Chapter 3

Family Expectations and Cultures of Educated Youth

This chapter will elaborate what tertiary education means for young people in Pontianak. For many young men and women, participating in tertiary education is considered part of fulfilling family expectations. It is one way of growing up by showing responsibility, especially to parents, and strengthening bonds of interdependence in the family. However, tertiary education also functions as a medium to construct youth identity through ‘cultures of educated youth’. At the end of the chapter, I will show how young people actively strategise to negotiate the process of growing up and being young within the domain of tertiary education.

The Sarjana Degree as a Means of Growing Up

For ethnic minorities or people living in peripheral locations, such as Pontianak, education is often a means to achieve collective empowerment, and not merely a means to individual upward mobility. Abada and Tenkorang (2009: 202), for instance, argue that immigrant youth in Canada (especially those of Asian and South Asian descent) achieve academic success with the support of their families. Family relations function as social capital in their children’s educational sphere.
as families tend to motivate their children and expect their children to achieve academic success. Immigrant children who receive tertiary education are expected to increase the possibilities of social mobility which will benefit the whole family. The same holds true for immigrant youth in the United States (Fuligni, 2001) and young people in Pontianak, who pursue tertiary education to fulfil family expectations rather than merely for the academic life. Family expectations that young people try to fulfil through tertiary education include getting a better job in the future, finding a compatible future spouse, and obtaining a prestigious *sarjana* degree. The Indonesian term *sarjana* may refer to a four year university degree or to a person holding the degree.\(^{56}\) There are various levels of tertiary education offered in Pontianak, the most popular being a one-year diploma (D1), a two-year diploma (D2/Akta II), a three-year diploma (D3), and a full undergraduate programme (S1, D4 or *Akta IV*)\(^{57}\). Not all of these programmes confer titles, except the S1 and D4\(^{58}\) programme which confers the *sarjana* degree to its graduates.

**Getting a ‘Better Job’**

Here, I will elaborate how tertiary education functions as a means to an end. The human capital perspective argues that education facilitates economic growth and development (Blundell et al., 1999). Tertiary education is usually considered a capital for securing ‘good jobs’ and

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\(^{56}\) In this text, ‘*sarjana* degree’ is used when it refers to the degree. When it refers to the person, the term ‘*sarjana*’ alone is used.

\(^{57}\) D in these abbreviations stands for Diploma, S for *Sarjana. Akta* is a qualification specifically for teachers. Diploma programmes are ‘vocational’ or applied tertiary education.

\(^{58}\) Even if a D4 programmes confers the title of *sarjana*, it is considered less prestigious than a four-year university programme because of its applied nature.
enables a person to achieve upward social mobility (Haveman and Smeeding, 2006), despite the ambiguities many families often face in relation to how much return they will obtain from investing in their children’s education (Demerath, 1999: 171-174). In the context of developing countries, senior high school and tertiary education is usually regarded as the basic capital for increasing the chances of acquiring these ‘good jobs’, which usually refer to jobs in the formal sector, especially permanent white collar jobs or state office jobs (Maria, 2002; Jeffrey et al., 2008; Schielke, 2009: 255-256; Kompas Ekstra, 2012).

In the small survey I carried out, 68 per cent of respondents said that the main reason for participating in tertiary education was hope of obtaining a better job (*mendapat pekerjaan yang lebih baik*) in the future. An equal proportion of young men and young women reported this as the main reason for entering tertiary education (50 per cent each), which supports the notion that paid work is important for both young men and young women. Seventy-four per cent of these young people consider a job in the civil service a ‘better job’, despite the fact that employment opportunities in Pontianak for those graduating from tertiary education institutions are mainly in the service sector outside the state domain. Positions offered in this sector include sales promotion (for young women) at the mall, or staff in companies/hotels/restaurants (for both young men and young women), which usually require some kind of tertiary education (regardless of level, be it at the diploma level or the four-year university level).

59 The remaining 32 percent of the respondents prioritised reasons other than ‘getting a better job’ for pursuing a tertiary education. However, this does not mean that the expectation of finding a better job is not also a significant motivation for participating in tertiary education.
Parents expect their children who have received tertiary education to obtain a ‘better’ job after they graduate. Parents hope that their children will be able to enhance the family’s position by doing so, as stated by Ibu Era. Ibu Era is a stay-at-home mother with four children and married to a mid-level civil servant. Her eldest daughter has graduated from university and is looking for a job. Her other two children are in tertiary education, while the youngest is still in elementary school. Like her husband, Ibu Era is a senior high school graduate and admits that she has limited knowledge of university life. What she believes, however, is that tertiary education will open up opportunities for her children to achieve a higher position in their careers than her husband has.

I will send all my children to university, I don’t tell them which university to go to, I let them choose (because) I don’t know about universities. I want them to get a job, a permanent one, not a contract one. (A state job), like their father’s. But he only graduated from senior high school. Going to university will secure them a better position in a permanent job, and make their parents proud. (Ibu Era, 47, a Malay mother)

Echoing Ibu Era’s words, her eldest daughter also sees tertiary education as a way to secure a job in the formal sector. Though she was more realistic about her chances of actually getting a permanent job in the formal sector with her university degree, her motivation to go for tertiary education was framed within the notion of fulfilling her mother’s expectations.
My mother would consider me successful if I got a job in the formal sector. Actually, I know that after university there is no guarantee (of getting a job in the formal sector). But I think university is something that I have to do so I can (try to) live up to the expectations (of my parents), to make them happy...that is part of adulthood (Mully, 26, a Malay woman).

As suggested by the quotes above, investing in tertiary education is related to expectations of occupational upward mobility, especially in comparison to their parents’ occupational domain. In Ibu Era’s case, her children are expected to achieve upward mobility within the same work domain as their father. This is not always the case. Many young men and women in my small survey equated ‘better job’ with a job outside their parents’ occupational domain (not just having a better career within the same occupational domain). In my small survey, most parents were employed in non-government jobs, mainly in the agricultural and (small scale) business sector. This may explain why they see civil service jobs as the pathway to social mobility, whatever position they may eventually attain. Tertiary education is the first step in achieving this aspiration, as it is now the minimum education requirement for a civil service job. Applicants must have at least a D2/ Akta II to apply for elementary school teacher positions. These were the only vacancies available during my field research that required D2/Akta II, as other positions required higher education levels (Government of Pontianak, 2009b). Some districts have even started refusing D2 applicants for the position of an elementary school teacher, requiring instead at least a D3 (Tribun Pontianak, 16 July 2010). In Chapter 4, I will elaborate in further detail why civil service jobs are seen in that way.
In other cases, however, assumptions of upward social mobility by securing an office job do not always refer to jobs in the civil service. Julie, for instance, expressed her intention of getting an office job in a private company, which she considers to be better than her parents’ occupation as shopkeepers. She explains that working in a private company can offer her the opportunity to achieve upward social mobility and become financially independent. Her interest in working in a private company may also be influenced by the extremely low chance of a Chinese obtaining a civil service position, even though there is no official discrimination.

