

## Fatherhood and family values in Indonesia and Norway: A cross-cultural review

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### ABSTRACT

*This qualitative literature review compares how fathers shape family values in Indonesia and Norway. Guided by Hofstede's cultural dimensions, this study synthesized literatures and policy reports to examine (1) fathers' contributions to family values, (2) cross-cultural differences in paternal roles, and (3) the influence of societal norms and policies. Searches conducted in high-indexed journals from Scopus and Google Scholar by using combinations of keywords in both English and Indonesian. Inclusion and exclusion criteria, as well as screening procedures are detailed in Research Method. Thematic synthesis identified that in Indonesia, collectivist and patriarchal norms position fathers chiefly as providers and moral authorities, with involvement shaped by urban-rural location, socioeconomic status, and evolving gender norms. Meanwhile, in Norway, egalitarian culture and policies (e.g., the "father's quota") support shared caregiving and strengthen paternal bonds. Evidence on father absence and family disruption indicates risks for child socio-emotional outcomes. This study discuss implications for culturally sensitive parenting supports and policy design.*

**Keywords:** *Fatherhood; Family values; Parenting; Indonesia; Norway; Paternal leave; Policy; Cross-cultural comparison*

### INTRODUCTION

Fathers contribute to children's socialization and the transmission of family values not only through economic provision but also via modelling, boundary-setting, and shared caregiving. This has been an ongoing cross-cultural debate regarding father's role in parenting. Specifically, in the context of transnationalism and globalization, the father's role is reduced to economic provision for children, leaving the mothers to a more complex role, including emotional support and children's care system (Aure, 2018; Pribilsky, 2012). These phenomena occur in various countries. Despite policy and legislative differences, the role of fathers in parenting is continuing to be less visible in various countries such as England, Ireland, Norway, and Sweden as shown by the study from Nygren, Walsh, Ellingsen, and Christie (2018). Other comparative study from Afrooz, Asgharpour, Lotfi (2022) includes the comparison between Asia, specifically Middle East, and North America which concludes that the evolving nature of fatherhood, emphasizing men's roles in parenting, is shifting from traditional

providers to emotionally supportive and actively involved figures. The changing perception of fatherhood reflects cultural and social diversity, contributing uniquely to children's development and well-being. Similarly, Storhaug (2013) also argued that father's presence and involvement can raise a better outcome, both for children and families. Besides, another study from Novianti et al. (2023) mentions that when fatherhood extends beyond gendered provider roles, fathers can also contribute to shape children's identities, self-esteem, and socio-emotional development. This marks the urgency of examining father's role in parenting. Therefore, this study also highlights the involvement of father's presence in parenting, shaped by cultural context, focusing on Indonesia and Norway.

In the Indonesian context, Indonesia is not monolithic. Fathering practices vary across urban-rural settings, socioeconomic strata, ethnolinguistic communities, and generations (Yulianti, 2023; Rahmah, 2020). Younger dual-earner households where both father and mother work and contributes to household income, often reports more collaborative childcare. By contrast, Norway's policy architecture – most notably in father's quota policy in parental leave and supportive workplace norms – has normalized paternal involvement in childcare activities. These macro-level differences provide a useful lens for comparing how fathers help shape family values in each setting – Indonesia and Norway.

By using Hofstede's cultural dimensions as a heuristic to frame contrasts between Indonesia and Norway's contexts, this study provides a qualitative literature review. This study examined various sources retrieved from Scopus and Google Scholar database to extract the evidence of fatherhood in the context of Indonesia and Norway. All steps including inclusion/exclusion criteria, its thematic analysis, and its interpretation are provided in the Research Method section. Those backgrounds motivate this study to present:

1. How do fathers in Indonesia and Norway contribute to the development and transmission of family values?
2. What key differences in paternal roles emerge across these cultural contexts, and how do they vary within Indonesia and Norway?
3. How do societal norms and policies (e.g., paternal leave, workplace expectations, father's quota policy) shape fathers' parenting practices in Indonesia and Norway?

