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Undertaking a Journey in Hybridity
A Child-Centred Ethnographic Study on Well-Being
in Southwest Sumba, Indonesia

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List of Acronyms

BPS	Badan Pusat Statistik
BPJS	Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Sosial
CDC	Child Development Center
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
GKS	Gereja Kristen Sumba
KK	Kartu Keluarga
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PPA	Pusat Pengembangan Anak
PAUD	Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini
PKH	Program Keluarga Harapan
RT	Rukun Tetangga
SD	Sekolah Dasar
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
VOC	Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie
WeD	Well-being in Developing Countries

List of Terms

PPA	Child Development Center owned by local church, funded by global Christian charity
GKS	Sumbanese Christian Church, a Calvinist church, a member of World Communion of Reformed Churches
<i>Belis</i>	Bride-price, bridewealth or bride token
<i>Desa</i>	an administrative village
<i>Rukun Tetangga</i>	the division of villages in Indonesia in the framework of community service
<i>Kampung</i>	a small village or community of houses; gathering together
<i>Duatoleka</i>	good life
<i>Atadua</i>	ability to share a good life
<i>Kabisu</i>	a patrilineal clan or a group of people living together in a landscape
<i>Kumpul Tangan</i>	collects the ceremonial goods collectively
<i>Pesta adat</i>	a ritual ceremony
<i>Pindah adat</i>	the transfer ritual of bride to the groom's clan
<i>Mamoli</i>	A symbol of female genital and fertility, pendant for ceremonial gift

<i>Pinang</i>	Areca nuts, symbol of female
<i>Sirih</i>	Betel leaf, symbol of male
<i>Sirih Pinang</i>	Tradition of chewing materials such as betel, areca nuts, limestone
<i>Puskesmas</i>	Community health center
<i>Pancasila</i>	the foundational philosophical theory of the Indonesian state comprises five inseparable principles.
<i>Bukan orang lain</i>	no others
<i>Raskin</i>	rice for the poor
<i>Merantau</i>	leaving the home

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People in Sumba: all precious children in the village of Kadi Wannu especially fellow participants (some of them are on this picture) and colleagues at IO-678, Ps. Mariska, Vkr. Mery, Ina Elon, Ama Jenny, Ama Usi, Ina Ningsih, Nengu, tutors, mentors and all colleagues in Compassion IO-office.

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Abstract

This research seeks to elucidate how indigenous perspectives of the well-being of Wewewa children are being challenged by mainstream child-focused developments, and how children deal with this change. By following a child-centred ethnographic approach, this paper will explore the changing ways of thinking about contemporary child well-being in the Wewewa, a community who live on the island of Sumba, Indonesia. The hybridity of mainstream child-focused policy and indigenous knowledge change will be examined through three aspects of constructing childhood: children as economic contributors, the child gendered concepts of “becoming someone,” and the child as social order agent. This analysis brings into the discourse the childhood narratives of “being” and “becoming” someone they need to be to navigate market-tradition aspirations and negotiate the complexity of their community’s religious identity. This represents a challenge to adult-controlled child policy approaches, and takes well-“being,” as seen through children’s voices and participation, into account in the process of the legitimisation of child policy approaches.

Relevance to Development Studies

The grounded theory and ethnographically oriented methodology of this research contributes a shade of meaning to the child-focused mainstream approach, which affects people and places in indigenous communities. This study also adds knowledge of children’s well-being, along with potential support for actors making decisions about child policy approaches.

Keywords

Indigenous society, child well-being, child-centred ethnographic, child-focused policy, mainstream development, hybridity, constructing childhood, being and becoming, children’s voices

Chapter 1. Situating People and Places



Image 1. Some of the eleven members of Dirli's household (July 18, 2017)

This is the first picture I took after being woken up at 5:25 a.m. on a still-dark Tuesday morning. Immediately after, a group of women and children filled jars with water and carried them on their heads to transport them. So did Dirli, a boy who is my first research participant. After washing at a public bath, he dressed himself in red shorts, a tie, and a short-sleeved white shirt, the Indonesian public-school uniform. He looked smart, even though his skin was covered in dark mosquito bites and bruises. When he tied the laces of his black shoes, he was already wearing a schoolbag that was bigger than his back; these items were gifts from the GKS Protestant Church.

Dirli's bamboo house is attached to megalithic tombs, but also consists of a number of modern elements made of cement. Next door, an unfinished, modern brick house is being built for Dirli and his mother. The noise of loud music wakes the neighbours up, so the preparation of the wedding of Dirli's grandfather, Ama Renda, will be held in the following week. Ama Renda is already in his 60s, but will be "remarried" to pay the postponed bride-price of his wife.

This morning has inspired me to observe their everyday lives. All the family members are gathered around the fireplace. They have prepared grilled yams and boiled water for breakfast. Sitting on the mattress and warming my hands, with my eyes getting used to a tiny, dark house, their smiles make me feel welcome.

(Field Notes; July 18, 2017)

This chapter begins with my first rendezvous with Dirli, who is aged about nine, and his family who live in the Wewewa sub-district in the southwest of the island of Sumba. I have travelled frequently around the beautiful archipelago of Indonesia over the last ten years, which has brought me to this research. My interest stems from an epistemology of anthropology perspective and seeks to look at local people and places in the context of development (Li 2014). In particular, this research will examine how child-focused mainstream development is changing the social (re)production of place and indigenous groups (Morarji 2014).

During fieldwork, my dynamic, urban life experience needs to adjust to the nuances of rural life. After sunset, the roads and paths are abandoned, families lie on their bamboo mats around the fireplace, and sleep until early dawn. Electricity and running water have become available in the last two years, so locals no longer have to use a small kerosene lamp for light.

At dawn, women and children fetch water, feed the livestock, and boil water with firewood to make hot drinks. During the dry season, people carry water to their houses from a spring, walking for more than five kilometres. At this time of year, however, they only have to walk for five minutes to collect water and take a public bath. Some houses have a water tank, and use a water truck delivery service to bring water from the spring.

Noon is a good time for men come back from the rice fields to their houses for lunch. Afterwards, women and small children go to the river spring or a tap to do the laundry and bathe. Soon after, older children return home from school, have lunch, and rest a bit. The smaller children play with wheel and bamboo sticks, and then take a nap. The afternoon is spent on domestic work. A division of labour is implemented when gathering firewood, for household chores, and cutting grass and vegetables for the animals. At night, the children do their schoolwork and watch television.

One of the 17,000 islands that make up Indonesia, Sumba developed its own civilisation, given its isolated location. Agriculture and livestock were the mainstays of life, and there were small clans with their own social structure who practiced customs pertaining to the cycle of life such as births, marriages, thanksgivings, and death (Bato 2016). When sick, local people went to a shaman to cure themselves by exorcising the evil spirit from their body.

Marapu is a system of ancestral belief that is generally practiced in Sumba. There are no written records of the principles of Marapu; people have told tales about their ancestors in expressive poetry and ritual speeches, and each generation has relayed these doctrines to the next (Vel 1994). The narrative that people on Sumba tell today starts with the arrival of their ancestors. The first mortal came to the Earth via a ladder from the sky and landed at Tanjung Sasar, and their descendants spread out over the island (Woha 2008).

“Most children born here are already in debt,” said Mariska, a Protestant pastor and a member of the Kadi Wanno village council in Wewewa. We were riding a scooter, exploring the village to see the traditional houses and megalithic tombs. She then added:

“The debt is passed on to the next in line, if parents or ancestors prove unable to build stone graves for their dead family members.” Locals preserve their traditions by building tower-roofed houses as residences for the living, while nearby tombs are respected as places for dead ancestors. Archaeologists have termed this a “living megalithic culture” (Hoskins 1986). During festivals, hundreds of men carry heavy tombstones and slaughter animals, while women prepare the feast.¹ It is this interaction between people and places that has attracted me throughout this period of research.



Image 2. Tower-roofed houses and tombs in the kabisu Bondo Kaniki (July 22, 2017)

The concept of “well-being” can vary across types of social constructions, that is linked “to the *place* in which [the approaches] are produced, the *people* who present the account and the *methods* of data generation and analysis” (White and Blackmore 2016:38). In the local language, “well-being” can be translated using two words: *duatoleka* and *atadua*. Although the term is not commonly used in everyday conversations, the indigenous concept of “a good life” is understood as following a path to satisfy human needs such as food, houses, family, children, land, and animals (*duatoleka*), as well as the ability to share (*atadua*) with others².

According to a mainstream understanding of “well-being,” Sumba would be categorised as one of the poorest islands of Indonesia. There is a lack of basic human services, such as limited access to water, prevalent malaria, low sanitation, an undeveloped infrastructure, and children are often sick (Sungkar et al. 2015; SMERU and UNICEF 2012). Children eat rice and vegetables two to three times per day, and rarely eat protein of any kind. Meat is only eaten during special ceremonies. As a result of the high incidence of infant mortality and malnutrition, Sumba has become a target of child-focused mainstream development from both the state and non-profit organisations.