I continued to tertiary education to get a good job. If I was only a high school graduate, I’d just be a shop assistant (in my parents’ shop). But if I have a D3 (three-year diploma) or an S1 (undergraduate degree), (I) can work in an office. I would have a better job than my parents. Even to get a job in sales in a company (I would have) to have a D3 (certificate). Rarely are there openings for office jobs for high school graduates. (Tertiary education) is a must in this ‘modern’ age. (Julie, 21, a Chinese woman)

Fulfilling family expectations through participation in tertiary education is not only associated with acquiring better jobs in the future. Tertiary education is also assumed to make young men and young women more eligible, when it comes to seeking a compatible spouse in the future. The next section will discuss this point.
Finding a Compatible Spouse

I have elaborated above the importance of education as a means for upward mobility, as it builds expectations of acquiring a job that is considered superior to the occupations of the previous generation. Education also plays a part in ensuring other dimensions of the social reproduction process, such as finding a compatible spouse by using tertiary education as capital. As also suggested by Arends-Kuennig (2000: 130-132), education increases one’s chances of obtaining a spouse, especially among young men. For instance, Yulius is a young Dayak man from Landak, a district not far away from Kota Pontianak. Yulius’ parents stress the importance of him obtaining a sarjana degree, which will provide the bargaining power needed to attract a compatible spouse, that is, a young woman who is also a sarjana. Though he agrees with his parents, he is in fact dating a senior high school graduate who is not interested in continuing her education to university. Confronted with this reality, Yulius argues that his status as a future sarjana gives him the right to enhance his girlfriend’s level of education so that she is acceptable to his family. Otherwise, he feels that he would have no right to do so.

Adulthood is about making parents proud, by finding a compatible spouse…I will be a sarjana when I graduate. If (my girlfriend) is not a sarjana, then I will ask her to get a sarjana degree. In my family, it has never happened (that one ends up marrying someone with a lower educational background). If I date someone who is not a sarjana, I will not be acknowledged as being part of the family. So I also have to be a sarjana and I have told my girlfriend to go...
to university, so that when we are married, she will also be accepted by my family…(Yulius, 20, a Dayak man)

While a *sarjana* degree tends to enhance a young man’s eligibility in his search for a spouse, it may have the opposite effect for young women (Raymo and Iwasawa, 2005). Young women usually expect to marry a young man with at least the same level of education, but preferably a man with a higher education level than themselves. However, this does not seem to be the case in Pontianak. For some families in Pontianak, *where* a young man studied is more important than what education level he has achieved. This perhaps has to do with the current trend of increased educational opportunities for young women, even in Pontianak (Pontianak Statistics Bureau, 2008b). One consequence is that it reduces the possibility of them getting a husband with the same level of education.

Dea comes from Pontianak district. She had just finished tertiary education in Yogyakarta when I met her. She told me about her boyfriend who has a three-year diploma (D3). Having a *sarjana* degree, she emphasised her awareness that people would expect a young woman like her to find a future husband with (at least) the same level of education. But what is important for her and her parents is the fact that her boyfriend has studied in Java.

(Everybody says) that you have to look for a spouse who surpasses you (*pasangan yang lebih*)60. My boyfriend is a D3 graduate, while I am a *sarjana*. My parents don’t consider level of education (as an

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60 This means that a young man is expected to have a higher level of education than his future spouse.
important factor in considering a future husband). But then, my boyfriend graduated from Tasikmalaya (West Java), so that makes his position is a bit higher (agak keangkat). (Dea, 25, a Dayak woman)

For some Madurese youth, having a sarjana degree is not enough. Madurese parents consider a sarjana degree from an Islamic education institution, or a sarjana degree complemented by a pesantren (Islamic boarding school) education, as an advantage when it comes to promoting their sons to other families. Firmansyah, whose father is a speedboat driver, expressed his pride at having managed to fulfil this criterion. When I interviewed him, he had just broken up with his girlfriend. However, being a sarjana from STAIN, he was confident of his chances in finding another girlfriend.

When parents see us, people like me, who have studied at university and have a pesantren background, my parents can say ‘can you find fault with Firmansyah?’ So other Madurese families (who have a daughter) will say ‘OK, then’ (ye udahlah). I can also eye up other young women; there are many to choose from. (Firmansyah, 25, a Madurese man).

**The Prestigious Sarjana**

Parents often expect their children to obtain a sarjana degree or become a sarjana, but not necessarily to acquire knowledge through learning. The sarjana degree is valuable in itself as a status symbol.

As I was entering the house of Dewi, one of my informants, I noticed a large framed picture of her whole family hanging on the wall. The picture was taken at a photo studio after Dewi’s graduation
ceremony at Tanjungpura University in 2005. Dewi, wearing her graduation gown, smiles alongside her proud parents. Graduation photographs are common in many of the houses that I visited, where older brothers or sisters or sometimes even extended family members in gowns decorated the walls of the living room. These pictures are on display to the public as a reminder of their social status or their connection with a person of higher social status, a sarjana.

Gerke (2000: 135-156) observes that diplomas and educational titles are often used as a symbolic capital to gain entrance into the Indonesian middle class. As a consequence, most young people prefer to enter an S1 programme. In most cases, young people who do not continue to an S1 programme are unable to do so for financial reasons, not out of choice.

The focus group discussion I had with students at Tanjungpura University also confirms my observation of the importance of the sarjana degree for young people’s families. One of the students explained that most of his friends go to university merely to obtain the sarjana certificate, and many of the others in the group agreed. As shown in Table 5, obtaining the status of an educated person was one of the reasons for young people to enter tertiary education, especially for young men. Out of the 14 per cent of the respondents who regarded tertiary education as significant for status (over tertiary education as a means to attain a better job), 64 per cent were young men.

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61 The respondents were only allowed to give one answer.
Table 5 Primary reason for participating in tertiary education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining a better job</td>
<td>68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educational status</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding knowledge</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reasons</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
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Pepen, for example, expressed how meaningful the *sarjana* degree is, for himself and his family. Pepen comes from a small village in Pontianak district. His father is a farmer who did not finish elementary school. Pepen’s faith in the power of tertiary education to enhance his family’s status was strong enough to make him work hard to finance his studies. His parents only gave him 30,000-40,000 rupiahs each time he went back home to visit them, which was not very often. So Pepen combined study with work. His educational background in a *Madrasah* (from elementary to senior high), enabled him to offer children lessons in Quran reading.

