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Growing up and Being Young: Theoretical Perspectives

This chapter provides a general discussion about how youth is positioned within social theories, which I have briefly described in the Introduction. The first section of the chapter will focus on theories that deal with the issue of growing up. The theories in this approach mostly draw upon the idea that humans progress through life, from conception to death, along particular life stages. Youth is considered a life stage beginning after childhood and ending in adulthood. The next section of the chapter will discuss the concepts of being young. The concept of being young is based on the idea that young people should be seen in their own right as youth. One of the ways to do this is by understanding the process of the construction of youth identity rather than seeing them as merely adults in the making. It focuses on the relations between individual identity and social processes within groups in the present. I then describe how I will use this debate to establish my perspective in this study. This chapter will end with an elaboration of the chosen methodology for this study.
Growing Up

This section will discuss the growing up perspective, which is mostly derived from the assumptions of the life span perspective of developmental psychology. I will first explain the main premises of the life span perspective, and then briefly explain other perspectives of growing up: emerging adulthood and youth transition.

Life Span Perspective: Human Developmental Stages

The main idea of the life span perspective as suggested by developmental psychologists is that human life is divided into stages based on age. This approach emphasises individual development throughout one’s life, linked to biological, psychological, and social maturity (Rice and Dolgin, 2002: 30-33). The life span perspective proposes that humans go through life stages that are universal, applicable to all human beings, irrespective of class and culture. In each life stage, there are certain characteristics that show continuities and changes happening within a life stage or between life stages. Continuities usually refer to personality traits, assumed as relatively stable, despite the changes that go on throughout one’s development (Sugarman, 2000: 72-74).
In the life span perspective, humans are considered to progress towards adulthood through the life stages in a linear manner. Linear developmental stages mean that a person will progress from one stage to the next in the following order: infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. This linearity of the development process is based on the notion that each stage is linked to the progression of biological maturity (age, physical and hormonal changes), which supposedly goes hand in hand with particular psychological and social developments. The life span perspective is also future oriented, focusing on young people as being in a process of ‘becoming’ rather than ‘being’ in the here-and-now. By focusing on the future, this perspective tends to dwell upon issues that inhibit a ‘proper’ progress to adulthood.

The discipline of psychology, especially developmental psychology sees youth as a life stage between childhood and adulthood (usually termed adolescence). In the adolescent life stage, youth are considered in transition to an end point, adulthood. Change in the adolescent stage is seen in how adolescents shift from a biological individual to a more social one through processes of identity exploration before entering adulthood. Adolescence is generally divided into three sub-stages that show the evolving nature of the adolescent life stage, often with overlapping age ranges: early adolescence (12-16 years old), mid adolescence (15-18 years old), and late adolescence (18-

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2 Some psychologists refer to the life span as parallel to life course perspective. However, the life course perspective suggested by Elder (a sociologist) has some assumptions that are different from those of the life span perspective. For example, it places importance on history and the multiplicity of transitions in shaping one’s life (Elder, 1998: 1-2).
22 years old). Physical changes, the onset of puberty and its psychological effects (such as taking on risky behaviour) are considered the main characteristics of early adolescence. Stanley Hall, the founding father of psychological studies on adolescence in the early 1900s, claimed that adolescence is a period of storm and stress (Hall, 1904: 79). This period, he argued, is experienced by all youth, resulting in confrontation with authority figures, mood instabilities, and risky behaviour. The period of storm and stress will disappear once a person reaches adulthood, but is most prominent during the early adolescence stages (Arnett, 1999: 318). This assumption was later brought into question by Mead. She argued that adolescence and the storm and stress during this period, was culturally determined and was not a universal phenomenon (Mead, 1939: 197-199). Mead’s attack on Hall’s assumption started the debate between universalist and ‘cultural’ psychology of human development, but the universalist stance remains dominant in the field of psychology.

In mid adolescence, most young people have completed puberty. They have started negotiating family and peer relationships, and thinking of future work trajectories (Kroger, 2007: 60). In late adolescence, physical appearance becomes less important and longer term relationships start to develop. These relationships, however,

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3 For research on early adolescence see, for example, Wigfield et al. (1991: 554), Berndt (1982: 1447), Pellegrini, Bartini and Brooks (1999: 218). For mid adolescence, see for instance Wekerle and Wolfe (1999: 439). Research on late adolescence includes that by Subkoviak et al. (1995: 643), Reinherz et al. (1993: 1156), and Okagaki and Frensch (1994: 39). Manning (2002: 75) mentions during the time Havighurst (Havighurst, 1948) constructed his theory, there was no division of adolescence. Adolescence was merely seen as a life stage between 12 and 18 years old and the tasks apply to adolescence within this age range with a relatively fixed age boundary in setting the start and end of adolescence.
involve less commitment and mutuality in comparison to relationships that are formed during adulthood. Late adolescents also have clearer ideas of their career aspirations and possibilities in comparison to those in the mid adolescence phase (Kroger, 2007: 155).

The life span approach considers that a problem of development arises if an individual progresses in age, but does not show the relevant psychological development of that particular age and stage. Freud, who is often considered to be the founding father of psychology, proposed the notion of fixation and regression. Fixation is a condition where an individual is stuck in a particular stage of development, when age-wise he/she is supposed to have moved on to the next stage. Regression occurs when an individual shows psychological symptoms that are supposed to characterise the earlier life stage (Mowrer, 1940: 58-59).⁴ Thus, young people are supposed to progress to adulthood without performing ‘risky behaviour’ that might jeopardise this process. Such views are adopted in research extending to other fields such as sociology that focuses on, for example: academic failure (Tinto, 1975), youth unemployment (Smyth, 2008; Malmberg-Heimonen and Julkunen, 2006), juvenile delinquency (Hagan and Foster, 2003; Noszlopy, 2005, Beazley, 2000), and teenage pregnancies (Jones, 1985; Widom, 1996) or unwanted pregnancies (Major, et al., 1990). The

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⁴ This strict sense of development is often referred to as a ‘strong model of development’. A strong development model implies that each stage has separate development characteristics. Current works on life span development have acknowledged the complexities of human development, suggesting an alteration of the concept of development to include multi-linear processes. This means that, for example, some cognitive skills and behaviour are acquired at a certain stage, but they may be maintained, transformed or even diminish at later stages (Baltes et al., 1980: 72-73). However, it still builds upon the notion that human life is separated by age and stage within rather fixed boundaries.
life span perspective would tend to see these ‘failures’ as reflections of the individual’s inability to develop.

This description of the life span perspective reveals that it is oriented towards the individual without taking much account of the social aspect in understanding the process of growing up. This means that there is an assumption of the universality of life stages in all humans. This denies the fact that youth and childhood are social, cultural, and political constructions that vary across culture, class, and ethnic groups, and that change over time. It also places fault on individual young people/children when they do not progress through the stages at the ‘normal’ age by seeing them as deviant or defective. Another approach in the growing up perspective is the emerging adulthood approach, which builds upon the premises of the life span approach, but adds a social dimension to an individualistic approach.

**Emerging Adulthood**

The emerging adulthood perspective originates from Arnett (2004), who argues – mainly on the basis of research in Western society – that current social change is the main driving force behind the life phase that he calls ‘emerging adulthood’. These social changes include changes in the labour market that require young people to stay in education longer. Arnett also mention changes in societal attitudes towards women and sexuality that have enabled young people to delay marriage and parenthood. Being a single woman is no longer socially sanctioned, and young people are able to be sexually active outside the confinement of marriage. The introduction of easily available birth control has also provided space for young people to delay having children (Arnett, 2004: 44-5). These factors mean that young
people are experiencing a delayed entrance to adulthood. In other words, they are experiencing an extended state of adolescence or the prolongation of youth (Tyyska, 2005) – typically until at least the mid 20s (Schwartz et al., 2005: 201), or even until the late 20s (Arnett, 2000: 267). These social changes and the extended period of adolescence as described above have resulted in the need to conceptualise a new life stage that falls between adolescence and adulthood, which is termed ‘emerging adulthood’.

The main development in emerging adulthood that distinguishes it from adolescence and adulthood, according to Arnett, is the intensity of explorations. Arnett suggests that emerging adulthood is a period of high exploration (higher than during adolescence), especially in education, work, and love (Arnett, 2004: 5-7). In comparison to explorations during adolescence, explorations in the emerging adulthood stage are more intense and oriented to the future rather than to the present. Thus, explorations in personal identity, constant change in future planning, increased decision-making opportunities, feelings of ambiguity between being young and being an adult, and having an optimistic outlook on the future (because they have yet to face the realities of life), characterise the emerging adult life stage (Arnett, 2004: 8-9). For instance, in the domain of work, young people explore different types of jobs before settling into a career. The difference between the frequent job changes that adolescents go through and job changes experienced by those in the emerging adulthood phase is that the job changes among emerging adults are more structured and have a clearer direction towards a particular career path (Arnett, 2010: 328-329).

Arnett also distinguishes emerging adulthood from youth. He argues that youth is defined by characteristics derived from societal perceptions and expectations while the characteristics of emerging adulthood are young people’s subjective constructions.
Though the emerging adulthood perspective has added a social dimension to the growing up perspective by emphasising the role of social change in determining the course of human development, it remains focused on the individual. Thus, another approach that uses a social lens in understanding youth is needed. The last approach in the growing up perspective that I will elaborate is the youth transition perspective. This perspective focuses less on the individual and tries to understand young people in their social context. It tries to explain how young people are socially positioned (either as youth or adults), based on their participation in certain social institutions rather than on their individual development.