¹ Interview with Ama Gole (July 22, 2017)

² Interview with Kornelis (July 13, 2017)

Previous studies on child well-being have outlined multi-viewpoints in the area of mapping indicators. I am strongly inspired by Ben-Arieh and other scholars in my belief that studies of children's well-being must take into account the local context when coming to conclusions about quality of life (Ben-Arieh 2005; Doek 2014; Main 2014; Minujin et al. 2006; Redmond 2008; Gordon 2003). This inspiration is brought to bear when deciding on the research purpose and questions.

Research Questions

This research emphasises how rural people contribute to the meaning of childhood well-being, rather than exploring children's deprivation and suffering. By doing so, I choose to look at the changing perceptions of childhood well-being through the eyes of indigenous caregivers and children. In this way, the following research questions will be investigated:

How is the indigenous perspective of child well-being changing and blending with mainstream conceptions of child-focused development, and how do children navigate this shift to hybridity?

By using the concept of Human Well-Being 3D or Wellbeing in Developing Countries (WeD), I will elaborate on the local perception of child well-being in material, relational, and subjective terms (Sumner 2010; Main 2014; Wood and Selwyn 2017; Lippman et al. 2011; White and Pettit 2007). This concept will guide me as I look at what people "have" and "have not," such as income, assets, employment in the household, education, health, and household quality; observe indigenous children's relationships with their family, political, and cultural identities, friends, and school; and understand children's feeling, aspirations, hopes, self-concept, thoughts, and fears.

Following an anthropological approach to the study of childhood (Sobo 2015; Allerton 2016), I believe that the well-being of Wewewa children can be understood if it is contemplated in the context of indigenous culture. The first sub-question, then, is: **what is child well-being from the perspective of indigenous rural people in Wewewa?** By doing so, I examine the culture of well-being and how the "child" is socially constructed, which I argue are related to the cultural politics of childhood by unpacking culturally determinant elements (James and James 2004).

However, an undivided focus on the local understanding of child well-being could lead to bias, in the sense that one could easily lapse into hybridity between the original and external ideas. Sumba has long been relatively isolated, both economically and politically, and its inhabitants stereotyped as "backwards" people in the eyes of the "modern" inhabitants of Java. External ideas have influenced rural Wewewa communities since the interventions from the central Indonesian government and religious institutions in the 1970s. Local economic and social policies have placed great attention on the Wewewa as a focus of child-focused development.

Following on from this, the second sub-question that can be posed is: **How do Wewewa people deal with mainstream ideas of child-centred development in their understanding of the concept of child well-being?** In other words, how do state policies and external aspirations influence locals' perspective and alter their notions of child well-being?

I regard Wewewa children as subjects in a process of hybridity, concerning their well-being; in other words, these children are partaking in a process of socialisation and cultural production (Cheney 2011; James 2007). In a sense, local children have to find their own way of dealing with the transition that is taking on their island. This in turn prompts the third sub-question of this research: **How do children experience and give meaning to a period of transition, under the influence of the state and religious institutions?**

With regard to qualitative studies that look at children's own perspectives and voices (James 2007; Kellett 2005) concerning their well-being (Crivello et al. 2009), I will explore children's participation in aspects of their everyday lives. The context of children's lives and the shift to hybridity on Sumba will be outlined in the next section.

Characteristics of Sumba, and Major Changes currently under way

Located in a mountainous area, the Wewewa region is at a crossing of the roads leading to Waingapu in the east and Waitabula in the west of the island. It is situated twenty-two kilometres from Tambolaka Airport, and twenty from the southwest Sumba capital, Waikabubak. Unlike in the east of the island, which features a savannah, in the southwest, the environment becomes green, scenic, and humid. There, the dry season lasts from September to February; the remaining months are the rainy season, in which the average temperature varies between 12 and 22 degree Celsius.³

East *Wewewa*, is a sub-district in the area of the southwest Sumba district that is comprised of ten *desa* (villages). The smallest units of administration, known as *Rukun Tetangga* (RT) or *kampung*, are composed of 10-20 households. *Desa* Kadi Wanno covers 545 households over an area of nine square kilometres,⁴ some of which are located in scattered *kabisu* or *kabihu*, a patrilineal clan whose members share ceremonial responsibilities (Vel 2011).

³ Data are taken from the Village Kadi Wanno Administration Report

⁴ *Ibid*



Image 3. Location of the island of Sumba in the Indonesian archipelago⁵

Historically, life in Sumba has been chiefly affected by internal wars between clans over land rights. In the 16th century, Portuguese traders landed here. However, despite launching its commercial interests in Indonesia shortly after, the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, or the Dutch United East India Company (VOC), did not show any attention to Sumba, which was seen as having no commercial prospects.

In the eighteenth century, the Dutch attached great value to local sandalwood, and established trading outposts in the coastal areas of Sumba. In 1756, Sumba was one of the chief local producers of sandalwood and spices (Barokah 2016). In this way, Sumba flourished due the spice trade that took place during the Dutch Golden Age.⁶

At the end of World War II in 1945, the news that Soekarno – a scholar and political activist who became the first President of Indonesia – had declared independence took six months to reach Sumba. Five years on, Indonesia took over Sumba, which had formerly fallen under the political administration of the Timor Regency of the Dutch East Indies colony. Sumba became part of the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur (or East Nusa Tenggara).

Sumba is one of the richest examples of the mixtures of culture, languages, and religions in Indonesia. Although Indonesia is a Muslim-majority country, most inhabitants of the island of Sumba are Christian or followers of the poorly documented Marapu religion. Before 1970, Christianity was a minority religion in Sumba; since then, however, there has been tremendous growth in membership of the Protestant church (Vel 1994; Kapita 1965; Woha 2008). Currently, in each sub-village, there is a congregation of the Protestant Church (Gereja Kristen Sumba/GKS).

⁵ <http://www.citiestips.com/view/sumba-217853> accessed on 20 April, 2017

⁶ Data are taken from the Rijswijk Museum (November 11, 2016)

The population of the village of Kadi Wannu is 2,649 people, who form a homogeneous society. There are neither temples nor mosques in the village; Muslims (eight people) and Catholics are minority groups. However, followers of the Marapu religion are not officially recorded because most Marapu believers are gradually becoming associated with an “obligated religion,” with their official ID card⁷ showing them to be Protestant, Muslim, or Catholic.

Along with the growth in Christianity, recent economic changes on Sumba have brought about major changes on the island. In Wewewa, animals, houses, and land are considered to possess the most important economic value and these items are strongly linked to social relations, rituals, and cultural activities. Over the last three to four decades, the number of horses and buffalos in Wewewa has dramatically diminished,⁸ and the horse – the previous standard mode of transportation – has been replaced by the motorcycle. The non-monetary economy of rural people has consequently changed and is now based on monetary exchanges (Vel 1994).

The state and religious institutions have played an essential role in this change. The effects of the lack of investment in human capital such as infant mortality, malnutrition, and illiteracy have made Sumba a site of social policy intervention especially in social reproduction. The visual proof of the child-focused mainstream development is seen through the school, public clinics, and other physical constructions. The most recent intervention is conditional cash transfers, health insurance, a child development centre program, and a water project. On the whole, it shows that the new aspirations are blending with the nature of the indigenous people in Wewewa.

In order to come to understand the local conceptions of child well-being in this sense of hybridity, I will use an indigenous cultural approach called “emic categories” (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Below, I will briefly outline the methodology that will be followed, using the ethnographic approach.

Methods of Research in Wewewa

The main fieldwork was undertaken in the East Wewewa sub-district in southwest Sumba, Indonesia in July 2017. I concentrated my research activities in two *kampung*, Waekapoda and Waedindi. I chose this area due to the presence of key informants who have access to inhabitants who live in the area. My gatekeepers are Kornelis, Nus, and Mariska, who organise a child development centre. Being local people, they helped me to interpret “member meanings” and comprehend local constructions of well-being (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007).

I undertook a three-week period of fieldwork in order to perform ethnography orientations, participant observations, and semi-structured interviews. In addition, the em-

⁷ At the time of study (Nov 2017), Indonesian courts recognise indigenous religions on ID Card

⁸ Interview with Mariska (July 23, 2017)

pirical findings have combined secondary sources of information, ranging from a variety of sources of government documents, books, academic studies, and museum information.

To complement the ethnographic approach to this research, I carried out interviews with 19 caregivers and local figures. My research focus comprised nine purposely selected households as the units of analysis. The sampling encompassed a variety of genders and ages of children, education and work of adults, social intervention beneficiaries, religions, and child-disabilities. At first, I was confused about the definition of “household,” given that a man can have more than one wife who lives in separate houses, and there can be several nuclear families living in one house. In my study, I chose welfare intervention beneficiaries based on *Kartu Keluarga*, as recognised by official data from government family registers.