Why did I decide to go for tertiary education? Because in my (extended) family, on my father’s side, my mother’s side, nobody did tertiary education back then…My family expects me to become a *sarjana*. So I said to myself that I have to go to university so people will respect my family. Not one person in my family (of

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62 An average meal at the time Pepen studied would cost around 5,000 rupiahs.
63 An Islamic school
my parents’ generation) has gone for tertiary education to get a title (sarjana degree). (Pepen, 29, a Malay man).

Not all young men and young women are capable of entering tertiary education, despite the significance the sarjana degree has for them. Like Pepen, financial constraints are usually the main reason that a young person decides not to continue to tertiary education. It is often considered inappropriate to burden parents with the responsibility of financing their children’s tertiary education. Mala, for instance, has just graduated from senior high school and is working in an internet café near her house. She is confident about her intellectual capacity, which she measures from her acceptance into prestigious (but relatively cheap) state secondary schools. However, she failed the entrance test for Tanjungpura University. Her parents, who are small traders, cannot afford to finance her studies at a private university. Like Pepen, she was willing to work to help finance her studies at university. But she knew that no matter how hard she worked, she would never earn enough to go to a private university. At the time this study was conducted, the tuition fees at Tanjungpura University were 400,000-500,000 rupiahs. This is much less than at Widya Dharma or STKIP PGRI, where the fees were around 2,000,000-3,000,000 rupiahs a semester.\(^{64}\)

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\(^{64}\) Young people like Mala have even less chance of going to university since the increase in tuition fees in 2013. In 2011, the rector guaranteed that there would be no increase in tuition fees at Tanjungpura for the 2011/2012 academic year (Kompas, 15 July 2011), but there has been a considerable increase for the 2013/2014 academic year. The lowest tuition fee is now 1,033,000 rupiahs, which applies to most majors in the Faculty of Social Sciences, but most faculties charge around 2,000,000 rupiahs (Tanjungpura University, 2013). Tuition fees for the academic year 2013/2014 at private universities, such as STKIP PGRI Pontianak, remain more or less the same (STKIP PGRI Pontianak, 2013).
I wanted to go to university, to a state university. (My parents) supported the idea, but I did not pass the selection test at UNTAN. Private university is not an option. If some people only go to university (without combining it with work), that is their choice. If I went to university, I would have to work. But private university is too expensive. I pity my parents who had financed me up to high school. I don’t want to force my parents, I would be embarrassed to have to ask them for more money (to go to private university). (Mala, 19, a Malay woman)

Sometimes parents and their children have a different understanding of the meaning of the sarjana degree, which causes tension in family relationships. In these cases, young people often submit to their parents’ demands. For instance, Anto wanted to become a police officer after graduating from senior high school. For him, the sarjana degree did not mean much, especially in comparison to entering the police force. His desire to enter the police force was so strong that he was greatly disappointed when his mother did not approve. Eventually he decided to follow his mother’s wishes when he was offered a place in a tertiary education institution in Java without an entry test. He would have resisted following his mother’s wishes if he had had to stay in Pontianak for tertiary education. He thought that having a sarjana degree from Java would mean having a more prestigious status in the future, and that the family would also be more respected.

The sarjana (degree) may be the same, but it is different if you get it from Java. It’s better, the quality, and people will respect you more. (Anto, 27, a Dayak man)
Meanwhile, Illa’, who graduated from the Faculty of Economics at a private university in Pontianak, expressed her frustration when one of her uncles accused her of not living up to his expectation of what a sarjana is. Illa’ comes from a small village in the district of Sanggau. In her village, a sarjana is expected to understand contemporary issues that the people in the village do not. She explained that one day, her uncle asked her about a problem he was having with his computer. Illa’ was honest enough to say that she knew nothing about computers. This was not the answer he expected, and he expressed his disappointment in the sarjana identity that Illa’ has. After explaining several times that an S1 programme varies and that computer science was not her major, Illa’ stopped trying. She just tried to show empathy with her uncle in order to avoid conflict with him.

He said (in a cynical tone) ‘you are a sarjana and yet you don’t even know (how to solve) a simple problem like this.’ At that time he was with his laptop. (I tried telling him) that this has nothing to do with me being a sarjana (because) I studied many things, (but) not about computers. He has said (things like that) two or three times, so I just said to myself, he is an older person who has lived in this village all his life. He does not understand. So I tried to understand him. A sarjana is better equipped to think about the future (consequences). I don’t want conflict. (Illa’, 23, a Dayak woman)
The Mahasiswa and Cultures of Educated Youth

The previous section has explained how participating in tertiary education is considered a way young people fulfil family expectations. I have explained what acquiring educational status means for young people’s families and how it functions as a strategy to become an adult. In this section, I will explain another dimension to the importance of educational status – that is of being young. Being an educated young person often involves styles of appropriation, which are a source of cultural distinction (Jeffrey et al., 2005) that differentiates between educated and non educated youth. This includes ways educated youth try to maintain their respected identity as young educated people through engagement in a certain lifestyle (for example, the use of language, time or space), even within their limited economic capabilities (Jeffrey, et al., 2008: 62-77).

The Mahasiswa as Urban Intellectuals

In Indonesian, the term mahasiswa (from Sanskrit, literally ‘great student’) is used to refer to students in tertiary education. Therefore a mahasiswa is not just any student, but a student of a higher intellect, and thus of higher status and prestige. The term commonly used to refer to the education process of a mahasiswa is kuliah (literally, ‘attending lectures’). Kuliah only applies to mahasiswa, while sekolah (going to school) is a term for lower educational levels. Tertiary education provides a means of being young that separates young people from other youth who are not in tertiary education, and from the rest of society. This already distinguishes the mahasiswa as a superior identity,
which in turn is an important aspect of being young, as illustrated by the following two statements.

People in (tertiary) education are different (from the rest of society), especially the way they talk, (and) how they analyse other people’s sentences (what other people say). (Lina, 24, a Dayak woman)

The difference between young people in Siantan and Pontianak is the way that they speak. Pontianak youth are more polite when they speak, many young people in Pontianak go to university. (Young) people in Siantan are rude, even the Chinese in Siantan speak rough... not coarse in what they say, but just in the way that they speak. (Dendy, 19, a Chinese man)

In Pontianak, the notion of being an educated person is often intertwined with the identity of being modern and urbanised, which contributes to the formation of various ‘cultures of educated youth’ in this city. Some of the students I met are not interested in learning, but fixated on building the *mahasiswa* identity, which emphasises the image of urbanity and modernity. For instance, Mimi moved to Pontianak when she was in junior high school. Mimi says that many of her friends do not really take much interest in studying, and the urban experience often diverts them from finishing their education. Mimi explained that the homogenous life in the rural areas immediately changes when they come to the city. Social stratification, she says,

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65 Siantan is the capital of Pontianak Utara subdistrict. I have mentioned in Chapter 2 that this subdistrict is often associated with poor and uneducated young people. There are also no big universities in this part of Pontianak, just small academies offering diploma programmes.
becomes apparent, and this usually drives young people to consumptive behaviour in order to keep up with their peers.

