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Contemporary Discourses of Motherhood and Fatherhood in *Ayahbunda*, a Middle-Class Indonesian Parenting Magazine

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*There have been few studies of representations of gender in parenting discourses in Indonesia. In this article the authors investigate contemporary modalities of Indonesian parenting, questioning to what extent ideas of the roles of mothers and fathers represented in the middle class Indonesian parenting magazine (*Ayahbunda*) from 2000–2008 represent a break with conventional gendered parenting ideologies. The discourse analysis of both text and illustrations in *Ayahbunda* suggests that it promotes idealized, yet expanded gender roles for both women and men of middle-class Indonesian families. As a result the magazine jointly promotes ideas of a “super-mum” and a “super-dad”, which has resonance with patterns in the West. Yet motherhood remains the prescribed core identity of women and the role of protector remains the core identity of fathers.*

KEYWORDS *discourse, family, fatherhood, gender construction, Indonesia, media, motherhood*

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INTRODUCTION

In the early years of human life, parenting is the vehicle to preserve or change existing gender ideologies. Drawing from studies of gendered socialization of boys and girls in the United States between 1970–1980, Block (1983) argues that there exist gendered patterns in parent–child relationships in the early years. For example, mothers are more responsive to boys than to girls, parents tend to give more stimulation to the gross motor activities of boys rather than girls, and parents interrupt daughters more often than sons (Block, 1983). Some argue that “traditional” parental attitudes increase awareness of gender among children (Fagot, Leinbach, & O’Boyle, 1992; Tenenbaum & Leaper, 2002).

The media, and magazines in particular through their texts and illustrations, significantly contribute to the process of constructing, contesting, and reaffirming gender (Benwell, 2002; Diekman & Murnen, 2004; Sanford & Blair, 1999; Sunderland, 2002). Sunderland’s (2006) study of paternal identity in glossy commercial magazines in the United States and Canada published in 2002 signaled a trend of fathers being only partially addressed as parents and being represented as only part-time parents and less competent in taking care of babies. Mothers, by contrast, were represented as full-time parents who are sensitive to the baby’s needs.

Although there are numerous studies of gender representation in the Indonesian media (see Aripurnami, 1996, 2000; Clark, 2004; Sen, 1998; Sunindyo, 1995, van Wichelen, 2009), there are very few studies of representations of gender in Indonesian parenting practices. In this article the authors analyze how ideas of gender are represented, reinforced, and challenged in the popular Indonesian parenting magazine, *Ayabbunda*.

GENDER AND PARENTING IDEOLOGY IN INDONESIA

Gender ideologies have changed significantly in Indonesia since the fall of the New Order in 1998. During the New Order period (1966–1998), gender ideologies were homogenized and given official sanction through the Indonesian Law No. 1/1974 on Marriage (Robinson, 2000). According to this law, women and men have different but equal rights and responsibilities (Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia, 1974). The Law prescribes the husband’s responsibilities as the head of the family, the breadwinner, and the protector of the family, while the responsibility of the wife is to be a housewife and household manager (Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia, 1974). The New Order’s Family Welfare Movement also set out five key duties for women including the duty to “provide offspring” and “care for and rear children” (Sunindyo, 1995, p. 135). In addition, the New Order government disseminated its gender ideology by intervening in women’s organizations (Aripurnami,

2000; Bianpoen, 2000; Blackburn, 2004; Oey–Gardiner, 2002), with the hidden curriculum of formal education (Logsdon, 1985; Parker, 1997) and by controlling the media (Brenner, 1999).

Brenner argues that the New Order regime's policies and practices "set the tone for what could or could not and should or should not be said—and even what should be said" (1999, p. 14). Even though there were no written regulations on how to portray women in the media, the state-controlled media highlighted the ideal concept of womanhood as a woman who is a good mother and wife and who knows her *kodrat* (Blackburn, 2004; Brenner, 1999). The word *kodrat*, derived from an Arabic word, translates as inherent qualities of God's creatures (Munir, 1999). In relation to gender, the word *kodrat* implies that there are innate characteristics for men and women that are fixed and cannot be changed. Over time, the idea of *kodrat* has become a set of norms of how women and men should behave, and those who act against their *kodrat* have been subject to social sanctions.