As stated by Cheney, my research will take the form of a child-centred ethnographic approach (2007; 2011). From an anthropological perspective, children adopt a role in a social system, negotiating ideologies and cultures in certain periods and through everyday practices. This approach has strengthened the narratives of “child-focused qualitative research,” according to Crivello et al. (2009), that child well-being should entail evaluating the status of children; in this way, it is crucial to envision measurements of children’s well-being in different contexts, and consider children’s subjective understanding (Saith and Wazir 2010).

In doing so, I have used child-friendly participatory methods (Molina et al. 2009; Saith and Wazir 2010; Punch 2002) following a “Mozaic approach” (Crivello et al. 2009); this entails a combination of games, rankings, mapping, observations, focus group discussions, drawings (Einarsdóttir 2007), diaries (Lämsä et al. 2012), and worksheet tasks. The participatory method employed here comprises 105 children ranging from nine to 14 years of age, who are first- or second-generation school-goers at the time of study. A validity and reliability process was followed for half of all participants, by asking them the same questions twice at separate times.

Living with local people has given me better access to information. I have tried to meet people wherever possible in the course of their ordinary movements, while at the same time, I have engaged with collective practices such as wedding, cooking, and general meetings.

During fieldwork, reflexivity was fundamental, and needed to be done constantly, given my position as researcher in the field (Rose 1997; Allerton 2016). I regularly examined my position while writing my field notes at night. This essential process of reflexivity helped me to admit the strengths and limitations of approach, and thus enables a triangulation of the methods employed to find reliable data.

My “positionality” during the fieldwork put me into a privileged position, given special treatment by the society. I received tastier and bigger portions of side-dishes for lunch, was asked to sit at the front during villagers’ gatherings, was given accommodation with a personal modern-style toilet, and was offered a glass of milk (considered a luxury drink) during interviews.

Thus, I realised that local people and respondents did not see me as occupying a single role as a researcher; I was seen to embody other roles, based on my ideology, gender,

status, religion, and previous job. The answers of the research participants were sometimes ambivalent, and not based on neutral space; local people tried to answer my questions based on accepted norms. Thus, I sought to avoid leading and closed questions, remained open and vulnerable, and giving people any information they asked for. Who I was considered in the view of others affected my position in four aspects:

Firstly, I used to work for an international Christian organisation, together with the local church. In this case, I may have been looked at as an “insider” who shared the same nationality and religion as prominent local residents. In addition, local people thought of me as a “person from the top,” who supported them through a poverty alleviation programme in the village. Every time locals invited me to join them at prayer time or with other church activities, this helped me to connect and bond with them.

Secondly, my gender is female. Because of the local gendered division of tasks, people were surprised that I was unable to cook rice in the traditional ways. Nus, one of my informants, said that cooking rice is the most basic and essential role for a woman at home. In order to live like “them,” I started to learn how to cook in a pan on the kerosene stove and once, I took a bath in a river spring to participate in a local women’s task, to connect and talk freely.

Thirdly, I am non-Sumbanese, an urban citizen, and an international student pursuing a master’s degree; this posits me as an “outsider.” They called me “ibu,” meaning “madam,” “mother,” or “Mrs.” But, other unmarried ladies of my age are called “kakak nona,” meaning “Miss” or “sister.” This is the way local people embrace guests, and being visited by a stranger is considered a privileged for a Sumbanese person.

Lastly, although a child-focused researcher, I am an adult, and there is a twenty-year age gap between me and my fellow participant researchers. Such an age gap and consequent hierarchical relationship affects the research process, so the children were comparatively silent in conversations.

The children with whom I interacted successfully responded to a number of participatory tasks, although this was not the case for all the children. They often enjoyed writing diaries, sharing their opinions in discussion, and playing games. However, some children abandoned their tasks, misunderstood the guideline, or felt too shy to complete the task. I felt proud when children valued me as a confidante with whom they could share their fears and worries. The advantage of the Mozaic method is that it contributes to the richness of the data and findings; this goes back to the first principle, that every child is a social agent and cultural producer (Cheney 2011).

It is argued by Rose that both the researcher and research participants’ knowledge contributes to qualitative research (Rose 1997). I see research as a social interaction, given the relationship and “position” between research participants, and I can experience subjective emotions that are very different from the positivist “objective” view. Being a socially situated researcher, but engaging in self-aware and reflective conduct, the findings I have produced can be said to be “nongeneralizing knowledges” (Rose 1997).

With respect to the ethics of conducting research with children, one important matter is obtaining informed consent, and ensuring the children can decide whether or not to participate (Christensen and Prout 2002). To ensure this, I asked for consent from both the children and their guardians. On the first day of fieldwork, Kornelis told me

that written consent forms are inappropriate for the village. “People might find it suspicious,” he said smiling. He then invited me to join locals for a formal gathering to ask for “verbal consent.” After analysing the data, I resent the informed consent via the email account of Nus, my IT contact at church, to ensure I had consent to use participants’ real names and the pictures published in this paper.

In the final element of the research process, I use a grounded, inductive approach to build up the concepts and main arguments linked to the emic categories. The association of grounded data and experimental data derived from accounts in the scholarly literature supports the substance of the main thesis, presented in the following section.

An Outline of the Thesis

This research supports a complex understanding of the “indigenous” notion of children’s well-being, which is being challenged by “other” approaches in this area, especially that of mainstream development. As a consequence of the contemporary child-focused policy that has been implemented in indigenous regions, the way people think about child well-being has been changing through three aspects of constructing childhood: children as economic contributors, gender-specific ways of “becoming a person,” and children as a category in the traditional social order (James and James 2004).

For that reason, indigenous children are experiencing a shift to hybridity, continuing their traditions at the same time as accepting attractive elements of modernity. The discourse that I want to discover here is a shift in this sphere, particularly children’s experience of a clash between “being” and “becoming” someone (James and James 2004; Anderson-Levitt 2005; Cashmore 2002; Mason and Noble-Spruell 1993). This takes place in the way children navigate “new” aspirations and identities.

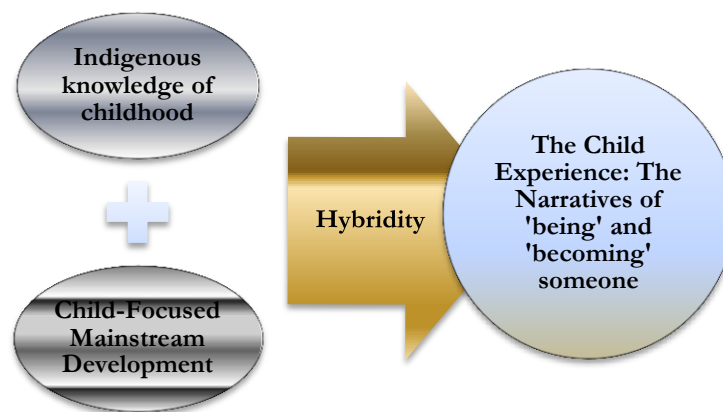


Figure 1. An Outline of the Thesis

The main findings of the research fall into three chapters. Chapter two seeks to identify the specific aspects in which being indigenous affects child well-being, and the indigenous construction of childhood in Wewewa. I will examine the indigenous “cultural politics of childhood” (James and James 2004:6) through one key element, by unpacking the cultural determinants of childhood (*ibid*). The relevant social factors are local beliefs,

cultural conceptions of well-being in relationships, material aspects, and subjectively, and the structure of social relations that influences the child's position in society. The construction of childhood in Wewewa is linked to their contribution of labour to the daily process of existence and the maintenance of life; the gendered structure of life supports the culture favoured by adults; and their tribal identity functions as a form of social ordering.

In accordance with the process of modernisation in attitudes towards children (Ansell 2016) and commercialisation (Wood 2002), traditional concepts of child well-being are constantly changing, and blending with various new approaches. In order to demonstrate this hybridity, Chapter three will quantify the changing notions of child well-being, and the influence of state and religious institutions. I will explore the history of welfare interventions, as well as the current child-focused policy mainstream for Sumba, which has brought about new ways of thinking about contemporary social reproductions in rural areas of the island. Some tensions include a different attitude towards the responsibility to promote education, access to commodities in the market that affect the different gender roles, and the state ideology, as well as the complexity of the resultant combination of animism and newly arrived religions.

Chapter four takes a close-up look at how indigenous children experience these changing notions of child well-being, especially the additional clash between “being” and “becoming” a person. They have to navigate the new aspirations of being “person” in the present and in the future in the context of their moral responsibility to be a source of labour for the household and in the market. At the same time, children negotiate a complex religious identity; their living obligation to maintain a link with their ancestral world, combined with the influences of outside religious institutions and the state ideology.

Finally, the last chapter will provide a conclusion for the research that will be drawn from the research question, followed by a summary of the main arguments, the findings, and an analysis, along with the limitations to and suggestions that have emerged from the study. As outlined above, “Undertaking a Journey in Hybridity” is about a journey, an experience of how children cross between the characteristics of two separate cultural forms: mainstream child-focused policies, and indigenous approaches to children's well-being. This hybridity causes children to change their aspirations and identity, both “being” and “becoming” a person.

