

Imagining the "New Father": Fatherhood and Masculinity in Keluarga Cemara (2018)

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Abstract

*This study critically analyzes the representation of fatherhood and masculinity in the Indonesian film *Keluarga Cemara* (2018). It utilizes Norman Fairclough's framework for critical discourse analysis to examine how sociocultural norms and expectations shape the conceptualizations of fatherhood roles. The analysis revealed that conventional patriarchal values dictate fatherhood primarily through an economic lens, placing immense pressure on fathers as financial providers. However, the film's portrayal of the character Abah disrupts this dominant narrative by highlighting the importance of the father's emotional presence and involvement in children's lives, even when facing financial constraints. Abah's struggles expose the narrow definitions of masculinity and fatherhood perpetuated by society. His character illuminates the phenomenon of "father hunger" arising from emotional disconnection when paternal roles focus exclusively on being the breadwinner. This study argues that the film prompts a re-examination of outmoded fatherhood norms to address children's holistic developmental needs. This emphasizes the need for a more inclusive understanding of masculinity and fatherhood in the Indonesian society and culture. The analysis is situated within the specific sociocultural context of the film, highlighting the complex interplay between cinematic texts, discourse, and broader norms. It underscores cinema's potential to challenge engrained gender roles and catalyze progressive social change.*

Keywords: *masculinity, fatherhood, Keluarga Cemara, Cinema*

Introduction

Cinema, a prominent form of cultural art and medium for mass communication, encapsulates cultural values and societal norms while transmitting messages on a vast scale. Films, characterized by intricate combinations of narratives, imagery, language, and music, create virtual realms in which viewers can transcend their temporal and spatial realities (Izharuddin, 2017; Sen & Heider, 1992). Films often narrate stories about life, wielding a potential influence on viewers' perceptions (Spilker et al., 2020; Utami, 2019). The representation of societal issues in films plays an instrumental role in promoting freedom, equality, and human rights. Prior media research has revealed a significant focus on the portrayal of women, encompassing a range of life aspects, with particular emphasis on the theme of violence against women (R. Hegde, 2013; R. S. Hegde, 2011; Rahmawati, 2018).

The social construct of gender, defined as society's perceptions and expectations of men and women (Hamad, 2002; Scheibling, 2020) establishes masculinity and femininity as

ideal images for each sex. This entrenched hierarchy significantly impacts individuals' self-perception, steering them towards roles aligned with their assigned gender (Rahmawati, 2021). Consequently, society plays a pivotal role in molding patterns of behavior, physical attributes, and appearance expectations for men and women, demonstrating that gender is a culturally built construct rather than a naturally occurring phenomenon.

Masculinity, denoting social roles, behaviors, and meanings assigned to men (Boyle & Brayton, 2012), is an intricate cultural construct. Men are not inherently born with masculine traits; rather, masculinity is cultivated through socio-cultural processes. Traditional masculinity often extends strength, power, fortitude, action, control, independence, self-satisfaction, male solidarity, and dedication to work (Duffy, 2015; Gopinath & Sundar, 2020).

Historically, Indonesian men have been burdened with the societal expectation of being the primary provider of their families. Despite youthful indiscretions, men were anticipated to adopt the responsible mantle of a husband and father tasked with the financial upkeep of the family. However, modernization and the burgeoning wave of feminism have ushered in a shift in gender dynamics within contemporary Indonesian society (Silvanari, 2021). Western perspectives on gender equality, founded on the notion that traditional familial labor divisions engender an imbalanced power dynamic rendering women subordinate have further accentuated these changes (Isojärvi, 2022; Rahmawati et al., 2019; Suryakusuma, 1999).

These transformations have significantly impacted perceptions of masculinity, particularly within a familial context. The instrumental role of masculinity embodied in the father figure has evolved to exhibit greater emotional involvement and familial proximity. This redefinition of masculinity has been explored in the Indonesian film, *Keluarga Cemara* (2018). Directed by Yandy Laurens, the film narrates the poignant tale of a family forced into a dramatic transition from comfortable urban living to a humble rural existence following their patriarch's bankruptcy due to a deceitful family member. Notably, the film has been lauded for its nuanced portrayal of the father's character, diverging from the traditional representations of masculinity. Given its relevance and popularity, *Keluarga Cemara* provides a rich resource for investigating the evolving constructs of masculinity in modern Indonesian society.