Brenner's (1999) study of *Femina* and other popular women's magazines found that the media was used to enhance the conservative New Order gender ideology and, at the same time, to promote the idea of the modern Indonesian women. It provided choices for Indonesian women to conform to the idea of the modern woman, but it still emphasized the negative impact of denying women's *kodrat* on the family's stability, which in turn would affect the stability of the country (Brenner, 1999). Brenner (1999) suggests that the New Order regime focused on women's behavior and morality in an attempt to control the national future based on the assumption that future stability can be maintained by controlling women and hence the family. In addition to strict control of the press, the New Order's state-owned broadcasting stations such as TVRI (Television of Republic of Indonesia) replicated the regime's ideals of women as wives and mothers and men as breadwinners and the decision-makers for the family in its soap operas (*sinetron*) in the 1980s and 1990s (Aripurnami, 1996; Sunindyo, 1995). The same gender ideology was also evident in Indonesian films in the same time period (Aripurnami, 2000). In her study of the 1990s, Sen (1998), however, observed an expansion in maternal identities represented in Indonesian advertisements.

There is surprisingly little literature on parenting practices during the New Order period. Brenner (1999) provides some analysis of representations of motherhood in women's magazines especially of the working mother, but her analysis is framed in terms of national agendas rather than wider discourses on parenthood. On the basis of widespread economic, political, and social change one can anticipate that middle-class parenting roles changed from earlier patterns due in part to the pressure of increased state attention on the family and women's roles within them and to the implementation of the "two children is enough" family planning policy. The impact of having fewer children in the family may well have been increased attention provided to individual children and their development. Combined with patterns

of increased material wealth resulting from Indonesia's strengthened economy in the 1980s and 1990s, middle-class families engaged in increased consumerism, including the consumption of parenting texts and magazines. Women were encouraged to participate in the project of development and to thus work outside the home, but at the same time the regime designated the role of parenting primarily to mothers. Fathers, by contrast, were upheld in state ideology as breadwinners and thus under less pressure to perform as parents.

In the post-New Order era, gender ideologies in Indonesia have become more fluid and diverse, influenced by factors such as Islamic modernist movements (including those with conservative ideas on gender), gender mainstreaming initiatives, and women's NGO activism. Post-New Order governments lifted restrictions on the press and started to promote "gender mainstreaming" in all fields. Parawansa (2002) points out that the number of non-governmental organizations concerned with gender issues has rapidly increased since the fall of the New Order era in 1998. Women's involvement in politics has improved with an increasing number of female representatives in the parliament and an increasing number of female ministers with portfolios other than those related to women's roles.

In the early post-New Order era, contemporary fiction written by women writers, such as Ayu Utami and Dorothea Rosa Herliany, started to challenge the "conventional" gender ideology of the New Order (Clark, 2004). On the one hand these women writers portray women as demanding more than being seen as complementary to male counterparts; they demand equality, power, and even dominance (Clark, 2004). On the other hand, Clark's (2004) study of masculinity and men's portrayal in Indonesian advertisements in the post-New Order era shows that men are still represented as breadwinners, though women are increasingly represented as equal to men.

These changes in gender ideologies have also influenced gender norms in parenting practices. In this article the authors examine the underlying gender ideology of one Indonesian parenting magazine, *Ayabbunda*, and questions the extent to which the magazine might challenge or reproduce existing gender constructions. The authors also assess whether the set of norms provided by the magazine is consistent to the actual life of Indonesian middle-class families.

AYAHBUNDA: A POPULAR INDONESIAN PARENTING MAGAZINE

First published in 1977, *Ayabbunda* is the pioneer parenting magazine in Indonesia. *Ayabbunda* is published fortnightly and is available in printed form and online (www.ayahbunda-online.com). The target market for this magazine, illustrated on its cover, is young married couples with children. The name of the magazine is taken from the Indonesian words for father

and mother (*ayah* = father; *bunda* = mother). The words *ayah* and *bunda* reflect parental connectedness (biologically) to a child in both an affectionate sense and in roles much broader than *bapak* and *ibu*, which are used to address all adult men and women regardless of their biological relation. In referring to both parents, the title of the magazine courts both mothers and fathers as readers and implies gender neutrality.

Ayabbunda aims to provide useful child development information for parents of children aged 0–5 years. Articles in *Ayabbunda* are written by board members based on research conducted in the West (primarily in the United States) by child development experts. Frequently quoted U.S. experts include Michael E. Lamb, the author of several books on child development,¹ S. Adam Sullivan, the author of *The Father's Almanac*, and Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, an emeritus clinical professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School. Aside from adopting parenting advice from the West, *Ayabbunda* also includes several sections with advice from Indonesian pediatricians, psychologists, and gynecologists.

Based on close readings of approximately 32 editions of *Ayabbunda* published between the years 2000–2008 the authors apply discourse analysis to both texts and some illustrations to analyze the construction of social practices in the magazine. The study examines (1) how women and men are represented in child care and parent-directed teaching practices; (2) how mothers are represented, particularly in suggested activities for mothers with their sons or/and daughters; (3) how fathers are represented, particularly in their interactions with their sons or daughters or both. Interviews with five middle-class parents and three lower-class parents were also conducted in February and September 2008 to examine the consistency between the results of the study and the reality facing parents in Indonesia.

