

Traditional to egalitarian: A literature review of fatherhood from the gender role perspective.

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ABSTRACT

In recent decades, works of literature on fatherhood noted a transition from the traditional father's role into a new or modern role in caregiving. The traditional role in the parenting context determines the mother as the primary caregiver and the father as the breadwinner. However, this hierarchy contrasts with the patriarchal hierarchy that sets men as the supremacy or privileged party. Gender roles are socially constructed, causing upheavals at various times and places. The famous movement named feminism, brings a significant impact on the role of men and women, including the men's role as a father in caregiving. *Objective:* This paper aims to briefly review fatherhood from the global conditions and specific to the conditions of fatherhood in Indonesia from the gender role perspectives. *Method:* A literature search was conducted to identify the relevant studies. *Result:* Fatherhood in Indonesia is strongly rooted in the traditional role model conditioned by the culture, religion, and patriarchal system. While it may be too early to assume that fathers in Indonesia will also move into the modern father role, a review of the studies suggests that Indonesian fathers will be following the global trend, considering the benefits of the new role for all family members.

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Introduction

This literature review aims to capture the current situation of fatherhood in Indonesia, specifically the attitude and practices of the father's role in caregiving. This notion emerges from the global literature on fathering, which showed the tendency to shift from the father's traditional role into modern fatherhood, namely egalitarianism. Reviewing the existing literature on fatherhood in Indonesia may help to understand the Indonesian father's need and their peculiar characteristics as suggestions for the next research to improve the fatherhood facet in Indonesia. In summary, this literature review may expose the influences of gender roles in the parenting context, especially on fathers.

Through the lens of sociology, gender role is socially constructed, as well as the father's role. It means that the attitude and behavior of fathers in the family are defined through experience, mutual agreement, and interaction with others in society. This kind of construct

always has the opportunity to change over time along with the cultural shift, as explained by social constructivism theory (Creswell & Poth, 2013; Thunstedt, 2017).

The traditional role of parenting.

Global Western and Eastern cultures of the traditional parenting role determine the father's role as the breadwinner and the second caregiver after the mother (Petts et al., 2018; Ang & Loh, 2019). It is reasonable to position the mother as the primary caregiver. Remaining biologically, they are the one who gives birth and breastfeeds the baby, creating the first bond and attachment between mother and child. In contrast to the mother's depiction as soft and nurturing, an old (or traditional) father, as a provider for the family's needs, is described as disciplined, unexpressive, authoritarian, distant, and less involved in child rearing (le Gresley, 2001; Lazar M, 2005). Traditionally, the appreciation of the father's role is based on their fulfillment of covering the family financially rather than emotionally.

Research on fathering still needs explorations in many areas and promising for scholars since the existing literature on child development and parenting often focuses on the interaction between mothers and children rather than father and child. However, maternal research issues emerge due to the tendency of family research to focus on mothers (Rudelli et al., 2021). Even though the first wave of fatherhood research began in the 1970s, unfortunately, recent studies still suspect a lack of research specifically on fathers. Some reasonable explanations for fathers' inclusion in family research are detected in some research, for instance: the traditional gender role of caregiving, the perception of father's limited time or availability (due to work), and the tendency to overlook father-child relations (Braunstein et al., 2013). Other research suggests that fathers may not be interested or inclined to participate in the research (Cheuk & Lashewicz, 2016).

Lack of fathering research may become a disadvantage for fathers due to their important contribution to the child's development in particular areas, such as teaching freedom and discipline, broadening the children's views, and also as male role models for the child (Ashari, 2017). Instead of completing the mother's role, the father's role is as important as the mother, because both mother and father have their respective and valuable roles in the parenting process that are special and cannot be replaced.

Gender role: Femininity and Masculinity.

Gender roles discuss how society creates expectations or standards of being a man and a woman, which determine particular characteristics that define masculine for men and feminine for women. Historically, men hold a privileged position in the social hierarchy and women in a subordinate position (Barbeta-Viñas & Cano, 2017; Kray et al., 2017).