In the end, this paper will propose the necessity of taking into account children's voices in the process of the legitimisation of child-centred policy approaches. In particular, it is necessary to pay more attention to the discourse of well-“being,” rather than well-“becoming.”

Chapter 2. The Cultural Determinants of Childhood

“On my first day in Sumba, our turboprop aircraft landed softly. Along the way here, I strained my eyes in order to concentrate on the picture around me. From the car window, I could see men with blades hanging from their belt sashes, handwoven to a back-strap loom around their waist. Around their heads, they wore a woven band with allegorical motifs. My driver told me that today, people were celebrating a horse-riding battle festival.

This made me think of the first time I came to Sumba in 2013, following the road from Waikabubak to Waingapu. Local people told me that this used to be a dangerous forest road, filled with robbers and thieves. Especially in certain months, when people engage in a “bride kidnapping ritual,” many women are forced into marriage by being captured. I was frightened, and wondered what on earth was happening on the island.

Still, visiting Sumba has always been special for me; I have always been so fascinated by people’s warm welcomes, especially their smiles that show their red-stained teeth, since most people regularly chew betel nuts. I met Kornelis, who is my contact in the village. Surprisingly, they had prepared for me a room in a modern building with a toilet; I felt – until I realised that my wall was connected to an old tomb building...wow”

(Field Notes; July 12, 2017)

Living on the island has enabled me to observe a certain rhythm to the flow of people’s beliefs and their culturally based philosophies, ethics, and practices. These elements relate to their rights and responsibilities within the society and their cosmology, including the value of their relationship with the world of their ancestors. In this sense, those values influence their concept of wellness: human beings, the tombs of their ancestor, their houses, and their animals form a coherent whole.

During my second week in Sumba, I often heard the sound of gongs, in the monotone timbre of the hymn for the dead. This is a sign to attend to the houses of the deceased. Although many people have left behind former animism practices to convert to Christianity, these rituals of burials, weddings, and thanksgivings still exist.

I will borrow the term “the cultural determinants of childhood,” as stated by James and James; essential elements here are social characteristics such as the patterns of the kinship system, gender ideologies, beliefs, and the process of social ordering (2004:7). To define social construction of childhood from the viewpoint of indigenous people, this chapter will first look at the narrative of their cultural norms through the local cosmology, the conception of wealth and social structure, and the nature of social relations and transactions.

As explained in the field notes above, my interactions with and interpretations of local people helped me immensely to come to an emic perspective on how local people conceptualise wellness: the concept of life after death.

Local Beliefs: Reciprocity between People and their Ancestors

In the south of the village, an area in the *kampung* Bondo Kaniki belongs to a Marapu family. The old village is constructed behind the trees on the top of a hill above the valley. Steps lead to its entrance, but extra determination is required to climb up the slippery path. The appearance of the *kabisu* is very impressive (see Image 2); there are about seven houses, with a central stone area covered with both old and new tombs. Despite the locals' attempts to preserve the old style of construction with stone, beams, and grass, some features of modernisation have been introduced through modern materials such as cement and tin towered roofs.

Two-hundred meters from the main residence is another vernacular house I visited. It belongs to Vinto, a first-born son from a Marapu clan. His grandfather is a Marapu priest in the village; he can “read” signs of good or bad fortune animals' livers in rituals, and is also the *pesta adat* (a ritual ceremony) during funerals and weddings. This area is of central importance for those who follow the indigenous practice of animism.

Some writers – for example, Weisner (2014) – have argued that discovering why people invest so much in religious devotions is important for studying well-being. Indigenous people believe that one of the most important aspects of a “good life” is burying deceased family members according to the correct rituals (Vel 1994). Slaughtering animals to send the family member's soul into the world of heaven, and completing stone-dragging and grave-building practices, is not following an ancestral custom (Hoskins 1986), but is rather an essential task for living people. If a ritual task is not completed for a deceased relative, their soul can come back to haunt their descendants.⁹ This is connected to the social productions of the living, as will be explained in the next section.

Local Measurements of Well-being

Different cultural communities differ in their beliefs in the meaning of life (Weisner 2014). For the Wewewa, well-being in the local language is referred to as *duatoleka* (*dua*: good and *toleka*: life), life satisfaction in the material, spiritual, and relationship areas of one's life.¹⁰ Moreover, the term “well-being” is encompassed by *atadua*, a higher stage beyond *duatoleka*; this entails sharing with others, including knowledge, materials, love, a happy life, and good characteristics.¹¹ In other words, *atadua* is achieved if someone is surrounded by many people, including one's wives, children, neighbours, and slaves.¹²

⁹ Interview with Maxi (July 28, 2017)

¹⁰ Interview with Kornelis (July 13, 2017)

¹¹ *ibid*

¹² This system of slavery no longer exists in Wewewa, but remains in place in other areas in east Sumba. It is illegal, according to state regulations.

Conceptions of well-being are determined based on the context of people behaviour. For instance, polygamy is fairly common among the elites; Vinto's father has two wives, and built two houses to accommodate the consequently large number of family members. In another example, a smooth house veranda is a "sign" that that house is frequently visited (Vel 1994), while a large number of buffalo horns and bronze gongs hung on the walls indicates a wealthy family (Hoskins 1986).¹³ Buffalo horns symbolise the fact that those animals have been slaughtered, revealing that family's ability to command a vast amount of communal labour and order frequent ritual feasts. This correlates with the size of the social nexus surrounding the members of the household, and their position in this network. It is indubitable that the meaning of "well-being" is associated with people's ability to "share" in this society.

A traditional house has a triangular peak in the centre of the roof to the deified clan ancestor. The wealth of the family is indicated by three levels of house¹⁴; a towered roof, a central floor area for humans, and a shelter for livestock underneath the house. Husbandry is the main source of income in Wewewa. There are three categories of cultivation: rice farming, dry-land farming, and livestock. The horses and the buffalo are traditional modes of transportation, objects used in ceremonial exchanges, and symbols of prosperity; a man without a horse or buffalo is considered poor (Vel 1994).

As mentioned previously, wellness means having enough rice to feed a whole family, plentiful food to please and impress visitors, being far from evil spirits (healthiness), possessing a three-level house, good prospects for one's children, the ability to perform ceremonial duties, and maintaining a harmonious relationship with one's neighbours, relatives, and forefathers¹⁵ (*ibid*). This shows that locals have their own measurements of well-being in both material and relational dimensions. In order to learn how people interact with one another, the next section will describe the economic and moral transactions that take place in the community.

Mode of Exchange: Pre-Capitalist Meanings

In this section, I will present a reconstruction of the social distance and original mode of exchange in Wewewa. Using the terms "us," "not others" and "others" to designate the levels of social organisation in Sumba, as proposed by Vel (1994:62), I will seek to identify the different role of the actors in social exchanges.

In former times, the exchange of goods occurred based on geographical boundaries. For people living in remote areas like Wewewa, trade with outsiders was limited, due to the danger of being murdered or enslaved (Vel 1994). The introduction of money to the area started with relationships with traders, the Dutch East India government, and missionaries. These were categorised as "others," people from outside the community borders.

¹³ Interview with Ama Mira (July 27, 2017)

¹⁴ Interview with Umbu (July 30, 2017)

¹⁵ Interview with Kornelis (July 13, 2017) and Umbu (July 30, 2017)

The actors inside the borders of society are deemed “us” and “not others” (*bukan orang lain*). The household is the smallest social institution. The understanding of what constitutes a household in traditional Wewewa life does not appear to mean a co-residential unit; the members of a household do not necessarily share one or the same house. In the family structure, a man can have more than one wife; the wives live in segregated housing, but are joined together in one *kabisu*, or patrilineal clan. There is typically plenty of food and livestock present in each house, and each household has a responsibility to participate in social gatherings and share sacred offerings during a *kabisu*'s ceremonies.

Houses are built around family tombs and ceremonial statues; together, they make up one settlement (*kabisu*). The type of exchange people employ is based on collective possessions. Social cohesion within the community is maintained by a large degree of mutual help and trust; if one household cannot meet its daily needs, its members will ask relatives for goods or favours. No specific times or quantities are demanded when returning the “loans,” and therefore “the debt confirms the quality of the relationship between the exchange partners” (Vel 1994:159). This type of transaction only takes place between closest relatives, or “us.”

Naturally, the most prominent mode of exchange in Wewewa is that of a reciprocal relationship. This also applies to transactions between people in the community, who are categorised as “not others,” meaning members of other *kabisu*. In this case, the most strategic transaction is the ceremonial exchange. One instance of this is marriage – the transfer of the bride to the groom's clan, from one to another *kabisu*.