...their reason (for studying in the city) is actually their interest in city (life). The kinds of friends they meet (in the city) changes, and their social status also changes. By social status, I mean, in rural areas simplicity is valued, most come from modest backgrounds (keluarga yang biasa-biasa) or (their parents are) teachers...(and social status) does not matter much. Here, they meet children of high ranking civil servants and merchants, (anak pejabat, anak pedagang), they meet people who dress smartly (perlente), coming to campus by car or motorcycle, while they just walk...it makes them feel degraded and beneath them (the upper class youth). Their parents who tap rubber can send them money, but only enough to eat, and here they want to buy credit for their mobiles, they want to hang out in the mall...in the end they become frustrated and some, who give in to temptation, end up selling themselves to oom-oom or tante-tante⁶⁶. Regardless of all that, they (still maintain) their status as modern youth (through) being a mahasiswa. (Mimi, 27, a Dayak woman)

Not all young people go to the extremes described above in constructing the mahasiswa identity. Tina, from the district of Sanggau admitted that she wanted to have fancy things after coming to Pontianak. Unfortunately she cannot afford them, so she dates a couple of young men who are also studying in tertiary education in Pontianak. She dates young men who are willing to take her out to a restaurant,

⁶⁶ Oom-oom refers to older men, and tante-tante to older women, who are willing to pay for sex.
buy her clothes, and cover her mobile phone bills. She does all this without her steady boyfriend in Sanggau knowing.

The perception of possessing the ‘cultural capital’ of being educated and streetwise in an urban context aside, the increase in the past decade in the number of mahasiswa in Pontianak, has shifted the meaning of being a mahasiswa. Being a mahasiswa is idealised as the mainstream youth identity, rather than an identity achievable only by a specific group of young people. This applies especially to young people who have been in education institutions in Pontianak before entering university, because ‘everybody’ in Pontianak seems to be going to university. As such, going to university feels like the normal thing to do after senior high school. Epi, whose father works as head security guard at a junior high school in Pontianak, was actually not interested in going on to tertiary education. However, because his friends were going to university, he decided to go anyway. For Epi, a Malay young man of 23, going on to tertiary education is a means of keeping his friends from senior high school. He knows that his going to university is a burden on his parents, but he insists on not being left out of his social group. He says that it would ‘feel awkward’ if he did not go to university.

Working Mahasiswa and Killing Time

Cultures of educated youth that form the mahasiswa identity in Pontianak do not only involve displays of urbanity and modernity. They also involve a strategy young people use to kill time, pass time (Jeffrey, 2010), avoid boredom (Schielke, 2009), or as Stefanus in Pontianak says, to avoid ‘doing nothing’. Stefanus (20) was chosen by his high school to apply for merit-based entry to Tanjungpura University without a test,
also known as PMDK (*Penelusuran Minat dan Kemampuan*). He passed the selection, but was not sure whether to go to university or not. He was thinking of working, but was not sure whether he would find a job immediately after high school. Later, he decided that going to university would be better than being unemployed. “I was confused... re-register or not, if not, then I would be unemployed, doing nothing. So I re-registered.” For Stefanus, tertiary education was about killing time, which he thought was better than waiting around for a job he wanted. When he finally started his years in tertiary education, he felt he had enough spare time to work. So, he helped his cousin sell fruit and vegetables on the market to earn extra cash. He needed more money to treat his girlfriend, who he has been seeing for quite a while.

Like Stefanus, some *mahasiswa* perceive that they have a lot of time to kill. With more free hours than they had at high school, many end up combining work and school. Thus, financial reasons may be a necessary condition for students to work (Curtis and Williams, 2002: 7), but the perception of having the time to do so is more important for young people in Pontianak. Muchtadin is a young man from Sambas who studied at the Faculty of Forestry. His parents often did not send him enough money. His aunt was responsible for his daily expenses, but his tuition fees and pocket money were provided by his father. With only a few classes each week, he felt that he had plenty of time on his hands to do something else. So he decided to start working in his third year, because he wanted to earn more pocket money. His lecturer offered him a marketing position on one of the faculty’s projects. This job earns him around 500,000-600,000 rupiahs a month, which he uses to buy mobile credits. He thinks the job raises his status as a *mahasiswa* because he already practices what he has learned in class. The job also
gives the impression that he is smarter than other mahasiswa, even though he admitted that a large portion of his work hours are spent in selling selected seedlings to logging companies. He ended up being behind in class and even stopped going to university.

(I worked) to earn money, I had so much free time on my hands (banyak nganggurnye). My lecturer offered migrant students the chance to earn some pocket money… I had to identify specific seedlings. You’d only know (about these seedlings) if you’d studied about them, so it is related to forestry. Eventually I got behind (in my studies). I was very confused, I stopped my education without telling my parents. (Muchtadin, 23, a Malay man)

Rita also combined school and work after her father died. She felt that a mahasiswa has more space to manage his or her free time, but she also wanted to help her mother finance her education by working. Rita chose teaching over other part-time jobs such as working as an administrator in a private company or as a waitress in a small restaurant, because teaching is a dignified profession. So even though she wanted to kill time and earn money, she still chose a job that would maintain her self-esteem and status. So she started giving private lessons to elementary school children when she did not have any classes or assignments. Though she wanted to earn money, she emphasised that the lessons she gave to children were intended to make use of her free time. She only had classes at university until the afternoon, so she had nothing to do the rest of the day.
(I was inspired) to give private lessons because there used to be many children living nearby who played around my house. They started asking questions (about) their homework, or they asked me to teach them stuff. So their parents felt uncomfortable that the children came (to my house) every day, and they brought their friends along (to ask me questions for school). I didn’t mind actually, I had the time (to help them). Classes are only until the afternoon and I like children, but their parents insisted on paying me. In the evening, I (always have the time) to teach them anyway. But I can use the money. My mother gives me money, but I also want to contribute towards (things like) gasoline for my motorcycle (to get to campus).