**Youth Transition**

While the emerging adulthood perspective emphasises the influence of social change on young people as individuals, and how they manage these changes in the course of making it to adulthood, the youth transition perspective shows how social institutions shape and are shaped by the process of growing up. Instead of focusing on the psychological dynamics of individual young people, this perspective

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6 As previously mentioned, the life course perspective also focuses on institutional processes, because it views human development as affected by both personal history and social-historical forces (Elder Jr., 1994: 5). It originally emphasised the transitions young people experience, even though recent work on life course theories have been used to explain ageing (Hareven, 1982; Hockey and James, 1993). I will not elaborate on this approach, as it shares many similarities with the youth transition approach, including the idea of cyclical and multidimensionality of growing up, and the importance of historical and economic change in the process of growing up (Elder, 1998: 3-5). The life course approach, however, pays little attention to issues of power relations and social locations of young people that influences their pathways in growing up, which the youth transition perspective discusses more intensively (Wyn and White, 1997: 100).
focuses on young people as a collective. It also views young people’s progress in the life stage as related to wider social, economic, political, and cultural processes.

Life domains such as education, work, and marriage, are seen as social institutions that signify a person’s social positioning within the life phase. In this perspective, in order to make the transition to adulthood, young people are expected to progress from one life domain to the next (from education to work to marriage). This perspective also implicitly shares the same assumptions as the life span perspective which emphasises ‘normal’ timing of human progress. Young people who leave education, work or marry at a younger age than the normative standard are often considered social problems (Tyyska, 2005: 5). The stigma of being a social problem also applies in conditions where young people fail to progress to the next life domain at the ‘right’ age. The mass media are quite influential in portraying young people as a social problem, as ‘dangerous, deficient, and vulnerable’ (Muncie, 2004: 3-14), when they do not make the normative transition.

The shifts from one domain to the next are often termed ‘life events’, which indicates how humans progress from youth to adulthood. This progress is marked not only by the attainment of psychological maturity, but also by changes in social relations, especially with adults. As such, inter-generational and intra-generational relationships are discussed, but with inter-generational relations receiving more attention. These life events include the start of work, marriage and parenthood, which often denotes a transition from a state of dependence to a state of independence, especially in relation to adults (Wyn and White, 1997: 12). Those who are still in education are considered part of the youth category because they are often partly or
wholly dependent upon their family. On the contrary, those who have started work or have entered marriage are often considered independent from their family financially, psychologically and socially.\(^7\) Hockey and James (1993: 13), for example, describe how both childhood and old age are often socially portrayed as times of dependence as opposed to the independence found in adults. The normative timing of life events, associated with a transition from a state of dependence to an independent one, constitutes an important part of the youth transition perspective. It focuses on how notions of growing up, especially in relation to concepts of independence and autonomy, often denote the transition to adulthood.

In the Global North, the concepts of independence\(^8\) and autonomy are usually related to employment and home leaving. In Europe, issues of youth un/underemployment are also often related to the functioning of the welfare state. This includes issues such as provision of unemployment benefits (Jacob, 2008) and the failure of the welfare state to integrate youth to society via the labour market (Malmberg-Heimonen and Julkunen, 2006: 575). The welfare state failure has supposedly increased the role of interdependent

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\(^7\) Another term often used to refer to life events in traditional societies is rites of passage, where certain ceremonial rituals are performed to mark the transition between life stages. An example of these rituals include the practice of circumcision among young men in Eastern Uganda (Barker, 2005: 17) or in Eastern Indonesia (Hungu, 2005), as an initiation to enter manhood. Van Gennep refers to rites of passage as happening among ‘semi-civilized peoples’, though they are also common in modern societies (such as circumcision among Muslims). Instead of mainly focusing on the domains of life that are related to relations of dependence/ independence, rites of passage are often linked to ceremonies that are bound to religion or supra natural powers (Van Gennep, 2004: 3)

\(^8\) This does not mean that families are no longer important when one grows up, as many young people in the United States continue to maintain their emotional attachment with their families even after they are (financially) independent (Arnett, 2002: 311-312).
relationships in families, peers, or charity organisations, especially among poor youth (Jones, 1997: 98). Family assistance is seen as inhibiting proper integration to the labour market, as the function of the family as a safety net encourages young people to quit their job voluntarily rather than to stay employed (Jacob, 2008: 157). Studies on youth transition also describe the ‘problem’ of young people leaving home at a later age, continuing to move in and out of their family’s house, or co-residing with their parents (Kins et al., 2009: 1425-1427, White, 1994: 92-93, Guerrero, 2001: 3-5, Seiffge-Krenke, 2009: 239, Celik, 2008: 433-435). In these studies, late and circular patterns of home leaving are again linked to a failing state welfare system (Cote and Bynner, 2008: 258-259; Miller and Gangl, 2003: 10-17; Plug et al., 2003: 128, Mendes et al., 2006: 110, Mizen, 2004: 67-68). The ‘Global North’ in this context refers not only to Western contexts (the US, Western Europe, and Australia), but may also include those of the higher social strata in non-Western developing countries. Seiter’s (2009: 60-62) study, which focused on university students in India, suggests that independence is also one of the important indicators of adulthood. In Recife, Brazil, Dalsgaard et al. (2008: 58) found that independence and autonomy are also mentioned as indicators of adulthood among middle class youth in Brazil. Young people who are considered independent are thus assigned to the adult category (Modell, et al., 1976; Furstenberg, 2000). As illustrated by Meth (2008: 49-54), even poor young men in South Africa want to be financially independent from their parents and are delaying marriage to be ‘independent’ from the restrictions of having a wife.

However, studies carried out in the Global South highlight the importance of interdependence, especially within the family context.
The issue of un/underemployment, in the Global South, is seen as a consequence of failed state policy in education, training or labour market policies (Manning and Junankar, 1998: 49-51; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007: 13-15). The issue of the welfare state in the context of under/unemployment (and home-leaving as a consequence of it), is not central. This is because many of these countries do not even have a recognisable welfare state system, and even if they do, it applies to a minority of the population. Thus, the role of families in providing a safety net in times of crisis becomes quite central (Gough, 2008: 139; Kiem, 1988: 34), because there is no state to fall back on. Dependence on the family as a social security net or in facilitating one’s social mobility through the labour market is not seen as inhibiting the transition to adulthood. The ‘Global South’ in this context includes not only non-Western developing countries, but also relatively marginalised minority groups or the poor in the Western world. Thus, the transition to adulthood is not indicated merely by a transition from a dependent to an independent state. Instead, interdependence, (a state of mutual dependence between people (Laursen and Williams, 1997: 4)), is a central issue among young people in Central and Eastern Europe. Guererro (2001), for example, argues that leaving home at a later age is still acceptable in certain Western countries such as Italy. Tseng (2004: 979-983) shows that young people from immigrant families in the United States (of Asia Pacific, Latino, and Afro Caribbean/Afro American descent) place more significance on values of interdependence and spend more time fulfilling family demands. However, this study seems to focus on how young people facilitate the needs of their parents as a family obligation, without
placing much emphasis on how young people are mutually dependent upon their family.

In another study several decades ago, Johnson (1977: 352-353) used the concept of family solidarity, which revolves around the concepts of reciprocity, indebtedness, and dependence as kinship mechanisms that better explain how interdependence is played out among Japanese Americans in Honolulu (Hawaii). Mutual dependence was reflected in young people staying with their families until marriage and seeking advice from their parents, while ageing parents relied on their children to care for them rather than on nursing homes. Thus, leaving home was less of an issue in these contexts, as living in the natal home until marriage was a more accepted condition among families in these places. In some cases, married couples are even encouraged to stay in the natal home (Megawangi, et al., 1995: 102-104), where the parents still provide financial support (Lestari et al., 2010: 143). This means that young people in different societies and different contexts face different challenges and issues in growing up.

To sum up, despite the differences, the life span, emerging adulthood, and youth transition perspectives share similarities. They all focus on an idealised concept of growing up, framed within the assumption of progress through idealised linear life stages and life domains. Age is seen as a prominent factor in progressing through the life stages, whether as a biological factor affecting progress towards psychological/social maturity or as an indicator of appropriate timing and ways to participate in (adult) social institutions. Independence is often assumed to characterise the progress towards adulthood in studies carried out in the Global North, while interdependence is highlighted in studies in the Global South. Other paths, which do not
progress through the life stages in a linear manner, at the ‘normal’ age and according to societal norms, are often assumed to be the mark of a young person’s failure to adapt to society. The growing up perspective thus tends to emphasise the ‘normality’ versus ‘deviance’ dimensions of the process of a young person becoming an adult.

**Being Young**

In the section above, I have explained how the growing up perspective sees youth as a stage of transition to adulthood. In this section, I will show how the being young perspective sees youth as a social category in their own right, and not as half-complete humans in transition to adulthood. Here, I will use the social identity theory and youth subculture perspective. Social identity theory basically assumes that identity is derived from membership in a certain social group while the youth subculture perspective focuses on how youth identity is formed through the production and consumption of culture (Wyn and White, 1997: 73).