The bride-price (*belis*) is the symbol of ceremonial exchange (Kleden 2017), while horses, buffalos, and machetes are the main objects of ceremonial exchange. If a young man needs a horse to “propose” to a future wife, the *kabisu* members collectively share the ceremonial male goods. “The amount of the bride-price depends on the prestige of the bride's family and wealth,” said Nus Dao, a village council member (July 20, 2017). Apparently, the higher the status of the woman's family, the higher the number of horses, pigs, gold ornaments, and buffaloes offered (Baring 2015). In return, the bride's relatives should “repay” this through the same exchange value of female ceremonial goods, which are commonly pigs, jewellery, and woven clothes.

Another form of reciprocal relationship in Wewewa is “loans” from relatives and balanced exchanges (Vel 1994). For example, a gift can be adequate, but not necessarily reciprocated with money or the same good. If someone asks their relatives or neighbours to give a horse as the bride-price, the “creditor” can help the “debtor” voluntarily in agriculture, or even household chores. On the other hand, if borrowed goods are repaid with money, this can be a sign of a lack of friendly feeling because money is not an original mode of exchange, so can be considered suitable for transactions with “others.”

On the whole, reciprocity in Wewewa is the common element of the principal of trust indebtedness, which is timeless and without terms or conditions. Here, well-being is not seen as an individual possession, but rather something that appears via relationships of reciprocity with others (White and Blackmore 2016). For instance, a Wewewa man

can at the same time owe a buffalo to one member of his *kabisu* and have given a pig to another relative. Exchanging these moral and economic “debts” is a sign of a good relationship. Due to this timeless reciprocity, “debts” tend to be claimed in the next generation. The following section will consider how childhood is affected by Wewewa social conditions.

The Social Indigenous Construction of Children: Vinto’s story

The dogs were always barking when I was in Vinto’s house. I visited the stone graveyard, a very old area in front of the house. Today is my interview with Vinto’s mother, Ina Vinto. In Sumbanese culture, it is not polite to mention someone’s given birth name. The mother and father are called “Ina” and “Ama,” respectively, followed by his or her first-born child’s name.

Sitting on the wooden floor, Ina Vinto, who is in her mid-30s, is expecting her sixth child next month. She gives me a tour of her house. One room is divided into three spaces where people sleep and sit. Wewewa people seem not to value “privacy,” in that children sleep together with their parents. In the side-house, there is a space where Ina Vinto and her mother-in-law are not able to enter. “If married women with an unpaid bride-price enter that area, it will cause a sickness or curse,” she explained, showing me a small veranda used for ceremonies (July 22, 2017).

The narrative of Vinto and his family explicitly describes his childhood experiences in Wewewa. It has been argued by James and James (2004:13) that childhood is not only a developmental stage, life phase, and part of the general structure of the course of life; it is also the socially institutionalisation of children by adults, between cultures and generations (*ibid*). In the conceptualisation of childhood, James and James state that we should look at “the child as [a] social actor within [a] tribal model of childhood” in order to see their “agency within [the] local context and in response to local particularities” (2004:61). These assumptions are particularly strong in Wewewa, where children play a role in the relationship between one’s “spirit” ancestors and the “adult” society.

In Wewewa, being a “child” is considered a symbol of well-being. The Marapu family has expanded its clan through the marriage of several wives and subsequent birth of children. Ama Vinto is married to his second wife, Ina Dian, with the consent of Ina Vinto. He has six children with Ina Vinto, and two daughters with Ina Dian.

The importance of having a child is shown through the feminine traits of Sumbanese women such as a *mamoli* pendant (a necklace for women), which is a symbol of female genitalia and fertility (Baring 2015). Such gender symbolism is also a feature of *sirih pinang*, a daily food for chewing, and important goods during ceremonies. The *betel pinang* nut is the symbol of women, and the *betel sirih* the equivalent for men. Adults and some children chewed these nuts, and their mouth shows a blood-red colour, considered a symbol of life and fertility.

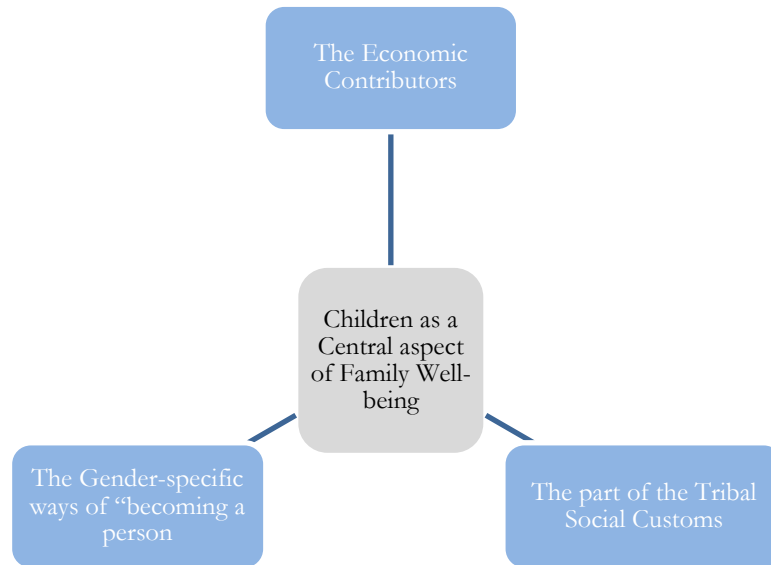


Figure 2. The Social Construction of Children in Wewewa

Children are required to **contribute to the household economy** in terms of husbandry care and household chores. In each household, a division of labour is needed to enable the family’s collective well-being.

For example, Ama Vinto has a rice farm and small plot of land. At the corner of Vinto’s house, one pig and three chickens can be seen in a cage attached to the kitchen room. The spring where they get water is situated far from their house, one hour by foot, but closer thanks to the motorcycle. Two elder sons have a role in family structure. Vinto is in the eighth grade while Rangga, his younger brother, is entering fifth grade of primary school. Every day, the boys help his father in their field rice, fetching water and collecting the firewood. The girls are still very young, but when they turn six, they will start collecting pig feed and feeding the chickens.

“I would be angry if children did not show responsibility towards the tasks they are given,” said Ina Vinto. Children from the lower classes work even harder than those from the upper class because of the need for extra labour. It is almost as if in the household, the child plays an essential role in the reproduction of labour power as a social process ensuring the maintenance and survival of the family.

The second social construction of childhood in Wewewa is the **gendered roles in “becoming” a person**, which manifests in their current tasks and future rights and responsibilities. Since their early years, girls conceptualise their role by doing domestic work such as cooking, child care, feeding pigs, and washing.¹⁶ Differently, boys are socialised to work by collecting wood for the fire and performing agricultural work¹⁷. In

¹⁶ Based on a participatory meeting with 105 children (July 26, 28-29, 2017)

¹⁷ *ibid*

particular, girls are more involved with household chores than boys. Despite the fact that both boys and girls work with general livestock, a higher proportion of boys herd than girls.

Sumbanese inheritance customs favours sons over daughters to continue the customs of the patriarchal clan. Similarly to the gender ideology of many traditional societies, the Wewewa view men as leaders, while the female is the pillar and support of the home. Although there are eight children in Ama Vinto's family, the property will be inherited by the sons. "The land and housing will be divided into two, for Rangga and Vinto; the girls will move away to follow their future husband," said Ina Vinto.

A first-born son in Wewewa has the most responsibility to decide on the family's lineage. Vinto will become a respectful leader of his siblings and their children, including future nephews and nieces. All sons have a responsibility to look after their aging parents, as well as to hold ritual ceremonies.¹⁸

While sons' "becoming" continues the tribal social customs of kinship, daughters' "becoming" means them preparing to move from her father's *kabisu* to that of her future husband. In this stage, girls from noble families command high bride-prices, as a symbol of the appropriate form of marriage. In contrast, girls from poor families can end up in forced marriage through kidnapping rituals, or through the strategy of postponed *belis*. In this sense, when the bride-price is postponed, women cannot respectfully "move," or perform *pindah adat*, to their husbands' clan.

This is the case for Ama Vinto; both of his wives have not received their *belis*. "If we cannot afford the ceremony, Vinto and Rangga should organise *kumpul tangan*, or collecting ceremonial goods from *kabisu* [relatives]." In this way, the *belis* could be paid by a descendent when the couple (husband and wife) have passed away. That is to say, Vinto and Rangga are supposed to prepare the *belis* for their mother, as well as for their own future wives. As a result, boys and girls have different expectations with regard to their future roles.

The third childhood construction in Wewewa is **tribal law responsibility**. This consists of a cause-effect relationship; in other words, deceased ancestors affect the destiny of their living descendants. "Most Wewewa children are taught from an early age to respect their ancestors because they see how adults perform funeral ceremonies," said Mariska (July 20, 2017). Working in husbandry is an investment to prepare for children's future responsibilities as bride-takers, as well as to perform relatives' funeral rituals. To avoid any negative consequences, a primary concern of the living is placating their sacred forefathers through ceremonies.

In conclusion, indigenous rural people's perspective towards child well-being is influenced by three aspects: their economic contribution, adult-desired gender roles, and

¹⁸ Interview with Maxi (July 29, 2017)

tribal law responsibilities. These aspects promote the material and relational dimensions of well-being. However, these features constructed by Marapu are at times blended with those introduced by the human capital models of Christian values and Indonesian state ideology. The notion of child well-being is evolving into different ways of conceptualising childhood.