MODERN PARENTS: THE SUPER-DAD/SUPER-MUM DISCOURSE

Like all popular magazines in Indonesia that prescribe what it means to be “up to date” to their readers, *Ayabbunda* attempts to prescribe modern identities for parents in many of its articles. Some examples of articles that attempt to shape the contemporary identity of parents are “The Pride of A Child: My Dad, the Strong Person,” “Cool Dads, Super Dads,” and “Working Mothers Happy and Satisfied”.

The identity of contemporary fathers prescribed in *Ayabbunda* conforms with Lupton and Barclay's (1997) definition of the “modern fathers” in the late 20th century Western context, where fathers are encouraged to balance their role at work and their role as parent. An article in *Ayabbunda* July 31–August 13, 2004 edition, “Cool Dad, Super Dad”, prescribes the norm of a “cool contemporary dad”. The author, Maerzyda, positions herself by representing children's need to have fathers around for them, to play with them, to entertain

them, to protect them, and to provide them with comfort and warmth. In other articles, such as “Even Father Can Take Care of a Baby” (Pattinama, 2000, p. 32), suggestions are provided for care-giving activities, in which fathers can participate, such as changing nappies, feeding, cuddling, and putting the baby to sleep. The number of articles on fathers’ involvement in care-giving routines, 29 articles in 32 editions, reflects an attempt to challenge “conservative” paternal identities. Similar to the idea of super-mums, Indonesian “contemporary” fathers are also depicted as super-dads who can do anything and balance their work and family life with joy and happiness. The authors interviews with fathers, however, revealed that when men are the main breadwinners they describe their work as very time consuming, such that they do not have time for care-giving activities on weekdays.

Increased women’s involvement in the public sphere seems to encourage a shift toward these idealized male parental roles. A study by Smyth (1999) shows that in West Java, Indonesia, between October 1994 and April 1996, the increased involvement of wives in factory work increased their husbands’ involvement in domestic work, except in cooking and washing. Even though support for child care more often came from grandmothers, other female relatives, or neighbors, husbands were also willing to help in child care activities while their wives were at work by adjusting their own work schedules (Smyth, 1999). This pattern is replicated in the interviews of the current study with middle-class mothers. The interviews revealed that where wives were involved in the public sector, their husbands were more likely to fit the model of the contemporary, idealized, male parental identity.

The super dad image appeared constantly within the eight-year period of 2000–2008 in *Ayabbunda*. On the other hand, in the same period, the representations of modern mothers’ identities have shifted. This shift is obvious in the working mothers’ section of *Ayabbunda*. Between 2000 and 2002 there was no specific section of *Ayabbunda* devoted to “working mothers”. A specific section for “working mothers” started in the mid-2003 edition. However, the section did not appear regularly. From six samples of 2003 editions of *Ayabbunda*, the “working mothers” section occurred only three times. The inclusion of a “working mothers” section implies that *Ayabbunda* started to recognize that working full time was the experience of many mothers. The first article in the “working mother” section, “Why Mothers Work?” (Rachmani, 2003), is tentative about working mothers. As the author puts it:

Whatever the reason is, mothers who work (full time) will not be able to avoid feeling guilty for leaving their children at home with other people. ... Generally, working women learn to make work their lifestyle. However, they do not want to sacrifice their lives for work, because their children with all their needs are their priority. If this is indeed the case, the truth is that there are work options that can be done together with child-rearing such as part-time jobs, freelance, working from home, or working after hours. (Rachmani, 2003, p. 36)

This article generalizes that mothers will feel guilty leaving their children at home. It seems to exclude the possibility that working full time is enjoyable for mothers. Furthermore, this article implies that child-rearing and full-time work in the public sector is something that cannot be combined harmoniously. This article suggests that mothers should prioritize their “primary duty” by choosing not to work full time, but instead doing work that does not consume much time. In this way, the author seems to provide solutions to the situation, but this approach may also result in those who cannot fulfill these expectations feeling inadequate and guilty (Maushart, 1997).

In the June–July 2003 edition of *Ayahbunda*, an article in the “working mother” section started discussions on how to balance work and family. The article entitled “Who will look after your children?” (Lubis, 2003) provides tips on how to choose the right nanny for children. Here a rare mention occurs in a middle-class magazine of domestic helpers, who perform much of the household labor in middle-class families and to some extent enable middle-class women to work and/or spend more time with their children. While it seems that *Ayahbunda* started to recognize the necessity of work–family life balance for mothers, in the same edition, the magazine published a counter article that claimed that if mothers worked full time, their children would be less intelligent. The occurrence of contradictory articles may reflect a transition from conventional maternal identities to contemporary maternal identities.