**Social Identity**

Social identity theory stems from psychology, but was formulated based on sociological ideas (Hogg and Ridgeway, 2003: 97). The social identity approach assumes that a person’s identity is constructed in relation to social groups (Hogg et al., 1995: 259-260) and social roles (Stryker and Burke, 2000: 285) through group membership. Individuals attach different meanings to various social categories. Individuals seek to be identified with social categories that elevate their status, and try to
distinguish themselves from social groups (roles) that they perceive as lower in status (Tajfel, 1974: 65). In an effort to elevate their status, individuals evaluate the in-group more positively than the out-group (Sussman et al., 2000: 192-196). This process often leads to prejudice and stereotyping (Brown, 2010: 4; Verkuyten, 2002: 558). Social identity theories emphasise individual efforts at identity construction, but also recognise that sometimes the individual’s process of identification is denied by the group that he or she identifies with (Verkuyten, 2005: 64-66). People constantly behave in a particular way to affirm their place in the group they identify with.

The strength of this theory is that it explains the effect of group membership on the individual’s sense of self (in the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions). This perspective manages to explain the formation of attachment to the group(s) one identifies with, as well as the negative biases and effect that individuals have on members of the out-group, including – or perhaps especially – in the context of youth. This perspective has informed various studies focusing on racial, ethnic, or national social identities among young people (among others, see Verkuyten and Lay, 1998; Reicher et al., 2006). Verkuyten and Lay argue that the influence of group status on the psychological well-being of Chinese youth in the Netherlands is greater than that of the cultural values socialised by their parents. Reicher et al. (2006) focus on the role of the national identity of being Scottish in the decision to take up work in England. They find that in contexts of long-term migration, the more Scottish a person feels he/she is, the more likely they are to stay in Scotland. The decision to stay is based on concerns of whether they will be able to fit in with English society. In other words, Verkuyten and Lay’s study re-emphasises the importance
of group status to one’s sense of self, while Reicher et al. highlights the significance of in-group membership for one’s sense of belongingness.

This theory is helpful to understanding young people by viewing youth identity as a part of social identity in itself. This means that young people are assumed to claim age-based group membership, and make efforts to construct a youth identity because they see the youth category as a high status group. Thus, being a member of the youth group supports a positive evaluation of the self, encouraging young people to behave in ways that signify their identity as youth. It explains why some young people become members of ‘deviant’ youth groups or other peer-related groups that adults have a negative view of, as these groups provide a sense of self-worth (Pickles, 2006). While age is important to claim membership of a youth identity, it is not the sole determinant. Those who are young by age, but have married or have established a successful career, may reject the youth identity, because marriage and work symbolise success or the achievement of a ‘good life’ in adulthood (Nilan et al., 2011b: 714).

This perspective, however, fails to capture the importance of the generational aspect in the lives of young people. The concept of generation recognises the existence of asymmetrical power relations between youth and adults, where youth are often positioned as subordinate, powerless, and marginal in relation to adults. In this case, the concept of social identity fails to explain why young people, often marginalised in relation to adults, continue to express their youth identity (for instance, through fashion, youth gangs, language, etc.). Why do young people (who are unmarried, out of school and out of work) continue to affirm their youth identity when being young also means being subordinated by adult society? If a positive evaluation of
the group is the main basis for the construction of social identity, how does being a part of a subordinated group in relation to adults, support this as a basis for increasing self-esteem? To answer the above questions, another approach to being young needs to be taken into account: the youth subculture theory.

**Youth Subculture**

The youth subculture approach, which is derived from sociological literature, demonstrates that youth identity is culturally and socially constructed in relation to the dominant, adult culture. It posits that young people’s identification with the adult culture is often denied by the adult world. This discourages young people from finding belonging in the adult identity and encourages them to enhance their status through other channels, such as seeking attachments with groups of their own generation as a way to construct a more meaningful identity (Cote and Allahar, 1996: 20-21). It thus assumes that young people construct their identity as a form of *resistance* against the domination of adult cultures. Youth subcultures enable a shift from social identity assigned by adult society to an identity that young people perceive as empowering (Widdicombe and Wooffitt, 1995: 24-25).  

This approach explains how present needs of social existence are accomplished by experiencing an alternative form of social reality, for

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9 Based on Brake’s approach to youth subculture, the authors elaborate that youth subcultures provide a means by which young people are able to fill in the gap between an individual’s low status position and a position he/she aspires to. They show how subcultures provide symbolic solutions to marginalised youth (such as those who are disadvantaged in education or unemployed).
Youth subcultures are not confined to leisure cultures, but also extend to cultures of violence (Kadir, 2012: 352-365; Willis, 1977; McDowell, 2004: 49), criminality (Muncie, 2004), religion (Al-Rasheed, 2007; Nisa, 2012: 366-381), and the ‘politics of waiting’ (Jeffrey, 2010), which are often intertwined. This means that youth subcultures offer an opportunity outside adult-made domains (such as education or work) where young people are able to express themselves with their peers without adult scrutiny (Widdicombe and Wooffit, 1995: 24-25).

Youth subculture scholars suggest that particular spaces or places (such as streets or pubs) are often used as boundaries that facilitate identity construction (Hollands, 2002: 160). Postmodern approaches to subculture (post-subculturalism) see subcultures as fluid. Bennet (1999) gives an example of the club culture, in which membership is not fixed and young people move from one club to another without any attachment to a particular group as such.

Thus, the issue emphasised here is the forming of strong relations of interdependence among people of the same generation as an act of resistance towards adult culture, as a denial of the superiority of adult culture (through ignorance), and as a way young people form their identity (vis-à-vis the adult identity) in the midst of modernisation and globalisation (Bucholtz, 2002). For example, Masquelier (2010: 226-229), argues that Muslim youth in Nigeria negotiate their identity as Muslim youth by adopting particular styles or practices that the elderly find irreligious. Believing that Islam is transcendental rather than mere religious

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10 Studies of leisure culture include those in relation to music (Johnstone and Katz, 1957), fashion, drugs, consumption, sexual relations, and, recently, the internet (Liu, 2009).
11 Subculture studies often focus on working class young men (Bennet and Kahn-Harris, 2004: 7), but have also paid particular attention to young women’s ‘bedroom culture’ (Lincoln, 2004).
performance of daily prayers (as their parents’ generation suggests), hip hop music (along with its style of clothing and accessories) has become a media through which they demonstrate their stance towards constructing their Muslim youth identity *vis-à-vis* that of the older generation.

Studies focusing on the experiences of ‘being young’ conducted in the Global North and the Global South share similarities in focus, being largely dominated by issues of lifestyle and identity. Lifestyle is generally seen as a part of the formation of youth identity. Johnstone and Katz (1957: 565-566) and Bennet (1999: 609-611), for example, discuss how youth identity is constructed through music and style preferences. Johnstone and Katz argue that music preference among young people in the US is related to where young women live, their popularity among peers, and their personal relationships. Young women from higher social class backgrounds, who are popular with young men, and who do not date frequently, tended to prefer happy and popular songs. In contrast, young women from lower social economic neighbourhoods, who are not popular, and who date frequently, preferred blues music. Four decades on from Johnstone and Katz’s study, Bennet conducted a similar study of dance music in Newcastle, United Kingdom, which focuses on the formation of youth culture\(^\text{12}\) as an attempt to construct youth identity per se. However,

\(^{12}\) Youth culture refers to a social and cultural positioning in which age becomes the main marker that binds people together. The use of youth culture often implies that there is a single youth culture that applies among all young people – mostly in relation to global (Western in particular) life styles. On the other hand, youth subculture is more specific, emphasising the differences within youth culture related to class or family background (Pilkington et al., 2002: 14; Wyn and White, 1997: 75). Youth culture is used here instead of youth subculture because being young is not only about youth cultural practices in relation to class or family background (as in youth subculture approach), but also about how it represents a global culture.
instead of looking at structural determinants in the shaping of young people's identity, Bennet underlines the prominence of agency and fluidity in the construction of youth identity in modern times, rather than identity being determined by structural categorisations such as class. For instance, Bennet explains how young people are agents who participate in the construction of dance music that suits their own preferences, rather than being passive recipients of what dance music is available to them. This process is not necessarily related to one’s social class.

Many youth studies focus on issues of lifestyle and youth identity in the Global South, illustrating the dynamics of local and global forces in the formation of youth identity, such as in Indonesia (which I will describe in greater detail in the section ‘Main Trends in Studies on Indonesian Youth’), China (Liu, 2009; Salmen, 2010; De Kloet, 2008; O’Connor, 2010), Korea (Yoon, 2003), and South Africa (Salo, 2003). Salmen (2010: 4) suggests that despite the growing wealth in China that has enabled wealthy Chinese to access global consumer goods, most Chinese youth who aspire to global citizenship are unable to purchase global brands. The same applies to young people with low incomes in Western countries, who may be even less likely to be able to afford global brands than their rich counterparts in non-Western countries. Thus, young peoples’ efforts to claim global citizenship in the Global South are often sought through lifestyling (Gerke, 2000), such as buying affordable local products that resemble global branded ones. This also means that in non-Western countries, the influence of Western culture among young people does not necessarily lead to cultural homogenisation. Rather, identity is formed within local contexts where
the adoption of Western culture is modified or ‘re-traditionalised’ (Yoon, 2003).