(Rita, 24, a Malay woman)

**Mahasiswa and Leisure Activities**

Being a *mahasiswa* offers particular leisure activities that are often not as accessible and acceptable for non *mahasiswa*. As a *mahasiswa*, hanging out is often done on campus through various organisational secretariats. This gives the impression that it is a more respected form of hanging out than hanging out at a coffee stall, because it is done in an ‘intellectual’ space. One day, one of my informants, Riri, asked if she could borrow my camera. I agreed to lend her the camera, but also asked if she could take pictures of her daily life. She handed me the results, which showed various dimensions of her life – her family, her home, and her friends. But her photos were dominated by pictures of her involvement in campus activities. I asked her why, and she explained that campus organisations are an important part of being a *mahasiswa*, just as important as studying itself. She considers her involvement in
campus activities a break from studying. For her, it is a respectable form of leisure activity.

I always get good grades…but being active in student organisations is also important as a mahasiswa. The organisations that I participate in are all good (organisations)...I have more friends, we talk about things. It’s to get away from studying. It is better (to meet here and talk) than in a coffee stall. It is more respectable (on campus). (Riri, 24, a Madurese woman)

I also visited one of the student organisations on campus, a group for music and arts, also known as bengkel seni or art workshop (see Figure 4). It was interesting for me, because unlike other secretariats, which are usually only open certain hours, this secretariat seems to be open 24/7. The secretariat is a simple building made out of plywood, with a wooden floor. It is shared with other organisations, but most of the students who hang out there are from the music and arts groups. There were always students hanging out there, sometimes playing music, or just having a chat. Most of them are young men, but sometimes there are young women too. It was of particular importance because it is used not only as place for students to hang out, but also somewhere that senior students who no longer have classes can meet and hang out. Alumni of the university who are still in Pontianak or are visiting the city, also often meet here. Thus, it functions as a connecting space where

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67 The art workshop was burned down in a fight between students of the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Engineering on March 12, 2010 (Pontianak Post, 13 March 2010). Fights between groups of students are referred to as tawuran, and have become more frequent in recent years. In 2012 alone, 11 incidences of tawuran were recorded in Jakarta (Kompas, 27 September 2012). For more on tawuran in Indonesia, see for instance, studies by Kadir (2012) and Nilan (2011b).
young people share information, especially related to youth activities happening in the city (such as concerts, theatres, etc.). This place is preferred over others because it provides a sense of collective ownership, and it is free.

Figure 4 Mahasiswa hanging out in campus secretariats

Being young through the mahasiswa identity is not a privilege for all mahasiswa. Ari, for instance, expressed how young women like her have to choose between continuing education or working. She felt that her parents did not leave her much space and time to think about what she wanted to do after senior high school. So she decided to continue her education to buy time to think about what she wants to do later in life. She expressed how different her experience was to that of her male
peers, most of whom, at the age of 25, are still free to explore their options. She said that young men of 25, knowing what they want with their future and making preparations for it, are the exception rather than the norm.

Men have more freedom (to choose) what they want do. Some of my male friends already have targets for their future, saving money for marriage – even though they are only 25. That is really early for men, but not for women... Usually men can still think about their options until they are 30, 35. (Ari, 22, a Dayak woman)

Muchtadin, the young man in the case above who worked and got left behind in his studies, explained that young women do not have as much space as young men to ‘stay young’. Referring to the experiences of young women in his small village in the district of Sambas, he said that young women typically have three choices after high school: marriage, work, or going on to tertiary education. Young women are not given much time to explore their options after high school. Thus, many young women opt to go for tertiary education in Pontianak so they can hang out and have fun. There are also many recreation facilities in Pontianak, like the mall where they can hang out with their friends and ‘do nothing’. He considers that urban society is more accepting of this behaviour among young women than rural society. So for some young women, being a mahasiswa is also a means to prolong their youth.

Young women spend their leisure time in specific places and at particular times. These places are ‘safe places’ such as the home or respectable public places. Their activities, usually carried out during day time or in the evening, include hanging out on campus or at a friend’s
house, or eating out with a friend. Lincoln (2004) argues a distinct youth culture exists among young women, which he refers to as the ‘bedroom culture’, a youth culture influenced by ideas of romance and marriage. For instance, when I hung out with the young women, the liveliest topics of discussion would be their love lives or their relationships with their boyfriends. There was a tendency for young women to share intimate details of their love life when hanging out in the privacy of their homes. This included instances when other family members, especially parents, were out or were in another room, out of earshot.

However, some young women, like Sari, attempt to reject the ideas of femininity that bind women to these particular places. As a migrant student from Ketapang, she is far from the watchful eye of her parents, and campus grounds provide her the opportunity to enjoy her social life. Sari is known as a tomboy among her male peers. She likes to hang out at the art workshop, where most of the others are young men. One of the young men at the art workshop said that Sari insists on paying for her own drinks and meals when she hangs out with them in the campus canteen – a reaction rare among young women when a man offers to treat them. She is not shy, either, about the fact that she is attracted to Adi, one of the young men who is also a member of the art workshop. When Adi decided to go out with another young woman, Sari was generous enough to congratulate him. She also refused to shy away from the art workshop community out of embarrassment because Adi rejected her in favour of another. For young women, being rejected by a young man is often considered much more humiliating than vice versa.

I know I am considered a tomboy, that’s OK. I like it (because) I don’t want to be (seen) as weak. I like to
hang out with young men. (There is more) freedom.  
(Sari, 25, a Malay woman)

Young men have more options where to spend their leisure time. Urban nightscape (Robinson, 2009) often provide the opportunity for young men to find leisure space to experiment with behaviour commonly deprecated by adults. In Pontianak, these spaces include campus grounds, cafés, open spaces such as the town square and sport hall grounds. For young men, these spaces provide a place to consume alcohol, smoke and take drugs, which facilitate the construction of a masculine identity (Mullen et al., 2007; Ng, 2007), including that of young men in Pontianak.

Ony, a young man who lives in the outskirts of Pontianak city admitted that the reason he wanted to study in the centre of the city was because in his home community, drugs and alcohol are strictly controlled.

(I) chose to study in Pontianak because I wanted to know about (city) life, observe the young people, (including) in destructive (activities)...I wanted to know, and I ended up involving myself in those activities ha ha ha (laughs)...well, we’re young, so boys will always (be involved) with narcotics, drugs, that’s for sure. It’s important for young men. (Ony, 25, a Madurese man)

What separates the consumption of alcohol among mahasiswa and non-mahasiswa is the capability to manage their alcohol intake. As such, young people also perceive that society provides more space for a mahasiswa to consume alcohol, as society assumes mahasiswa are
better able to manage alcohol intake than high school students are. Leo, a young man from the district of Landak says that when he moved to Pontianak, he often hung out with his friends and got drunk. He thought that it was a normal thing to do as a migrant student coming to the city, even though after a while he decided to reduce his alcohol intake to make sure he does not get drunk.