More generally, however, articles in the “working mothers” sections started to focus more on how mothers can balance responsibilities at home and at work. Some examples are “Going on Assignment out of Town” (Rachmani, 2004b), “Working Mother: What to Do if Your Husband is Sick” (Lukman, 2004), “Happy with Double Roles” (Thambas, 2006), “Successful Breastfeeding” (Rachmani, 2006), and “How to overcome the guilty feeling [of leaving your children for work]” (Rachmani, 2007). These articles do not encourage women to stay at home and leave their jobs. For example, the article “Happy with Double Roles” encourages mothers to be happy with their double roles, and for them to see their roles not as burdens, but as choices (Thambas, 2006). On the other hand, these articles also reflect the same anxieties that were observed in Brenner’s (1999) study: that women’s work outside home should not interfere with their domestic duties. For example, the article “Going on Assignment out of Town” gives tips on how a woman can fulfill her domestic responsibilities before going on a field trip away from home. The responsibilities of “conventional” mothers are not discarded, but working mothers’ responsibilities are expanded from domestic to both domestic and public roles, which is a trend observed globally among contemporary middle-class women (Stivens, 1998). There has thus been a transition from conventional maternal identities to contemporary ones that encompass women’s double roles. This transition may be connected to the post-Suharto women’s movement and a more general process of re-evaluating gender ideology.

THE FATHER AS COMPLEMENTARY CARER/MOTHERS AS THE NATURAL PRIMARY CARER

Mothers have long been assumed to be experts at care-giving, due to their presumed innate nurturance qualities. This has led to the exclusion of fathers in care-giving activities simply because they are not seen as naturally capable of care-giving. Therefore, there is a common perception that fathers have to be taught and trained to be caregivers (Sunderland, 2002). Some articles in *Ayabbunda* reject this discourse by suggesting that fathers can also be good parents, educators, and trainers by using their own skills which are different from those of the mothers. In turn, fathers' ways of parenting are represented as complementary to those of mothers. The following articles reflect this idea: "Learn from Father" (Maerzyda, 2008), "New Father, Be Confident!" (Rachmani, 2002) and "The Pride of A Child: My Strong Dad" (Bergita, 2003). These articles highlight a male's unique role in child-rearing activities. The logic therefore is that men only need to be encouraged, not to be trained. The third article, for example, reads:

Before, you might have thought that mothers were the true educators, because they have prolactin, whereas fathers, who have testosterone, would not be able to educate children with love and care as mothers do. Fathers are always misjudged for being incapable of maintaining family life and child-rearing or making children comfortable. This is an incorrect assessment. (Bergita, 2003, p. 94)

The above quote attempts to counter the argument that nurturing qualities are biological. The author explains that child-rearing is not merely about breastfeeding, and prolactin does not have anything to do with love and care. Therefore, fathers too can provide love and care for their children as much as mothers do. On the other hand, in this article the author demonstrates that fathers are not aware of their child-rearing abilities. Therefore, they need to be reminded that they are able to perform such roles.

These messages are missing in articles addressing mothers, implying that mothers are automatically aware of their child-rearing capacities (Lupton & Barclay, 1997). It is simply their nature! They do not need to be reminded because they will automatically prioritize their children before other matters (Lupton & Barclay, 1997). This is described in the article "Why Mothers Work?" (Rachmani, 2003, p. 36).

The ideology of child-rearing as a mother's natural and primary duty is also evident in an article entitled "Oh... Mothers! Don't be Depressed" (Lestariningsih, 2005). This article explicitly says that nurturance is part of a mother's nature. It states that, "Depression will disturb the natural functions and natural roles of mothers, which are rearing and nurturing their children" (Lestariningsih, 2005, p. 32). Both articles, "Why Mothers Work?"

and “Oh . . . Mothers! Don’t be Depressed”, define “good” mothers according to their availability in terms of time and capacity to comfort their children. This is in line with what Wearing calls “the ideology of a good mother, puts her children first” (1984, p. 49).

In this sense, the encouragement provided for a father’s involvement in child-rearing activities does not mean that fathers share the primary responsibilities of child-rearing. Rather, mothers have non-negotiable natural responsibilities for child-rearing, but they can delegate these responsibilities to others. This is supported by the occurrence of articles that prescribe, for example, how to look for a good nanny (see Lubis, 2003), how to make a to-do list for other adults who take care of her family while she is away (see Rachmani, 2004b). On the other hand, a father’s involvement in child-rearing is complementary to mothers’ responsibilities, and is said to complete the child’s development.

