direct communication via telephone, internet, or letters are necessary to replace sexual relations (Carter et al., 2015). For long-distance couples, communicatong through communication media is a challenge because it does not fulfill inner needs and does not feel complete (Guerrero et al., 2017; Suminar & Kaddi, 2018; Tseng, 2016).

In terms of interaction with children, informants in this study have varied responses. A soldier’s wife stated that her husband rarely communicates with his children because he rarely returns home. In addition, the relationship between children and their parents is not too close. Another housewife informant admitted that her children still do not understand the condition of their parents who are living far apart because they are still small.

An informant, who works in the informal sector (self-employed) revealed that if her husband gets home, he spends most of his time on family, starting from hanging out with children or doing other activities. Upon returning home, a housekeeper admitted that she spends time with her children because she rarely sees them. Some other informant, who works as a private employee, narrated that the husband meets his children often because he returns to Surabaya every weekend. As DIA said:

We meet once a week, my husband comes home on Saturdays. During school holidays, the children came to visit their father in the city where his father worked. (DIA, 39 years old).

However, at the end of the month, he can not go back to Surabaya because the office where he works should make a closing book so that he should work overtime and cannot meet his children. Another informant, who is a lecturer, stated that meetings with children are conducted every weekend. Her husband always takes time to go home and meet the children even though the distance between work and home is quite far and in different provinces.

My husband and I see each other every weekend. When my husband came home, we never walked alone . . . children usually ask for a walk. When my husband is at home, I often cook my husband’s favorite food at his request. (DIP, 42 years old).

According to a soldier’s wife, her children usually ask for a walk when their father gets home to eat outside or watch a movie. As IKA said:

When my husband comes home, we usually eat out of the house, watch movies at the cinema with the children too. It is quality time for us. Sometimes we go out together, for example, on New Year’s Eve because the children also have their own events with their friends. (IKA, 40 years old).

When her husband has extra money, the children buy a new gadget. An informant, who is a housewife her husband works outside of the Island, revealed that when the husband returns home, they take a walk or visit in-laws’ house because of their child are little. When her husband returns home, an informant who is self-employed admitted that he takes children to the market as a way to relieve stress. They rarely go to tourist spots and only do it during Eid holidays. As SIP said: “We meet once a month. We go to the market together with the children, and there is no special time for us to go out together” (SIP, 45 years old).
A household assistant said that she takes her children to the market on returning home every time. Whenever she has extra money, she takes her children to the beach. Atomistic families, commonly called long-distance marriages, are a challenge for couples with children because they need to take care of themselves (Kariuki, 2014). Previous studies stated that parenting by a long-distance partner cause stress, and therefore when meeting with a partner, they invite children to have quality time (Krapf, 2017; Parreñas, 2005; Pistole, 2010).

The intensity of meeting parents or in-laws is also very diverse. A soldier’s wife stated that she rarely meets her family in Palembang, and even her children had only come to Palembang twice because the informant’s parent-in-law had died before she married her husband. However, she often meets her parents in Jakarta, because every Eid festivals, she always comes to Jakarta to meet them. Even if there is free time, she and her family visit the parents’ house. Another housewife informant who lives in her parent-in-law’s house admitted that her husband, who works outside the Island, meets the in-laws when he returns to Surabaya.

A worker in the informal sector revealed that when her husband returns home once a month, the family spends time meeting with the parent-in-law because the family lives together with them. In addition, they meet with parents who live outside the city every three months or during the feast of Eid. A private employee admitted that she rarely meets with her parent-in-law because they live in Jakarta. An informant, who works as a lecturer, stated that she met with parents and parent-in-law, who live in other cities, during Eid or school holidays. Parents and parents-in-laws sometimes also come to Surabaya.

