

## Setting as an Indicator of the Main Character's Social Status in the Film Home Sweet Loan Directed by Sabrina Rochelle Kalangie

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the function of setting in signifying the social status of the main character, Kaluna, in the family drama film Home Sweet Loan (2024). The film portrays the struggles of the sandwich generation in a modern urban environment. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive method, the analysis focuses on 10 selected scenes that reflect Kaluna's social status through three elements of setting: place, time, and social context. Indicators of social status (occupation, clothing, personal belongings, and speech style) serve as the foundation for the analysis. The research concludes that setting plays a crucial role, both narratively and visually, in communicating the character's social status. The visible contrast between the simple family home, the formal office, and the modern friend's apartment illustrates class differentiation. Despite having substantial savings, Kaluna is positioned within the lower-middle class due to asset limitations and family pressure. Her social status is categorized as achieved status, attained through hard work and strict financial management, thereby superseding her family's traditional hierarchy.

**Keywords:** *Setting, Status Sosial, Home Sweet Loan, Achieved Status, Sandwich Generation.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Film is recognized as an essential medium of mass communication, functioning to transmit a diverse range of messages to its audience. As an audiovisual entity, film effectively integrates the elements of moving image and sound to present significant entertainment, information, and education to viewers. The level of effectiveness of film in message delivery is considered superior due to its ability to combine the audio, visual, and emotional dimensions, which facilitates optimal understanding and reception by the audience. Conceptually, Effendy (1986) emphasizes that the communication potential of film is comprehensive, enabling messages to simultaneously reach the emotional and intellectual dimensions of the audience.

The structure forming a film consists of two main elements: narrative elements and cinematic elements. Within the cinematic elements, there is *mise-en-scène*, which plays a fundamental role in constructing the story's meaning in the film. *Mise-en-scène*

encompasses aspects of film related to the art of theater, namely setting (location) and props, lighting, costume (and make-up), and the behavior of the figures (actors). Bordwell explains, "Mise-en-scène includes aspects of film that overlap with the art theater: setting, lighting, costume and the behavior of the figures. In controlling the mise-en-scène the film maker stages the event for the camera" (Bordwell, 2019). These elements are interconnected, forming a unity that provides appeal and purpose to the sequence of events in the film. Overall, mise-en-scène plays a crucial role in creating an atmosphere that supports the visual narrative, strengthening character expression, and helping the audience understand the context and meaning intended to be conveyed through each scene.

The element of setting in film production holds a crucial function as the primary support for the narrative. Through the representation of the location, time, and atmosphere, a story can be visualized more realistically, which significantly supports the development of the plot and strengthens characterization. Setting, or the story's background, is formally defined as the depiction of the time, place, and atmosphere in which a story takes place (Wiyanto, 2002). Therefore, setting is understood not merely as a passive background for events, but rather as an essential active means to reinforce meaning, build ambiance, and establish specific socio-cultural realities. Consequently, through the setting, the audience is enabled to grasp the broader context, including the cultural values and social conditions that surround the characters in the story.

Social status is an important concept that explains the position of an individual within the social structure of society. Social status is defined as a person's general place in society in relation to others, encompassing their social circle, prestige, as well as their rights and obligations. Every individual possesses a certain standing that describes their social position, and this position determines how a person interacts with and is treated by others in their environment (Soerjono Soekanto 2009). Therefore, social status influences the way the individual relates to their environment through the rights, obligations, and social recognition attached to them.

In film, the social status of characters can be visually determined through the setting used. The settings for upper-class figures (such as nobility or modern elite) will be sharply contrasted with the settings for lower-class figures. Settings for the upper class generally feature spaces that are magnificent, spacious, well-lit, luxurious, fully furnished with props, and characterized by intricate and detailed ornaments, reflecting power and prosperity. Conversely, settings for the lower class are commonly depicted as small, cramped, dark spaces, with minimal and simple props, communicating limitation and struggle. This view aligns with social stratification theory, which states that an individual with great wealth will be placed in the upper strata, and those with little wealth will be placed in the lower strata (Basrowi, 2005). Furthermore, indicators of social status in film can be extended through the social and cultural demands within the story, where the ownership of assets, particularly a home, is used as a symbol of success and life balance.