The role distribution comes from the beliefs, values, and social expectations of appropriate/inappropriate behavior for men and women. In the family context, men lead the family, whereas women serve the family's members (husband, child) and manage the household (Angelina & Arianto, 2022). However, the form of gender roles is the cultural context, which depends on society. It is very diverse, adaptable, and modifiable. In other words, something valid at one time can be invalid at another time, and changes may occur over time (Quinain, 2015).

Gender roles have been underlying the movement for decades. The famous one is feminism. Literature notes that feminism leads to changes, especially in the attitude toward the father's role in the family. Begin with the first wave of feminism, voiced by white middle-class women in Europe and the United States during the late 19th and early 20th, this movement had the main purpose of creating opportunities and achieving women's suffrage such as voting rights, education rights, public space rights, and inheritance rights which were previously dominated by men. One of the effects of social revolutions between 1960-1970 was restructuring the role expectations for women and men as mothers and fathers to be equal. For fathers, it means new expectations to increase their active involvement in caregiving responsibilities of their children and do the domestic chores instead of being a provider or breadwinners (le Gresley, 2001; Finley & Schwartz, 2004; Tan, 2016)

The second wave of feminism, voiced by both white and non-white women of Western countries as well as in developing countries, started in the 1960s and ended in the 1990s, which tries to uproot the cultural inequalities, gender norms, and attempts to establish the egalitarian role of women in the society, by growing of self-consciousness for minority groups. They fight for equal education and employment opportunities, maternity leave, birth control, and abortion rights, and fight against domestic violence issues, marital rape issues, sexual harassment, rape, etc.

The third wave of feminism presents a dynamic critique of the previous. This movement developed through the reactions of the second wave from the 1990s to the 2000s. Women felt strong and rebellious, and working women in various occupations are not subjected to sexist patriarchy. The purposes focus on communal objectives to individual rights. They tried to show the diverse range of exploitation and oppression through age, race, and class attributes.

Fourth-wave feminism, influenced by technology, creates greater gender equality in society through the use of internet facilities started around 2012, which offers a new feminism that is used on online social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube for sharing and empowering women with their experiences about sexual abuse, violence, harassment, etc

There are so many feminists in history now. Tracing history discovered that the root of the feminism idea started in the 1700s by Mary Wollstonecraft (considered the first philosopher of feminism). According to her book "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman", her ideology of feminism was provoked by traditional social and political theories that promote inequality and oppression in gender, especially women as the victim (Mary Wollstonecraft, 2014). The 2000s generation might be difficult to understand the struggle and challenge by feminist in the 1700s era. Even inequality still exists now but in different forms and intensities. At the time, the critique of male supremacy was a radical idea without support from society and politics.

Besides Wollstonecraft, bell hooks (1952-2021) introduced herself as a feminist theorist, writer, and cultural critic who had already engaged with feminism for more than 40 years in the year 2000 (hooks' name wrote in lowercase for the reason that she wanted people to focus on her books, not on herself). She wrote the definition of feminism in her book titled "Feminism is for Everybody", according to hooks, "*Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression*", which implies a clear, neutral, and universal meaning. Hooks intentionally did not mention women in the definition because she understands that feminism is not about being anti-male or the effort of women to fight for the equality of roles. Still, she realizes that feminism is about sexism experienced by women and men.

From Wollstonecraft to bell hooks, there is a fundamental change. Before, feminism was only for women to fight men's supremacy, but now for everybody with the same root of philosophy: ending sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression. This transformation reveals that women and men can be a victim of oppression and marginalization. Unfortunately, this justification tends to be ignored or not taken into account because the patriarchal system and hegemonic masculinity consider men to have the privilege of the superordinate and women as subordinate. In other words, if men fight against their inequality seems inappropriate.

In the parenting context, men might experience the inequality of gender. Existing research showed that in the traditional parenting role, the father assumed as the second caregiver, labeled as "invisible", "hard to reach", or "shadow". This position might be benevolent or otherwise disadvantageous for men. A father in research "The Experiences of Fathers Who Have Offspring with Autism" (Burrell et al., 2017), said that he felt disrespected, misunderstood, and ignored by the professional service. He felt that he was considered "clueless" regarding childcare. The study also shows that some professionals certainly treat mothers differently than fathers. For example, a study by Fabiano (2007) about the father's involvement noted that professionals rely more on the mother's report and lack paternal reports. This situation might decrease the involvement of fathers in child-rearing.