POSITIVE CONSTRUCTIONS OF FATHERS ALONGSIDE MOTHERS

A noticeable trend in *Ayabbunda* is the encouragement of greater participation of fathers by suggesting this will result in better emotional and performance outcomes for the child. This can be seen in the construction of fathers as better cognitive enhancers for children, ideal entertainers and playmates, and as models for self-confidence. Each of these constructions, however, has a counter effect of constructing mothers as inadequate in the same capacities.

Childhood education has been the territory of mothers in the “conservative” Indonesian parenting discourse. *Ayabbunda* however suggests that fathers are better cognitive enhancers for their children. These sentences imply the idea:

... It is proven that early father–daughter/son interactions through play improves children’s cognitive ability. (Lubis, 2004b, p. 34)

Fathers, who participate in playing with their children, have children with better cognitive and language ability. (Nugraha, 2003, p. 80)

Each of these selected sentences clearly indicates the significance of a father’s involvement in child-rearing in enhancing the child’s cognitive ability. However, this implies that women, or mothers in this context, have inferior cognitive-enhancing abilities to men.

The idea of male cognitive superiority to women is also applied to children. The quote below implies that little girls have less cognitive ability than boys by suggesting that activities with fathers will improve the girls’ cognitive ability, whereas for boys it will improve their strategies of using their cognitive ability: “For the little girl, father’s assistance has a positive influence on her intellectual development. For the little guy, father inspires him with strategies of problem solving, thinking, and choosing words to

speak” (Lubis, 2004a, p. 76). Contrary to these claims our interviews revealed that mothers often choose their children’s schools and assist with homework. In this sense, these articles seem to persuade men to participate in child care, especially in cognitive enhancement activities, by encouraging a belief in their sense of superiority to women as educators.

Even though the idea of fathers as carers is promoted by *Ayabbunda*, the discourse of the father as entertainer (Sunderland, 2002, p. 308) occurs more intensively in *Ayabbunda*’s articles. This is reflected in these quotes:

Different to mums, dads like to improvise when they read story books. That is his specialty! It will be more exciting if the story is a mystery, is surprising and funny. (Maerzyda, 2004, p. 70)

... usually children tend to be able to express themselves more freely in front of their fathers, because often fathers do not forbid and say no. (Pattinama, 2001, p. 42)

These quotes suggest that fathers are exciting companions for their children, who can entertain them and offer lots of surprises for them. This idea implies that children’s time with mother is not as cheerful as it is with fathers. Both sentences also reflect the mothers’ roles as the guardian of behavior and norms, thus the mother becomes the anxious parent who applies strict rules.

Ayabbunda strategically suggests child-rearing activities that are as fun and exciting for fathers as they are for children, and that will benefit both father and his children. Sunderland (2002) in her study of paternal identities in Western parenting texts, sees this strategy as a reflection of the perceptions of fathers. Fathers are thought to consider child-rearing as boring and unrewarding (Sunderland, 2002). This perception is evident in these sentences from *Ayabbunda*:

...Playing with your children is not easy for some fathers, but try enjoying it...

If your daughter asks you to play Barbie dolls with her, don’t be upset. Go along with her wish and watch the surprise that you will get from the play. Some fathers say that they get a lot of things from this play... (Lubis, 2004b, p. 34)

Ayabbunda’s efforts to intensively promote the involvement of fathers in child-rearing are an improvement when contrasted to previous government discourse. Yet, gender stereotypes that lead to gendered activities and gendered functions, as described in the articles entitled “Playing with Dads” and “The Pride of A Child: My Strong Dad”, continue to exist in *Ayabbunda*.

Children who play a lot with their fathers are usually more sociable, brave, and assertive... (Lubis, 2004b, p. 34)

... father-child closeness which tends to focus more on physical and wild activities, than when it is with mothers, helps boys and girls to be more confident... (Bergita, 2003, p. 94)

These two quotes reflect the idea that a father is the builder of a child's self-confidence and bravery. In the above quotes, mothers tend to be excluded or less valued in the process of building children's self-confidence. The word "wild" is used to describe the father's preference for activities which create positive impacts on the children's self-confidence, implying that mothers tend to like "tame" activities. In this sense, mothers are not trainers in bravery, but they are trainers in good manners.

Balancing work and child-rearing is a key issue covered in *Ayabbunda*. In this context *Ayabbunda* introduces the father as the complementary carer, cognitive enhancer, entertainer, and bravery trainer, as well as the breadwinner. However, this is not the case for mothers. Even though *Ayabbunda* recognizes a mother's involvement in the public sphere, the identities they project related to child-rearing are still in line with the conventional ideas of mothers as natural carers, primary educators, and guardians of morals and tradition. The conventionally prescribed primary roles of mother and father continue, with some role extensions across spheres.