Cinematic Fatherhood: An Evolution of Masculinity

Scholarly discourse suggests that fatherhood has become a prominent paradigm of masculinity in mainstream US films, according to Hammad (Hamad, 2002) referencing several key studies (Bell, 2013; Díaz-cerveró et al., 2021). This trend, advancing in parallel

with the cultural normalization seen in post-feminist discourse, features films replete with paternal characters epitomizing idealized forms of masculinity that increasingly lean towards fatherhood. However, as others points out, the legitimization of post-feminist masculinity within popular media is complicated by its multifaceted nature, eschewing the possibility of universal normative ideals and diverging from traditional notions of hegemonic masculinity (Isojärvi, 2022).

In his seminal book, *Bringing Up Daddy: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Post-War Hollywood*, Bruzzi articulates the complex and often contradictory relationship between the portrayal of fatherhood in films and their historical contexts (Brunner, 2010). Although Hollywood's depiction of fathers has intermittently mirrored societal trends, it has deviated from them. Despite this interplay between Hollywood and history, Bruzzi constructs a historical narrative informed by Hollywood's unique portrayal of fathers and the thematic, narrative, and iconographic patterns that have persisted over the last decade.

The depiction of fatherhood that emerged during the postwar decades oscillated between predictable and unexpected (Bell, 2013; Isojärvi, 2022; Muhammad, 2022; White, n.d.). By the 1940s, only a handful of films truthfully mirrored the increasing financial and political independence of women, contributing to surging divorce rates and the emergence of a fragile and less assertive image of masculinity. Hollywood's subsequent focus on the 'new father' was only sparingly referenced in films from this era. Similar historical ambivalence can be seen in films from the 1950s, a decade often synonymous with conformity and conservatism in Hollywood's post-war narrative, reflecting the ascendancy of nuclear families and masculine norms.

Interestingly, the 1960s and the 1970s marked a deviation from the 1950s trend of maintaining traditional father figures, leading to a shift in the paternal archetype towards increased involvement and care. Three influential Hollywood films released between 1962-1965 – *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962), *The Courtship of Eddie's Father* (1962), and *The Sound of Music* (1965) – concentrated on the evolving societal norms affecting single fathers, reflecting the gender revolution unfolding during these decades (Brunner, 2010).

A subsequent return to 1950s ideologies characterized the 1980s, with Bruzzi, referencing Susan Jeffords' "Hard Bodies: Hollywood, Masculinity in the Reagan Era" (Díaz-cerveró et al., 2021), noting a direct link between the politics of this decade and the masculinities depicted in American cinema. The transition in the portrayal of fathers from sensitive and gentle figures to minor characters with often antagonistic roles mirrored the era's socio-

political climate. This trend not only encapsulated conformity and conservatism, but also signified safety and comfort.

In the final decades of the last century, there was a shift in Hollywood films to explore issues of gender and family in more depth (Boyle & Brayton, 2012; Hamad, 2002). The dominance of the alpha male and traditional masculinity that characterized the 1980s gave way to more complex representations of manhood and fatherhood. As a result, conventional constructs of masculinity and paternal roles came under scrutiny, as alternative portrayals emerged that embraced vulnerability and nurturing qualities over authority and dominance. The depiction of masculinity and fatherhood in cinema has increasingly become a subject of critical analysis.

Traditionally, father figures were portrayed as stoic, controlling, and primarily focused on their role as providers - reflecting ingrained societal expectations of masculinity. However, contemporary films often present more nuanced representations of fatherhood that allow for emotional connection, mutual responsibilities in parenting, and complex expressions of manhood. These alternative portrayals contest the stereotypical 'male breadwinner' model and blur traditional gender roles (Hamad, 2002).

While striving to reconcile contemporary values with established masculine norms remains an underlying tension, contemporary cinema has started to challenge and subvert traditional masculinity constructs. Films frequently explore the insecurities and inadequacies that arise from grappling with modern expectations of fatherhood and manhood. By examining such intricacies, deeper insights can be gained into how masculinity constructs are evolving within Indonesian cinema and global film narratives. These explorations also prompt important discussions on the societal and familial implications of shifting gender identities.

Construction of Fatherhood in Indonesia

Desi Dwi Prianti, in Anna Pilinska's book "Fatherhood in Contemporary Discourse: Focus on Fathers," provides an insightful discussion of how men, particularly fathers, are depicted in Indonesia (Lam & Yeoh, 2018). Since the precolonial era, the concept of fatherhood has been central to the masculine identity in Indonesia, given the country's patriarchal hierarchy. Younger men are expected to submit to their fathers and older males until they establish their families. Gender-related literature in Indonesia has consistently presented fatherhood as an idealised form of masculinity, with men expected to provide stable financial support for their families.