The relationship of a couple with parent-in-laws also determines happiness in marriage. The low intensity of meeting in-laws indeed becomes an advantage for the couple to avoid conflicts from the influence of in-laws. For some couples, relationship problems between in-laws and couple are sources of conflict that can impact marital satisfaction (Oshio et al., 2013). Sometimes, in-laws interfere with a couple’s problems, or in-laws may be the source of family conflict because they feel their children are still entirely owned by them (Nam & Ahn, 2011; Serewicz et al., 2008; Wu et al., 2010).

In light of the informants’ narratives, I realized that family is a part of a broader community. Their professional status and the responsibilities they fulfill in other groups separate them from the intimacy of the family group. Organizations and associations also adapt to constantly changing roles and statuses. Modern material culture, technological advancements, transportation, and communication improvements, as well as widespread industrialization and urbanization all, contribute to family change. These factors have weakened the patterns of family life that have been previously accepted, including things that are recognized in human life. In addition to the strength of the interpersonal relationship, there is a new type of growing family life. Impactful influences from social, economic, political, technological, and philosophical factors have given rise to new attitudes, norms and values, which have influenced the family (as well as to other institutions).

The reason underlying the atomistic family is economic reasons, namely job. The husband must work outside the city for a long time, while the wife also works in a different place from the husband. A job that requires them not to live in the same house has given rise to a new type of family, namely an atomistic family, where in the past, every married couple had to occupy the sameplace. In other words, a married couple must live together. Currently, different households reside. Besides the lower classes, the middle classes, and even the upper classes have these kinds of marital relationships with varied forms of interaction.

Economic factors such as family needs also support the provision of atomistic family. Furthermore, this is supported by women who are already empowered since they can work and are not reliant on their spouses (Davin, 2005). Previous studies suggested that women who choose
not to be with their partners end up having a dual role as mothers and workers (Acedera & Yeoh, 2019; Kismini et al., 2018; Palriwala & Ubenoi, 2008).

Based on the informant’s narrations, it can be concluded that the frequency of social interaction differs between couples in the middle class and lower class. Middle-class couples meet more often as compared to the lower class. The amount of income is one of the factors affecting the frequency and intensity of meetings. When couples have a higher and more stable income, they can meet with their families every week or every two weeks. While the lower classes, who face difficulty in earning income, are willing to reduce the number of meetings for the sake of family survival.

3.2. Efforts to maintain marriage in atomistic families
The trend of household development in the modern era shows a unique phenomenon. Japanese society has abandoned the traditional family form in favor of the nuclear family as a modern family unit (Ogihara, 2018). Previous studies have suggested that in modern family structures, there has been a change in social values, family structure, technology, and community structure (Berger, 2017; Kennedy-Eden & Gretzel, 2016; Nemova et al., 2016).

The family concept has changed a lot. Previous studies pointed out that the definition of family structure is based on living arrangements, not on parental marital status (Bumpass & Raley, 1995). The study illustrates the fact that, as in previous studies (e.g., Bjarnason et al., 2012; Dinisman et al., 2012), there are a variety of types of families, including nuclear and single-parent families as well as long-distance families with shifting functions. Children who live in separate families can split their time between two homes, while others can visit other houses less often (Maccoby et al., 1988).

3.2.1. Preference of intra-cultural marriages
The participants in this study shared that they were married to someone from the same ethnic group, such as the Javanese. By marrying within the same ethnicity, they hope to get the blessing of their parents and be more adaptable before deciding to marry, because even extended families always advise marrying Javanese people. Some studies showed the importance of social norms about the desires of their groups (Becker, 1981; Kalmijn, 2013). One usually prefers partners with the same values, class background, and cultural preferences that facilitate interpersonal relations and ideal integration with relatives of partners (Kalmijn, 2013; Schwartz, 2013). Relationships tend to be more successful among couples with the same cultural background (Kalmijn, 2013; Rosenfeld, 2001; Qian and Lichter, 2007; Schwartz, 2013).