Furthermore, extended roles are not free from conventional gender stereotyping. The idea of "different, but complementary" roles is depicted in each of the new identities. This reflects the fact that contemporary parents as represented in *Ayabbunda* draw upon "conventional" parental identities.

Next, the tasks and obligations of these ideal contemporary parents with regard to the socialization of gender roles to their children will be analyzed. The focus is on mother-daughter and father-son representations and the gendered portrayals of boys and girls in order to understand the process of gender socialization by parents in early childhood.

BRAVE, BUT FEMININE LITTLE GIRL

The importance of a parent as an agent of gender role socialization appears quite often in *Ayabbunda*. Two articles in two different editions of *Ayabbunda* were found specifically addressing mothers and fathers on how to be the right gender role model for their children. An article from *Ayabbunda* March 23-April 5, 2006 edition entitled "I'm Like My Mother" (Lukman, 2006) provides tips on mother-daughter activities that can enhance the process of delivering gender messages to young girls. The other one is an article entitled "What Does a Boy Need from His Father?" (Rachmani, 2004a) that appeared in the March 13-26, 2004 edition. This article talks about how important a father is for his son as a behavior model.

Both articles have the same basic messages. They both discuss parents as gender role models for their children. However, these two articles reflect

different levels of responsibility for mothers and fathers in transferring gender roles to their children. The language used to deliver the message in the first article, "I'm Like My Mother", is more directive than in the second article, "What Does a Boy Need From His Father?". The opening of the article specifically says "You, her beloved mother, play an important role in shaping your daughter's behavior..." (Lukman, 2006, p. 63). This opening sentence implies that it is a mother's obligation to transfer socially desired gender roles to her daughters. This tone is also evident in the way the author instructs mothers to initiate mother-daughter activities. The author uses an authoritative word, *lakukanlah* (do) (Lukman, 2006, p. 65), which is more a command than a suggestion, to suggest that mothers organize mother-daughter activities.

This is not the case in the second article. The opening sentence of the second article is "boys who are taken care of by their father and who get physical affection from their fathers, can positively accept themselves and feel secure about their masculinity" (Rachmani, 2004a, p. 56). Even though the basic messages are the same, the tone is more persuasive. It does not authoritatively say that fathers play an important role in shaping their sons' behavior; rather it informs them of the positive outcomes of having father and son interaction not only for the boys, but also for the fathers. In this sense, it is not obligatory for fathers to interact with their sons; it is merely suggested that to do so is beneficial.

Furthermore, the prescriptions of gender roles are more obvious in the first article than in the second. The first article prescribes activities that can enhance feminine qualities of girls, while the second article does not prescribe a list of activities to enhance masculine qualities, but to control and accept them. Activities recommended in the first article, in terms of gender role transfer, are girl talk, putting on make-up, household activities such as cooking and tea time, and other activities such as dancing, drawing, and making handicraft. This article anticipates the possibility of girls having an interest in what are labeled as boys' activities by saying that she can do boys' activities, but this does not mean that she should behave and act like a boy. The second article does not suggest specific father-son activities; it only emphasizes physical activities as part of boys' needs. It also does not discuss boys doing girls' activities.

The first article suggests that gender roles are learned. However, they are not voluntarily learned by the children but are intentionally formulated and shaped according to social expectations that are set by the significant adult of the same sex, which in this article is the mother. "You, her mother, play an important role in shaping your daughter's behavior" (Lukman, 2006, p. 63) reflects the mother's obligatory task to teach socially "right" or "correct" behavior to her daughter, specifically based on her sex. This article strongly urges the mother to initiate gender stereotyped activities, in particular household-related activities, with her daughter and to ensure that her daughter understands and willingly accepts her roles and tasks as a woman. The activities recommended are limited to the domestic domain.

On the contrary, the second article implies that masculinity is an innate quality in boys that can be threatening if not controlled. In the Australian context, Alloway (1995) argues that within the essentialist framework, physical activities and aggressive responses are natural for boys. Therefore boys need to be taught to control their innate potential of being aggressive in order to conform with society. Therefore, boys need to be trained to accept their masculinity, and at the same time, to control it. The author of the second article argues that “boys, who are taken care of by their father and get physical affection from their fathers, can positively accept themselves and feel secure about their masculinity” and “without any control from their fathers, boys would not be able to control themselves” (Rachmani, 2004a, p. 56). By saying this, masculinity is represented as something threatening. Feminine qualities of women, by contrast, need enhancement. Femininity seems to be placed in a higher position than masculinity in terms of morality. The emphasis on ensuring feminine qualities in young girls may be connected to ideologies in Indonesia which promote women as the guardians of morality, traditions, harmony, national identity, and stability (Brenner, 1999; Locher-Scholten, 2003; Shiraishi, 1992).