This study selects the family drama film titled *Home Sweet Loan* as its main object. Released on September 26, 2024, the film has a running time of 1 hour and 52 minutes, is directed by Sabrina Rochelle Kalangie, adapted from a novel by Almira Bastari, and

produced by Visinema Pictures. Home Sweet Loan narrates the life of Kaluna, which is highly relevant to contemporary social issues, particularly the phenomenon of the sandwich generation—a generation that has to bear the financial burden of both their parents and their children, or, in Kaluna's context, the burden of her extended family.

Home Sweet Loan presents a touching and challenging story about the dream of owning a home, which is a collective aspiration for many in the modern era. The film narrates the life journey of Kaluna, a sandwich generation individual who struggles relentlessly to realize her dream amidst intense economic pressure and the burden of social demands from her family. The reality presented in this film is highly relevant, especially for the young urban generation who must grapple with high property prices and fierce competition in the job market.

More than just entertainment, the film also subtly throws criticism and satire towards the economic situation that demands many individuals work non-stop merely to fulfill basic needs, such as owning a place to live. The story implicitly carries a message about the importance of balancing the pursuit of dreams and maintaining the quality of life to achieve well-being. In the aspect of the modern context, the social status of urban dwellers tends to be consumptive and competitive. The standard of success is measured by material possessions, with home ownership becoming the main indicator, thus creating a feeling of pressure for those who have not yet achieved it.

The setting in the film Home Sweet Loan depicts the background of young people's lives in a modern urban environment, focusing on houses, apartments, offices, and the active city atmosphere, all of which constitute important parts of the storyline. The urban environment does not merely function as a place where events occur; it also serves as a reflection of urban society's life, which is full of ambition, competition, and social demands. The setting of houses and apartments becomes a symbol of dreams and achievement, while offices and other public spaces represent the routine and economic realities that the characters must face. Through the construction of contrasting and layered settings, the film Home Sweet Loan presents the complex social reality of the city, simultaneously reflecting the struggle of young people to achieve stability in life.

The character Kaluna in the film Home Sweet Loan represents the urban middle-class youth striving to achieve life stability amidst the pressures of modernity. Despite having a job and sufficient financial capability (which indicates Achieved Status), Kaluna is still constrained by financial burdens and lifestyle demands that require sacrifice. Kaluna is portrayed as a tenacious and independent figure, yet vulnerable to the pressing socio-economic anxieties. This condition illustrates that Kaluna serves as a symbol of the social reality currently faced by urban youth, particularly in their struggle to gain social recognition through economic achievement. Based on the entire background that has been presented, the author's interest in the research title Setting as an Indicator of Social Status in the Film Home Sweet Loan is

## **METHOD**

The study employs a qualitative method with a descriptive analysis approach. This design was chosen to provide a comprehensive overview and in-depth interpretation of the function of setting as an indicator of the main character's social status in the film Home Sweet Loan. The primary data source in this study is the film Home Sweet Loan itself, which was downloaded and viewed in HD 720p quality. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from literature studies (books, theses, and scientific articles related to setting and social status) and the results of a structured interview with the film's Art Director, Haris Huda. The researcher applied the purposive sampling technique to select 10 scenes from a total of 122 scenes, which were considered to best reflect the social status of the character Kaluna. The main data collection techniques include Documentation (taking scene screenshots as research evidence), Literature Study (gathering theories and analytical frameworks), and Interviews. Data analysis was conducted systematically, following the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The theoretical foundation used for the analysis includes setting theory (Nurgiyantoro 2013) (place, time, and social setting), social status theory (Ralph Linton 1936) (ascribed and achieved status), and social status indicators (Soerjono Soekanto 2009) (occupation, attire, and personal possessions).

