Growing up and being young in an Indonesian provincial town
Wenty Marina Minza, W.

Citation for published version (APA):
Minza, W. M. (2014). Growing up and being young in an Indonesian provincial town
The previous chapters have shown how education and work facilitate the experience of growing up and being young. Tertiary education and working as a civil servant (PNS) are a means of growing up, as they fulfil family expectations of a smooth transition to adulthood. Intragenerational relationships support the formation of a youth identity as an educated person (mahasiswa) and as a playful worker. At the same time, being a mahasiswa also facilitates growing up, as it provides opportunities for networking by hanging out on campus. Being a playful worker is relevant not only to the making of a youth identity. Playful work is also seen as a way young people re-define meaningful work in their transition to adulthood, as young people wait for better work opportunities that fulfil family expectations.

In this chapter, I discuss various forms of romantic relationship and the different meanings young people attach to them. The first section will explain how some young people see romantic relationships as a way to grow up by constructing romantic relationships in preparation for marriage. The second section will deal with romantic relationships as a form of exploration. Here, the relationship is more about identity and status rather than a preparation for marriage. The last
section will elaborate how romantic relationships also function as a youth culture of waiting, where young people construct the idea of being in long-term relationships as they ‘wait out’ the uncertainties of the transitions into work and marriage.

**Pacaran as Romantic Relationship**

Young people in Indonesia often use the term *pacaran* to refer to a love-based relationship. *Pacaran* originates from the term *pacar*, defined as a friend of the opposite sex in which a person has a love-based relationship (*hubungan cinta kasih*) (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, 2012).\(^85\) I think that *pacaran* is best explained by the term romantic relationship, as this term also mainly refers to (heterosexual) love-based relationships (Fincham and Cui, 2011: 5). Closely related to this term is ‘heterosexual relationship’, often used in developmental psychology. Developmental psychology assumes that young people become involved in heterosexual relationships to form a proper gender identity (Galliano, 2003: 98-100) and further, find a future spouse that matches their individual personality and needs (Arnett, 2006: 315-317). I have chosen to use the term ‘romantic relationships’ instead of heterosexual relationships because the term romantic relationship incorporates the ‘love-based’ aspect of the relationship (also an important part of the

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\(^{85}\) Though a *pacar* often refers to one’s partner in the context of a heterosexual relationship, it is also used in homosexual relationships (such as among lesbians and gays). Homosexual romantic relationships are no doubt also to be found among young people in Pontianak, but I did not attempt to cover this issue in this study. Therefore, this chapter is restricted to *pacaran* in heterosexual relationships (see the brief discussion about this in the following section).
definition *pacaran*), which does not seem obviously apparent in the term ‘heterosexual relationships’.

Both terms are used in a way that emphasises romantic relationships as a part of growing up, as an individual project to secure one’s transition to marriage. While this may be true, I will show that romantic relationships may be defined in a broader sense. I will try to see romantic relationships or *pacaran* in terms of how young people make different meanings of this relationship, as a way to secure one’s youth identity now, and how it compensates for not being able to grow up.

Saxby (2006) identifies the stages of *pacaran* in Jakarta, starting from being single (*jomblo*), identifying a person one likes (*gebetan*), approaching the person which often involves flirting (*PDKT* or *pendekatan*). Then the person becomes one’s girl/boyfriend (*do’i*), and if the relationship is serious, then one gets introduced to the future in-laws (*calon mertua* or *camer*); otherwise it might just stay as a casual sexual relationship (*TTM* or *teman tapi mesra*). Bennet (2001: 96) differentiates between traditional *pacaran*, modern *pacaran*, and backstreet *pacaran* in Mataram, Eastern Indonesia. Traditional *pacaran* (*midang*) implies a man visiting a woman’s house, usually done on Saturday evening and preparing the couple for marriage in the future. Modern *pacaran* (*pacaran modern*) is usually carried out outside the young woman’s home and away from parental control or supervision, while ‘backstreet’ *pacaran* (*pacaran backstreet*) is a relationship that is kept secret from parents or older relatives, usually because the young woman’s parents would disapprove of the relationship.

In some cases, *pacaran* in Indonesia is closely related to Bennet’s definition of traditional *pacaran*, which is oriented towards
marriage (Hadi, 2010). In others, it may also be a much more casual relationship, though generally involving romantic ideas (sexual attraction, physical and emotional intimacy), mutual awareness as romantic partners (Baron et al., 2008: 259), and interdependent relations over a certain period of time. This is similar to modern pacaran. Usually pacaran involves physical intimacy and sometimes, sexual intercourse. Casual friendship between a young woman and young man is not considered pacaran.

Courtship: Romantic Relationships as a Prelude to Marriage

Heteronormativity is often the rule guiding discourses of romantic relationships in many societies, including in Pontianak. This means that heterosexual relationships are considered universal and appropriate, marginalising other types of non-heterosexual relationships. In West Kalimantan, gays and transsexuals are starting to make their existence noticed by performing road shows in some of the major cities, but the majority of society is still unwilling to even acknowledge their existence (Pontianak Post, 17 February 2010). In this study, I have focused solely on mainstream, heterosexual romantic relationships, since all of the young people that I interviewed claimed to be heterosexual. However, my focus on heterosexual relationships should not be taken to imply that homosexual pacaran (both male and female) has no place in the lives of Pontianak youth. It just so happens that I did not come across a case of homosexuality and it was not mentioned by informants.

Most young people in my study consider that involvement in romantic relationships serves the purpose of finding a future spouse,
and is not just for the sake of exploration. Family and religious institutions influence the meaning given to the relationship, and how it is practiced. Viewing romantic relationships as a preparation for marriage often means respecting the sanctity of marriage and intensifying involvement of the partner’s family.

Respecting the sanctity of marriage refers to two processes. First, it means building a monogamous relationship and maintaining a stable partner whom one expects to marry in the future. Romantic relationships are a preparation for marriage with one’s present partner rather than an exploration period to find a suitable partner. Thus, romantic relationships are considered a part of the ‘marriage package’, as expressed in the following statement.