Masculinity is represented as something threatening which boys should be able to accept and be happy with. This is in line with Alloway’s (1995) argument, that it is part of cultural anxiety that masculinity has to be maintained in boys because feminine qualities in boys are often associated with homosexuality. Therefore, the absence of discussion about boys doing feminine activities in this article may reflect the cultural anxiety about the feminization of boys. Such anxiety is evident in a mother’s questions in the “ask the expert” section of *Ayabbunda*:

... I want my son, five years old, to learn dancing. But I am worried that he will become *gemulai* (literally means supple, this word is usually used to refer to girlish behavior). Is it ok for boys to dance? What is best to do? (asked by Dwiani, 2006, p. 38)

The answer provided to this question is for the mother to balance the dancing class with other activities such as martial arts classes. This question reflects the importance of gendering of children in Indonesian society or at least for *Ayabbunda*’s readership—the Indonesian middle class.

The authors of both articles project stereotypical beliefs about psychological traits and behaviors of boys and girls. In the first article, by describing the ideal daughter as “brave and agile, but still feminine” (Lukman, 2006, p. 63) the author excludes bravery and agility from the construction of femininity. Furthermore, by using the term “introducing the role of a mother to their little girls” (Lukman, 2006, p. 63) the author specifies feminine qualities as equal to mothering qualities. In this sense the author is still adopting the conservative distinction between masculinity and femininity. Masculinity is still strongly

associated with roughness, aggressiveness, and physical strength, while feminine qualities are related to qualities of being soft, sensitive, beautiful, and nurturing (Locher–Scholten, 2003). These feminine qualities are in line with the feminine values of the Japanese middle class, which were adopted into the national concept of Indonesian femininity in the New Order.

Ideas of motherhood are central to concepts of femininity in Indonesia. This is highlighted by the concept of *kodrat perempuan*, which prioritizes motherhood over other women’s roles. The first article, “I’m Like My Mother”, clearly applies the idea of *kodrat perempuan*. In addition, it also projects Western ideas about how *kodrat perempuan* should be practiced. Activities suggested by the article are very much adopted from Western life style. For example, “tea time” (see Figure 1) is illustrated with a mother and daughter sitting together having tea, with the daughter pouring tea into her mother’s cup. In most parts of Indonesia, tea is consumed as a regular drink, but there is no particular ritual as described in the picture. Another example is Figure 2 which illustrates a mother applying make-up on her daughter’s face with a powder brush. Furthermore, the use of English to name the activities, “tea time”, “girl talk”, “girl stuff” is a clue of the adoption of Western ideas. Taking into account the readership of the magazine as middle-class families, the authors suggest that this article reflects the prescription of how to be a middle-class family. The author has equated middle-classness with Western lifestyles, particularly those relating to leisure and consumer-oriented activities. The identification of a Western lifestyle as a signifier of Indonesian middle-classness is also demonstrated in Brenner’s (1999) study of the representation of women and the family in popular magazines in the New Order era and



FIGURE 1 The illustration of “I’m Like My Mother”, Playing “Tea Time” (*Ayabbunda*, 23 March–5 April 2006, p. 66). (Color figure available online.)



FIGURE 2 The Illustration of Putting on Make-Up in “I’m Like My Mother” (*Ayabhunda*, 23 March–5 April 2006, p. 64). (Color figure available online.)

Jones’s (2003) study of fashion and middle-classness in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in the late New Order era. The author of the first *Ayabhunda* article above, “I’m Like My Mother”, interestingly ignores Islamic notions of modernity which Brenner (1999) in Indonesia and Stivens (1998) in Malaysia have identified as a counter to modernity. The whole magazine is remarkably secular in its discussion.

The authors interpret the first article, “I’m Like My Mother”, as a form of instruction for mothers to prepare their daughters to be “modern Indonesian women” (Brenner, 1999), who are brave, smart, and independent but also put their *kodrat* above all. The author makes this point by saying:

It is ok to do boys’ activities . . . but she should not act and behave like them [boys] . . . As long as you give her appropriate support and explanation about her role and obligations, your little girl will grow into a brave and agile woman capable of solving problems and yet still being feminine. (Lukman, 2006, p. 63)

Even though the author permits mothers to widen the experiences of their daughters by exploring masculine activities such as football, climbing, and fixing the bike, the daughter has to realize that these kinds of activities are not naturally hers, and it is inappropriate for her to model the behaviors and attitudes of boys. Daughters are thus introduced to and familiarized with the notion of *kodrat* as being important for women. Why is it that only daughters need to be guided to become “modern Indonesian women”? Guidance for boys to become “modern Indonesian men” seems to be absent. This may be a product of the assumption noted by Brenner (1999) that the “modern” world is not problematic for men, while it is for women.