Chapter 3. Changing Notions of Child Well-being

“In the cold early morning, Kornelis and I sat and talked, staying in the sun for warmth. He was sweeping the dry leaves in front of the PPA office. New classrooms are being built; there will be a total of 18 bamboo classrooms, and each 4x6m2 room will have twenty chairs and ten desks, with a whiteboard at the front. Kornelis is one of the community leaders who recommends me household members to interview. I told him that I needed to meet a boy called Vinto, and possibly interview his Marapu family. “Certainly, you can visit them. His parents are still ‘kafir,’ and most of his relatives are scattered across the top hill of Bondo Kaniki.” His finger pointed to the hill in front of us.

I was surprised that they called Marapu believers “kafir,” an Arabic term meaning “one who covers the truth” or “unbelievers.” This word has been used by Muslims to describe non-Muslims, a term I have heard since childhood in my hometown on Java. It has since been used by Christian on Sumba to describe Marapu followers to show them as “others” and maintain social distance. I realised that the changing concepts of and differences between “we” and “others” really exists in Sumba. Even Pastor Mariska makes the distinction, although he uses a different term: “We don’t use terms ‘Marapu’ or ‘Christian’ to clarify social relations; instead, I use the terms ‘churchgoers’ and ‘non-churchgoers’.”

(Field Notes; July 20, 2017)

In the previous chapter, I explained how locals on Sumba distinguish the actors in transactions through the terms “us,” “not others,” and “others,” based on space (Vel 1994:62). Despite their remote location, people in Wewewa love to be hosts and welcome guests, which has led to the modernisation of the human capital economy (Ansell 2016; Wood 2002), and the decrease in distance from “others” has lessened the isolation, blending and hybridising locals’ social systems. This hybridity seems to continuously affect the structure of social distances, economic transactions, and physical constructions in Wewewa.

The narrative field notes provided above explain the growing number of churches; Sumbanese Christians tend to differentiate themselves from the Marapu (Vel 1994). The Wewewa people, therefore, identify “us” as those who share the same aspirations and religious worldview, rather than geographical borders. Furthermore, the influence of development, demographics, and social change has affected locals’ priorities in terms of material well-being, particularly in livestock property. During the period 1985-1989, statistics revealed an absolute decline in livestock property in Sumba (*ibid*). Since then, the monetary economy has gradually replaces the value of animals and land, but the demand for ritual ceremonies remains strong.

Other changes can be seen through new physical constructions at *desa* Kadi Wannu. The new village government office is being built next to the church. The church is the best building in the village, followed by the school and the public clinic. The walls are constructed with carved limestone blocks, and the grass roof has been replaced by tin, in a mix of traditional and modern architectural styles.



Image 4. Christians going to the Waekapoda Lalara church, a tower-roofed building made of limestone blocks (July 23, 2017)

Every Sunday, girls dress up in their best outfits; going to church is a weekly occasion to attend a social gathering. The *puskesmas* (community health centre) is staffed by a nurse, and offers a limited number of government-subsidized medicines and services. For more sophisticated medical treatment, people must visit a doctor at the medical centre in the Elopada sub-district.

Walking east along the main road during the day, the onrushing traffic consists of public transportation, trucks, motorcycles, and pedestrians. Modern houses have been built alongside the road, followed by a separate space for tombs and animal husbandry. Other residences can be reached by a narrow track. The paths along the fields are shortcuts that are commonly used by children in uniforms to walk to school with their peers. Half of this way is along the main road; this is only for motorised traffic, but is also the only way to reach the school. On Wednesday and Saturday, many women can be seen carrying babies on their backs and baskets with vegetables and coffee beans. They sell these agricultural products in Omba Rade, going in trucks, and at noon, return with the cash they have earned at the local market.

This chapter is comprised of three major sections. The first concerns historical events, following the first steps of globalisation that took place in the 19th-20th centuries. The Dutch government and missionaries intentionally affected perceptions of child well-being in rural Wewewa. The main issues here are the role of the VOC,¹⁹ the Dutch

¹⁹ The Dutch United East India Company, 1588-1795 (Source: Rijswijk Museum & National Archive, the Netherlands)

East Indies²⁰ colonial government, and later, the independent Indonesian state, along with the impact of the Calvinist Reformed Mission.²¹ The description of historical developments is done to provide insight into the major issues involved in changing perceptions of the nature of the good life for children.

The second section of this chapter examines the emergence of the child-focused policy of the modern Indonesia state and international aid targeting the *desa* Kadi Wannu. These interventions have consisted of education, health, and other welfare programmes and have led to changes in caregivers' perspective towards child well-being that will be studied in the third section.

Historical Events in Welfare Intervention

In the pre-modern era, Sumba was not considered a promising area for trade due to its limited natural resources and the perceived belligerent nature of local tribes. In the 18th century, the VOC established commercial activity in the island based on the trade in sandalwood. In later structural changes,²² the VOC's territories became the Dutch East Indies, and were enlarged over the course of the 19th century to comprise the Indonesian archipelago, which would later become the Republic of Indonesia.

Although the aims of the Dutch East Indies colonial rule were economic and political in nature, there was also a large number of missionaries who worked to spread Christianity (Woha 2008; Kapita 1965). Beginning in around 1881, the Calvinist Protestant Reformed church entered the island of Sumba, known in Dutch as the *Nederlandsche Gerefomeerde Zendings-vereeniging* (Woha 2008).

The first era of globalisation arrived at coastal Sumba through financial transactions introduced by three main actors: traders, governments, and missionaries (Ellis 1988; Versluys 1941, cited in Vel 1994). The Dutch East Indies declared an *Ethical Policy*,²³ creating the first welfare state in the Archipelago, and churches played an important role in building schools and health clinics. In that time, economic and educational activities were dominated by non-Sumbanese, while the rural population in Sumba played no role in the commercial sector (Vel 1994). Only Savunese Christian children (from the island of Savu) and few children from the Marapu nobility attended primary school because most children were required to take care of their family's livestock, rather than attend school (Twikromo 2008).

In 1945, Soekarno – the first president of Indonesia – declared independence. The island of Sumba thus become part of the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur. Despite the gradual growth of the Communist Party in the Soekarno era, anti-communist violence

²⁰ Indonesia was under the colonial power of the Kingdom of the Netherlands the 1820-1949 (Rijswijk Museum)

²¹ Calvinism is a major branch of Protestantism; one of the largest Christian denomination in the Netherlands from the Protestant Reformation until 1930.

²² Bankruptcy, and Fourth Anglo-Dutch War (Source: Maritime Museum & National Archive)

²³ It is in the form of better schools, roads, railways, and healthcare (Source: Tropen museum).

brought Soeharto to power in 1967, and he replaced the country's founding president, Soekarno.

The New Order²⁴ policy emphasised economic development and top-down bureaucracy. Links with the West, broken by the anti-West Soekarno, were reinstated, allowing the United Nations and NGOs to spend huge amounts in development aid (Vel 1994). In the 1970s, mainstream developments in the form of medical care, infrastructure, and formal education were introduced by the government, and have manifested in a variety of ways on Sumba.

School enrolment in Indonesia has markedly increased, since a six-year compulsory period of education was implemented in 1984. In rural Sumba, free primary education was not a prime priority for caregivers. Ten years later, the government's education policy was changed to a compulsory educational period of nine years. Dirli's grandmother, who is in her 50s, explained her childhood experience:

“School was a new thing for villagers. My parents said that the school did not help the family eat. I went to school barefoot, but began to skip classes every day. After that, I had never went to school anymore” (July 18, 2017).

Attending school was not considered essential for child well-being in the past; instead, the social expectation was for children to enter the labour force, engaging in husbandry.

During the New Order era, the influence of the church increased rapidly in rural areas of Sumba. In the 1970s, a growing number of people converted to Christianity, and began to practice the doctrines they learned from missionaries (Kapita 1965; Vel 1994). Many people in Wewewa were baptised; the Christian community grew and began expanding its presence in the social and economic lives of villagers.

Economic growth vanished when the Asian Financial Crisis erupted in 1998. After the fall of Soeharto, there was transition from an authoritarian regime into an era of reformation. The influence of politics and capitalism led to general changes in the economy of Wewewa, especially in terms of access to monetary resource. “Cattle theft became a big problem in the dry season. Poverty forced locals to steal horses, cows, or buffaloes in exchange for money,” said Mariska (July 23, 2017). As a result, the diminishing appeal of breeding livestock made locals tend to choose to profit from monetary exchanges.

As has been noted, modernisation took root in the local economic and social structure, based on the human capital model of the capitalist system. Parthasarathi (2011) asserted that the Weberian argument about the Protestant work ethic and Smithian ideas of commercialisation have certainly had a legacy in Wewewa. In other words, the influ-

²⁴ The *New Order* was the name given to Suharto's government, which is associated with authoritarian rule.

ence of Calvinism and theories of production for profitable exchange brought the history of Sumba into a new system, that of so-called development.