Yulindasari explored the role that modern media, specifically parenting magazines, play in promoting the values of fatherhood and motherhood in Indonesia (Adji, 2020). They argue that both roles are viewed as innately determined in Indonesian society. Rooted in societal norms, these roles shape the expected behaviors of men and women (Soeters et al., 2021). Furthermore societal norms dictate that women naturally care for young children and focus on their early development, whereas men are deemed ill-suited for such tasks (Scheibling, 2020).

Indonesia's family planning initiatives have successfully reduced national birth rates while endorsing an 'ideal' family structure: a breadwinner father, caregiver mother, and two children. This narrative is supported by state-sanctioned women's organizations such as Dharma Wanita and PKK, both of which emphasize a wife's duty to support her breadwinner husband by managing the household. In this openly patriarchal discourse, men's role as reliable providers and women's role as caregivers are considered moral obligations (Ida, 2009; Nasucha & Kertanegara, 2020; Putra & Primadini, 2021; Suryakusuma, 1999).

Given this context, young Indonesian men often envisage their future roles as husbands and fathers in their families. Marriage and fatherhood are perceived as milestones in their transition to manhood, without which they remain 'boys' and subordinate to older men. As a father, a man is expected to support his immediate family as well as his extended family, including parents and siblings.

By contrast, upon marriage, a woman and her family become the responsibility of her husband. Fatima Rahmah's research, "Father's Involvement in Early Childhood Education in Indonesia", reveals growing awareness and increased involvement of fathers in their children's education (Hariyadi, 2013; Trijayanto, 2017). However, compared with mothers, fathers' participation in education in Indonesia remains relatively low. There is a lack of school programs that focus on encouraging fathers' involvement in school activities, especially during early childhood. Factors influencing fathers' participation include societal norms and values, family income, fathers' work schedules, mothers' and teachers' attitudes, and socioeconomic backgrounds (Adji, 2020; Silvanari, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

Norman Fairclough's discourse analysis will be conducted to see how the discourses of fatherhood and masculinity are presented in *Keluarga Cemara* (2018). The three elements in Norman Fairclough can be divided into three parts. Text analysis will be done by analyzing the text that will look at narration, characterization, dialogue throughout the film. For example, how Abah's character is built throughout the movie and how Abah's

relationship with his daughters. Furthermore, discourse practice will look at how the characterization of Abah in *Keluarga Cemara* is attached to a broader interpretation of the text. Sociocultural practices will look at how fatherhood is embedded in the socio-political context, culture and prevailing values and norms. A discussion of the concept of "father hunger" will also be conducted to see how sociocultural conditions are at work in *Keluarga Cemara* (2018). By combining each element of Fairclough's framework, we can form a more holistic understanding of the representation of fatherhood in "*Keluarga Cemara*", considering both what is contained within the text and the wider social implications.

The first dimension of text analysis will involve close study of the film's narrative structure, characterization, dialogue, and cinematography (Leeuwen, 2012). For instance, textual analysis will explore how Abah's character is constructed through his words, actions, values, and relationships with his daughters. Observing his dialogues and interactions can reveal the complexities of his paternal role. Focusing analysis on key scenes related to masculinity, father-child relationships, and cultural norms will allow for an in-depth critical discourse analysis of how societal values and gender roles are constructed in the text, production, and reception of *Keluarga Cemara*.

The second dimension of discourse practice will analyze how the text is produced and consumed. This includes considering how filmmakers shape narratives and representations of fatherhood through choices in characterization, setting, and imagery. It also entails examining audience interpretations and the impact of Abah's portrayal on perceptions of masculinity. Finally, the third dimension situates the text within broader sociocultural contexts, norms, and political dynamics. Analysis will relate Abah's struggles to Indonesian cultural values, prevailing gender roles, and class-related pressures facing fathers.

Discussion of "father hunger" will elucidate how socio-cultural conditions perpetuate emotional distance between fathers and children when paternal duties emphasize provision over nurturing. By synthesizing insights from textual details, production/reception, and societal contexts, this multidimensional critical discourse analysis will facilitate deeper understanding of fatherhood representations in *Keluarga Cemara* (Bryman, 2004). It will illuminate the interplay between cinematic portrayals and wider cultural constructs of masculinity and paternal responsibilities in Indonesia.