By structuring the review around these questions, this study aims to provide a balanced, cultural contexts on fatherhood and its influence on shaping family values.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### ***Collectivism and Individualism***

The concepts of collectivism and individualism introduced by Hofstede (1980) remain foundational for explaining cross-cultural variation in family roles. Collectivism emphasizes the importance of group goals, interdependence, and loyalty, with individuals defining themselves as part of a “We” collective. In contrast, individualism focuses on personal achievement, independence, and individual rights, where self-image is defined by “I.” Subsequent work refines these orientations by linking interdependence vs. independence to caregiving expectations (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) and by proposing an autonomous-related self in contexts where modernization coexists with strong family ties (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2007). In collectivist settings like Indonesia, hierarchical family structures often position fathers as authority figures and moral guides, with indirect communication and harmony-maintenance shaping parenting; in individualist settings like Norway, equality, open communication, and personal autonomy are emphasised, with fathers acting as co-parents in decision-making (Hofstede, 1980; Brandth & Kvande, 2009). Policy instruments such as Norway’s father’s quota further institutionalize egalitarian caregiving (Brandth & Kvande, 2009; Duvander & Johansson, 2012; O’Brien & Wall, 2017).

### ***Empirical Studies on Fatherhood (Indonesia and Norway)***

In Indonesia, Nurjanah, Jalal, and Supena (2023) show that fathers provide emotional stability and moral guidance in early childhood development, yet societal norms may cast them as distant authorities rather than day-to-day caregivers. Yet, evidence of Indonesia’s cultural diversity indicates that paternal involvement differs through urban-rural location and ethnocultural systems (e.g., Minangkabau matriliney) and is changing across generations (Yulianti, Denessen, and Droop, 2019; Rahmah, 2020; Stark and Yahaya, 2021). Meanwhile, in Norway, Brandth and Kvande (2009) demonstrate how the father’s quota policy increases fathers’ everyday caregiving and strengthens bonds. After all, this study agrees with those assumptions concerning the need for fathers to actively participate in caregiving and family activities which tends to contribute to positive children’s development.

### ***Integration and Analytical Lens***

Guided by those respective traditions, this study treats cultural values (collectivism – individualism) and policies (e.g., parental leave in father’s quota) as the starting conditions that shape fathering. These conditions influence how fathers see their role,

for example, as a provider, moral authority, or co-parent (Hofstede, 1980; Brandth & Kvande, 2009). Those role views then guide everyday parenting practices and these daily practices are the channels through which family values are passed on and its inevitable effects when the parents neglect their roles (Nurjanah, et al., 2023). In short, this study starts from cultural values and policies which shape the role views on fatherhood, and it is transmitted to society's daily practices (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Kağıtçıbaşı, 2007; Duvander & Johansson, 2012; O'Brien & Wall, 2017; Yulianti et al., 2019; Rahmah, 2020; Stark & Yahaya, 2021).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a library-based qualitative literature review to compare how fathers shape family values in Indonesia and Norway. This study also examines how cultural norms and policies influence paternal roles. This research method emphasized gathering peer-reviewed articles, scholarly books/chapters, or reputable policy reports examining fathers' roles, family values, or parenting norms in Indonesia and/or Norway in Scopus and Google Scholar. The keywords to find relevant references include English and Indonesian words/phrases: "father/paternal involvement"; "family values"; "Indonesia"; "Norway"; "collectivism"; "policy"; "peran ayah"; "nilai keluarga"; "cuti ayah"; "kebijakan pengasuhan"; "masyarakat patriarkal". Titles/abstracts were screened, followed by full-text eligibility checks, and for each included source we extracted the country/setting, design, sample, focal constructs (e.g., paternal involvement, moral authority, co-parenting), policy context (e.g., the Norwegian father's quota), and key findings. Sensitizing examples from prior work, such as Indonesian studies noting more traditional, hierarchical paternal roles consistent with collectivist norms (Setiawati et al., 2021) and Norwegian work documenting how gender-equality policies and the father's quota support active caregiving (Gauthier & Sutherland, 2018), were used to refine searches and initial coding without privileging them over other included sources.

Analysis proceeded via thematic synthesis organized around this study's objectives and the collectivism–individualism lens. The distinguished evidence reporting the sources and the interpretation presenting cross-study comparison are compiled in a matrix which aligns Indonesian and Norwegian themes. It encompasses the similarities and differences within the area of provider/ moral authority vs. co-parenting, policy examinations, and father absence/risks. The goal was to explain how fathers see their role (provider, moral guide, co-parent) and how those role views shape each society (boundary-setting, caregiving, communication) through the cultural values and policies in each country. No primary data were collected. All claims derive from secondary literature identified and synthesized through the procedures above.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