As found in studies on young people in the Global North (Reyes, 2005; Bucholtz, 2001; Miller, 2004) that suggest language is an important aspect to the formation of youth identity, similar conclusions are found in the Global South. However, based on a study in Indonesia, Smith-Hefner (2007b) asserts that youth language is not always meant to counter adult domination. Along the same lines, Englert (2008) found that youth language used in popular music in Tanzania is aimed at forming a youth identity that generates respect across generations, rather than countering adult cultures or trying to gain respect from the older generation per se.

Other studies in these contexts focus on the experience of being young in relation to present livelihood opportunities in the informal economy. Scheld (2007: 235) and Weiss (2009) describe how youth lifestyles in Africa are not only a way in which young people try to take part in globalisation through their youth identity, but also a way in which they fulfil their present economic needs. In Dakar, Senegal, youth cultures are linked to the informal economy of producing and distributing clothing. Scheld argues that youth cosmopolitanism offers the feeling of being part of the global fashion trend, while also boosting the local economy and supporting the current livelihood of young people there. Sharing a common perspective, Weiss (2009) in his study on young people in Tanzania also shows how global-local cultures are expressed through the setting up of barbershops with a ‘Western’ touch. Barbershops are not only a way that young men earn money, but also portray an effort to take part in the globalisation process. Along the same lines, Amin (2012: 36) shows how the informal economy of ojeg
(motorcycle taxis) provides space for young men to assert their identity through the youth cultures of hanging out and sports in Ternate, Eastern Indonesia.

To conclude, the ‘being young’ perspective focuses on issues of identity and how youth identity is constructed. Youth identity is constructed in two, possibly related, ways. First, youth identity is formed mainly through membership (or aspirations to membership) in a youth group. Here, age is an important (though not necessarily a determining) factor motivating young people to claim membership of a youth group that forms youth identity. Other factors, such as being married or having stable work, on the contrary, may make a young-in-age person less likely to claim youth identity. Second, youth identity is also formed through cultures practiced by young people – either as members of a group or as a process of identification to a more general youth culture (without necessarily being part of a particular youth group). This includes the use of ‘youth language’ as a basis for the formation of a youth identity. Here, being young is often construed as being opposed to being an adult, and being in a particular relationship with adults, thus, denying any ‘superiority/dominance’ of adult culture. Youth identity as explained by the youth culture perspective dwells on processes that distinguish youth identity from adult identity. Youth cultures help explain why young people, regardless of their subordinate position to adults, continue to affirm their youth identity. Youth identity is also about seeing young people as living in and for the present, rather than seeing them as in progress towards adulthood and having to be prepared for their future social roles. This includes instances where young people make a living from practices of youth cultures, rather than fulfilling the normative ideal of moving from education to work to become an adult.
Main Trends in Studies on Indonesian Youth

The previous section dealt with the theoretical perspectives of growing up and being young. This section will elaborate some of the main trends in studies on Indonesian youth. Studies on young people in Indonesia stem from various academic disciplines (especially psychology and family/health studies), and do not necessarily frame their analysis on key concepts within the discipline of youth studies. Aside from the interdisciplinary nature of youth studies, what sets youth studies apart from other disciplines is that it studies young people in their own right, rather than seeing young people as an extension of the family, as often the case in family and health studies. Thus, the concept of age-based relations constitutes an important part of youth studies, including critical discussions about youth participation, empowerment, subordination and marginalisation. Only a few studies, most carried out by Western academics such as Nilan (2006) and Smith-Hefner (2007a), frame their work within a youth studies perspective.

The mainstream ideas of growing up, the link between the timing of human progress, life domains, and the structural conditions that constrain or support ‘progress’ have made education-to-work transitions a major focus of studies on young people in Indonesia. Most literature on growing up among Indonesian youth discusses the disruptions in making a smooth transition. Young people are often viewed in the context of risky behaviour or juvenile delinquency (commonly called kenakalan remaja), such as sexual behaviour leading to unwanted pregnancy/abortion (Khisbiyah, 1994; Faturochman, 1992; Bennet, 2007; Lubis, 2006; Supriati and Fikawati, 2009; Harding, 2008), smoking/drugs (Ng et al., 2007), and involvement in illegal migration
(Liow, 2003). Otherwise, they position youth as a social problem in cases of underachievement and un/underemployment (Manning and Junankar, 1998).

Thus, this literature basically discusses young people’s experiences of ruptured transition from education to work, referring for the most part to the shortcomings of the education system encouraging ‘risky behaviour’, such as smoking (Ng et al., 2007: 797). Others point to the weak link between the educational system and the labour market as inhibiting the ‘proper’ transition to adulthood. Youth un/underemployment (as one of the consequences of the disruption of the education-to-work transition) is seen as a consequence of the gap between demographic factors (the youth bulge) and education/labour market opportunities (Hugo, 2005: 64-67), the mismatch between education institutions and the labour market (Sziraczki and Reerink, 2004: 28), or expanding capitalism and neoliberalism (Naafs, 2012a: 52-61).

Eilenberg’s (2005: 178) study of borderland Iban in West Kalimantan, for instance, describes the failure of the education system to provide opportunities for social mobility, especially among the minority, such as those living in borderlands. Another study highlights how a large foreign owned mining company in Sangatta, East Kalimantan, has offered better access to education, but in which not all young people are equally included in the economic opportunities it has to offer. Those from lower social and economic backgrounds continue to be excluded from working in the company, due to their low educational credentials (Lahiri-Dutt and Mahy, 2011: 43-44). Thus, education also seems to maintain the social reproduction of an elite circle (Nilan, 2005: 165), allowing certain segments of society to become independent adults while restricting the opportunity for others.
As well as looking at the structural shortcomings in education and the labour market, other studies on young people in Indonesia also focus on their agency in pursuit of better education-to-work transitions, either through migration or joining religious groups (Azca, 2011: 177-184; Noorhaidi, 2005: vi). This includes cyclical rural-to-urban migratory experiences to pursue education or work (Kiem, 1993: 73-76, Koning, 1997: 221-222; Speare and Harris, 1986: 241-242; Liow, 2003: 45). Koning, for instance, looks into how social change in rural Java has affected the patterns of migration among the younger generation. Circular migration to Jakarta becomes more common, as sources of livelihood in the village decline, paralleled by the need to pursue the cultural ideal of being modern by obtaining urban experiences.

The topic of sexuality dominates most studies of the growing up process among Indonesian youth. Limited knowledge about sex and reproduction (Faturochman, 1992: 77, Lubis, 2006) accompanied by exposure to pornography (Supriati and Fikawati, 2009: 50-56, Harding, 2008) is viewed as the main cause of illicit sexual activities (Sikwan and Triastuti, 2004) or seks bebas (free sex)\(^\text{13}\), unplanned pregnancies (Butt and Munro, 2007), unwanted pregnancies (Khisbiyah, 1994), sometimes leading to induced abortion and the stigmatisation and marginalisation of the young women involved (Hull et al., 1993; Bennet, 2001).\(^\text{14}\) Aside from that, spread of sexually transmitted diseases has been on the rise,

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\(^{13}\) Among young people in Indonesia, seks bebas usually refers to pre-marital sex with one or multiple partners. Bennet (2007: 373) explains that seks bebas also refers to extra-marital sex, prostitution, and homosexual relationships.

\(^{14}\) While Khisbiyah’s work does not specifically include discussion of Islam, how gender works within religious norms is discussed by Bennet (2001: 37) and Butt and Munro (2007). Bennet argues that how young people react to unwanted pregnancies is influenced by the morality of society – in this case Islam. Butt and Munro discuss sexual behaviour within a Christian community in Papua.
especially among marginalised populations such as street youth (Situmorang, 2006). Promotion of sexual and reproductive health education, especially if in keeping with the cultural and religious background of Indonesian society (Bennet, 2007: 372), is often believed to lower the incidence of unintended consequences of sexual practice (Rani, 2009: 101-109) that could disrupt future education, work, and marriage trajectories. In these studies, the role of the family and school as young people’s moral guardians and a security net to ensure a smooth transition to the future is often highlighted (Afandi et al., 2009: 5-8; Manning and Junankar, 1998: 90).

As in the studies on Indonesian youth that employ the growing up perspective, only a limited number of studies, mostly carried out by foreign academics, look into young people’s lives through the lens of youth identity (being young). In the context of being young in Indonesia, lifestyles and identity in a modernising world remain the main topics discussed in the literature. Some of the studies emphasise youth identity as a form of rebellion against the adult world (as youth culture), and some (though to a lesser extent) look into youth identity as a strategy to fit within the peer group (as social identity).