The Influence of Mainstream, Child-Focused Development

The relative poverty that characterises the lives of many children in Wewewa is shown through a number of material dimensions: school infrastructure quality, illiteracy, health access, child mortality, nutrition, sanitation, water access, and problems with diseases such as malaria, headaches, typhoid fever, and skin ulcerations. In terms of household assets, people in Wewewa rarely breed horses and buffalos now, which used to be important for ceremonial exchanges. In the last two years, development has focused on bringing water and electricity to communities as basic necessities for the caring economy and market, as well as on child-focused social policies.

In the *desa* Kadi Wanno, there are two sources of welfare support for children. The main contribution from the state is through schools, conditional cash transfers (CCT), subsidised rice, and basic public health services. Other sources are Christian churches, and initiatives are funded by congregations and Christian foundations. Welfare interventions organised by the church are known as *Pusat Pengembangan Anak*, or Child Development Centres (PPA). Most of the participants in this research are beneficiaries of a CCT and a PPA. Some families receive a double benefit, while others only get one or have a choice between two.

The Waekapoda church was established in 2007. Pastor Mariska became the first pastor when she was in her mid-20s. In 2009, she committed to the development of a children's centre through a partnership with a global Christian charity. Foreign aid brings welfare interventions that take the form of educational opportunities, nutritional support, and child development programmes. However, a maximum of two children from each household (based on their Family Card) can join the programme. In total, more than 400 poor children participate²⁵ and go to the centre in two-three days per week after school, wearing a different uniform provided by their PPA. Similarly, in school, children follow the curriculum, attend classes, listen to the lessons given by their mentors, while also receive food and a medical check-up, and participate in a Bible study and talent activity.

Mkandawire (2005) has argued that there are two approaches to these interventions in developing countries: universalism and targeting. School and health insurance is a universal entitlement in Indonesia. Under education policies, children start primary school at six or seven, and early childhood education (PAUD) is provided for children aged four to five. In Kadi Wano village, there is one primary school, SD Inpres,²⁶ and two vocational middle schools. The more sophisticated schools located in Elopada, a 15-minute drive from the sub-village.

²⁵ Interview with Kornelis (July 13, 2017).

²⁶ A primary school built with funds specially designated by the president and allocated by presidential decree.

Since July 2017, educational policies in Indonesia have mandated full schooldays for both primary and middle school students. The school week lasts five days, with the option of additional hours in which students can engage in extracurricular programmes. This policy has been restructured to prove a better quality of education; in this longer school day, students can learn more character-building in the *Nawacita* programme²⁷ put forward by President Jokowi (Wirawan, August 10, 2016). It would appear that education is one area of “modernisation” in the human capital model that affects children. As a result, school in Indonesia follows a standardised curriculum and is assessed through final examinations. The adult-dominant mode of teaching conforms to the local hierarchy: the teacher actively talks, while students passively listen.

Targeted social interventions have been implemented through the Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH), a CCT programme. Established in 2007, this programme is for families with children of school age, with a focus on education and health. The beneficiaries of the PKH are chosen based on official poverty statistics, as measured by the Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS), Indonesia’s central statistics agency. Since 1984, the Indonesian government and policymakers have used poverty reports to decide on the distribution of social policy funds and make decisions (Priebe 2014).

PKH beneficiaries receive from 200,000 to 500,000 rupiahs,²⁸ four times per year. The criteria for receiving cash transfers²⁹ is that the child must have a birth certificate and be on the family register. During the assessment, the government official will assess the physical house such as materials used for the floor and walls, sanitation, source of drinking water, and the possession of specified assets worth over 33 euros. The survey form also asks how frequently the family buys meat or milk, the education level and main job of the head of the family, and whether they have a monthly income of less than 15 euros³⁰.

The potential of and limitations to the current child-focused policy can be seen in how the state defines poverty and who is entitled to such payments. Poverty is measured through health and life expectations, access to schooling, housing standards, the possession of productive land, and monetary income. This system has been criticised by Laderchi et al. (2003), who assert that the assessment is contradicted by empirical comparisons, and some dimensions are irrelevant to the social and economic structure in place in Wewewa. The unique nature of non-monetary economies, irregular forms of income, and ceremonial expenditure vary in their application in mainstream economics. In addition, traditional wooden house can be more expensive than modern houses, while animals and lands are not necessarily counted as money. This is because livestock are commonly used for ceremonial rituals, as well as for children’s education. One example is the story of Ama Gole (July 22, 2017):

²⁷ A nine priority-agenda that also includes the national plan, and the SGD’s coverage since 2014.

²⁸ The nominal payment depends on an assessment report. One euro can be said to equal 15,000 rupiah.

²⁹ From a phone interview with a PKH official in Sumba (July 31, 2017).

³⁰ *ibid*

Ama Gole has two wives, with whom he has fathered 16 children. His first wife, Ina Gole, gave birth to nine children, and he has had seven children more with his second wife, Ina Yuli. They can neither write nor read, and have never been to school. These two women share their lives, living next door to each other, bound together by their polygamist marriage. There are two livestock herds, one for each house. Ina Yuli has two pigs and four chickens, while Ina Gole has one pig and two chickens, for ceremonial purposes.

There is a part of a rice field and a patch of dry land for growing coffee, vegetables, and corn. Every harvest time, being the breadwinner, Ama Gole's crops will be divided between his wives equally. Then, each wife will go to the nearest market to sell the products. Once the women have obtained the money, it is spent on their houses' daily expenses and school equipment for their children. "I earn 50,000-60,000 rupiah [four euros] in a single visit to the market," said Ina Yuli. However, the women only sell their agricultural product seasonally: "It depends on the harvest time and open market schedule," she explained. The rest of the crops are consumed as a part of daily life. The family members eat porridge and vegetables every day.

The government has placed Ama Gole's family into two different households, or family registers. Being the breadwinner of two households, he is only registered into one household, together with Ina Gole. Because Ina Yuli is illiterate, she does not know that she is defined as the head of a family on second family register. She cannot access the PKH, while Ina Gole has.

Both households receive *raskin*, or subsidised-rice,³¹ and BPJS³² from the government. Two children of Ina Gole and two of Ina Yuli are beneficiaries of the PPA programme. All their children have been enrolled at school, while some are now married and have moved to bigger towns.

The conflict between what is normal and what is desirable can be seen through the narrative above – that the standard of child well-being is analysed through a general measurement of poverty. In other words, "whose child are deserving, and whose are not" is influenced by a complex social structure involving polygamous family, spouses whose bride-price has not been paid, an irregular income family, non-monetary relationships, and the morality of exchanges. Other households are sometimes not registered due to limited access to birth certificates and family registrations, due to the unofficial marital system in Sumba. Those with unpaid bride-prices or who follow a non-recognised religion can end up with their marriages not registered. Furthermore, every household causes some confusion in the revenue-expenditure chains of different exchanges. A "poverty calculator," or assessment of the material of a household including gifts, claims, and debts from other households, need to be considered when constructing a household balance sheet (Vel 1994).

This indicates that the contemporary child-focused policy has been set up to boost human capital model. As mentioned previously, the entitlements to social aid takes the form of a commodity in a market society. The next section describes how these "new" aspirations have changed the structure of social interactions among the Wewewa.

³¹ *Raskin* is subsidised rice delivery, an emergency food security programme started in 1998.

³² BPJS is the Indonesian national health insurance scheme.

Different Ways of Thinking and (Tensions)

The introduction of mainstream development in Wewewa has created different ways of social reproduction. Local conceptions have thus become shaped by the dominant rationale, leading to negotiations between “traditions” and “modernity,” particularly the new construction of childhood in contemporary Wewewa (Lukose 2005; Morarji 2014). The power of monetary capitalist transactions is the biggest reason, followed by the national ideology and new religions. The influence of the economy and political context on children can be seen in the table below:

Table 1. Changing Notions of Child Well-being (Source: the author’s own elaboration)

The social construction of childhood	Before	After
	Blending and changing through the influence of the state, religious institutions, and global aspirations	
Economic contributors	Husbandry care, household chores	Husbandry care, household chores, school, aid programmes
Gendered roles in “becoming” a person	<p>Girls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Feminine” roles: Domestic • No-property rights, move out from clan/<i>kabisu</i> • Bride-price: based on the family’s social status • There is the same exchange value of ceremonial goods between bride-takers and bride-givers <p>Boys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Masculine” roles: Livestock and agriculture, wives (polygamy) • Property rights (land and houses), livestock as social status • Replace the position of one’s parent, working with livestock for funerals and bride-prices 	<p>Girls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Feminine” roles: Domestic, employment, education levels • No property rights; they move out from clan • Bride-price: based on education and employment status • There is an unbalanced exchange value for ceremonial goods <p>Boys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Masculine” roles: Livestock and agriculture, money, employment, education level • Their higher education and employment position demands a higher number of livestock for funerals and bride-prices as a symbol of social status • The aspiration to move from the village (<i>merantau</i>) and access money
Form of social ordering or tribal law	<p>Tribal tradition</p> <p>Marapu</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-official religion • Ancestors affect the living • Polygamy <p>Ceremonial practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slaughtering buffalos and pigs for a funeral • Horses, machetes, woven clothes, and jewellery in ceremonial exchanges • Building tombs 	<p>Tribal, state, and religious institutions</p> <p>Christian domination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of certain recognized religions • School/state: religion final exam, identity as an “Indonesian child,” contraception programme • Church: the gospel of prosperity, aid, monogamy, non-animism, a “child of God” identity • Monetary oppression: livestock, land, house, and house furniture vs money

The way in which children contribute to the labour force of the household is clearest when it comes to education. Selling pigs or land to pay for university fees was seen an irrational decision, but today, spending money on education is seen as a good investment for the child's future well-being.