There is a lower level of agreement between husband and wife due to cultural differences, as well as a lack of support from family and friends (Kalmijn, 2013; Schwartz, 2013; Zhang and Van Hook, 2009). Multicultural relations are usually more controversial than same race because cultural differences produce lower levels of consensus between husband and wife and less support from friends (Kalmijn, 2013; Schwartz, 2013; Zhang and Van Hook, 2009).

3.2.2. Adaptability with circumstances
This study found uniqueness appeared in atomistic family life. A soldier’s wife revealed that the intensity of conflict occurred at the beginning of the marriage period. The informant must adapt to the husband who has lived longer in the military environment, especially in terms of freedom. Interestingly, when discussing atomistic marriage, the informant rarely fights with her husband as their interaction is weak in person. As long as they still trust each other, fights rarely occurs. As IKA said:

In the early days of our marriage, we often had some conflicts, that we have compromised My habits with my husband were different, he is a military officer. Especially when it comes to freedom. Yes, there are a lot of rules. In fact, when we don’t live together, we rarely fight with our husbands. Yes, because we rarely meet face to face, maybe yes. We finally realized, as long as we still trust each other, then fights don’t happen (IKA, 40 years old).
Another informant claimed that the main triggers of contention are communication problems and misunderstanding between couples. Informants often fight with their husbands when they return to home, but it is only a small argument and does not cause a rift in the family. Similarly, one of another informant added to the discussion that, during his long-distance family, he often had disagreements with his wife, especially for economic issues. At the beginning of marriage, his wife found it difficult to be taught to live simply. At the beginning of the marriage, the informant once slapped his wife because she did not listen to the advice he gave to her. This triggered the wife to ask to go home to her parents. Finally, they choose to live in the atomistic family. At that time, the wife also asked for a divorce, but it failed to happen because the parent-in-law helped to resolve this issue. According to an informant who works as a household assistant, she told that her husband never argued during their atomistic family. She feels there is nothing to fight with the husband. She only feels a sense of longing, and she wants to return to her family as soon as possible.

An informant who works as a private employee revealed that the main cause of informants fighting with husbands are their children’s. Children do not obey the words and advice of the informant. The husband is more obedient to his wives, aside from the wife’s nagging and unfriendly in nature. In addition, they don’t meet every day, however, provoking a fight for personal reasons is rare. Another informant who is a lecturer stated that during their atomistic family, the main trigger for contention is the problem of miscommunication or misunderstanding between couples. It further indicated that, a couple should communicate, making sure that there are no misunderstandings if no news is given.

The harmony among a husband-and-wife relationship depends on how the couple responds to differences or existing problems. Personality characteristics and lack of interaction between partners can cause conflict in the household (Rehman et al., 2011). Conflicts that occur in atomistic families illustrate that in fact, both partners are not ready for the situation they living (Anand et al., 2018; Du Bois et al., 2019; Nastiti & Wismanta, 2017).

A soldier’s housewife revealed that the way to resolve conflicts is to surrender and give in more to him. The couple never discussed the arguments when they met, and if there has never been physical violence, there is no reason to question them. Trust in a husband is the most important thing. It makes the informant not suspicious of her husband. Another housewife admitted that conflicts usually occur because her husband does not give news. The informant always gives in whenever she conflicts.

Another informant who works in the informal sector revealed that he and his wife solve the conflicts in the room. Parent-in-law and children do not know their problems. Even though they get into an argument, they always try to cover up the problem however, parent-in-law and children would not get involved. When there is a problem with children, the informant lets his children argue and negotiate a way out. An informant who works as a household assistant rarely gets into fights with the husband because the husband gives in and knows that his wife earns extra money by working away from the family.