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

### **RESEARCH RESULT**

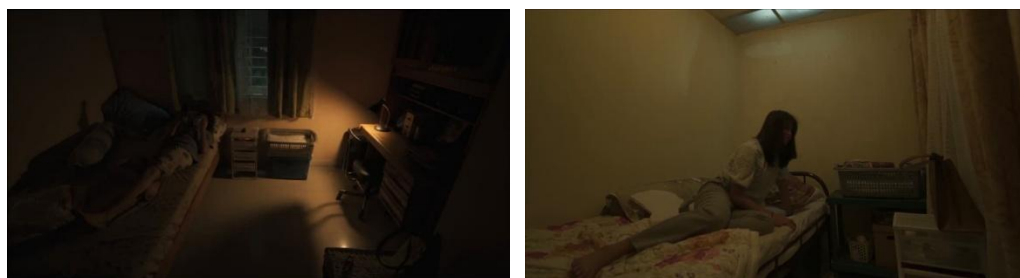
In the film Home Sweet Loan, 10 scenes were identified to serve as indicators of the social status of the character Kaluna. These scenes include Scene 9, 15, 26, 28, 40, 41, 43, 81, 86, and 101. The analysis focuses on the place setting, time setting, and social setting as indicators of social status, supported by various social status indicators in terms of occupation, attire or appearance, personal possessions, and manner of speech.

#### **1. Place Setting and Achieved Status**

Kaluna's initial bedroom (with a double bed) and the marginalized room she later occupied (the maid's room) visually depict her social position being squeezed by her family. This simple and cramped setting confirms that even though Kaluna has financial stability savings of Rp 335,575,000.00, she still lacks independent property assets, which is a marker of the urban upper class. The transition to the maid's room explicitly visualizes the family's exploitation of her privacy and comfort, which sharply contrasts with the savings she accumulated on her own.

The strongest difference in social status is apparent when Kaluna interacts within an upper-class social environment. The setting of Hansa's house, which is luxurious and formally decorated Scene 26, contrasts sharply with Kaluna's simple attire and her passive style of speech when Hansa's friends discuss vacations to Sydney and Bali. This indicates that the setting (luxurious house) and props (clothing) function as visual markers that reinforce the difference in social status between the characters. In line with this, Art Director Haris Huda stated that the modern setting of Hansa's house, supported by Kaluna's simple clothing, positions her as lower middle class within that context.

Kaluna's decision to move into Danan's apartment, and her insistence on paying the maintenance fees, demonstrates Kaluna's refusal to be a burden on others. The setting of Danan's apartment, which is minimalist, clean, and spacious (with complete facilities), becomes a recovery space for Kaluna, symbolizing her emotional and financial independence. The act of paying the fees reflects high self-esteem and the affirmation of Kaluna's Achieved Status.



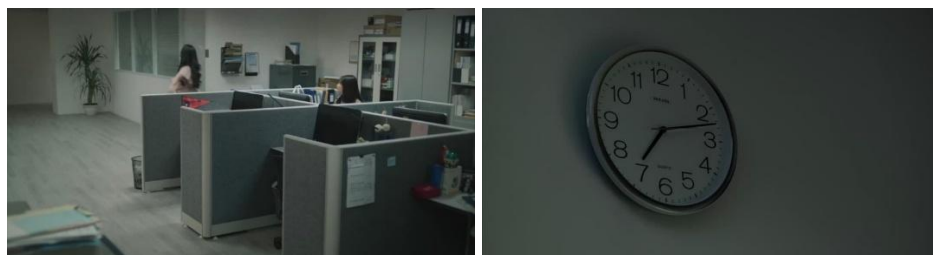
**Setting 1.** Kaluna's room and the maid's room settings

(source: Dika Amarta)

## 2. Time Setting

The analysis of the Time Setting in Scene 15, which takes place at night (19:15 WIB/7:15 PM), effectively narrates Kaluna's working condition as she is working overtime. The presence of the office setting, which Kaluna is still using at that hour, reinforces the visual depiction of her intensive struggle to pursue Achieved Status. Kaluna's focus on a budget spreadsheet displaying her significant savings indicates very strict financial management. This situation visually communicates Kaluna's independent priorities and work ethic, where she consciously defers gratification (a simple lifestyle) in order to achieve the future goal of asset ownership. Thus, the nighttime setting in the office serves to validate Kaluna's position as a persistent individual who strives hard for personal economic stability.

driven by the desire to understand the extent to which the use of setting is able to depict the social condition of the characters through the visual aspects of the film. The author is interested in exploring how setting functions not only as an aesthetic element, but also as a means to provide information about the social status of the characters, as well as the time and place, in accordance with its narrative context.