Result and Discussion

Idealization of Fatherhood in Keluarga Cemara

Keluarga Cemara, released in 2018 presents a vivid portrayal of an Indonesian family's life. The film employs a variety of cinematic techniques such as camera movements and musical compositions to enhance its dramatic impact. It unrolls a chronological plot tracing the family's trajectory from prosperity to bankruptcy, and then their struggle to regain stability, thus facilitating the audience's engagement with character development and intrafamily dynamics. The primary focal point is the representation of fatherhood, which offers significant insight into the realities of Indonesian family life.

The patriarchal culture deeply entrenched in Indonesian society imposes immense expectations on men, as illuminated in Desi Dwi Prianti's study in Anna Pilinska's "Fatherhood in Contemporary Discourse: Focus on Fathers" (Silvanari, 2021). The societal notion of a successful man is intricately intertwined with his ability to provide not only his immediate family, but also extended relatives. Consequently, failure to fulfil this role is equated with a fundamental failure in masculinity. This unfair burden often obscures the fact that a good father is not merely a financial provider, but a nurturing caregiver.

Abah's character in "*Keluarga Cemara*" embodies the idealized version of fatherhood in Indonesia. Unlike the conventional portrayal of distant father figures, Abah actively participated in his children's lives. He is a loving, attentive father who prioritizes character building and future success for his children. His active involvement in emotional, cognitive, and social well-being aligns with the significant benefits highlighted in research (Isojärvi, 2022). However, despite Abah's progressive nature, the film reflects societal expectations that burden a father with the role of primary breadwinner.

Yet Abah's humanity shines through during a subsequent scene where he apologizes to Euis, affirming that her dreams matter to him. This marks a turning point where Abah recognizes that Euis's act symbolized her need for his attention and engagement. When she asks if he even wants her in the family, Abah is overcome with emotion. He embraces Euis, validating her worth and cementing their father-daughter bond. This scene typifies Abah's struggle between upholding paternal authority and connecting to his children's emotional needs.

In another instance, Abah tells his wife, "What kind of father am I, when I can't even put food on the table?" This dialogue encapsulates Abah's torment over not fulfilling the traditional role of breadwinner. His lowered status and inability to comfortably provide for his family deals a crushing blow to his perceived masculinity. However, his wife responds, "Our children need more than just food and money. They need our love and

guidance." This exchange poignantly captures the film's message on re-examining singular definitions of fatherly roles. This failure for Abah perceived masculinity especially pivotal in scene 25 "Sir, our company is looking for younger, unmarried employees." Abah's face looked sad, realizing that his age was seen as no longer productive after applying for jobs here and there. Despite *Emak* reassurances, Abah's despair heightens as he can no longer financially support the family or pay for Euis's music lessons. This depicts Abah's internalized belief that his value is inextricably tied to providing for his family, reflecting the immense societal pressure on fathers.

In one particular scene, Abah said sorry for not being able to provide for his family "*What makes dad feel sorry is you, emak!! You're pregnant again, working day and night, suffering because of me! I have made your life... difficult*" (Scene 41, *Keluarga Cemara*). Through Abah's moments of raw vulnerability, the film humanizes the struggles of fathers who strive to fulfill contradictory roles – being strong yet sensitive, knowing yet humble, caring yet authoritative. Abah's character and dialogues reveal the burdens placed on fathers by societal norms, often at the expense of their emotional health. By giving Abah's inner turmoil a compelling cinematic voice, "*Keluarga Cemara*" makes a strong case for redefining dated expectations of fatherhood and masculinity.

Abah's struggle with self-esteem following his unemployment and inability to provide as he once did manifest the societal pressure placed on men in Indonesia. Society's demand that fathers be decisive, knowledgeable, and in control contributes to a one-dimensional understanding of fatherhood. Societal norms confine the father's role to financial provisioning while relegating domestic responsibilities and child development to the mother.

These restrictive gender roles perpetuate the "Father Hunger" phenomenon in Indonesia, leading to its ranking as a "Fatherless Country" (Mokkil, 2020). Despite legal marriages, many fathers remain unfulfilled or neglected, leading to a sense of fatherlessness. Rooted in a strong patrilineal pattern, minimal involvement of fathers in childcare underscores the importance of redefining fatherhood to include active engagement in children's growth and development.