There are people who like to change partners (pacar), but not me. If I can, (I want to stay together with my girlfriend) until later in the future, until we marry. (Linus, 24, a Dayak man)

Second, it means resisting sexual temptation to ensure each other’s chastity until they marry. Social institutions such as marriage justify sexual encounters (which include a wide range of physical intimacy, from holding hands, kissing, and petting, to oral sex, and vaginal penetration), but it also reduces sexual encounters that occur outside of wedlock to an act that ruins one’s chastity. Yet, the most important point expressed in relation to this issue is virginity (especially for young women) and preventing unwanted pregnancies. In other words, vaginal penetration is an act most avoided in the norms of pacaran, while other forms of sexual encounters are more acceptable. The preoccupation of safeguarding female virginity in Indonesia has also been noted, for

During my third, fourth semester I was very busy with campus activities. (I had no time) for her, I didn't pay much attention to her. So logically it is understandable (that she cheated on me). It is hard (to be in a relationship) where partners understand each other. We should encourage each other (to study), but she wants us to meet up all the time (pengin dekat-dekat). I think we should think about marriage (not) about sexual encounters (mesra-mesra bercinta). If we meet too often, it will result in lust, and then she will get pregnant, then abortion will follow. This relationship (pacaran) should not be about meeting every day; the important thing is trusting each other. That is enough to build a stable relationship and to have a good marriage in the future. (Andre, 20, a Dayak man)

Resisting sexual temptation when in a romantic relationship is also meant to avoid the consequences of defiling the sanctity of marriage, assumed to result in an unhappy marriage in the future. Lia, for instance, believes that premarital sex is a sin. In turn, sinning will bring her misfortune in life. She reflects upon two of her friends’ experiences of having unwanted pregnancies, often called MBA (Married by Accident).

Sometimes I am afraid what happened to Dini and Sari will also happen (to me). (In high school), Dini asked me to help her get an abortion. We had to do it secretly, at a traditional masseuse. She had an abortion twice, and then she got married to her boyfriend. Sari (also) was involved in MBA. She got married to a man
who she had just got to know because of it. (He) did not have a decent job. She does not have a happy marriage, a good life. (Lia, 27, a Malay woman)

Lia continued her story of Dini, who later had a handicapped child. Lia attributes this to a punishment by God for Dini’s sin. She also thinks that Sari’s economic hardship and failure is God’s way of punishing her for her sins. Lia does not consider herself as pious, because she goes on dates that involve physical intimacy, such as holding hands and kissing. But her belief that premarital sex and abortion are sins remains strong.

Belief in repressing sexual desires to avoid sinning is even stronger among religious Muslim youth. They use the term ‘ta’aruf’ – from an Arabic word meaning ‘introduction’ as a substitute for the term pacaran. The use of this term is associated with finding a future spouse by building a relationship which, unlike pacaran, strictly limits the couple’s physical and sexual encounters. Pacaran is often assumed to involve at least some physical and sexual contact. In some communities where Islamic norms are still predominant, pacaran may even be considered as facilitating the loss of a young woman’s virginity. In this case the concept of virginity is sometimes extended to refer not only to a state where a young woman has never had sexual intercourse, but even ‘suspicions of sexual misdemeanours’ (through pacaran) may bring a young woman’s virginity into question (Platt, 2012: 78). The religious leader often plays the role of matchmaking members of the religious group with other members (or a person that the religious leader deems appropriate), though the decision whether to continue the relationship to marriage is made by the ‘couple’ and their families. If one is not attracted to the person introduced by the religious leader, he or she is
allowed to decline the leader’s proposed arranged *ta’aruf*. Ami (23) is a member of one of these religious groups. She claims that she does not have a boyfriend and does not intend to have one. Even so, Yani, her older brother’s girlfriend, told me that many young men outside her religious circle have approached her, coming to her house and introducing themselves to her and her family.

You know that in Islam, there is no such thing as *pacaran*. For me, *pacaran* is measured by the benefit of it, whether it has more advantages or disadvantages. To be honest I think that it does not have many benefits. We have a religious teacher who delivers our messages that we want to get married. We can approach (the teacher), and tell him we are ready to marry. He will look for someone (for me). If we are attracted to each other, then the *ta’aruf* will continue (to marriage). Otherwise, we can tell our parents that we are ready, because (parents) have the right to decide who their daughter will marry. (Ami, 23, a Malay woman)

When romantic relationships are viewed as a prelude to a marriage, they are no longer an individual matter, but a social one. Young people have to think ahead and understand how kinship systems work in their partner’s family. Achid, for instance, says that his girlfriend’s family expects him to be responsible for their welfare once he marries. Achid comes from a relatively well-to-do family, and is currently campaigning to be a member of the local legislative body. On the contrary, his girlfriend’s parents are small farmers. He emphasises that he has to be
prepared to become part of his girlfriend’s family, and thus become responsible for them.

When I marry, her parents, her family, they will all live in my house….I will also be financially responsible for them. Even when we are old, we will have to bear that burden. We have to be prepared for that. (Achid, 35, a Malay man)

Though the family is usually involved in the romantic relationships of their children, the intensity of involvement differs according to how serious the relationship is. In romantic relationships that are expected to end in marriage, the intensity of family involvement is assumed to be quite high. They can be influential from the very start of the relationship. Nius, for instance, has just started university. He says that he is still a long way from actually marrying his girlfriend. However, he expects that their relationship will end in marriage. This is why he feels that it is important to have his family involved early on in their relationship.

What is important in determining my future spouse is not me, but input from my parents and family. (I will take into consideration) what my mother thinks is good, what my older sister thinks is good, what they think is bad. I take on board what they think, and reflect upon it. Oooh, my family likes this and this, and it is not me that determines my future spouse. So there is a need (for approval) from my parents or my older sister. (Nius, 24, a Dayak man)
In other cases, the partner’s family may encourage a prospective son-in-law to find a ‘proper job’ to ensure the welfare of their daughter, as expressed by Yudha. Yudha is a guitarist in a band who has been in a steady relationship with his girlfriend for four years. They have accepted Yudha as their future son-in-law but they encourage him to find stable work. Yudha agrees with their advice that he should think about his future family’s economic security, as he earns only 600,000 rupiahs a month; barely enough to cover living expenses in Pontianak. According to my small survey, 35 per cent of the respondents assume that a person would need to have a minimum income of 2,000,000 – 3,000,000 rupiahs to provide for a nuclear family when he or she gets married. However, marriage often entails a responsibility to the extended family, especially to parents and in-laws as expressed by Achid above. In this case, 47 per cent of respondents say that they would need a minimum income of 5,000,000 rupiahs a month.