Furthermore, to understand fatherhood, it is important to examine the construction of hegemonic masculinity as a part of men's identity. Masculinities have many interrelated discourses to shape the holistic understanding of masculinity. In masculinity topics, scholars discussed orthodox masculinities, hegemonic masculinity, inclusive masculinity, and toxic masculinity. In order to understand and get a holistic understanding of masculinity (as part of men's identity), we need to explore and discuss those sections.

Connell (2005), created a very influential theory of hegemonic masculinity. His definition of hegemonic masculinity is...

"Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and subordination of women" (Thunstedt, 2017).

Connell's emphasis on the power of men over women, another perspective from contemporary Western society, assumes hegemonic masculinity is closely related to income-generating work as a central source of masculine identity, or called the breadwinner (Brandth & Kvande, 1998).

The concept of hegemonic masculinity by Connell was criticized (Anderson, 2009) with his idea of orthodox masculinity. Instead of emphasizing power, Anderson refers to the traditional concept of masculinity related to the depiction or characteristics of men, such as men should be less to express emotion, strong, invulnerable, and distinctively different from women.

In contrast with orthodox masculinity, inclusive masculinity defines men as having the freedom to overstep from the traditional view of ideal masculinity. According to this critique of Anderson to Connell, he stated that there is not only single hegemonic masculinity but two major strands of masculinities, one orthodox and another inclusive.

Another section of masculinity is toxic masculinity. According to the explanation by Saphiro in his book about fatherhood titled "Father Figure How To Be A Feminist Dad" (Shapiro J, 2021), he said that toxic masculinity could be a barrier to implementing a more involved father in parenting. He wrote that modern culture not only presses on the expectations but also on the essential moral characteristic for fathers to perform all the elements of toxic masculinity, such as Dads are expected to be badtempered, watchful, authoritarian, show less emotion, and never look invulnerable. This concept of toxic masculinity seems in line with orthodox masculinity, which emphasizes the appearance characteristics of men, especially the difference between men and women.

Based on the concept and the attitudes of hegemonic, orthodox, and toxic masculinity may predict that those kinds of masculinity can be a barrier and impede the shift to modern fatherhood. Their concepts contrast with the concept of "new ideal fatherhood" or "modern

fatherhood”, in which man as a father not only acceptable to provide for the family’s needs but also should be highly involved in parenting, has a significant contribution in housework, also engaged with spouse as a partner or co-parent (Petts et al., 2018).

Previous research has shown that many fathers struggle to balance the hegemonic masculine norms with the new ideal of fatherhood (Petts et al., 2018). One of the possible reasons for the condition is that childcare and housework are associated with femininity, so this extra responsibility might be disgraceful for men especially if the environment does not support and judge them as a man without superiority at home (Brandth & Kvande, 1998). There was even a label emerged in research (Rotundo, 1985) for father as the “Androgynous father” to define someone who is “an active participant in details of day-by-day childcare”, that label may provoke men to worried about this “new” or “additional” responsibility might decrease their masculinity and increase their femininity (Magaraggia, 2013a).

Previous research has shown that men who view their masculinity as an important identity might be less to perceive father involvement as significant for their child’s development or well-being. In contrast, men who prioritize the importance of father identity, associated with the new fatherhood ideal, might be less conform to hegemonic masculine norms because it may contradict their paternal identity. In conclusion, embracing the new fatherhood ideal may require fathers to refuse traditional masculinity.

Based on the fact above about feminism and masculinity. Egalitarian parenting can be achieved by taking a positive perspective from the feminism and masculinity ideology. Early feminism fights the patriarchal system and men’s supremacy, identic with hegemonic, orthodox, and toxic masculinity, both of which consist of oppression, creating an imbalance role, one as a benevolent group and the other as a subjugated group, either men or women.