Some of the studies that touch upon the issue of social identity, including those written by Pickles (2006), Guinness (2009), Nilan et al. (2011a), and Leksana (2009), show the value of membership of the youth group for young people. Pickles’ (2006) study shows how youth identity is built in to the relation to the peer group. He describes how heroin use among young people in Jakarta provides a means to form

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15 An exception here is Bennet (2007: 374-375) who finds that peers play a more significant role in delivering sex education. Holzner et al. (2004: 47) also shows how young people actively seek information on sexuality from media, outside the confines of the family, state or religious institutions.
the ‘junkie character’, which raises one’s status in that group. Because heroin is costly, only those with the junkie character (assumed to be confident, intelligent, deceitful, stingy and arrogant) will manage to obtain, distribute, and use heroin. The other studies describe how youth groups or gangs, mostly consisting of young men, often function as a media for young men to construct their masculine identity. For instance, in Jakarta, ethnic-based youth groups are often involved in violent clashes. These groups provide a sense of belonging for marginalised young men to form a masculine identity. Through activities that are sometimes illegal and violent, the group provides access to temporary work, which gives young men a sense of ‘being young and being male’ (Leksana, 2009: 3). Young men in the ojeg (motorcycle taxi) business express their identities by constructing and redefining space through pangkalan ojeg (space occupied by a group of ojeg drivers) in urban Ternate, Eastern Indonesia (Amin, 2012: 37-42).

Various arenas of youth culture – music (Barendregt and Van Zanten, 2002; Barendregt, 2008: 24), fashion (Uttu, 2006; Nilan, 2006: 91-110; Nisa, 2012: 366-381 and Jones, 2007), movies (Sulistyani, 2006), language (Smith-Hefner, 2007a, 2007b), and drugs (Nasir and Rosenthal, 2009) - cutting across gender, class, religion and ethnicity are also discussed. These youth cultures are often seen as a form of youth agency to counter the adult culture. Martin-Iverson (2012: 386) and Barendregt and Van Zanten (2002: 81-82), for instance, describe the emergence of underground and indie music\textsuperscript{16} among young people in Indonesia. The producers of underground and indie music reinforce the ‘do it yourself’ attitude by preferring to establish their own independent

\textsuperscript{16} Indie music is a combination of alternative and underground music (Barendregt and Van Zanten, 2002: 81-82).
This ‘do it yourself’ attitude is also apparent in distro fashion. Uttu (2006) describes how young people in Indonesia creatively seek existence through fashion and style by establishing independent fashion outlets called distro.\(^{18}\) **Distro** is short for distribution and in Indonesia, is a word derived from bahasa gaul\(^{19}\)(youth language). It now refers mainly to youth fashion outlets, selling clothes, accessories and merchandise. The idea of being independent through indie productions or through distro was initially politically inspired – a reaction to the repression of the New Order regime. However, since 2003, it has become a mainstream fashion that has expanded to other cities in Indonesia outside of its city of origin, Bandung, West Java. It has lost its political roots and has instead become a lifestyle choice.\(^{20}\)

Youth language (bahasa gaul), a language variation derived from the national language, Indonesian (Smith-Hefner, 2007b: 184), is a well-studied dimension of Indonesian youth culture, which is often used to separate youth identity from adult identity. However, it has also been found that youth language is used to strengthen solidarity and interpersonal relationships among young people and differentiate the identities of groups of young people. For instance, youth language reinforces the identity of being part of the young modern middle class (Smith-Hefner, 2007b; Oetomo, 1990), and of being transgender (Fazly, 2012), and functions as a symbol of intimate friendship (Wijana, 2012).

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17 The indie movement has extended outside the realm of music to include other forms of youth culture that form an image of rebelliousness (such as the punk subculture).
18 **Distro** has close connections to underground music bands selling their merchandise. The merchandise is made by and for young people.
19 Gaul literally means socialising or sociable, of being able to communicate in the right way by creating and playing with new words considered ‘cool’ by the young (Barendregt, 2008: 166)
20 The author notes that in Bandung, there are currently more than 200 distro.
Youth language is also used in text messages and emails, and on chat forums (Barendregt, 2008: 166). These studies confirm Smith-Hefner’s (2007b) finding that youth language is significant in the formation of a youth identity, and is not always intended to counter adult culture.

The culture of youth sexuality is also an important part of studies on being young (Webster, 2010; Saxby, 2006). Instead of emphasising how sexual behaviour is potentially harmful in making a ‘proper’ transition to adulthood, sexuality is viewed as part of youth culture. Drawing on youth events (such as music concerts) in Yogyakarta, Webster (2010) argues that these events provide space that encourages active pursuit of love and sex among young people, away from adult scrutiny. She explains how certain sexual terms are used by the hosts of these events to promote a more open attitude towards sex. These events often encourage the idea of sexual freedom and rebellion against religious norms.

The studies about youth in Indonesia reviewed above largely focus on the structural constraints of growing up in the context of education to work transitions. They discuss the flaws in the education system and the labour market, which fail to facilitate a smooth transition for young people. In the domain of sexuality, the focus shifts to young people’s own sexual behaviour and how their sexual behaviour has negative effects on growing up, especially on how it defies society’s moral norms. Rarely do the studies touch upon the issues of independence or interdependence in relation to these ruptured transitions. On being young, only a few studies focus on youth identity from the social identity perspective. Most emphasise various forms of youth culture in the shaping of youth identity, in which language, art performances, fashion, violence, and lifestyle set youth identity apart.
from the dominant adult culture. Most of the studies about youth identity therefore seem to portray youth as *always* busy within their own youth world, oblivious of how to become adults. Aside from that, although the studies above focus on diverse contexts, they rarely mention how youth culture develops in the contexts of education and work. The studies seem to suggest that growing up and being young are contradictory processes in young people’s lives, and that ‘being young’ only matters when it becomes a media to challenge adult norms, or that impediments to growing up (either due to structural constraints or wanting to ‘be young’) result in imperfections in one’s adult life.

**Growing Up and Being Young**

In the previous sections, I have described the basic premises of the growing up perspective and the being young perspective. Both perspectives see growing up and being young as two separate processes. Though the youth subculture perspective assumes that a connection exists between youth identity and the adult identity, it is used to state that young people construct their identity as a way of building their own world in resistance to adult culture. Thus, adults and youth remain separate (and so do growing up and being young).

In this section, I will discuss the need to combine both perspectives, and describe two patterns of relationship between growing up and being young. The first pattern I refer to as ‘being young while growing up’, which places greater emphasis on the ‘being young’. The second pattern, the ‘growing up while being young’, places more emphasis on the process of growing up. At the end, I will show that
young people can move in and out of these categories, rather than
remaining in one category throughout their life time.

**Combining the Perspectives**

Naafs and White (2012) identify three perspectives on youth, based on
studies conducted in Indonesia: youth as generation, youth as transition,
and youth as makers and consumers of culture. The growing
up perspective is similar to the ‘youth as transition’ perspective, while
the being young perspective is similar to the ‘youth as makers and
consumers’ perspective proposed by the authors. I view the ‘youth as
generation’ perspective – understanding youth as a demographic
cohort, seen in relation to generations and as a group consciousness –
as a perspective that combines the two main perspectives of ‘growing
up’ and ‘being young’. Thus, this will be an approach that is central to
this study. For instance, I see intergenerational relations as constituting
relationships that construct the growing up process, while
intrigenerational relations facilitate the construction of a youth identity
or of being young.

The relation between growing up and being young is not new,
as described by Mathews and White (2004: 4):

…young people largely create their own world as they
have been molded to create it, unwittingly
reproducing the world of their elders because they
know no other. However, it seems that aside from this,
there is also always a degree of volition at work. After
all, every generation of youth in the contemporary
world has a choice of whether to reproduce, reject, or
reshape the world of its elders.
This quote contains concepts of generation and social reproduction. Mannheim (1952: 288-290) differentiates the concept of generation into: 1) generation as concrete social groups and 2) generation as mere collective facts. As social groups, individuals are bound by ‘ties of proximity’ (such as the family) or by a conscious common goal (such as associations). However, Mannheim takes a more critical view of the term generation that goes beyond these concrete social groups. Unlike concrete social groups such as the family (in which physical contact and knowledge of its members are the basis of its formation) or associations (where conscious aims or goals bind the members together), what ties a generation together involves another aspect – the consciousness of social location. This is what he refers to as ‘generation as mere collective fact’. Consciousness of social location can be defined as participation in a similar historical-social experience and having consciousness of the events which produce knowledge structures transferred to the next generation.

Aside from defining the concept of generation, another of Mannheim’s important contributions is how generation is linked to the concept of social and cultural reproduction through intergenerational relations (Mannheim, 1952: 292-294). In intergenerational relations, the process of cultural transmission that facilitates the occurrence of social reproduction is often accompanied by a process of adaptation and negotiation by the younger generation (Mannheim, 1952: 292-294). Adaptation and negotiation in cultural transmission includes looking at how each generation conceptualises the meaning of and experience of being young and growing up, within the changing political, social and economic conditions they face (Wyn and Woodman, 2006: 499).
Growing up is about the process of reproduction of adult cultures. No matter how much social change young people face, they are socialised by the values and practices of the older generation. However, which values and practices are reproduced, how, and to what extent, is largely a matter of agency on the part of young people, often realised through the formation of youth cultures. Thus, intra and intergenerational relations are significant in the transmission of cultural values and practice, and ensure the flow of social reproduction.