In relationships where the couple intends to marry in the near future, the family also expects their children’s partner to become involved with the family. The involvement of their children’s partner in the family can take many forms, and can apply to both young men and young women. It is common, for example, for the child’s partner to contribute labour to the family’s economic activity, as in Rita’s case. As a widow, Rita’s mother finds Erry’s labour a positive contribution to her family’s economy. Rita has been involved with her boyfriend, Erry (24), who works as a temporary worker in a small communication company in Pontianak, for almost five years. Rita’s mother has approved of him, and considers him a member of her family. He often assists Rita’s mother in her wedding rentals business. He is also asked to help out in their small
optician’s business. There are even plans to send Erry to Jakarta to be trained as an optician.

I expect that Erry can get along with my family and become part of the family. He has to help the family, because being involved with a man is not just for me, but for my mother, too. He has to be able to help my mother. It does not matter whether or not he succeeds as an optician or anything. It’s just a plan. (Rita, 24, a Malay woman)

**Finding a Pacar not a Calon: Romantic Relationships as Explorations**

In the previous section, I have described how romantic relationships are viewed as a step towards growing up by expecting that the relationship will end in marriage. Proper romantic relationships are seen as those that abstain from sexual intercourse to respect the sanctity of marriage. Adult family members have a substantial role in controlling young people’s sexuality, because of the expectation that the partner will one day be part of the family. Control and restriction of young women’s sexuality is stricter than of young men’s. However, not all young people see pacaran as a step towards marriage. Instead, they view it as a must for a successful young person, especially in relation to their peer group. This includes processes of exploration, from sexual attraction to sexual intercourse. A relationship aimed at exploration usually means that the family’s involvement is limited, and peers play an important role in how these relationships are played out.
A Pacar and Social Status

Explorations in romantic relationships are often determined by education and age. Young people often use education and age as a basis of their reasoning as to why they view romantic relationships as part of a being young, emphasising exploration and the process of constructing a youth identity. Being in education strengthens the justification to concentrate on the present, because transitions to work and marriage are matters that they have to deal with in the future. As such, rarely do young people who are still studying at university refer to their partner as their calon (future spouse). They use the word pacar as in girlfriend/boyfriend instead. The term pacar is more neutral than calon. It may be someone who one is thinking of marrying, but in the far distant future. On the other hand, using the term calon often indicates that the couple will marry in the near future. In other instances, a pacar may also refer to someone who one wants to be involved with at present, without really seeing him/her as a future spouse. This was expressed by Aam, a young man who was recently involved in a one-year relationship with a young woman from campus. He claims that he has not thought about marriage yet.

We are still mahasiswa, albeit in the last semesters, but still mahasiswa. We haven’t discussed what we are going to do (with the relationship) in the future. We are still enjoying ourselves, so we haven’t talked about marriage and other things. Of course, sometimes I say to my pacar (just to show that I am not playing around) using ‘pretty words’ (rayuan gombal), ‘Dek (honey), if we do this and that, we will achieve this and that in the future, for us, for the both of us.’ But that’s just in my
mouth, not from the heart. (I consider her) a pacar, not a calon. (Aam, 24, a Malay man)

Aam says that having a pacar (not a calon) means that he does not have to introduce her to his family. However, he recently decided to introduce her to his mother, out of politeness. But he says that he is not actually obliged to do so. This is different if he later has a calon, whether it is the current girlfriend or another young woman. In this case, the family will definitely be involved. His insistence on differentiating a pacar and a calon is based on his previous traumatic experience when he thought he had met his calon. He once introduced his (then) calon to his neighbours. He thought that they would get married when they had settled down. But the relationship had to end because his calon found a job in another town. He was devastated when the relationship ended, and decided to focus on the present if he was involved in a relationship with a young woman. He no longer wants to set his hopes too high, for fear that things might not work the way he imagines. Having merely a pacar also justifies his keeping the relationship to himself to avoid any embarrassment with his extended family and neighbours. Lina (24), a Dayak young woman, also differentiates these two terms. When I asked her when she planned to get married to her calon, she immediately corrected me, “I have a pacar, not a calon.” Like Aam, for her, the term calon is to be used only when they are going to marry in the near future. There is no benchmark for the ‘near future’; rather, it is based on feeling. She also added that sometimes, the term calon is used if the couple is engaged.

Romantic relationships as a sexual exploration do not always start out romantically. Instead they may start out as transactional
relationships. This is seen in cases where young women seek sexually attractive men who they believe will help them acquire material goods and status. Evi (20), a Malay young woman who has just started her D1 (one year diploma), mentions how her friends often search for men in the army to have as boyfriends, even though most of these men are married. They seek status from this relationship, by being able to show off their ‘cool’ boyfriends to the public. Having an attractive boyfriend not only means being handsome, but in the case of army men, often has more to do with having an athletic body and wearing a uniform. It forms the image of masculinity and power. Such display of authority and power seems to be important in Pontianak society for acquiring social status. However, she notices that her friends begin to form emotional attachments when they feel that their need for protection and security is fulfilled by these army men. In this process, the transactional relationship evolves into a romantic relationship where the intensity of emotional and physical intimacy overrides that of sexual attraction per se.

The men however, do not seem to experience this change. Evi believes that these adult men actually have their own interest in getting involved with these young women, which is merely for sexual pleasure. This often has serious consequences for young women. In some cases, they become pregnant and the men leave them without taking any responsibility. The young woman’s family take on the responsibility of taking care of her and the baby, often putting even more economic burden on the family. For adult men, dating young women is another way of expressing control and power over the less powerful, often used as indicators of masculinity. There are three layers of power working in this relationship. Not only are they adults in relation to youth, they are
also men in relation to women. Last but not least, they also have more control over economic resources in comparison to the young women that they date. It is this economic resource that Evi believes is most important in driving these relationships towards the interests of these men.

If a young woman goes out with an army man, people with notice (and people will quietly say), ‘wow, what a cool guy she has’. This (relationship) has nothing to do with love. I don’t care if he is married. If he loves his wife, he will go back to her’. That’s what (my friends) say. Sometimes I think, how could these girls (date someone else’s husband)? There are so many other nice guys, but they just don’t seem to care. They say ‘(my boyfriend) takes care of my tuition fees’. OK, that’s reasonable, because they have a stable job. But these army men also have their own interests (agenda). They like to play around; there is a (hidden) agenda. First they give the young women money for the first tuition fee, then the second tuition fee. Then (the girls) slowly feel a bond and in no time, they will give all they have. After three months of dating an army man, it turns out that this friend did all kind of things and became pregnant. She was returned to her parents, the man just left her. (Evi, 20, a Malay woman)

Status attainment from explorations in sexuality is important not only for young women, but also for young men. There are cases of young men dating adult women in Pontianak, but it is less commonly shown off in public, and I did not encounter one during my fieldwork. Although a young man may be attracted to an older woman, being her ‘brondong’ (a toyboy) does not raise the young man’s status because he is regarded
as being under the control of the older woman. When the woman has the power in the relationship, it harms a man’s masculinity. Ical (30), a Malay young man, for example states, “Pacaran with an older woman? No, they will control me. People will think I am a weak man.”