I was still like a high school kid back then. You know, (high school students) don’t have (self) control. In my first, second semester (of university), I often got drunk (but) I didn’t do drugs. I got wiser afterwards. Many of my friends did (drugs). People who hang out have many friends who are like that. But (now) many of my friends just hang out but don’t drink alcohol; they just hang out. Maybe some drink, but others don’t. (Leo, 20, a Dayak man)

The notion that *mahasiswa* have more control over alcohol intake is supported by Mak Mas. Mak Mas is a forty-something canteen owner at one of the universities in Pontianak. Even though her canteen is located on campus, she admits that it is a place where some ‘naughty young men’ (*budak degel*) hang out. At night, these male students bring in alcohol and get drunk.

They are actually nice, and not all get drunk. There are some who don’t (get drunk). I try to understand (that the ones who get drunk) just want to have fun and relieve stress. I don’t mind (them drinking) as long as they don’t wreck my place. (Mak Mas, 40, a Malay woman)
Because alcohol management is important, beer (rather than traditional forms of alcohol drinks such as arak or tuak, or even factory-made local products) is considered a better choice of alcohol drink. Beer contains less alcohol, which decreases the risk of getting drunk. Staying sober while drinking alcohol is said to be what characterises the drinking habits of mahasiswa, as mentioned by Hanan.

Mahasiswa don’t get drunk like (people do) in the village. We try not to drink arak or tuak (because they contain) too much alcohol. We like beer. If we have no money (to buy beer), then we just buy arak, tuak, or maybe factory-made bottled alcohol if we have a bit of money. But we only drink a little bit (if we buy arak or tuak). Drinking is only for relaxation, not to get drunk.

(Hanan, 26, a Malay man)

However, the perception that a masculine mahasiswa identity involves smoking, the use of drugs and alcohol, is not shared by young women. They can tolerate smoking as a way of demonstrating masculinity, but not drugs and alcohol. Young women who are attracted to the ‘bad boy’ image of masculinity (those who do alcohol and drugs) are considered the exception, because the negative stigma of being a ‘naughty girl’ (cewek nakal) rubs off on them. Also, not all young men agree that smoking, drugs and alcohol perpetuate the masculine identity. Bhakti is a mahasiswa who often works night shifts in cafés. He admits that he smokes and enjoys a bit of alcohol now and then, but he would never do drugs.

Young men who do narcotics are failing themselves. I have friends that are like that (take drugs). I don’t stay
away from them, as long as they don’t force me to use drugs too. If they want to get high, then get high, but don’t take too much, otherwise you’ll die (I say to them). That’s all I can say to them. (Bhakti, 24, a Malay man)

Aside from smoking, taking drugs, and drinking alcohol, for young men being a mahasiswa also legitimates hanging out, which might be seen as a negative behaviour if it were other groups of young men who were doing it. For example, young people who are still in high school have rigorous school hours that do not leave much time to hang out, except on a Saturday night or on Sunday. Young men at high school who hang out too often are sometimes seen as not being serious about their studies. As mentioned elsewhere, a mahasiswa has a lot of free time. Thus, hanging out is viewed as normal. On the other hand, when people who are unemployed hang out, it is often seen as a waste of time – a form of ‘laziness’. Andy, a young man from Ketapang notices that,

Nowadays young people continue their education to university so they can hang out together, to meet friends, (but) not to study. It is different from (hanging out) when (a person) is unemployed. (Hanging out while being unemployed) seems like (one is) wasting time, (being) lazy, (or) not wanting to work. (Andy, 24, a Malay man)

In the previous section, I have shown how the sarjana degree functions as a means to an end (enabling young people to obtain better jobs and find a compatible spouse in the future) as well as cultural resource in itself. Here, I will show the limitations of the sarjana degree in facilitating the growing up process, which forces young people to find other ways
to grow up through the education system. One of these ways is by engaging in youth cultures within and outside the university system, which they assume will complement the goals that the sarjana degree is supposed to serve. One of these is the arisan nilai system.

**The Arisan Nilai System and Hanging Out**

The value of the sarjana degree for families actually lies in the state’s acknowledgement of it, which opens the possibility of upward social mobility in formal sectors that is very central in young people’s narratives. However, many young people are also aware that there are not enough jobs available that match their educational background. Nonetheless, the sarjana degree is a resource for survival – a resource that gives many youngsters the minimum base from which to apply for work in the formal sector. The function of the sarjana degree as a resource for survival was mentioned by one of the senior lecturers I met, Pak Alam. He is aware of the reality that youth have to face today, where education can no longer be expected to help them get a job – any kind of job, let alone a job that matches their educational background. When he made that statement, his expression was a combination of frustration and disappointment. He told me that he has siblings with S1 diplomas who graduated around 2000, but none is working in a field that they were trained for. So, he is very pessimistic about education as a means to securing a good and satisfying job.
I always tell the students, tertiary education is only a means for survival\textsuperscript{68} (\textit{untok betahan jak}), that’s it. (Pak Alam, 54, a senior lecturer)

The gloomy picture of tertiary education in West Kalimantan is portrayed on one of the websites that discusses education in Pontianak. The website emphasises the need to provide quality education in West Kalimantan, parallel to that found in Java. Many parents cannot afford to send their children to Java to study. By increasing the quality of education, students from lower social economic background will have the same access to quality education as their more privileged peers who are able to study in Java (InfoPontianak, 2011).

Some students expressed that class sessions were boring for them as a techno savvy generation. Older or senior lecturers are reluctant to learn to use technology that young people are used to. Rarely did I find classes with the technology to generate interactive and interesting teaching processes. Many classes still use black/white boards (with limited use of overhead projectors). However, this only partially explains the de-motivation among the students. One of the most important factors in quality education is the teacher’s performance, creativity, teaching style and their commitment to their profession (Supriyoko, 2012). Authoritarian teaching styles (Tribun Jogja, 1 October 2012) and poorly trained teachers (Kompas, 7 December 2012) remain one of Indonesia’s main problems in enhancing the quality of education.

In her research among students at the Faculty of Economics, Tanjungpura University, Ramadania (2008: 52) suggests that ignorant

\textsuperscript{68} What he means here is that tertiary education merely provides the minimum base for applying for jobs, even though these may not be ideal jobs that offer job satisfaction and decent pay.
attitudes among lecturers are one of the main sources of dissatisfaction among university students. These ignorant attitudes are reflected in lecturers’ lack of empathy towards the students’ learning needs, the difficulty students have reaching lecturers via phone or text message, and the dearth of guidance offered to students by academic counsellors. Lecturers have thus become uninspiring and motivation to learn has remained low. Ramadania’s study is a reflection of dissatisfaction among students in one of the preferred faculties; and perhaps it is even worse in other non-preferred faculties.