**Table 1**

*Evidence in Indonesia and Norway*

Theme	Evidence in Indonesia	Evidence in Norway
Provider role/ moral authority	Fathers often present but less engaged in daily nurture/learning; act as a provider–moral authority within a collectivist, patriarchal frame. However, it cannot be generalized since there may be variation by urban-rural, socio-economic status, and ethnolinguistic in Indonesian diversity systems (Rahmah, 2020; Ashari, 2018; Yulianti et al., 2019; Stark & Yahaya, 2021; Nurjanah et al., 2023).	Fathers widely framed as co-parents in an egalitarian context; contribute to participation in decisions and daily care is socially valued and institutionally supported (Brandth & Kvande, 2009; Eydal & Rostgaard, 2015).
Shared caregiving	This trend is more visible in younger and urban families, but busy schedules and work responsibilities often limit direct caregiving (Rahmah, 2020; Yulianti et al., 2019; Nurjanah et al., 2023).	The trend in Norway is supported by parental leave. When fathers take leave on their own (without the mother also on leave; or also called ‘solo leave’), they learn to focus on the child’s needs, slow down, and build relationship skills. Doing the “three Cs” (caring, cleaning, cooking) shifts them from “helping” to true co-parenting (Kvande & Brandth, 2017).
Policy scaffolds	Father-specific leave is limited. Families often rely on relatives and informal help, which keeps fathers mainly	A non-transferable “father’s quota” (use-it-or-lose-it leave reserved for fathers) has helped normalize paternal caregiving and is associated

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<p>Father absence &amp; risks</p>	<p>Early marriage and divorce can reduce daily father–child contact. Even when families live together, many children still receive less-than-optimal parenting (Rahmah, 2020; Cameron et al., 2020).</p>	<p>with high uptake. Since 2007, greater flexibility, such as splitting leave, deferring portions, or taking it part-time, has further expanded opportunities for fathers to provide solo care (Brandth &amp; Kvande, 2009; Duvander &amp; Johansson, 2012; Lappegård, 2010; Eydal &amp; Rostgaard, 2015).                  Studies across settings show that greater father involvement is linked to better outcomes. Early father absence is also associated with a higher risk of depression (Cabrera et al., 2018; Culpin et al., 2022).</p>
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Table 1 summarizes the reviewed literature as a joint display, allowing a direct comparison between Indonesia and Norway across four recurring themes. For Indonesia, the evidence clusters around a provider–moral-authority role: fathers are often expected to secure economic stability and provide moral guidance, while routine socio-emotional caregiving and learning support are more frequently concentrated in mothers’ daily labor (Rahmah, 2020; Ashari, 2018). However, the Indonesian pattern is heterogeneous: fathering practices vary across urban–rural settings and socioeconomic strata, and ethnolinguistic/kinship systems can reallocate authority and caregiving responsibilities (Yulianti et al., 2019; Stark, 2021). For Norway, the evidence consistently frames fathers as co-parents, with shared caregiving mainstreamed and reinforced by institutional supports, including the father’s quota and flexible leave arrangements that increase opportunities for solo caregiving (Brandth & Kvande, 2009; Eydal & Rostgaard, 2015; Duvander & Johansson, 2012; Lappegård, 2010).

These results establish the empirical pattern (what is similar/different across contexts). The Discussion then explains how these patterns relate to the study’s research questions: (A) what fathers contribute to family values, (B) how paternal roles differ across Indonesia and Norway, and (C) how societal norms and policies shape those roles. Section (D) synthesizes the argument by connecting cultural orientations and institutional supports to fathers’ everyday practices through which family values are transmitted (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Kağitçibaşı, 2007).

## Discussion

This discussion interprets the patterns summarized in Table 1 in relation to the three research questions: (1) fathers' contributions to family values, (2) cross-cultural differences in paternal roles, and (3) the influence of societal norms and policies.

### *Fathers' contributions to family values (Indonesia and Norway)*

In Indonesia, the reviewed literature depicts fathers as key contributors to family values primarily through economic provision and moral authority. Within a patriarchal cultural framework, fathers are often expected to secure the family's material well-being and to function as decision-makers and moral guides, transmitting values such as discipline, respect for elders, loyalty, and responsibility toward the family unit (Ashari, 2018). However, evidence from the National Socio-Economic Survey (BPS) suggests that although most children co-reside with both biological parents, fathers' physical presence does not always translate into routine engagement in nurturing, educating, or emotion coaching (Rahmah, 2020; BPS). This pattern can lead to an undervaluation of fathers' caregiving role, with mothers carrying most daily responsibility for children's moral and emotional development and fathers' contributions becoming concentrated in moments of rule-setting rather than the micro-practices of everyday caregiving (Ashari, 2018; Rahmah, 2020). In Norway, by contrast, fathers' contributions to family values are more frequently enacted through shared caregiving and everyday interaction. Policies such as the father's quota support fathers' involvement from birth and encourage them to function not only as breadwinners but also as caregivers and educators; this involvement has been associated with strengthened emotional bonds and more balanced family value transmission (Brandth & Kvande, 2009; Eydal & Rostgaard, 2015). Consistent with attachment-based accounts, sustained paternal involvement can foster children's security and confidence, while the quality of father-child interactions have demonstrable links to developmental outcomes (Cabrera et al., 2018).