Exploration in these relationships provides a means for young men to attain status in the eyes of their peers (Lee, 2002: 138). For example, Adi told me about hanging out with his friends and what they talk about.86 Sex is one of the hot topics in this forum, he explained. Adi claims that he does not yet have a girlfriend, so he is more the listener than the talker in these sessions. In one of the sessions, he remembers, one of his friends advised the other members of the group about ways in which to mengikat (literally, bind, get a commitment from) a young woman. His friend assumes that young women form romantic relationships based upon physical and emotional intimacy rather than sexual needs. What young men see as sexual, he says, is often interpreted by young women as physical and emotional intimacy. Thus, the friend emphasises, binding a young woman through sexual relations is an advantage for young men, but without the young woman being aware of it. By sharing his sexual experiences and his insights into how it might work in the interests of young men, the group’s ‘advisor’ wins admiration from his circle of friends.

For young men, (sexual encounters) make them proud…especially if they can share it with their friends. Their friends will admire them. For young women, it’s about expressing their love. Most of my friends stop at

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86 It was difficult for me to get a frank account from young people of their own sexual experiences. However, it was much easier to obtain stories of their friends’ sexual experiences.
petting, but some, you know...they actually use their girlfriends. They say ‘if you want to make a woman commit to you, then you have to do all this (have sex). I guarantee (that).’ Young men, they want to safeguard their interests. They know about sexually transmitted diseases, so they only want to be with one (young woman). To ensure they do, they bind the young women by doing all that. To make certain that there is someone there if he feels the need (for sex). (Adi, 20, a Malay man)

Despite some young men viewing sexual intercourse in relationships as working in their advantage, some young women also seek sexual satisfaction in the relationship. This was noted by Sujarwo (2008), a prominent local writer whose work is read by many young people in Pontianak. He writes that young women today consider loss of virginity as ‘normal’, and that young women are no longer expected to marry or stay with the person who she has lost her virginity to. His words echo what Laila is experiencing. She says that she has been having sex with a young man, Andi, her co-worker at the mall. She has been dating him for a couple of months. One day, Andi quit his job at the mall because he was hired as a driver for one of the local legislative members. That’s when he had enough money to rent a hotel for them.

I was just starting to date him, there was no intention of going there (having sex) at the hotel. (But), I have no intention of marrying him. I’m close to many men, I can’t remember all of them. But one that I remember

87 ‘...still a virgin these days? (Being a virgin) isn’t important anymore’, that’s what today’s ‘sociable (liberal) youth’ in Pontianak are saying. This statement comes from the book by Sujarwo (2008) who uses the term perawan in this text to refer to a female virgin. A male virgin is termed perjaka.
has a steady job, his name is Edy. That’s the one (I want to marry). He calls me mama, and I call him papa ha ha ha (laughs). But we haven’t done it (had sex) yet. I want to look good (in front of him). (Laila, 24, a Malay woman)

Laila is not worried that Edy will question her virginity once they are married. She strongly believes that if Edy loves her, he will not mind her no longer being a virgin. Edy’s employment status is a major reason that Laila has chosen Edy over Andi. Like many young people in Pontianak, having a steady job is an important factor in choosing a partner for marriage; more important than the fact that she has lost her virginity to somebody else.

**Ethnicity and Attraction**

Attraction is the first step in developing romantic relationships. In Pontianak, attraction is often influenced by one’s ethnicity and how he or she views it in relation to the other person’s ethnic identity. Ethnic identity and status are important factors in forming these relationships. Members of a group of lower status are often attracted to someone from a higher status ethnic group, because they often believe that forming a relationship with a member of a higher status ethnic group will boost his or her own status. Language is an important capital to build a relationship with a person from a higher status ethnic group, as expressed by Oni. Oni is a young Madurese man who has just finished his study at a university in Pontianak. Speaking ‘proper’ Malay (without the strong Madurese accent) has enabled him to be involved with a
young Malay woman, and has provided him the confidence to date young women from other higher status ethnic groups.\(^{88}\)

My ex-girlfriend is a Malay. She had no problem (being involved with a Madurese). She admitted that at first she did not even know that I was Madurese because I spoke proper Malay. (Later on in the relationship), she noticed that I had a slight Madurese accent. So I told her (that I am Madurese). She couldn’t believe it. She didn’t mind, but her parents disapproved. So we broke up. I’m thinking of looking for a Dayak (young woman). They don’t really mind dating a Madurese. (Oni, 25, a Madurese man)

For Chinese youth, language has a different role. Instead of using it to help find a partner from another ethnic group to achieve higher status, it is used to maintain their in-group exclusiveness. As previously explained, the Chinese have a history of marginalisation and the need for inclusion in mainstream society may not be as great as it is among the Madurese. Having a partner who can speak the same local dialect provides these Chinese youth a sense of security. Most Chinese youth are raised by parents who are fluent speakers of local Chinese dialects and tend to be reluctant to speak Malay, though Malay is the lingua franca of the province. Thus, communicating in the local dialect is a significant factor in choosing a partner, even though the relationship may not be intended to end in marriage. This was mentioned by Vanka and Robert, two Chinese youth who are in the early phases of their university education. Vanka (19), for example, says,

\(^{88}\) Though Madurese parents prefer their children to be involved with Madurese, Madurese youth themselves seem to prefer being involved with a person from another ethnic group.
I like to go out with Chinese young men because we can understand each other better. It is easier to communicate. When you like someone and date, communication is important, even though marriage still seems a long way off. In daily life we use the Teochew dialect, so dating someone who speaks Teochew would be easier. I speak a bit of Mandarin, but it is for learning (formal education) – like the one used in Taiwan. That’s different. (Vanka, 19, a Chinese woman)

On the contrary, a Malay who is attracted and becomes involved with a Madurese is often looked down upon within his/her own ethnic circle. Joni, for instance, explains that he used to have a ‘dark skinned’ Madurese girlfriend, a feature considered undesirable in terms of femininity that is common in Asian societies (Rozario, 2002). When I asked him why he broke up with her, he said that he thought she was ugly. Her physical appearance identified her as a Madurese, who are stereotyped as being dark skinned. Personally, he was attracted to her as a person and did not mind the dark skin. But he was concerned that his friends might see him with her, and that this would be detrimental to his status. So he tried to maintain the relationship by agreeing to meet her only at night. He argued that at night, people were less likely to see her dark skin. However, his girlfriend started to become suspicious of these night-time meetings. He was unable to explain his real reasons, so a week afterwards, they broke up.