Many students also stated their disinterest in using the library. It was the last thing on their mind, as stated by Ian.

I never go to the library, I don’t even know when it is open or what time it closes, ha ha ha (laughs)...sometimes I study, but not at the library...and that is only when there is going to be an exam. (Ian, 21, a Malay man)

Though Ian did not specifically mention why he did not take interest in going to the library, the lack of good books on the shelves, the disorganised catalogue system, and the unenthusiastic librarians in one of the libraries that I visited, may have been among the reasons for students’ lack of interest in visiting the library.

The high expectations parents have of the sarjana degree stand in contrast to young people’s awareness of its limited capacity to access the jobs they dream of. Poor education facilities exacerbate the need to emphasise the symbolic function the sarjana degree has – the diploma in itself is enough. Learning becomes much less important than the grades listed on the sarjana diploma. This has given rise to the arisan
nilai system as a strategy for acquiring a sarjana degree, without having to deal with the challenges of learning.

The arisan nilai system is basically a bribery system, the term arisan being used ironically here. Arisan generally refers to a rotating savings or credit association. Members of the arisan each deposit a set amount of money. At each meeting, a member’s name is chosen at random, and he or she ‘wins’ the arisan, meaning that he/she will receive the pot of money saved by the members of the arisan. All members will be given a turn to ‘win’. The arisan also allows its members to take turns to take out loans, which they usually repay in instalments.

When I asked a student why it is called arisan nilai, he told me that it is similar in that people pool money and ‘win’, in this case, a particular grade or nilai (depending on the amount of money pooled). There are different ways in which the arisan nilai system operates, but usually one of the students plays the role of middleman. He or she distributes a form on which the students are asked to write down how much they are willing to pay. The form will later be given to the lecturer. The lecturer will then determine a student’s grade based on the amount he or she has written on the form. Usually an A costs around 50,000-75,000 rupiahs, and a B, 30,000 – 40,000 rupiahs. The middleman does not have to pay, as he will automatically get an A for his services.

The term arisan in the campus context seems to refer to all activities related to bribes paid for grades, regardless of whether it involves the actual pooling of money. For instance, students also use the term arisan (or in some cases, sogok, meaning bribe) to refer to the money paid directly to a lecturer to pass the defence of their undergraduate thesis. Some students pay 100,000 rupiahs to each of the committee members, and in this case, no middleman is involved. In
addition, some lecturers require that their students bring a basket of fruit, snacks or biscuits to their home the day before the defence. I happened to accompany one of the students to his friend’s house. This student wanted to ask the direction to his thesis advisor’s house, because he wanted to deliver some biscuits to him. I asked his friend whether this delivery was actually necessary, the friend said,

…if we don’t deliver anything to the lecturer’s house, he/she will make up excuses for not showing up for the defence, like forgetting the schedule or something. A friend of mine, Carla, paid 100,000 rupiahs, so the lecturer wouldn’t ask too many questions. (Dedi, 25, a Malay man)

Of course, not all campuses have an arisan nilai system, and not all students or lecturers participate in it. For instance, high achieving students are not always keen on paying lecturers for their grades. One of the examples of a high achiever is Riessa. I had a chat with her one day at her faculty canteen after one of her classes. While we were chatting about daily life, Riessa suddenly stopped. She had a troubled expression looking at her agenda. I asked her what was wrong, and she explained that she feels that she has been discriminated against by one of her lecturers, because she asked why he gave her a low grade for his class.

You know, I always get an A, sometimes a B. But a B minimum. Suddenly I get a C. I asked (the lecturer) why I got a C, and he was furious. Really mad. I asked if I could get a resit and he refused. I didn’t pay (the lecturer). I have friends who did get a good grade. My friends who never study get good grades (because they pay)…I know (my friends who pay) just never
study. I am going to try to meet him again this week. Some of my friends say I am too ambitious, having to have A (for all subjects). So I only told my best friend about my concerns (over this grade). (Riessa, 21, a Madurese woman)

Because the system incorporates short cuts to earn grades and the sarjana diploma, youth cultures of hanging out on campus are even more prominent. What else is there to do on campus when the motivation to learn is low? Since the sarjana degree functions mainly as a symbolic capital in itself, hanging out is sometimes a way to find other means of growing up in the university context. Youth cultures of hanging out on campus become a strategy to acquire networks and information that will facilitate future transitions to work, as Yayan explained.

Yayan comes from the subdistrict of Matan Raya, about a four-hour drive from Pontianak. He sees hanging out as an investment in his future. Rather than seeing it as a waste of time, he sees it as a way to scope out potential sites for future business opportunities. He often hangs out at his faculty canteen while playing chess with his friends. He also often goes to billiard halls, where he hangs out with three of his best friends to have some fun off campus. No matter where the hanging out takes place, he feels it is important to have friends from campus to hang out with. Even the friends from his hometown that he sometimes hangs out with are students, though from different universities. He describes how hanging out at mobile phone counters on campus could benefit him financially.
I go to university… I hang out the smart way… I usually hang out at mobile phone counters around campus. If hanging out doesn’t get me something (I don’t do it)... you know when they just talk about stuff (*berbual-bual*), their lives, their girlfriends. Sometimes hanging out (produces) something (money), like when I help out at the mobile phone counter. Or sometimes (I hang out) at a coffee shop near campus. There I get to know people, middlemen looking for people to buy and sell mobile phones and stuff, and network. (Yayan, 20, a Malay man)

Yayan wants to open his own mobile phone counter back home, where he can provide a hang out place for other young people while earning money for himself. Hanging out on campus with *mahasiswa* from
various regions is a crucial experience for him, especially to get the connections he needs. He assumes that many migrant students like him will go back to their hometowns. He finds it more comfortable hanging out with friends from his own ethnic circle, but especially with friends from his hometown. Because he plans to open a counter in his hometown, he prefers to hang out with peers from his hometown. By doing that, he will expand his distribution network when he has opened his mobile phone counter.

Others see that hanging out as a mahasiswa is a way of meeting young men and young women from different backgrounds, which provides the opportunity to learn to be open-minded and tolerant of differences. This is part of the mahasiswa identity that Tris, a migrant Dayak student from Kapuas Dalam subdistrict, emphasises. She compares herself to her friends back home who have never experienced tertiary education and never lived in an urban environment like she has. She said that they still often feel insecure about building relations with people from a different social group, and especially of a different ethnicity. Thus, they tend to confine themselves to people from their own group. This attitude, she argues, will close doors to future opportunities, such as finding a job.