At the same time, the evidence in both countries cautions against one-size-fits-all conclusions. Indonesia is not monolithic: fathering practices vary across urban-rural settings and socioeconomic strata, with more collaborative patterns reported in some urban and higher-education households (Yulianti, Denessen, & Droop, 2019; Nurjanah, Jalal, & Supena, 2023). Ethnolinguistic and kinship systems can also reshape paternal contributions; for instance, matrilineal traditions may redistribute authority and caregiving responsibilities in ways that differ from patriarchal stereotypes (Stark, 2021). Yet social factors such as early marriage and divorce can further constrain fathers' sustained involvement, increasing the likelihood of reduced day-to-day contact and narrowing opportunities for value transmission through routine caregiving (Cameron et al., 2020; Rahmah, 2020). Cross-context evidence underscores

why these constraints matter: limited paternal involvement and early father absence are associated with elevated risks for later socio-emotional difficulties, including higher depression rates in adolescence and adulthood (Culpin et al., 2022). Norway likewise shows variation in how fathers enact co-parenting, but the institutional context, especially the father's quota and flexible leave design, makes shared caregiving a common pathway for value transmission by expanding fathers' time in direct care (Brandth & Kvande, 2009; Duvander & Johansson, 2012; Lappegård, 2010; Eydal & Rostgaard, 2015).

### ***Cross-cultural differences in paternal roles (Indonesia and Norway)***

The Indonesia–Norway contrast in Table 1 reflects two dominant role profiles. Indonesian fathers are more often framed as providers and moral authorities in a collectivist, hierarchical family orientation, whereas Norwegian fathers are framed as co-parents in a more egalitarian setting, routinely participating in daily care and shared decision-making (Rahmah, 2020; Ashari, 2018; Brandth & Kvande, 2009; Eydal & Rostgaard, 2015). This difference is compatible with cultural-psychological distinctions between interdependent and independent orientations, where the “We” emphasis of collectivism supports role differentiation and hierarchy, while the “I” emphasis of individualism supports autonomy and equality (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Kağıtçıbaşı, 2007). In other words, fathers' roles differ not simply because of personal preferences, but because the surrounding cultural expectations define what a “good father” looks like, and which parenting tasks are socially appropriate.

Beyond cultural framing, structural constraints and family transitions deepen cross-cultural differences. In Indonesia, early marriage and divorce are repeatedly cited as factors that can narrow paternal involvement: early marriages may involve couples who are not emotionally or psychologically prepared to raise children, while divorce can reduce day-to-day father contact when children reside primarily with mothers (Cameron et al., 2020; Rahmah, 2020). In Norway, by contrast, the normative expectation of paternal caregiving is reinforced by policies that enable fathers to spend time in direct care, including periods of solo responsibility (Brandth & Kvande, 2009). Taken together, the cross-cultural evidence suggests that differences in paternal roles are produced by an interaction of cultural meanings (what fatherhood should be), social organization (who does which tasks), and institutional supports (whether fathers can realistically participate in daily caregiving).

### ***The influence of societal norms and policies (Indonesia and Norway)***

Table 1 highlights that norms and policies operate together to shape paternal practices. In Indonesia, provider-centric fatherhood remains common partly because fathers face

limited father-specific leave and constrained workplace flexibility, while families rely more heavily on kin networks and informal caregiving arrangements (Rahmah, 2020; Yulianti et al., 2019). These conditions make it difficult to convert good intentions into consistent daily caregiving, even when fathers value involvement. The practical consequence is that value transmission may occur through moral guidance and role modelling from an authority position, while routine socio-emotional teaching—communication, problem-solving, and everyday responsiveness—tends to be concentrated in mothers' caregiving labour. This helps explain why survey-based accounts can show high co-residence yet still identify gaps in parenting quality or paternal engagement (Rahmah, 2020).