In Pontianak, both the Malays (politically) and Chinese (economically) are often considered high status ethnic groups. But in relation to each other, Malays often see Chinese as higher, and the Madurese as lower in status. The Chinese are assumed to hold a strong
economic position. The perceived exclusiveness of the Chinese (culturally and economically) also makes it quite difficult for young people from other ethnic groups to approach them, let alone form a romantic relationship with them. In these situations, gender plays a role in how ethnicity works in romantic relationships. Having a Chinese girlfriend is sometimes seen as a victory or an achievement for young non-Chinese men. Another factor has to do with physical appearance; the Chinese usually have a lighter skin tone than people from other ethnic groups. Having light skin is a concept of beauty common in Indonesian society. Jeri, for instance, says that he would like to have a Chinese girlfriend.

If I had to choose between having a Malay, Dayak or Madurese girlfriend, I would not choose (any of them). I want a Chinese (girlfriend), because they are white, ha ha ha (laughs)….I like white women. But not Western ones (bule). Chinese girls are also hard (to get). The Chinese are closed (exclusive), and often rich. At least that’s what most people think (that the Chinese are rich), (because) Chinese girls know how to dress. So it would be nice to have one, to go out with. People will probably think, ‘how great he is to be able to get a Chinese (girlfriend).’ (Jeri, 28, a Malay man)

However, this does not apply to young Malay women. For young Malay women, having a Chinese boyfriend is not something that they would see as a privilege. Diah, for instance, would like to have a young Malay man for a boyfriend. She has never thought about dating a young Chinese man, because their light skin colour is often associated with femininity. The differences in the way the Chinese dress in comparison
to the non-Chinese youth are also noticed. But gender plays a role in whether this difference is viewed as negative or positive. While young Chinese women are seen by the Malays like Diah as dressing nicely, young Chinese men are not. Some young Malay women see young Chinese men’s style of dress as extreme – either too fashionable or too conventional.

Chinese are white, and I don’t know. White (is) I don’t know (shrugs her shoulders). For women it’s good, but for men it’s like a woman. Dark skin is better, like the Malay. But not as dark as the Madurese. Young Chinese men also dress funny (kampongan), like those Japanese youth…no, not Japanese youth, the Chinese young men dress worse. Maybe like the F4 guys (Taiwanese boy band popular in the early 2000s). Their hair hangs on one side, they wear baggy pants, long sleeves. I don’t like it. My friends don’t either. The young (Chinese) women dress quite nicely, but definitely not the young (Chinese) men. Sometimes, they (Chinese men) dress too smartly. (Diah, 20, a Malay woman)

Habits that are linked to ethnic group and gender specific practices can also be a factor in determining a person’s preferences about who they date. Tutty says that she is not interested in dating a Dayak young man because they often get drunk. She claims that because she is Dayak herself, she knows how damaging alcohol can be for young men who cannot control alcohol use beyond ceremonial practices.

Even though I am a Dayak, I don’t like Dayak (men). Not that I don’t really like them, but all Dayak, I know. I’ve been to many (Dayak) places. They like to drink.
Not all drinkers are Dayak, but a Dayak man is more likely to drink. Basically what they want to show is ‘we are Dayak’ (and this is what we do). That is actually not important (to show they are Dayak). But they want to show off their (ethnic) traits. Dayak also like to hang around, doing nothing in particular. Drinking, playing the guitar, eating, drinking again. (Tutty, 24, a Dayak woman)

These stereotypical ethnic and gender specific habits are also a reason that Chinese young women are not interested in dating young local (priobumi) men. They consider local young men rude and likely to practice extortion. Identifying themselves as migrants in these situations has caused them to position themselves as victims of local male dominance.

Local young men are rude. They like to practice extortion. They think we are all rich; we are not. I don’t like them. That is why I take night classes, most (of the students) are Chinese because Chinese work during the day. As migrants, we work hard, we don’t extort. Of course not all (local young men) like to do this. Some Chinese even like to extort (money from) others. But in my experience it is the (local young men) who are doing the extorting. (Frida, 20, a Chinese woman)

Long-Term Relationships

In the first two sections, I discussed two forms of romantic relationship: as courtship or prelude to marriage, and as sexual exploration. The last form of romantic relationship I would like to discuss here is long-term
relationships. Here, romantic relationships are not seen as a preparation for marriage, but neither are they seen as sexual exploration. Instead, a long-term relationship is seen as an indefinite period of commitment to the romantic relationship, without any certainty of marriage in the future. (Financial) sacrifice, expected gender roles, and involvement in inter-ethnic and/or inter-religious relationships exacerbate the need to form long-term relationships.

**Sacrifice and Consumerism**

Sacrifice is considered key to maintaining romantic relationships, especially for the sake of securing the future of the relationship. In Pontianak, sacrifice often has a financial dimension. Ibu Ita points to how the meaning of financial sacrifice has changed between her generation and her daughter’s. She explains that young people today are under pressure to live a consumer lifestyle and not to think about saving money for their future. Both young women and young men spend money on food such as buying lunch or dinner (*jajan*) for their partner, and feel that this behaviour is the proper way of getting to know one’s future spouse. She believes that *jajan* or eating out has become an inseparable part of current dating practices that she does not agree with, because in her opinion, it is just about having fun and is a waste of money.