**Interdependence, Social Reproduction and Generational Relations**

I will now describe how the relation between growing up and being young works by distinguishing it into the two main patterns introduced at the beginning of this section: ‘being young while growing up’ and ‘growing up while being young’. Within these patterns, the concepts of generation, social reproduction and interdependence will facilitate an explanation of the dynamics at work. Literature on youth frequently discusses two forms of inter and intragenerational relations: relations of independence and dependence. The growing up perspective assumes that independence makes adulthood, while dependence denotes youth. However, *interdependence* seems to reflect the reality of inter and intragenerational relations in everyday practices rather than relations of independence or dependence. Interdependence can be defined as a state of mutual dependence that contributes to the well-being of those involved in the relationship, as in a symbiotic relationship (Scanzoni, 2001: 703). Raeff (2006: 56-57) suggests the need to see independence and interdependence as a continuum. Raeff argues that human functioning is based on independence and interdependence as ‘humans
are physically and mentally separate and are also socially connected’. However, I see independence as relational rather than an individual state. Independence as a state totally free from dependence upon others seems like an obscure notion, since humans are after all, social beings. On the other hand, total dependence upon others in social relations is also rare. Even elderly people who live with their children may try to keep their autonomy by expressing their need for privacy and freedom to do what their children think they should not do (Wenger, 1987: 369). This shows that social relations, including generational ones, are based on interdependence rather than on independence or dependence. The family plays a critical role in the process of cultural and social reproduction, especially through interdependent relations of caring, familial obligation, and bonds of reciprocity (Johnson, 1977: 351).

Magazine and Sanchez (2007: 52-53) show how interdependence within the family constitutes the accepted form of social reproduction and cultural transmission. They describe how lower class families in Tlalcuapan, Mexico continue to involve children in the world of work to contribute to the family’s economy, despite improving economic conditions and pressures of schooling. Instead of viewing this practice as exploitation or as a way of training to become future adults, the people of Tlalcuapan in the study view this as a way in which relations of interdependence in the family are played out.

21 Wyn and White (1997: 149) state that interdependencies involve not only mutual dependence between persons, but also adult-based institutions (such as education, educational institutions and what is expected from young people in the educational domain).
Children do not work primarily out of necessity or for educational reasons, but rather because familial relations and the process of social reproduction are conceived of in terms of interdependence (Magazine and Sanchez, 2007: 53).

Magazine and Sanchez seem to suggest that interdependence comes more naturally in developing countries such as Mexico. However, they also recognise that socio-economic circumstances often influence the dynamic of interdependent relations. Like Magazine and Sanchez’s study, Punch (2002: 124) argues that interdependence between parents and their children and between siblings in rural Bolivia is quite high as children contribute to the maintenance of the household economy. Rutten (2003: 169) also shows that the dominant mode of relations in the operation of iron casting factories in Batur, Central Java, is an interdependent family relationship that runs across generations. Family cooperation supports the existence and development of family factories through time. This suggests that intra and intergenerational interdependent relations in the family are more intense when economic insecurity reinforces the need for it, when life transitions are less predictable, and when state welfare systems do not cater fully to the needs of young people (Mendes and Mosleuddin, 2006: 123).

**Being Young While Growing Up**

This part will explore the pattern of relations between being young and growing up, here, placing more emphasis on processes of being young. The main focus here is to identify the continuities that exist between being young and growing up through youth cultures. Instead of merely
seeing youth culture and adult culture as in tension or opposition to one another, it also recognises how certain aspects of youth culture are adopted from the adult world. Youth identity has connections to the adult world, even though it remains separate from it (Blackman, 2005: 1-2).

The pattern of ‘being young while growing up’ is seen, for instance, in the freeters phenomenon explored in Masahiro’s work on Japan (Masahiro, 2001). Freeters are basically young people who refuse to take up long-term employment in companies. A generational analysis helps to see how the freeter youth, while rejecting social reproduction, hold on to the old norms of adult society. Referring to Mannheim, Kiem (1993: 27) explains how generation is an intersection of age and a historical dimension of the social process that binds people together. This is apparent in how the freeter culture came to being. The youth culture of freeters somehow contradicts the predictable life course of Japanese society during the post-war period, shaped by ‘company society’ (Ronald, 2009), in which people’s life worlds were ascribed to men’s long-term employment in companies. The emergence of the freeters in the 80s was a form of resistance against company society. Though meeting with disapproval from the older generation (Mathews

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22 This is evident in how youth subcultures have connections to the parent culture (class), while also being different from them through use of certain symbols, dress codes, and life style available to them. For example, the hippie subculture has connections with middle class culture, but remains separate from it due to its engagement with a hedonistic lifestyle (Brake, 1985: 7).

23 Masahiro categorizes freeters into three groups: the ‘on hold’ group, who are ambivalent about their choice of life; the ‘no choice’ group, who are working in temporary jobs while finding the opportunity to settle into a stable job; and the ‘dream-pursuing’ group, who are pursuing their dream job in the professional world rather than working for companies. The freeters I am referring to here are those in the third category.
and White, 2004: 1-2), a group of young people expressed their desire to be free to pursue their own dream jobs by exploring their options in various temporary jobs that would someday lead the way to the job of their dreams (Iwakami, 2007: 7), which for most was in the professions (Masahiro, 2001).

As the generational gap widens between the Japanese youngsters and the older generation, interdependence is evident in the fact that young people seek (and often ask for) peer advice (McVeigh, 2004: 110). Thus, interdependence is not limited to relationships between the parent and child or between siblings within the family. Interdependence among peers is equally important for young people (Adams and Plaut, 2003: 346), especially as Japan’s older generation is considered by young people to be ill-equipped to provide advice to them about facing the severities of the contemporary labour market (Honda, 2005: 14).

However, social reproduction is never completely discontinuous. In this case, the freeters also hold on to the idea that they will someday be settling into a real job in the professional world at some point of their lives. This indicates that the adult culture that values stable jobs is still engrained in the minds of these young people, even though they are living the freeters youth culture.

**Growing up while Being Young**

The previous section has elaborated a perspective that emphasises how being young facilitates the process of growing up through young

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24 In the article, the authors refer to the participants in the study as adults. However, they included many university students that I would categorise as youth.
people’s agency in constructing their youth identity. This approach looks at the other side of the coin. In this section, the emphasis is mainly on how growing up is a *structured* process, and how young people give meaning to it (Wyn and White, 1997: 4). In this case, youngsters tend to accept the values of the older generation that ensure the process of social reproduction, but the process is constrained in various ways. This includes cases where growing up often forces young people to grow up too fast or too slow, become an adult earlier or stay young longer than the normative timing of transition.

For example, Robson and Ansell (2000: 176-191) show how young people in Zimbabwe are growing up on the fast track because they have to juggle being secondary school students and caring for their elders. The authors criticise the taken for granted assumption that caring for elders is part of the social reproduction process in the South, where cultural values of caring for the older generation are considered normal and expected. Despite having a positive attitude towards caring as part of Christian morality, young people report that they feel they are carrying out adult responsibilities at a younger age than they should. They feel that there are constraints to caring because of their status as minors. This expresses the construction of a youth identity in the lives of young carers that is inseparable from everyday practices of caring.

While Robson and Ansell provide a valuable insight into how the older generation are dependent upon the young (instead of the other way around), their study lacks information on two important issues in the relation between growing up and being young. First, there is very little elaboration on the mechanisms by which young people may also depend on the elderly they care for, at least, emotionally. Second, it does not describe how intragenerational relations play out and how
young people actually try to negotiate the social obligations of caring with play or other dimensions of youth culture.

In contrast, literature on the ‘slow track’ to adulthood provides more discussion on inter and intragenerational interdependent relationships, and how young people negotiate the tensions between growing up and being young. One of the conditions in which young people experience a slow track to adulthood is the ‘transition to nowhere’ (Herrera, 2010: 131). Transition to nowhere implies that the constraints to growing up are structural rather than a matter of choice, which is also evident in the case of ‘fast track’ to adulthood. It refers to a situation where disrupted transitions to adulthood result in young people feeling that they are stuck to their youth when they are actually ready to grow up. Herrera in Egypt (2010: 131-133) and Jeffrey et al. in the town of Meerut, India (2008) show how young men are often stalled in their process of growing up – jobless and without prospects for future marriage. They illustrate cases of unemployed young people who are frustrated because they feel they are going nowhere on their journey to adulthood. In India, young men have referred to their situation as engaging in ‘timepass’ or ‘purposeless waiting’, which is defined as passing time without any certainty of their direction for the future. Some of these educated Indian young men have even formed a group called ‘Generation Nowhere’, where they express their frustration over the decreasing value of their educational qualifications in the labour market (Jeffrey, et al., 2008: 739).

Though timepassers are financially dependent upon their parents, parents are equally dependent upon them to secure the status of the family. This especially applies in cases of youngsters who continue to postgraduate courses as a way to ‘pass time’, since higher education
also often means a higher status will be attributed to the family as a whole. At the same time, the timepassers often seek their social identity through engagement with young people who are in the same situation. They form a leisure culture of hanging out (Schielke, 2009), searching for entertainment through the internet (Herrera, 2010), or involvement in political or religious movements (Jeffrey, 2010). Political and religious movements provide a medium where young people can challenge the status quo, or dominant adult cultures. Thus, inter and intragenerational relations are equally important for young people experiencing this pattern of growing up and being young, though they tend to idealise the normative adult-made timetable of transition.

**Moving In and Out**

Though I have categorized the pattern of relations between growing up and being young in two separate processes, in reality an individual may engage in both patterns at different points in their life time. This, for instance, is illustrated by how young women deal with sexuality in Asia.