The Characterization of Ideal Fatherhood in the Cemara Family

Abah prioritizes open, honest communication as a key element in dealing with children's behavior, choosing constructive discussions over harsh reprimands. He also played an active role in his children's education, emphasizing the importance of academic growth and personal development in their lives. However, despite these admirable qualities, Abah grapples with societal expectations of fatherhood. He perceives that his

involvement in his children's lives and education is insufficient to define him as a good father. Instead, he is burdened by the feeling of inadequacy stemming from his loss to the company and his subsequent status as a low-income worker.

This dilemma underlines the complexities inherent in societal definitions of fatherhood. Abah's family, particularly Ara and Euis, appreciate his increased emotional availability and involvement after their move to Bogor. This improved emotional connection has a profound impact on their happiness and sense of fulfilment, surpassing the value of Abah's financial contribution during his time in Jakarta. However, Abah's focus remains on the traditional definition of the father as the primary breadwinner. His self-critical perspective blinds him to improvements in the quality of his emotional involvement and strengthening of his family relationships.

Abah's despondency, particularly following a work-related accident, underscores the psychological toll of societal expectations on fathers. His disappointment obscures the acknowledgement that their relocation to Bogor facilitated the re-establishment and nurturing of key values in Euis and Ara's lives. In a society where males are indoctrinated from a young age to suppress their emotions and strive for autonomy, the demands of fatherhood, which call for intimacy and emotional connections, can be overwhelming. Without the emotional tools or understanding to meet their children's emotional needs, fathers like Abah are left floundering, struggling to reconcile their internal emotional landscapes with external expectations.

Abah's characterization highlights the contrast between his perceived failure as the main financial provider and his success in forming emotional connections with his family. This difference underscores the stark contrast between society's recognition of the father's role as a provider and its disregard for their importance in developing character, providing protection, and forming emotional bonds.

This cultural dynamic contributes to the universal experience of "father hunger", leading to a spectrum of self-destructive behaviors. This social dichotomy highlights the occurrence of "father hunger". This concept defined as a profound longing for an emotional connection with the father felt by children. Just like physical hunger, this emotional emptiness does not go away with time; instead, it intensifies, resulting in ongoing feelings of lack. This is especially true for girls who are taught to prioritize relationships. The gap between their emotional needs and their fathers' capacity to fulfill them creates guilt and confusion. This problem is further compounded by patriarchal culture and inflexible gender roles that assign child-rearing duties to women and financial obligations to men (Siraj, 2012). Such cultural phenomenon contributes to the

widespread experience of "father hunger", resulting in a range of self-destructive behaviors.

In "Keluarga Cemara", Euis's self-destructive tendencies are illustrated by her extreme act of running away to join her friends, as a reaction to Abah's disregard of her needs. This act of rebellion serves as an expression of her anger and marks a pivotal moment in their relationship. Euis longs for an emotional connection with Abah, which she feels is lacking due to his focus on financial security. Instead of taking Euis's needs into consideration, Abah kept making unilateral decisions, further widening the emotional gap between them.

"Father Hunger: Fathers, Daughters, and the Pursuit of Thinness" (Maine, 2004) emphasizes that most fathers are unaware of the intricacy and emotional intensity of their children's needs, particularly those of their daughters. The expectation for fathers to be authoritative and all-knowing often stops them from truly comprehending and responding to their children's needs.

As a result, fathers tend to take on a "know-it-all" attitude rather than attempt to understand the complexities of their children's emotions. In the end, Abah acknowledges the importance of collective responsibility towards the family and values emotional connection over financial stability. His family values the emotional connections they have in Bogor more than the material comforts of their lives in Jakarta. This narrative emphasizes the need for society to recognize the important influence that fathers have on their daughters' self-esteem and confidence. The story serves as a powerful reminder of the indispensable role of a father's love, highlighting the emotional harm caused by its lack or uncertainty.

Critical Analysis of Fatherhood in Keluarga Cemara

The film exposes the sociocultural norms that perceive fathers primarily as breadwinners of the family. This perspective which deeply ingrained in society, often overshadows the equally significant roles that fathers play in their children's emotional development and character building. The movie "Keluarga Cemara" offers an alternative view of fatherhood in Indonesia.