*(When) my husband (and I were courting), he never asked me to do fun things, (*hura-hura*), like eating out (*jajan*). That is a waste of our time and money. And even then, my husband was already working in a bank, but he never asked me out to eat in a restaurant or*
even at a food stall. Even though there were already many places where we could have eaten. But he never took me out. (*Ibu* Ita, 48, a Malay woman)

*Ibu* Jay (44), echoed *Ibu* Ita’s experience of eating out not being a part of dating practices in the past. Then, not only was eating out considered expensive, young women were not allowed to go out at night. There was not much electricity and parents feared that the darkness made it unsafe for women to travel. She said that sometimes they quietly went out, shivering with fear that they would get caught on their way back to the house. At the same time, she realises that times have changed. Electricity is everywhere, the streets are not dark and dead quiet at night, and in the city there are lots of people about. Therefore, she does not mind that her daughter goes to eat out. She is happy that today’s young women have the opportunity to have a public life. For her, eating out is just an activity that they do in public, and not necessarily a display of consumerism per se.

Young people think that eating out is not only about fun; yet it is also not just a meaningless activity they do in public. For them, this is where sacrifice comes into play. It is a demonstration of how far one is willing to share and to sacrifice what material belongings they have for their partner. Thus, for this generation of youth, eating out is a way of knowing their future spouse, and having fun at the same time. So what *Ibu* Ita sees as a positive trait in her husband would be seen as a negative trait by today’s generation – he would be called tight-fisted (*masin*) and seen as unwilling to make sacrifices for his partner. Ina (21), a Malay young woman says,
When teenagers (ABG) date, they are spoiled, they don’t pay attention to their partner’s needs. When I am with my boyfriend, I like to hang out, go places, but most importantly, we like to eat out. My boyfriend has an internet café at his parents’ house. His parents don’t give him a salary, just ‘eating out money’ (uang jajan – basically meaning a small amount of money). We take turns treating each other, but it is mostly him who treats me. That shows that he pays attention to me, that he (makes) sacrifices (for me), that he is not tight with his money (masin). (Ina, 21, a Malay woman)

The financial and material aspect associated with sacrifice has exacerbated the need to construct romantic relationships as long-term relationships rather than with a view to marriage (courtship). As secure jobs are more difficult to attain, young people, especially young men, have to deal with the question of whether they will be able to afford to get married. Thus, young people without the appropriate financial resources have to sacrifice in other ways to maintain the relationship. Wiwin is a young man working as a freelance wedding photographer while finishing his studies at a private university. He has a girlfriend who he has been seeing for two years. In the last couple of months he noticed that she was withdrawing from him, but did not know why. It was not long before he knew that his girlfriend’s family had arranged her marriage with another man. Wiwin says that he lacks the confidence to approach his girlfriend’s family because he says he has ‘nothing’ in comparison to the man that his girlfriend is to marry. He has not yet finished his schooling and has yet to obtain a stable job. He feels that these are a must for him to be able to approach his girlfriend’s family, since his family cannot offer anything. He mentioned that he is ‘only’ the
son of a widowed teacher. However, this does not mean that the relationship has to end. He tries to make sacrifices to make his girlfriend happy in the hope that she will eventually choose him over the other man.

(I sometimes) take her to the mall, (some people) go to the palace (keraton) to hang out. But it has a (bad) reputation. I have never taken her there. I just try to go to places she likes, like the mall. I also try to ‘control myself’ (my sexual urges). She likes that. Her parents have arranged her marriage, but if the daughter does not agree, usually the parents will comply (with their child’s wishes). I am trying to make her happy, so she will choose me. I also go to her friends’, treat them, to create a good image. (Wiwin, 25, a Malay man)

Wiwin’s case shows how he tries to minimize the influence of his girlfriend’s family by strengthening his bond with his girlfriend and her peers. He seems to be aware that peers are also important in supporting his relationship, as an alternative strategy to approaching her parents. Creating a ‘good image’ in front of her friends includes being willing to chat with them or buy them drinks or lunch whenever he happens to meet them, despite his meagre financial means.

**Gender and Long-Term Relationships**

How long-term-relationships are constructed cannot be separated from gender roles and relations. Relationships that were once viewed as courtship may now be long-term relationships because young men are unable to fulfil the societal construction of masculinity. Young men
often consider the significance of becoming the family’s breadwinner. In the current situation, in which widespread youth unemployment and underemployment is common, this sometimes brings tension and conflict to the relationship. Underemployment often means being employed in casual informal, low-paid, and/or insecure types of job for which the young person is overqualified. Young men often feel that they are not able to fulfil this future role. Kaka is a 30-year-old Malay young man who works on contract at several local NGOs. Kaka felt the need to find a secure job to continue his relationship with his girlfriend, Diana. Diana’s family did not approve of the relationship because he does not yet have a permanent job. Kaka has been with Diana, a freelance writer, for two years. Diana, who originally came from East Java, agreed that she would move to Pontianak if they got married. However, Diana then landed a permanent job at a bank in East Java. She expected him to follow her to Java. Kaka refused, because he was not confident that he would be able to find a job there.

I am disappointed about (my relationship) with Diana. She said ‘you should stay here (in East Java)’, I replied ‘what will we eat, how am I going to provide (for the family)?’ ‘I will work, you can find another job.’ ‘I am a man, why should I beg for food from my wife?’ There should be no domination of course, there should be balance (between husband and wife). But I still think that a man should be responsible (for securing his family’s economy); that is the adult way (of forming a family). Her family wants her to marry somebody else, I don’t know (who). I think someone in the army. (Kaka, 34, a Malay man)
The construction of male identity as associated with being the family breadwinner has made Kaka put his relationship with Diana on hold. He is waiting to see what happens, hoping that Diana will be able to transfer to Pontianak.

For unemployed young men like Iwan, matters may be even worse. While Kaka was still allowed to see Diana, Iwan was no longer allowed to do so when he became unemployed. He remembers that when he was a *mahasiswa*, he was free to come to his girlfriend’s house. However, after graduating and not being able to secure a job, he was banned from visiting his girlfriend. He will be allowed to visit her house only when he secures a job. His girlfriend’s family has forced him to halt the relationship, without obliging him to actually break up with her. His own mother backed his girlfriend’s parents’ decision to temporarily halt the relationship on this condition. His mother feels that it is shameful to date a young woman when he is still unemployed. Iwan also mentioned that having a girlfriend is important for him, because it gives him the feeling that he is progressing towards marriage when he is somewhat stuck in the transition to work. This means that one ‘failure’ in one life domain (work) can be compensated in another (romantic relationship).