The informant, who is a private employee, claimed that her husband had never fought. When his wife gets involved in arguments with relatives and parents-in-law, she always tells her husband. If she gets involved in a fight with children, she resolves the problem together with her husband. An informant who works as a lecturer revealed that her husband resolve the conflicts internally. The husband more gives in when there is a fight with his wife. As DIP said:

So far, my husband and I have never fought seriously. The usual fights are like any other household. For example, the problem of miscommunication or misunderstanding because when my husband or I go where do I have to give the news. So when there is no news there will be a misunderstanding. That’s all that’s the problem. It’s a normal problem. (DIP, 42 years)
A soldier’s wife revealed that her husband once abused his children physically when a conflict started. However, it happened when the children were small, and right now the children more aware and can speak to father. When the children know that their father is abusing their mother, the children always defend her. A housewife informant asserted that disagreements do not harm her or her husband.

Another informant who works in the informal sector revealed that he once physically abused his wife, and at that time, the wife asked to return to another city (Malang) and no longer wanted to live with her husband in Surabaya. Implicitly, when he and his wife fight and their parent-in-law knows, they often feel reluctant and burdened because they live in the informant’s house. Another informant who works as a household assistant stated that she never involved anyone except her husband when a problem arose because the problem occurs only with the husband.

Domestic violence is evidence of low marriage quality and satisfaction (Panuzio & DiLillo, 2010). Previous studies explained that domestic violence is more common in women as victims because of the view of men as the party in charge of the household (Elbedour et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2019; Samman et al., 2015).

The informant who works as a private employee admitted that there had never been a fight during a long-distance family relationship. In the past, they fought and the victims were often children when they lived together. One of the informant revealed that she resolved the fight with her spouse. She considers that because the problem that arose is a problem of two, so it must also be solved together. Consequently, the informant never involves other people in a fight, and sometimes cries when a problem cannot be resolved.

Furthermore, Jacobson (1958) argues that every family experienced small and large crisis as a result of conflicts, frustrations, and tensions. In this case, marriage is far from achieving the main goals of family life. Every man and woman, who enters marriage with different ideas and attitudes, reinforces the experience of man and woman. In general, it is not surprising that certain types of personalities, role demands, and value patterns irritate others in satisfying family.

4. Conclusion
The changing dynamics of family structure have grasped the attention of academicians and researchers for adding up into the decipling of sociology of family. This is what makes family studies sociologically more interesting whereas increased gender awareness is related to the increasing number of women working in the public sector which ultimately has affected the structure and function of family institution. The power relationship between husband and wife and the pattern of decision-making in the family also experienced a shift. Along with this, the increased participation of women in the world of work has also led to a new form of family known as atomistic family.

The present study concludes that the participation of women in work force has changed the structure of family institution where couple is supposed to live separately and in the situation of having children, kids either live with any of the parents or in some cases with grandparents. The study also found the nature of familial relationship among atomistic families and it was revealed that there were diverse experiences and interaction patterns among couples. The participants told that they were having face to face interaction as well as virtual way of communication were used for this purpose. As far the frequency of interaction and communication was concerned, the informants of the study shared that they were having frequent communication through social media applications (almost on daily bases). In person interaction among couples was fortnightly or once in a month in case of having job in near by city while the interaction among family members of such couples was twice in a month, quarterly or twice in a year, if not yearly in cases of having work place in remote or farflung areas. The study also focused about the strategies in maintaining marriage among atomistic families despite of living
apart. It was found that the couples were coping with the said situation in various ways. Some couples gave up, while others resolved their problems through deliberations. Interestingly, some couples admit that they rarely get into a fight when they choose to live in an atomistic family (living far apart) because they understand the circumstances in which they are supposed to live. Therefore, when they meet face to face, or have virtual interaction they rarely get into a fight. It can be safely concluded that the atomistic families have a latent function in coping up with conflicts. Atomistic family shows that in contemporary society, the form of the family is increasingly fluid, where members of the nuclear family do not live in the same house. Women have the freedom to work and develop careers without having to follow traditional restrictive rules. With the increasing acceptance of the atomistic family as a new form of family in patriarchal society, gender equality is easier to realize, where women can develop and grow into their careers.

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