**Setting 2.** Office settings

(source: Dika Amarta)

### 3. Setting Sosial

The setting of the family's crowded and messy living room becomes the location for the climax of the family conflict. Kaluna's presence, who possesses significant savings (Rp 330 million), positions her as a capital owner and the family's economic savior. Kaluna's refusal to pay her brother's debt is an affirmation of the boundary of personal ownership resulting from her hard work (Achieved Status) against the demands of kinship (Kanendra's Ascribed Status). This proves that the highest social status in this context is held by the one who works hard, surpassing gender or age hierarchy.



**Setting 3.** Living room setup  
(Source: Dika Amarta)

### DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that the setting employed in the film *Home Sweet Loan* consistently functions as an effective indicator of social status. This is clearly demonstrated by the contrast across the various locations presented. Furthermore, through the social setting, the audience is able to comprehend the characters' behaviors and the conflicts that arise within the narrative (Nurgiyantoro, 2012). This information underscores that the setting is not merely a visual backdrop, but rather an essential narrative tool for representing Kaluna's economic condition, struggles, and social status.

The familial residence of Kaluna is depicted as a spatial environment that is congested, modest, and indicative of asset constraints, specifically the lack of outright homeownership. This condition situates Kaluna's family within the lower-middle social stratum, consistent with Basrowi's (2005) perspective that limited wealth positions an individual in the lower echelons of society.

Kaluna's relocation from the main bedroom to the maid's room in Scene 43 constitutes the most potent visual indication of her marginalized position within the family hierarchy. Despite possessing substantial financial stability evidenced by savings amounting to hundreds of millions she is compelled to occupy the lowest spatial tier. This demonstrates that even with her financially established achieved status, she remains trapped within a toxic social setting that fundamentally disregards her personal boundaries and autonomy.

The Settings representing the upper class, such as Miya's apartment in Scene 41 and Hansa's house in Scene 26, are characterized as modern, minimalist, luxurious, and fully equipped with extensive facilities. This contrast emphatically highlights the competitive social reality of the urban environment, where the ownership of assets, such as houses and apartments, functions as a definitive marker of social standing and a measure of success.

Kaluna's social status is not solely constructed by the spatial setting, but is also reinforced by other indicators, consistent with the theory of Soerjono Soekanto (2009). One such indicator is Occupation and Assets. Analysis of the screenshot of the work monitor in Scene 15 shows that Kaluna possesses savings of Rp335,575,000.00, aiming toward a target of Rp1,500,000,000.00. Economically, this figure places her relatively high. Nevertheless, she is still categorized as lower-middle class because this asset is the result of personal hard work combined with extremely tight financial management, delaying gratification, and shouldering family burdens. This is a pure representation of the struggle for achieved status, which is attained through personal effort and ability, as defined by Ralph Linton (1936).

The difference in social status is also discernible through the style of speech in Scene 26 and 28. Kaluna exhibits a manner of speaking that centers on independence and primary needs, specifically rejecting Hansa's suggestion to purchase a car or branded bags. Furthermore, in Scene 86, she insists on paying Danan's apartment maintenance fee to uphold her dignity and her status as a self-sufficient individual (Achieved Status), thus refusing to be treated as a charity case.

The role of the setting reaches its climax on the house's terrace in Scene 101, where Kaluna, through the evidence of a Rp300 million transfer, assumes the role of family head and economic savior. This action effectively subverts the norms of patriarchy and the traditional hierarchy within her family, demonstrably showcasing a shift in her social position achieved through sheer diligence and personal effort.

Collectively, this research corroborates the view that setting in film is a fundamental cinematic element, consistent with the perspectives of Bordwell (2019) and Nurgiyantoro (2013), which effectively bridges the narrative with the character's social status. The spatial, temporal, and social settings within *Home Sweet Loan* do not merely establish atmosphere, but also communicate the complexity of social pressures, struggles, and Kaluna's personal triumph as a representative of the urban sandwich generation.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that the setting in the film *Home Sweet Loan* functions effectively as an indicator of the social status of the main character, Kaluna. Kaluna represents an individual with Achieved Status acquired through persistence, hard work, and strict financial management. Although she possesses high financial capability, she is still categorized as lower-middle class due to the limitation of property assets (a house) and being under the pressure of exploitation within a simple family environment. The contrast in setting between the cramped Maid's Room, the formal Office, and the modern Apartment of Danan and Miya, supported by social status indicators such as her simple dressing style, emphasizes Kaluna's struggle to achieve independence and life stability.

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