I was actually close (to my girlfriend’s family before graduating). It was only in the beginning (that everything went smoothly). Now there are many conflicts, especially after graduation. Now I am unemployed, her parents are demanding (that I work), (get) a stable job. I have never talked to her parents, I only know (of their demands) through her. I can only come and visit her if I have a job. My mother doesn’t disprove of our relationship, but she also told me ‘no in-law wants an unemployed (son) in law’. But for me,
it’s good to have a girlfriend. Being unemployed without a girlfriend would be worse. At least I have a girlfriend. (Iwan, 26, a Malay man)

According to Aras (28), a Malay young woman, it is unfair to make young men bear the weight of having a permanent job on their shoulders. Currently she is teaching as a temporary teacher in a pre-school while her boyfriend performs with his band in various cafés. They are serious about their relationship and both parents have approved, but they are still reluctant to think about marriage. Aras does not have a permanent job yet, and neither does her boyfriend. Her boyfriend is a guitarist in a band that does not seem to be going anywhere. So she feels that she has to be the one responsible for getting a permanent job. Her parents do not mind her boyfriend being in a band, because her family thinks that as a couple, both need to find ways of securing their financial future. Aras explained, her parents understand that it is difficult to find a steady job in the current climate, so expecting their future son in-law to have a steady job would be unrealistic. Despite their understanding of his situation, her boyfriend still thinks that it is his responsibility to be the family breadwinner. There is frequent tension in their relationship. Thus, Aras is unsure where the relationship would go.

Some young women are also reluctant to view their relationship as courtship because they want to protect themselves from disappointment if marriage to the current partner does not happen. Like Aam, who introduced his partner to others as a calon and was ashamed when he eventually broke up with his calon. Vio is also careful not to give the impression in public that her relationship with her partner is a
preparation for marriage, to avoid shame if the relationship ends before she marries.

My family knows my current boyfriend. But they just know him; they’re not close. There is the intention to get married, but there has been no talk about it (in the family). Just between the two of us, (imagining) if we get married, I want this and that. But I am afraid to hope (that it will happen), because we’re not financially ready. It’s just fantasising (*miker bodoh-bodoh gitu jak*). I don’t want to raise my hopes too high. I’m afraid I will get sick (from) thinking about him and feel embarrassed in front of others. I am just not ready (to seriously think) about marriage; but I am not thinking of seeing anybody else. (Vio, 24, a Malay woman)

Vio is a temporary worker at a government office. She only needs to ‘wait her turn’ to be employed as a civil servant. In most cases, this would mean that marriage would soon follow. She admits that her friends have been asking ‘When?’ (*kapan*), meaning that they are asking when she is going to get married. She is still unsure where the relationship will go due to financial reasons, especially on the part of her boyfriend. But instead of emphasising the difference between a *pacar* and a *calon* like Aam does in dealing with insecure transitions to marriage, she tries to focus on maintaining her relationship with her partner without explicitly saying that the relationship will eventually enter the marriage phase.
When a Long-Term Relationship becomes a Waiting Period

Young people’s social position based on ethnicity, religion, class, or caste is influential in how they experience romantic relationships. In India, inter-caste couples often have to find ways to make their relationship work. Some Indian youngsters tell their parents that they want to study abroad, though they actually migrate to continue their relationship (Rutten and Verstappen, 2013: 11). I have explained that in Pontianak, ethnicity is often regarded as an important factor in the process of attraction and choosing romantic partners. There is a tendency to prefer a partner from the same ethnic circle, though some seek a partner from other (higher status) ethnic groups. Those who choose to become involved in inter-ethnic and inter-religious relationships often have to deal with the uncertainty of marriage. Thus, viewing their relationship as a long-term relationship is a strategy they apply to deal with this situation.

Asti, a young Dayak woman, describes how she chose to end her relationship with Nandar, a Malay young man. Her aunt took her in after the death of her father when she was still young, and arranged for her to marry Budi, a Javanese Christian. Her family was insistent upon this arrangement. She explained to me that her aunt’s family opposed her relationship with Nandar, because he is a Muslim. Her mother has no say in this matter, because Asti has practically been raised by her aunt and her financial needs have also been taken care of by her aunt’s family. In her family’s view, it would be hard to include him in her Dayak circle, unless he is willing to give up his religion. Nandar refuses, but Asti still has hopes that her family will accept him despite him refusing to
convert. She compares this situation to the relatively easy process for a Dayak to become a Malay rather than the other way round.

(When a Malay) marries according to the proper (Dayak) custom, his/her existence has to be explained (to the local people), that she/he is from a different religion, from a different ethnic group, and that he/she is going to follow his/her spouse. Then there are requirements, like sacrificing a pig. Pork is tradition, it has symbolic values to make the conversion official. The pig is not only eaten, the blood also has meaning because it is used for prayers. That is the way of the people. That is why it is hard for a Malay (who insists on keeping his/her religion) to become a Dayak. But for Dayak to become a Malay is easier, because many Dayak don’t mind converting to Islam…We hope to get married, but that is still a long way off. We will see. (Asti, 24, a Dayak woman)

The same view is expressed by Opal (27), a Malay Muslim; for him, religion is an important factor in any future marriage. He has been dating non-Muslim women – from Christians to atheists. He has had some Muslim girlfriends in between, but not as many as the non-Muslims. Instead of focusing on how his partners’ religion may become a hindrance to the practice of Malay customs if his non-Muslim girlfriend does not convert, he places more emphasis on the importance of religion for seeking family approval. It does not really matter to him whether or not she practices Malay customs. For Opal, family acceptance is based on his partner’s religion, not her ethnicity. His current girlfriend is a Christian. Opal has long abandoned his religious practices as a Muslim, but still holds on to the notion that if he marries,
he wants a Muslim wife. This is one of the reasons that he has stayed unmarried until now. For Opal, his girlfriend’s willingness to convert to Islam is an act of sacrifice, which he believes will smoothen the journey to marriage. But until the day that his girlfriend actually converts, he does not have the courage to say that the relationship will end in marriage.

Young people seem to take it for granted that it is the young woman who will be obliged to adopt (ikut, literally, follow) the young man’s ethnic group and/or religion when they decide to marry in the future. This view is shared by both Dayak and Malay men. Opal’s case above demonstrates the importance Muslim men attach to having a Muslim wife – though not necessarily a Malay one. The same view was expressed by Nus from Sanggau who is seeing a Malay young woman. He considers it important for his girlfriend to ‘follow’ him – as a Dayak and as a Christian.