CONCLUSION

Ayabbunda promotes an expansion of gender roles across spheres, such as the reformulation of paternal identity from just breadwinner to complementary carer, cognitive enhancer, children's entertainer, and bravery trainer and, of course, the acknowledgement of women's work outside the home. Both mothers and fathers are now expected to be able to balance their child-rearing activities with their public activities. This is what we call super-mum/super-dad discourse. The idea of super-mum is not new to Indonesia (see Brenner, 1999), but super-dad is a fairly new concept. In the Western world, however, the idea of super-dad has dominated parenting literature since the 1980s (Richardson, 1993).

The core parenting responsibilities are however still the same as in the conventionally prescribed primary roles of fathers and mothers. Obligations and responsibilities in the household are still divided between men as breadwinners and women as the household managers, including in child-development (child-rearing, education, and training). In addition, the idea of different, but complementary roles, as indicated in the 1974 Marriage Law, seems to be pertinent in parental identities represented in *Ayabbunda*.

After the fall of the New Order regime, gender identities in Indonesia have become increasingly diverse, influenced by factors such as Islamic modernist (sometimes radical) movements, gender-mainstreaming in development, and women's NGOs activism. *Ayabbunda*, however, depicts idealized gender constructions limited to middle class families and projects only Western versions of modernity, excluding other particularly Islamic versions of middle-classness, gender, and modernity observed in other studies in Indonesia (see Brenner, 1999; Jones, 2003; Fealy & White 2008; van Wichelen 2009). *Ayabbunda* seems to promote more secular ideas. This indicates that in an era where there is great pressure for Islamicisation in Indonesia, Western and secular modern identities are still popular. This can be seen as a form of resistance to Islamicisation in Indonesia. The persistence of competing secular ideas of modern identity in a climate of increased Islamicisation requires further analysis.

The reason behind the prescription of the same gender boundaries in *Ayabbunda*, in the post-New Order era in which gender equality is being strongly emphasized by the state and some non-government organizations (Parawansa, 2002), cannot be fully explained without further investigation of the magazine's sponsors, producers, chief editor, and writers, which is beyond the scope of this research. As a commercial magazine aimed at readers with significant disposable incomes the discourses of motherhood and fatherhood and related consumption must also match the agendas of advertisers such that they pitch their products at the right consumers (Sunderland, 2006). *Ayabbunda* is, for example, replete with baby and

toddler milk formula advertisements usually featuring mothers watching their children drink these products. Advertisers also play a role in projecting notions of motherhood and fatherhood. The idealized behaviors, attitudes, and appearances in this magazine match those of its readers, the middle-class families.

Middle class parents of today are encouraged to socialize gender roles in their children. Mothers should teach their daughters how to become women according to social expectations, and fathers should teach their sons how to behave like men. Parent-child activities recommended by *Ayabbunda* are overtly gendered. The recommended gender roles in *Ayabbunda* to be taught to children resemble “conventional” gender constructions. Women are recommended to show their little girls the roles of mothers and household managers with the possibility of experiencing boys’ activities, without emulating boys’ behaviors and attitudes. This reflects the conservation of motherhood as Indonesian women’s core identity. Meanwhile, the roles of men concerning father-son interactions are not given in detail. The emphasis, however, is on controlling and understanding masculine qualities.

In this sense, *Ayabbunda* does not suggest a radical change in Indonesian gender identities. We assume this is due to the deep-rooted idea of *kodrat* that implies each sex has innate qualities that are different, but complementary. The *kodrat* of women is motherhood, and the *kodrat* of men is to be protectors. The 1928 Women’s Congress declared that the identity of Indonesian women centered around their responsibilities as mothers, educators of their children, and educators for their nations (Blackburn, 2004). As Blackburn (2004) has argued, even though the identities of Indonesian women have expanded over time, the core identity of Indonesian women still centers around their identity as mothers.

Similar to the New Order’s state gender ideology, the recommended gender identities in *Ayabbunda*, including both parental identities and children’s identities fail to represent the reality of Indonesian families. Even though women’s participation in the public sphere has increased greatly and is welcomed by women themselves, the emphasis is still on motherhood, including household chores, as women’s primary responsibility. This is unrealistic, because many Indonesian families rely on women (wives or daughters) to work for the family’s livelihood. In addition, in middle-class families domestic chores are performed by at least one domestic helper. In the end *Ayabbunda* represents only idealized gender constructions.

NOTE

1. Some of his books are *Developmental Psychology* (1999) and *The Role of Father in Child Development* (1996).

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