For many Asian young women, social norms often confine the expression of sexuality. However, many young women are resisting these norms by secretly engaging in sexual activity without the knowledge of their parents or other adults. At first glance, it seems as if these women are focused on being young, developing a culture that defies the cultural, social, and religious values of the older generation. However, this resistance to ‘morality’ is also often accompanied by feelings of guilt (as argued for Indonesia by Sastramidjaja, 2001; Bennet, 2002). This shows that while some Asian women engage in premarital sex, they also internalise the cultural values of virginity. This suggests
that these young women are engaged in the first pattern, ‘being young while growing up’.

Asian youth’s access to knowledge about sexuality is limited, and young people tend to find knowledge about sexuality from sources outside adult institutions (Holzner and Oetomo, 2004). A gap between knowledge and practice of sexuality is often believed to contribute to unhealthy sexual relationships, including the practice of unprotected sex, often leading to sexually transmitted diseases or to unwanted pregnancies. Since premarital sex is considered a taboo, there is a tendency for pregnancies outside of wedlock to be socially sanctioned. As such, peers are usually the first place where young women seek advice and protection from the scrutiny of the adult world, especially when unwanted pregnancies occur. Those who choose to terminate their pregnancies by abortion are often supported by their peers.

In contrast, young unmarried pregnant women who choose to keep the baby have to grow up on the fast track. They have to make decisions that may affect them in the long-term, such as choosing to be a single mother or getting married at a young age. In Indonesia, for instance, this cannot be done without the knowledge of parents and other family members. Since it is common for these young women to be dependent upon their family, both financially and emotionally, most young women in this situation in Indonesia choose the second option, sometimes due to family pressure. Families, though often embarrassed by this incident, are also dependent upon their daughter to protect the family’s reputation. On the one hand, the young women start prioritising their new role as a parent. Yet, many young mothers also try to make time for their peers, and often remain involved in practices of
youth cultures. At this time in their life, young women have moved from ‘being young while growing up’ (prioritising youth identity) to ‘growing up while being young’ (prioritising growing up).

To summarise, this section has focused on two patterns of relations between growing up and being young. The first elaborates on the continuities between growing up and being young, with more focus on the experience of being young through youth cultures. These youth cultures often reflect adult cultural values rather than being in total separation from them. Intragenerational relations are considered more important than intergenerational ones. The second pattern emphasises the growing up process in terms of the structured experience of growing up. As such, it discusses the tensions between growing up and being young. These tensions are evident from how prolonging being young is constrained by the need to grow up (fast track to adulthood) and how growing up is inhibited by being young (transition to nowhere). In this pattern, both intra and intergenerational relations are significant in young people’s lives, though young people tend to feel the need to fulfil adult expectations of a ‘proper’ transition. Youth culture in this case is formed as a strategy for coping with not being able to grow up, rather than a conscious act of resistance. Young people are not isolated or trapped in one particular pattern, but may move in and out of each pattern in their life time.

25 In the US, many young mothers still regard their relations with peers as significant (Higginson, 1998), some still engaging in the youth culture of drugs (McDonald and Armstrong, 2001: 219-220).
Methodology

Doing the Research

The main research site of this study is Pontianak, West Kalimantan. In the Indonesian context, Pontianak is a provincial city which is ‘peripheral’ in relation to other bigger cities in Java. This means that power differentials in relation to the ‘core’ (the national or global) contextualise the lives of young people who live in these peripheral locations (Pilkington and Johnson: 2003; and Kjelgaard and Askegaard: 2006). However, as a provincial city (Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, 2012), its position as the capital city of the province also means that it is a core within the periphery. Education facilities, especially higher education, and work opportunities for young people in West Kalimantan are centred in Pontianak. West Kalimantan is a multi-ethnic society, with a history of ethnic segregation and ethnic conflict. Several ethnic conflicts have occurred in the region since the 1800s, mostly involving competition over resources (including access to natural resources such as gold, and until recently, competition for political positions). This core-peripheral position and the ethnic dynamics in this city are assumed to have implications for the strategies adopted by young people and their families in the processes of social reproduction, especially in the domains of education, work, and marriage.

I started my research about Pontianak with one month of preliminary fieldwork in January 2008, intended to capture the current dynamics of the city and to identify the concerns of young people there. At this stage, I used only qualitative methods, especially focused group discussions. The discussions mainly involved young Malay men from
West Kalimantan who were studying in Yogyakarta. Yogyakarta, the city where I live, was chosen because it is one of the cities in Java (aside from Jakarta and Bandung) that attracts many young people from Pontianak to study. Through the focus group discussions, I obtained new information about young people’s education and work aspirations. After the focus group discussion sessions in Yogyakarta, I spent the next two weeks of the preliminary study in Pontianak. Questions for my interview guideline in Pontianak were generated from the focus group discussions carried out in Yogyakarta. The interviews provided data on young people’s education and work aspirations and other aspects of young people’s life worlds (such as their boy/girlfriend or their relationship with their parents). The majority of informants at this stage were ethnic Malay, only two were Dayak and one was Chinese Indonesian.

The main fieldwork was carried out from August 2008 to July 2009. At this stage, a qualitative approach was used. This approach allowed room to understand the subjective experiences of young people within the context they live in. Qualitative data were generated using a number of methods: in-depth interviews, casual conversations, focused group discussions (held mainly to attain contacts), and secondary local sources. The qualitative data were supported by quantitative data generated from a small survey, which provided a general profile of young people in Pontianak and their future aspirations.

One of the first steps that I took in starting this research was to find local research assistants (one female Malay and one male Dayak-Malay) who were in more or less the same situation as the informants I

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26 Chinese Indonesian refers to Indonesian citizens who are of Chinese descent. From here onwards, they will be referred to as ‘Chinese’. 
intended to interview: university educated youth, in their twenties, either still at university or un/underemployed. Together with my two assistants, I set up an ‘office’ near Tanjungpura University where we would meet to discuss the research process. One of my research assistants said that the office was important for her, because it gave her a sense of really ‘working’. Both assistants contributed office supplies as a way of demonstrating their ownership of the whole research process. But most importantly, they gave suggestions about and insight on young people’s life in Pontianak. Their stories and suggestions were invaluable for this research. The male Dayak-Malay assistant was very helpful in approaching non-Malay informants. His gender also made him more flexible when it came to securing and conducting interviews, especially with young men, who often felt more relaxed being interviewed in (male dominated) areas, such as coffee shops during late hours. My female assistant had many contacts and networks among Pontianak youth. Having studied in Pontianak during her university years, she was more familiar with young university educated people’s lives in Pontianak than the male assistant, who had studied in Yogyakarta. She often invited me to her home or to hang out, and to various reunions with her friends.

A set of local publications were used to capture prominent local discourses relevant to young people and the three life domains that I focus on in this study. My main reference was a government published media, Berita Khatulistiwa (Berkat), which provided information on local political and labour market dynamics (especially concerning civil service recruitment), government projects, and government policy in general. The content was insightful, helping me understand how the state views local dynamics. I also referred to other local media (Tribun Pontianak and
Pontianak Post), as well as novels and writings by local youth, to generate a picture of how young people see themselves, and their present and future social relationships at present within the local context.

As mentioned, Pontianak is a multi-ethnic society which has experienced various ethnic conflicts in the past. This had implications for the way the research was conducted there, especially how to approach informants. The conflict has had quite an influence on how people here view ‘others’. In Pontianak, putting trust in a stranger (an Indonesian ‘stranger’, that is) is quite difficult, even among young people. West Kalimantan’s society is ethnically segregated into four main ethnic groups: Malay, Dayak, Madurese, and Chinese. The Malay and Madurese are associated with Islam, while the Dayak and Chinese are assumed to be non-Muslims.

My identity as a Muslim is apparent from the headscarf that I wear. I had to be careful using my identity and choosing the right people to help me approach the informants. My Muslim headscarf, in combination with having a Malay husband, placed me in the circle of the Malays. Thus, it was relatively easy to obtain interviews with Malay youth. My Muslim identity also connected me to the Madurese youth. Yet, this identity was a drawback when it came to interviewing the Dayak and the Chinese, and this is where the male Dayak-Malay assistant proved helpful. To gain the trust of the Dayak, the Dayak-Malay assistant was placed in the front line. Though he actually identified himself more as a Malay, his dual identity was quite useful in gaining the trust of Dayak youth. He introduced himself as a Dayak, but was

27 Aside from being Muslim and having a Minang mother from West Sumatera, he has lived most of his life among Malays.
honest enough to say that he was a Muslim. To gain trust among my Chinese informants, the head of the tertiary education institution, STMIK Widhya Dharma was approached. He was very open and helpful about providing me the opportunity to interview his students, most of whom are Chinese. Again, the Dayak assistant was better able to obtain information from Chinese youth, as they were more relaxed communicating with a Dayak than they were with a ‘Malay’ like me. A lot of time and energy was invested in approaching Dayak informants because the people in my Malay networks had few close friends of Dayak ethnic origin.