Norman Fairclough's framework of discourse analysis can be used to uncover the societal norms, gender roles, and intricate dynamics of emotional and financial obligations that shape fatherhood in the movie and in the broader society. The character of Abah in the movie symbolizes the difficulties encountered by many Indonesian fathers who attempt to meet societal expectations while dealing with their own inner emotions. The film

reveals the sociocultural norms that view fathers mainly as the providers for the family. This widely accepted view often obscures the equally important roles that fathers have in the emotional growth and character formation of their children. The movie illustrates the unfortunate consequences of societal pressure on Abah. Despite his success in forming an emotional bond with his family, he experiences a crushing sense of inadequacy when he cannot fulfill his role as the main financial provider. This paradox reflects the tendency of society to prioritize fathers' financial contributions over their emotional investments.

The movie also challenges the existing gender roles in society, which dictate that women are responsible for raising children and men are responsible for providing financially. This distinction not only reinforces traditional gender roles, but also contributes to the occurrence of "father hunger". By establishing distinct roles based on gender, society inadvertently prevents children from forming an emotional bond with their fathers, resulting in a strong desire for paternal attachment.

In the case of Euis, the film portrays her desperate need for emotional validation from her father: emphasizing the profound impact of "father hunger" on a child's emotional health and development. This sequence in the film also challenges patriarchal norms and provokes viewers to question the imbalanced gender roles that contribute to children's emotional deprivation. Moreover, the film has successfully and critically examined the societal expectations placed on fathers. This underscores the pressure exerted on them to always appear knowledgeable and in control. The societal demand often leads fathers to ignore or undermine their children's emotional needs, preventing them from forging emotionally fulfilling relationships with their children. "Keluarga Cemara" brings to the fore the significant role of a father's love and emotional support in the development of their children's self-esteem and confidence. By contrasting the family's life in Jakarta, which was marked by material comfort, and Bogor, where they experienced emotional bonding despite financial struggles, the film reveals that the value of a father's love surpasses material comfort.

A critical discourse analysis of "Keluarga Cemara" exposes the societal norms and expectations that often constrain the roles of fathers and deprive children of wholesome paternal bonds. The film challenges these norms and advocates for a more balanced approach towards understanding and defining fatherhood – one that values emotional connection and nurtures character development, along with providing financial stability.

Continuing the critical discourse analysis on "Keluarga Cemara," it's evident that the film takes an audacious step in challenging the established norms of fatherhood and masculinity within Indonesian cinema, particularly within its genre. Historically,

Indonesian films, much like their global counterparts, have portrayed fathers as patriarchal figures with a steely resolve, limited emotional expression, and a strong focus on their role as the breadwinner. However, "Keluarga Cemara" adopts a radically different approach.

Abah, the father figure, stands in contrast to traditional Indonesian cinematic depictions of fatherhood, as he navigates the tumultuous journey of unemployment and a perceived loss of status. Notably, the film allows Abah a depth of emotionality that is traditionally denied to male characters. He is permitted the vulnerability to express his fears, his sense of failure, and his desperation to regain the lost identity of provider. Furthermore, the film showcases Abah's involvement in domestic chores and his participation in the emotional lives of his children. These facets, typically overlooked in comparable genres, represent a seismic shift in the portrayal of masculinity and fatherhood, suggesting an evolving understanding of these constructs within Indonesian society.

The film *Keluarga Cemara* employs cinematic representations that reinforce traditional masculinity constructs while occasionally subverting them. For instance, the opening scenes use a series of close-up shots to establish Abah as the strong, stoic patriarch through his solemn facial expressions and body language. However, this is disrupted later when frequent close-ups show Abah's vulnerable emotional reactions to his unemployment. Dialogue also demonstrates the construction of masculinity. Abah asserts "What kind of father am I when I can't provide for my family?" linking his identity and self-worth to the provider role. His refusal of his wife's job offers underscores the patriarchal expectation of a breadwinner father. However, Abah later apologizes to his daughter Euis, disrupting the authoritative father archetype.

The *mise-en-scene*, particularly the contrast between the family's lavish Jakarta home and modest Bogor house, reinforces masculine identity as tied to economic capability. However, Euis and Ara's enjoyment of simple pleasures like swimming in the river subverts materialistic ideals of success. Abah's engagement in domestic chores like sweeping the yard challenges gendered divisions of labor. The sentimental soundtrack during emotional moments between Abah and his children cues the audience's empathy but also reiterates gendered assumptions, framing emotional expressiveness as feminine. Flashbacks to Jakarta emphasize the loss of status he feels in Bogor.