The way of thinking (back home) is wrong. Everybody is the same, no matter what ethnicity (they are), poor or rich. It depends on us whether you want to learn from other people. Here (in Pontianak), you have to learn about other people, but it all depends, whether you try or not. Being a mahasiswa in the city is supposed to change (they way you think)...Those who have been in the city to study will have adapted, and (will have) the power to find work (despite obstacles
they face). People back home are afraid of competition from people who are different (from them), of different ethnicity. (Tris, 25, a Dayak woman)

The importance of hanging out as a leisure activity and as a media to facilitate future work opportunities was also supported by Nyra. Nyra is a young Chinese woman who comes from Sekadau, a district four hours away from Pontianak. She admits that hanging out is significant to maintaining friendships, networking and for sharing experiences, especially among her urban peers. Her fascination about science and technology has influenced where she hangs out with friends, preferring internet cafés to restaurants or the mall. She argues that by having friends who share her interest in technology, she will be able to accumulate enough knowledge to achieve her dream of starting her own electronics business in the future. She does not have many friends who share her passion in the village she comes from.

When I hang out, I am happy because I meet my friends. Hanging out is important for sharing stories and experiences. The young people in my village are left behind, they have limited friends and networks, and they do not understand technology. But young people who study in Pontianak have a wide range of friends and they also understand technology. That is why we (Nyra and her friends) choose to hang out at internet cafés to acquire knowledge and to network. (Nyra, 19, a Chinese woman)

Pipi is a 24-year-old Malay woman who works in her mother’s canteen near one of the universities in Pontianak. She is in her last semesters of university and has started to work in her mother’s canteen after her
father died. With limited income, her mother had to rely on her children to run the business so that it can stay open longer hours. She admits that at first, working was only an expectation that she had to fulfil after her father died when she was still in high school. However, she now looks at it differently. Taking care of her mother’s canteen is something that she now enjoys doing, especially considering that she has more free time to do so after becoming a mahasiswa. For her, the canteen is where she hangs out and meets other students or alumni, friends, and acquaintances, not just a place to work. She says, ‘Hanging out in the canteen, I get to know many people. Many young men come in’. 

A couple of days after our first encounter, I went to her canteen again to meet someone for an interview. I noticed that there were many young men in the canteen, including a group of young men that Pipi seemed to know. All were students from various universities in Java who were back home in Sambas (a five-hour drive from Pontianak) for the vacation. They had come all the way from the district of Sambas to watch a movie at the Mega Mall. They were on a tight budget, so they decided to have lunch at Pipi’s canteen. I saw Pipi engaging in lively conversation with them, and asked whether she was so friendly with all her customers. Having so many young men from various backgrounds visiting the canteen, I asked whether she had ever had a boyfriend who she met at the canteen.

No, not yet. My mother says ‘it is a waste if you go for tertiary education, but still date boys that are degel-degel (those that hang around and have fun without thinking of their future), it is better not to have a tertiary education, high school is enough.’ Many
mahasiswa come in, but so far none (have become my boyfriend) (Pipi, 24, a Malay woman)

Her case shows that hanging out is not only beneficial to future prospects in the work domain, but also to finding a spouse. Pipi believes that being a mahasiswa herself, she has the skills to select nice young men.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that participating in tertiary education to earn a sarjana diploma is a way young people fulfil family expectations, or a way to grow up. Being in tertiary education is also about forming a mahasiswa identity by engaging in cultures of educated youth. As a result, tertiary education is both a means that young people draw upon to facilitate growing up, as well as to stall it.

As a means of growing up, a sarjana diploma is used as a means to an end: to obtain better job opportunities in the future, and to find a compatible spouse to ensure the family reproduction process. It is also used for symbolic purposes of status. It is therefore partly to be viewed as a way for young people to grow up. Gender differences exist in relation to how young people see tertiary education as a means of growing up (especially in finding a spouse) and how they construct their youth identity. There have been changes in how young women and young men evaluate the compatibility of a future spouse. Young men in tertiary education are now expecting their future spouse to be educated to at least the same level as they are, rather than accepting young women with a lower level of education. It is also more common to see
young women dating young men with lower education levels, though they often have to rationalise other positive attributes the young man has to maintain their self-esteem. Young men and young women also differ in the timing and practice of leisure as a mahasiswa. Young men have more time on their hands to engage in leisure activities, as there is no pressure to move on in their lives. There is also more freedom for young men to hang out in various locations on campus grounds, even if that involves breaking campus regulations by drinking alcohol or doing drugs. While drinking alcohol is more acceptable among the Dayak and Chinese communities, young Malay men and young Madurese men are constrained by parents and adults who observe the Islamic norm prohibiting alcohol consumption. Yet, they still find ways to engage in this youth culture of alcohol consumption in spaces where there is little or no adult control, including on campus grounds in the late hours.

The young people’s experiences in this chapter also show that they have to negotiate between family expectations of upward mobility through tertiary education and the pushdown effect of education\(^{69}\) (Keyfitz, 1989) in utilizing the sarjana diploma. Systems of bribery have become one of their strategies to attain the sarjana degree without having to put much effort into gaining a title that might otherwise be useless. Naafs (2012b: 125-126) also noted how university students in Cilegon, West Java make deals with lecturers to have ghostwriters write up their theses in return for considerable amounts of money. Other strategies include using the youth culture of hanging out to network (Jeffrey, 2010: 474), to learn to be tolerant of people from different social

\(^{69}\) The pushdown effect occurs when there is an increase in young people obtaining educational credentials, which makes it harder for them to enter the kind of work they are qualified for. Even when they do, there is a decline in the income they receive.
groups, to access future work, and even to search for their future spouse.

Yet, the paradox in making meaning of tertiary education is also shown in how young people view tertiary education as a way to postpone growing up. In peripheral locations, tertiary education institutions are usually centred in the provincial capital. Thus, being educated is associated with being modern and urbanised. Educated youth build their identity through campus settings that provide a respectable way of being young (Jeffrey, et al., 2005). Together, the qualities of being educated, modern, and urbanised form a particular culture of educated youth among mahasiswa in Pontianak. Killing time by working in dignified part-time jobs or in engaging in leisure activities on campus is one of the ways young people express their educated youth identity.

The next chapter will deal with young people’s work aspirations and the strategies they employ when their work aspirations are not fulfilled. It will also describe how young people negotiate the differences between their own work aspirations and those of their parents.