If we plan to get married, then automatically it will depend on her (whether or not she decides to convert). We all know that (a woman) usually follows her husband. She has to comply (to her husband’s wishes). I will keep my religion, my ethnicity (customs). It does not seem right for a husband to follow his wife. We have talked about it. She is considering it (converting). If she decides not to, well, I don’t know. It is hard to end (the relationship). We are compatible with each other. I will think about it later. (Nus, 24, a Dayak man)

The normative standard that encourages young women to ‘follow’ their future husband has made it difficult for young people who are involved
in inter-ethnic relationships to think about marriage. This applies especially if the young woman refuses to adopt her partner's ethnicity or religion. Nus’s ambivalence about his situation also shows how difficult it is to conform to social expectations of what is considered proper for one’s future, when he wants to stay with someone he sees as compatible with his personality. However, from the start, Nus seemed to consider his relationship a pathway towards marriage. In his perspective, the relationship will end only if barriers to the accepted form of marriage arise – that is if his girlfriend is unwilling to convert to Christianity and adapt to Dayak customs.

Some young men like Marko, a Dayak, differentiate their religious requirements for their partner based on the seriousness of the relationship. Marko says that if he were involved in a serious relationship, he would want a girl of the same religion. Otherwise, he does not really mind having a relationship with a young woman of a different religion.

(Whether or not a person is willing to be involved in inter-religious) relationships are based upon their own preference. I will not be a judge (on that matter). But I have decided to look for a person who has the same faith as me. It does not matter whether they are pious or not (they just have to be the same religion), unless the relationship is just for fun (main-main). When I was in high school, I used to date a Malay (Muslim). Her parents were fine (about it), they just reminded me to be careful (jangan sampai macam-macam)\(^89\). I only stayed with her for five months, then we decided to break up. Not because of religion, just because of

\(^89\) Usually referring to sexual acts.
differences in opinion. That was fine with me, it wasn’t serious anyway. (Marko, 24, a Dayak man)

Unlike Marko, many young men who are involved in these relationships often decide to just continue with the relationship, despite the challenges that they have to face. Senius, a young Dayak man, is involved in a relationship with a young Malay woman from Pontianak. Senius, originally from a district in the interior of the province, does not consider it very important to tell his parents about his relationship. He has been going out with his girlfriend for a year, but he has no plans of marrying her in the near future. He assumes that his parents are quite easy going and trust his choice. Senius says that his girlfriends’ parents do not seem to mind him seeing their daughter.

I do have a girlfriend, from Pontianak. She is a Malay, a Muslim. About the (differences) in religion, I will think about that later. That is for the future. For now, we both decided to just go with the flow. That doesn’t mean I’m not serious, but I will think (of the future) later. I have introduced myself to her parents, I had to because I have to pick her up on Saturday night. Her parents don’t seem to mind. At least they don’t show (that they mind). (Senius, 24, a Dayak man)

Ren, a young Dayak man has been involved with a young Malay woman for two years. In Ren’s account below, he says that there is consensual agreement between them that having different faiths will not be an impediment to their relationship – even if they decide to get married. In Ren’s view, young women are not obliged to adopt their husband’s
religion or ethnic customs, but he has not discussed this with either side of the family.

There are many, many inter-religious (romantic relationships) here. Like me, I have a Muslim girlfriend. We (young people in inter-religious relationships) are able to meet because we join organisations. I am still considering whether to continue with the relationship or not. So far, we are just getting on with it. It has been two years. If both (sets of) parents are fine (with it), then we don’t really make an issue of our beliefs. She does not have to follow me (adopt my religion). (Ren, 23, a Dayak man)

In this section, I have shown that most of the informants involved in inter-ethnic and inter-religious relationships are Dayak young men, perhaps because Dayak young men are more open to forming these relationships. It may also be that they are more open about admitting their involvement in inter-ethnic or religious relationships. Either way, one possible explanation for this is that most of these Dayak young men are migrant students in Pontianak, and thus, are far away from family supervision. Family control of a young man’s sexuality is less strict than of a young woman’s. Also, as young men, they may feel that they are in a better position to ask their partner to convert. This provides more space for these young men to become involved with a partner of their choice. This does not mean that informants from other ethnic groups have not been involved in inter-ethnic or inter-religious relationships. Most, however, decided to end their relationship at an early stage – most likely due to family disapproval.
Conclusion

This chapter has identified three views of romantic relationship (pacaran) among young people in Pontianak: as a prelude to marriage, as exploration, and as a long-term relationship. In the first type, romantic relationships are considered to be courtship, as a prelude to marriage. When young people view their relationship in these terms, they emphasise the importance of the sanctity of marriage by resisting sexual temptation. This relates to the notion of self-control as an indicator of adulthood, as I explained in Chapter 2. In Chapters 3 and 4, I showed that education and work serve the purpose of fulfilling the expectations of one’s own family. When young people practice courtship, they sometimes have to start fulfilling the expectations of two families: their own and their future spouse’s.

Aside from seeing romantic relationships as way to grow up, they are also seen as present-oriented relationships not leading to marriage. In a present-oriented relationship, sexual exploration and attraction become significant. The emergence of these cultures is driven by the need for status attainment. Status attainment can be gained from public displays of a partner’s physical attractiveness, sexual experience, or membership of a higher status social (ethnic) group.

Long-term relationships, the last form of romantic relationship that I discuss, are often a consequence of uncertainties in the transition to marriage. I view them as a form of ‘youth culture of waiting’. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, youth cultures of waiting have mainly been discussed in the domain of work and education, focusing on the structural constraints that inhibit young people from making the transition to work. Here, I show that youth cultures of waiting can also
occur in the domain of romantic relationships, and are largely a response to structural barriers to making the transition to marriage. These structural constraints include the experience of circuitous education-to-work transitions (rather than smooth ones), and the challenges young people face in inter-ethnic and inter-religious relationships. Making financial sacrifices to treat one’s partner, especially for eating out, is considered an important way of indicating one’s indefinite commitment to the relationship, albeit without any certainty of marriage.

Gender and ethno-religious membership are most influential in the construction of long-term relationships. Unemployed young men are most prone to becoming stuck in their transition to marriage, as a knock-on effect of their halted transition to work. Young men have more space to become involved in inter-ethnic inter-religious relationships because a young man’s sexuality is not under such strict family control as a young woman’s. Also, religious and ethnic conversion is expected among young women, but not among young men. Even so, young men are aware that in practice, there is no guarantee that their partner will necessarily convert. Thus, they tend to wait and see where the relationship goes.