In later interviews, the Dayak students revealed that they considered me too young to be a PhD candidate, and that this engendered a feeling of incompetence on their part. The arrival of my supervisor from the University of Amsterdam brought about some changes in their attitude. A focus group discussion session with students at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at Tanjungpura University was arranged with my supervisor. The topic of the discussion touched upon young people’s work aspirations and their experiences combining education and work. It also represented another attempt to open more doors to gain access to informants. Introducing a more authoritative figure than me (white, male, and senior), made them see me as less threatening. The student identity also somehow connected us as they started to express their curiosity about studying in Amsterdam.

Through informal conversations and interviews with Dayak youth in the later stages of my research, I found out that most of the Dayak students are from the rural areas. In these interviews, the Dayak youth expressed their concerns about lacking the confidence to speak out, especially in discussion forums. This is often due to language barrier; they feel that they are unable to speak proper Malay or Indonesian, especially in public and in front of non-Dayak people.
Informants

In-depth interviews were carried out with young people and parents. Young people as informants were acquired through a snowballing technique, keeping in mind a balance between genders and a variation in ethnic background. In total, 106 young people were interviewed, resulting in 136 interviews (some informants were interviewed more than once). The mean age of the informants was 24, most of them still at university (36 per cent) or university graduates (51 per cent). A small portion (13 per cent) of the informants were high school graduates. High school graduates were interviewed in order to better understand how those with a university education (compared to those with high school education) shape their future aspirations and ways of being young.

Most of the informants were enrolled in or graduates of four-year undergraduate courses (S1), while a few in other programmes of tertiary education (for instance, in diploma and postgraduate programmes) were included. This means that this study provides only a partial picture of how educated young people live their lives. However, I believe that the decision to focus on young people studying in or graduates of S1 programmes better reflects the gap between expectations of social mobility through long-term investment in higher education and the reality of under/unemployment among S1 graduates. Postgraduate programmes are even longer term investments in education, but most postgraduate students in Pontianak are working adults who are furthering their education for the purpose of career advancement, and not the educated young people this study targets.
Most of the young people in this study come from lower middle class families, in which the parents are either in the civil service (lower echelons of the bureaucracy or teachers), retired civil servants, small scale traders, or land-owning farmers. I started with the Malay youth and those who are considered part of the Malay group (mostly the Javanese Muslims and the Bugis). But in order to understand the social position of the Malay in relation to other ethnic groups, I then gradually started interviewing young people from the other main ethnic groups. The majority of the informants are non-migrants (60 per cent), meaning that most of them have been raised and lived in Pontianak almost all their lives. The gender and ethnic composition of the informants is shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dayak</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others²⁹</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madurese</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>106</strong></td>
<td><strong>(100)³⁰</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

²⁹ These were young people who were assumed to be Malay, but in fact did not identify themselves as Malay. They gave insights into how members of the other ethnic groups in West Kalimantan viewed their social position as a minority living in a social and cultural context dominated by members of the Malay, Dayak, Madurese, and Chinese communities.

³⁰ Column totals may not add to exactly 100 due to rounding of decimals.
The majority of informants (45 per cent) were Malays. Table 1 also shows that interviews were conducted with thirteen members of ethnic groups other than the dominant ethnic groups in West Kalimantan (12 per cent). They consisted of young people from the Javanese, Bugis, Banjar, and Minangkabau ethnic groups. Table 2 shows that more young men (59 per cent) were interviewed than young women (41 per cent).

The in-depth interviews provided valuable insights into how young people perceive their life experiences and their future aspirations. They largely remained focused on the individual young people's accounts, rather than on how their social relations are actually played out. On several occasions, I was able to join them in their activities (such as participating in reunions, hanging out, class sessions, and during times when they were working). Thus, despite the tendency of this study to reflect young people's subjective state of mind and feelings rather than ‘objective’ facts in their life experiences, it does not disregard the importance of these ‘objective facts’ in young people’s subjective life experiences. The decision to approach non-Chinese youth and the relatively easy access I had to the Malays in particular, means that the study tends to represent the narratives of non-Chinese young people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2 Informants by gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional interviews were carried out with parents to understand their values and how these did (or did not) shape young people’s lives. The questions posed were related to how they view the meaning of education, work, and marriage, and what expectations they had for their children in those three domains. A total of 12 parents were interviewed (seven mothers and five fathers). Interviews with bureaucrats (the mayor of Pontianak, the Regional Staff Bureau, and the Pontianak Education Office) and three senior academics were also carried out. These interviews provided a better understanding of the overall local context in terms of education and the labour market in Pontianak.

Some informants did not mind having their identities disclosed; others were extremely cautious and repeatedly reminded me not to reveal their identities. To protect the identities of my informants, I have used pseudonyms and changed the names of subdistricts where the informants came from in the cases elaborated in the empirical chapters. An exception to this policy is the bureaucrats, such as the mayor of Pontianak, whose identities are public knowledge. Informants were aware that their photos were taken and might be used in published material.
Small Survey

After carrying out interviews with young people for the first four months, I decided to carry out a small survey to obtain a general profile of young people in Pontianak (especially of those outside the Malay circle). The questionnaires were distributed at four different universities, and covered the topics of education, work, and family life aspirations and transitions. Pontianak society categorises universities in ethnic terms based on the perceived ethnic background of its students. I chose four universities that mirrored this categorisation, as seen in Table 3. The majority of the respondents were from the ‘Dayak’ university of STKIP, and the fewest from the Widya Dharma ‘Chinese’ university. Faculties and departments within these universities were chosen based on considerations of practicality, easier access, and assumed social economic background of students studying in those faculties and departments.

The main focus of the first part of the questionnaire was why and how the respondents ended up studying at their university, and what they expected to attain from their studies (especially in relation to work opportunities). The questions in this part of the questionnaire allowed only one response, which in hindsight was not the best option; it meant that respondents had to choose one answer from the available choices of response, although in reality, other answers might also apply. For instance, a respondent might answer that he or she studied at Tanjungpura University because of his/her parents’ wishes. In fact, he/she might have also chosen Tanjungpura University because of other factors, such as the higher expectation of work opportunities if he/she
graduated from a state university. Hence, caution needs to be exercised when reading the conclusions of this survey.

Table 3 Summary details of the survey sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Perceived ethnic background of students</th>
<th>Faculty/Department</th>
<th>N sample</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNTAN (Universitas Tanjungpura)</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Malay (and Dayak)</td>
<td>Social Science (Sociology)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAIN (Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri)</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Madurese</td>
<td>Tarbiyah (Islamic Education)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Syariah (Islamic Law)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STKIP (Sekolah Tinggi Keguruan Ilmu Pendidikan)</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Dayak</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STMIK (Sekolah Tinggi Manajemen Informatika dan Komputer) Widya Dharma</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Information Systems</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Information Management</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL SAMPLE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>369</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

31 Only two students from the Department of Information Management, STMIK Widya Dharma filled in the questionnaire, because they were in a class that was held in the Information Systems department.

32 Column totals may not add to exactly 100 due to rounding of decimals.
In the second part of the survey, the respondents were asked to rank various items according to the respondent’s preference. For example, to understand young people's work aspiration, respondents were asked to rank their work aspirations based on a number of job alternatives (civil service, business, worker in private company, politician, military, police, NGO worker, and other). Ranking or prioritising gave the respondents more room to express a range of choices.

The implication of using the above sampling method is that there remains a possibility that different responses may have been given, had the questionnaire been distributed in other faculties/departments/higher education institutions. For instance, preferred faculties or departments (fakultas/jurusan favorit), such as the Faculty of Economics or Engineering at UNTAN, were not included in the survey. Preferred faculties are those where competition to enter is quite high and those that are considered to provide better future job prospects. Most students who enter these faculties or departments were high academic achievers during their high school years, and tend to come from higher (elite) social classes. Since this study intended to capture the experience of young people from the lower middle class, I focused on other (non-preferred) faculties/departments/higher education institutions. This means that the answers given by respondents of this study may be different to those that would have been given by students from the preferred faculties (even at the same education institution) or higher education institutions. For instance, perhaps more agency in choosing faculties/departments would be observed among students from preferred faculties/departments in comparison to those studying in non-preferred faculties/departments.
Due to the choice of sampling methods and the differing sizes of the samples for each university, the results of the small survey cannot be generalised to describe the whole of the university-educated youth population. However, the survey does provide useful conclusions about differences between universities, ethnic groups, gender, and class.

In this section, I have discussed the methodology used in this study. Relying mainly on in-depth interviews has allowed a better understanding of the subjective life experiences of educated lower middle class youth in Pontianak. The small survey was useful in providing a general profile of young people in Pontianak, especially in relation to their education and work aspirations, and the differences in these aspirations between groups of young people. The focus group discussions were effective ways of networking and obtaining informants. The local secondary sources provided information about the contextual dynamics of the city, from the perspective of the state, and (to a lesser extent), from the perspective of young people. The choice to recruit young assistants was made not simply for reasons of practicality (such as accessing young informants); it was also intended to provide more room for participation in the research process by young people, whose contributions were invaluable for the research as a whole.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has dealt with various theories on growing up and being young that frame this study. I have argued for the need to combine the two perspectives rather than seeing the two processes separately. This theoretical stance has influenced the choice of methodology used in
this study. Using a largely qualitative approach that focuses on the results of in-depth interviews has facilitated the understanding of the contradictions, tensions and continuities between growing up and being young from young people’s point of view. Before presenting my main findings, the next chapter will provide an overview of the location of the study.