To neutralize, the concept of feminism, such as the framework from bell hooks (“Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression”) and inclusive masculinity (more freedom to overstep the traditional view of parenting) can be a powerful concept to be implemented, in order to create more beneficiary role of parenting for mother and father as the basic principle of humanity, which is everybody has the equal rights and freedom with no distinction by gender.

Modern father’s role: The egalitarian

Literature on fathering detected the egalitarian model as promising and might be the ideal future of new parenthood (Magaraggia, 2013; Petts et al., 2018; Estevan-Reina et al., 2020). Studies also give abundant evidence that greater father involvement is associated with positive

contributions to children, such as their self-esteem, emotional well-being, academic, behavior, etc (Habib, 2012; Rankin et al., 2019). Besides the children, the benefit of the father's involvement is also for the spouse to increase marital satisfaction and decrease maternal stress. Hence, in order to make the shift run smoothly, we have to understand which party has the hardest challenge, either the mother or the father.

In the 2000s, the idea of egalitarian parenting emphasized the involvement of the father. As mentioned above, some literature believes the shift in man's involvement in the family is influenced by feminism. The emphasis on the increase of men's involvement, assume as a modern style of parenting, emerge many labels to this model, such as 'new fatherhood', 'generative father', 'egalitarian father', 'new fathers', 'innovative fathers', 'positively involved fatherhood', 'responsible fatherhood', or 'intimate fatherhood' (Magaraggia, 2013).

The style of more men's involvement in parenting is not a fresh or modern idea. The idea's story began around the 1900s when the historians of the nineteenth century associated the new ideal family of the middle class with intimacy and affection between parents (including fathers) and their children. At the time, this idea even inspired working-class families though they could not realize it (Allen, 2014).

According to history, the idea of high men's involvement in the family is luxurious, seems that the egalitarian parenting style is suitable or more effortless in a prosperous country that values gender equality. The justification above is affirmed by the fact that in the 1970s, governments in Sweden (which is considered one of the wealthy and high gender equality countries) took the first steps toward a more egalitarian distribution of familial labour by authorizing parental leaves for fathers as well as mothers and other measures designed to encourage men's involvement in family life.

Eriksson (2015) researched the paternal leave policy in Sweden (one of the Nordic countries), known as a pioneer country in implementing paternity. The government continues to revise the extension term of paternal leave for the father. Fathers are entitled to 13 months of leave, which can be distributed until the child completes the first level of school (8 years). In 1974, they replaced the term maternity/paternity leave becomes parental leave to emphasize the philosophy of the policy. Rather than free from going to work, but is an opportunity for parents to create an intimate attachment, develop early parent-child bonding, and balance parenting responsibilities and household chores while still earning a salary of up to 80%.

Fatherhood in Indonesia.

Indonesia is a non-Western developing country, considered the fourth most populated country in the world after China, India, and the United States of America. As one of the most

diverse countries with many cultures and values in the world, in general, Indonesian culture is identified as patriarchal, collectivist, and religious (Riany et al., 2017; Maulana et al., 2018).

Based on data from the Ministry of Home Affairs (Kemendagri), Indonesia's population was 273.32 million as of December 31, 2021 (www.dataindonesia.id). As a religious country, Indonesia consists of six religions Islam, Christian, Catholic, Hindu, Buddha, and Khong hu cu, with Islam as the largest religion (86.93%) and the second Christianity (7.47%). This review aims not to explore an in-depth religious aspect but to give an overview of the positions of men and women in a cultural context. Indeed, it can be noted that the patriarchal system influences the majority of Indonesian culture.

Those two largest religions have similarities related to the hierarchy of men. Most Muslims believe that leadership is for men based on the Qur'anic verse 4:34. The literal reading of the above verse resulted in the interpretation:

"Men are the leader of women because some of them (which is interpreted as men), have been granted superiority over the other (which is often interpreted as women), and because they spend some of their wealth to support the family. This verse not only becomes the basis that men are leaders of women but also as the basis to construct idealities of men as family breadwinners" (Nurmila, 2018).