However, sequences of the family spending time together dispute material wealth as central to Abah's identity. This demonstrates how key elements in *Keluarga Cemara* reveals the complex interplay between reinforcing and challenging paternal masculinity

constructs in the film's discourse. Expanding on specific examples illustrates how cinematic techniques convey norms, ideologies and power dynamics related to gender.

In comparison to other Indonesian films of a similar genre, "Keluarga Cemara" seems to lead a vanguard in redefining masculinity. While films such as "Ayah Menyayangi Tanpa Akhir" (2015) and "Surat Kecil Untuk Tuhan" (2017) feature emotional exploration of fatherhood, none confront the socio-economic aspects linked to masculinity as openly as "Keluarga Cemara." The film does more than merely representing an alternative narrative of fatherhood; it prompts a critical examination of traditional gender roles and the cultural expectations that sustain them. As such, "Keluarga Cemara" opens the door for future Indonesian cinema to engage more deeply with evolving concepts of fatherhood and masculinity.

However, while "Keluarga Cemara" portrays a moving narrative of fatherhood that challenges prevailing norms, the film has limitations in its discourse that warrant further analysis. Firstly, the film's depiction of middle/upper-middle class Indonesian family life offers a narrow perspective, failing to examine how economic factors may shape fatherhood across classes. Financial capability deeply impacts how fathers navigate expectations, as seen through Abah's struggles. However, for lower-income families, providing necessities would override emotional connections, illuminating different masculinity constructs.

Secondly, the film is inherently an urban-centric discourse, exploring fatherhood within a specific geographic community. Norms surrounding masculinity and paternal roles likely differ across Indonesia's diverse ethnic, religious, and regional groups. Rural fathers may have greater involvement in domestic chores out of necessity, allowing alternative masculinities. The film cannot represent a universal 'Indonesian fatherhood'. Relatedly, the narrative does not critically address how its message reaches or impacts different demographics.

As an acclaimed urban film, its counter-discourse on fatherhood mostly influences educated, middle-class audiences. However, replicating revised norms across all segments of society remains challenging. Additionally, while spotlighting "father hunger", the film risks perpetuating gender stereotypes that position females as inherently seeking emotional connections. Implying daughters are lacks paternal love could unfairly burden men with fulfilling this 'need'. More nuanced engagement with this concept is required.

Finally, the film's attempts to redefine fatherhood seem incomplete. Abah remains confined to prescribed roles as provider and moral guide, despite gaining emotional

depth. His expressions align with socially acceptable masculine expressions of vulnerability during failures. Truly radical depictions of involved fatherhood involving domesticity and nurturing are absent.

CONCLUSION

The comprehensive examination of the depiction of fatherhood in "Keluarga Cemara" underscores the importance of critically analysing cultural narratives and societal expectations that influence parental roles. It reveals how these discourses perpetuate narrow definitions of fatherhood, centered around economic provision, inadvertently leading to emotional disconnection and the phenomenon of "father hunger". The film, through the character of Abah, offers a counter-narrative that illuminates the potential for a more inclusive understanding of fatherhood, one that prioritises emotional presence, character formation, and protection.

Abah's struggles to reconcile societal expectations of fatherhood with his lived reality, expose the fallacy that a father's value is solely as a provider. Despite facing financial setbacks and emotional turmoil, Abah remained a valuable figure in his children's lives because of his involvement in their upbringing and his unwavering emotional support. The portrayal of Abah's role reiterates the importance of fathers' involvement in children's lives and the need for an emotional connection to foster a balanced, nurturing environment.

The discussion of "father hunger" is a significant critique of patriarchal norms, illuminating the emotional void that can arise from overemphasis on the father's economic role. This highlights the emotional needs of children, which, when unmet, may lead to self-destructive behaviours. Therefore, this analysis prompts society to reassess fatherhood norms to ensure that they serve the holistic needs of children.

In summary, while praiseworthy in challenging dominant fatherhood narratives, "Keluarga Cemara" has limitations in its discourse. As critics have noted, the film struggles to escape the class-based worldview of its urban creators. Its ambitions to ignite social change may be restricted without resonating with the diverse spectrum of Indonesian society. However, its questioning of ingrained norms represents an important, if imperfect, step in expanding representations of fatherhood and masculinities. The film provides a foundation to build upon in striving for more inclusive, progressive depictions in Indonesian cinema and culture.

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