In Norway, institutional design actively reshapes what fathers do. The non-transferable father's quota in parental leave signals that fathers' caregiving is expected rather than optional, and high uptake means that many fathers experience direct responsibility for infants and toddlers (Brandth & Kvande, 2009; Eydal & Rostgaard, 2015). Research on policy reforms shows that flexibility (e.g., splitting or deferring leave, combining leave with part-time work) can extend or diversify paternal participation across the child's early years (Duvander & Johansson, 2012; Lappegård, 2010). Qualitative studies further show that solo-leave can generate practice change—need-oriented care, “slow time,” and relational competence—alongside routine domestic work (the “three Cs”: caring, cleaning, cooking), shifting fathers from “helpers” into confident co-parents (Kvande & Brandth, 2017). These mechanisms illustrate how policies do not merely allocate time; they can also transform identity and skills by placing fathers in repeated caregiving situations.

### ***Fatherhood in Indonesia and Norway***

Synthesizing the evidence, the previous discussions capture the cross-cultural pattern: cultural values and policy scaffolds shape role identities, role identities shape daily practices, and daily practices transmit family values. In Indonesia, collectivist expectations and patriarchal norms often construct fathers into provider/moral-authority roles, which can effectively transmit discipline and loyalty but may limit routine emotional scaffolding unless co-parenting is intentionally developed (Ashari, 2018; Rahmah, 2020). In Norway, egalitarian expectations and father-specific leave increase the likelihood that fathers enact caregiving as a daily practice, embedding value transmission in shared routines such as dialogue, joint problem-solving, and responsive care (Brandth & Kvande, 2009; Kvande & Brandth, 2017; Eydal & Rostgaard, 2015).

This also clarifies why father presence alone is not an adequate indicator of paternal contribution. Even in Indonesia, where most children live with both parents, children may still experience suboptimal parenting if fathers' involvement remains limited in

daily learning and emotional support (Rahmah, 2020). Cross-context research as shown above suggests that when fathers participate consistently, through caregiving actions and high-quality interactions, children benefit socio-emotionally (Cabrera et al., 2018), whereas early father absence is associated with higher depression risks later in life (Culpin et al., 2022). At the same time, the Indonesian literature underscores heterogeneity: urbanisation, education, and ethnolinguistic systems can facilitate more collaborative fathering (Yulianti et al., 2019; Nurjanah et al., 2023; Stark, 2021). Therefore, the most defensible conclusion is not that one country “has good fathers” and the other “does not,” but that different cultural-policy environments create different pathways and constraints for fathers to contribute to family values.

## CONCLUSION

The roles of fathers in shaping family values differ significantly between Indonesia and Norway. It was found that cultural values and policy scaffolds shape paternal role identities; role identities shape daily parenting practices; and daily practices are the primary channel through which family values are transmitted. In Indonesia, fathers’ contributions tend to be anchored in economic provision and moral authority, with value transmission often occurring through boundary-setting and role modelling in a hierarchical family frame (Ashari, 2018; Rahmah, 2020). In Norway, fathers’ contributions more often operate through shared caregiving and everyday interaction, supported by institutional arrangements such as the father’s quota that expand opportunities for direct care and strengthen father–child bonds (Brandth & Kvande, 2009; Eydal & Rostgaard, 2015; Kvande & Brandth, 2017). Across contexts, the literature also suggests that sustained paternal involvement and interaction quality matter for children’s socio-emotional development, while early absence is linked to longer-term risks (Cabrera et al., 2018; Culpin et al., 2022).

At the same time, the findings underscore that Indonesia is not monolithic. Fathering practices vary across urban–rural contexts, socioeconomic status, and ethnolinguistic/kinship systems, and these differences shape how paternal authority, caregiving, and value transmission are enacted in everyday life (Yulianti et al., 2019; Stark, 2021; Nurjanah et al., 2023). Social factors such as early marriage and divorce can further narrow fathers’ day-to-day contact, helping explain why living together does not necessarily translate into high engagement in daily nurturing and learning support (Rahmah, 2020; Cameron et al., 2020). Therefore, there is not that one national model is universally “better,” but that different cultural-policy environments produce different pathways and constraints for fathers to contribute to family values.

Although this study may provide new insights to portray the complexity of fatherhood in two countries through the comparative literature review, this review has clear limitations. First, it relies on secondary sources and therefore cannot directly assess

paternal intentions, household negotiations, or children's lived experiences. Second, the strength and granularity of evidence are not evenly distributed. Norwegian scholarship is comparatively policy-rich, whereas Indonesian studies often vary by region, design, and measures, limiting direct comparability. Third, because the reviewed studies are largely observational and context-specific, the discussion should be read as descriptive and interpretive rather than causal. Future work can strengthen these claims by combining multi-site qualitative evidence (including observations and family interviews) with comparable indicators of paternal involvement and value transmission across diverse Indonesian settings and Norwegian regions, and by evaluating how specific supports reshape fathers' daily practices over time.

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