Christian bible Genesis 5 verses 22 – 24 :

"²²Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything".

Studies showed the verses above related to gender and have a deep, meaningful understanding, not only superficial literal meaning but may easily trigger misunderstanding and provoke gender inequality (Nurmila, 2018; Setianto et al., 2022), especially in the patriarchal culture may be strengthened the hegemonic position of men.

Parenting in Indonesia is still strongly rooted in the traditional model of roles, influenced by the patriarchal system. Also, the social system supported the traditional role of parenting, for example, the Paternal leave policy. Policy is one of the support from the system in changing cultural ideas, financially and impacts the changes in attitude. Based on Manpower Law No. 13 of 2003 chapter 93 clause 4e (Undang Undang Ketenagakerjaan No.13/2003 pasal 93 ayat 4e), paternity leave is given only for 2 days. This policy focused on the birth of the child and less attention to the following stages of the child's psychological development. This system might be less beneficial for the father since their involvement is not only to help the spouse (who is in conditions of recovery after giving birth) but also important to form attachments as early as possible with the child.

Compared to countries that are already aware of fathers' role in parenting, Indonesia might

still have steps to go. Still, currently, the Indonesian government has started a small step to prepare for the changes to support the father's role in the family. The House of people's Representatives (DPR) is drafting the Law of The Mother and Child Welfare (Undang undang kesejahteraan Ibu dan Anak) in 2022 to update the term of leave from 3 months to 6 months for maternity leave and from 2 days to 40 days for paternity leave (www.cnbcindonesia.com). Although the change is still uncertain and relatively early to appreciate, but can be considered as a small step from social structure to support the shift into the modern parenting role.

Result and Discussion

According to the discussion above, some hypotheses and questions could be generated for further research, especially in Indonesia. For instances:

- a. The traditional role strongly associated with the patriarch's hierarchy and hegemonic masculinity of men, creates the status quo and provokes inequality in the implementations and practices of gender structure. Moreover, the literature showed in order to obtain improvement in gender equality is by doing a shift to the modern role (egalitarian), which theoretically will give advantages to both men and women. Future research needs to examine whether the Indonesian fathers enjoy the status quo as living in the patriarchal system or need to shift into the modern role.
- b. The overlooking of fathers' voices in the family context seems tolerated due to their role as second caregivers. However, this condition needs to be noticed because the father's role is valuable as a mother and needs to be improved by understanding their particular needs and characteristics. Therefore, society in the patriarchal system may be difficult to understand this father's position because man is considered the beneficiary party and hold the privileged status. Future research needs to examine fathers' feelings, thoughts, and behavior regarding their role.
- c. Future (modern) fatherhood ideally implemented the egalitarian role. To make the shift transition run smoothly, scholars need to explore in depth to understand the barrier and the accelerating factors that influenced the shift, especially in a country with a strong traditional role and patriarchal culture like Indonesia. Future research may need to explore the factors that accelerated and factors that impeded the shifting from the traditional role into the egalitarian role.
- d. Referring to Ecological systems theory was introduced by Bronfenbrenner over 30 years ago. Human development is influenced by all the systems that play a role in impacting the lived experiences of the individual. In 2006, Bronfenbrenner revised his original theory,

adapting the name to bioecological systems theory, emphasizing the individual's active role in the developmental process. In the fatherhood context, to make a shift in the parental role needs dynamic interaction between the individual with the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. In other words, men need to be supported by understanding their needs as individuals such as their masculinity traits, and from the perspectives of the social system.

Conclusion

Father's role in perspective gender role appears strongly related to the identity of men and the system in society. General literature on fathering associate the father's role with paternal involvement, pioneered by the feminist movement striving for role equality in the family, namely modern fatherhood, or called an egalitarian role. Men as a father are encouraged to improve their position as caregiving by shifting from the traditional role to the modern role. Apparently, the Indonesian father will follow this change sooner or later, as notice from the revision of the paternal leave policy. To make sure, scholars need to do more research on fathers' role in Indonesia, exploring their feeling, thought, and attitude regarding their role and improving their roles for the family.

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