The influence of the monetary economy has created tension for illiterate and low-education parents. The new generation of educated children has led to “new” tensions in households with regard to both the morality and economy that govern social interactions (Morarji 2014). However, the role of children in the labour force has not significantly changed. Their responsibilities are not limited to household chores and husbandry, but include welfare support programmes such as those providing education and aid. For example, Ina Yabes, a parent of a child who receives PPA support, explained her “new thinking” about education and employment, as follows:

“Education is important for both boys and girls. If we are intelligent, people will not look down on us; if we can count and read, no one can trick or cheat us. After school, my child Ovir [aged 17] needs to walk one kilometre to fetch water; he also has to collect firewood and so the cooking. He wants to be a veterinarian. Kezia [another child, aged nine] has the responsibility of washing the dishes and sweeping the floor. Our motto is ‘You need to work before you deserve to eat’” (July 18, 2017).

Despite the patriarchal culture in Wewewa, all children are thought to deserve a formal education. Being educated is an “elite” way to build a political culture, from the adult's perspective. In other words, being an educated child raises the social status of the family.

However, there are tensions that result from the gendered roles of “becoming” a person; educating both one's sons and daughters has an effect on gender ideology and notions of well-being. Thus, family debts and past gifts can be balanced by reciprocal gifts and debts in the future (Vel 1994:157). Parents consider education a “new” way for their children to obtain a monetary income, especially by working in the government bureaucracy as a police officer, or teacher (Nus, July 20, 2017). Social status is considered from the perspective of employment and education: “When someone's employment status is higher, this requires more animals to be slaughtered for their funeral,” explained Maxi (July 29, 2017).

Gaining access to “urban” money is a new way to earn a living, and education is in this way firmly linked to future employment. Continuing the story of Ina Yabes's son, Yabes has just graduated from a vocational secondary school. He attends job training in Tangerang (near Jakarta). In one month, Ina Yabes expects him to send money. “I have asked him to help us install a water tank because I cannot carry water from the spring any more. From his income of one million rupiahs [67 euros], he has transferred 40 euros to pay for a debt at a grocery stall, and another 27 euros to buy some cement,” she explained.

The responsibility to maintain the economic health of the household may fall to a daughter as well. In this way, educated girls raise the social status of the family by receiv-

ing a higher bride-price in the future. Nowadays, educated and employed women are valued for bringing a high bride-price for the family. “If the bride has a job as a nurse, teacher, civil servant, or other official job, she deserve to receive a high bride-price,” said Nus (July 29, 2017). However, the monetary system brings disadvantages for bride-givers, because female ceremonial goods are more expensive than their male counterparts. “Bride-givers these days need to prepare a modern house with furniture such as a refrigerator, wardrobe, blankets, and other domestic things,” added Nus Dao. The same exchange value in the past has been replaced with an unbalanced exchange because the price of house furniture and pigs is higher than the male ceremonial goods.

Development in Wewewa has led to a clash between traditional perceptions and new ideas. The influence of education, new religions, and a monetary system on the well-being of locals, with regard to their priorities in resource expenditure, can be seen at funerals, due to divergences from tribal law. “The problem now is that a long time ago, we used non-monetary livestock for ceremonies but nowadays, everything is valued in money” said Ina Dirli (July 17, 2017). “I have a ‘debt’ in which I must give ceremonial goods to my relatives. They claim the ‘loan,’ but if I convert it into currency, it might be 2,000 euros,” she added. As a result, the solidarity-based exchange principle (see Chapter two) has been altered by the introduction of the monetary economic exchange.

The problem of debts lasting for generations has become an issue for the local government and the church. The transformation from traditional beliefs to Christianity has caused a change in attitudes towards ancestral ceremonies. “We bury the dead with due respect, but with fewer livestock slaughtered,” said Kornelis. The church and the government have urged locals to minimise the amount of animals sacrificed and money during burial ceremonies. In addition, the church teaches a “gospel of prosperity,” that financial and physical blessings are the will of God (not dependent on one’s ancestors). In this way, locals are persuaded to save their money, or pigs for use in their children’s education, and agriculture maintenance.

In conclusion, social policies strongly effect the construction of childhood and local notions of “being” a child in material and relational well-being, creating a lived experience. The Wewewa people deal with mainstream child development policies by accepting different ways of thinking, and have to live with tensions in the fields of education, commodity markets, monetary resources, and new religions. In a sense, contemporary children in Wewewa perform a new identity as “Indonesian children” who go to school, or as “children of God” who go to church.

Chapter 4. The Voice of Children: The Clash between ‘being’ and ‘becoming’

“Today is my last day of fieldwork in the village. It was early in the morning, around 7.10 a.m., and I had packed all my things. There was a gentle knock at the door. At first, I ignored it; I was not sure who it was because usually, visitors call my name to get my attention. However, when the knocking continued, I gave up. I walked slowly to the door to unlock it, and peeped out the window. Ade was standing right in front of my door; I was a little bit surprised. “Hi Ade, what’s going on?” I greeted him. His eyes looked at me for a couple of seconds, then he lowered his head until it was parallel to the ground. “Madam, can I go with you to Holland?”

This reminded me of something that happened two days ago, when he asked me almost the same question. “Can I come with you to Bandung?” I answered that I was not going to stay in Bandung because I had to finish my studies in the Netherlands. Today, he is not giving up so easily. I politely turn down his request by explaining my situation as a student, researcher, and visitor.

(Field Notes; August 1, 2017)

Early on in my fieldwork, I met a group of children at a PPA. One of them, Ade, had shown particularly good writing, during my research assignment. He was sitting in the corner of the class, raising his hand to volunteer as a fellow researcher. I had been conducting a participatory approach, diary assignment training, and focus group discussions for almost two weeks, I felt interacting with him to be a draining experience due to his introverted personality. He preferred to remain silent, while other children spoke with enthusiasm.

I got to know Ade through his writing, where he writes everything about his daily life and feelings. Ade is a nine-year-old boy, a first-born son with younger siblings. His father is a farmer, and his mother mostly stays at home to look after their children.

He wakes up every morning at 5 a.m., does his morning prayers, collects wood for the farm, sweeps the floor, and collects water. After school, he prepares food for his family’s pig, then plays football with his friends before sunset. Like other children at the centre, he likes to go to a PPA programme where he has spiritual lessons, continued by nutritional support and a talent-sports activity.

On the last day, however, he became someone who strongly shaped my fieldwork. The social change in Wewewa has created a new structure of social networks to approach education and urban resources. Having children stay with relatives, especially those who live in urban areas, has become a strategy for help children access higher education. In return, the children perform domestic work for the foster parent with whom she/he stays. This is a financial necessity for parents, given that “children of eight years and older compose the most mobile part of the labour force” (Vel 1994:173).

The day when Ade asks about “boarding” make me feel uncomfortable. I realise that the emotional bond of a relationship has formed during this ethnography. This has changed my position, and I have moved from “other” to “not other,” in terms of our social relations. In this sense, I assume that a child’s strategy to access urban resources is no longer necessarily based on kinship and relatives, but potentially non-relatives too.

In the first meeting of my participatory research, I met the children to find their subjective understanding of well-being, and how they interpret it in their own daily lives. I asked questions to obtain data about subjective well-being: “What are the three things that make you most happy, and are important for you?” followed by the next instruction, “What is the thing that makes you most happy if you get it, and most sad if you lose it?”

The children said that their education was their highest priority, and so was the most important aspect of contemporary child well-being. This was followed by family and God, as the happiest things in their lives. In a sense, their generation is experiencing “new aspirations,” a hybridity between Marapu-Christianity and husbandry-education.

Using the tool of drawing and mapping, children generally drew three elements: a house, animals (livestock), and crops (cultivated land) as symbols of their everyday lives. This hybridity of daily elements is shown by their drawings: tombs, a towered house, church, modern houses (with stairs in front, being a combination of a traditional Sumba house), cars, a water tank, toilets, and a cross. In this way, it can be seen how the hybridity shapes children’s perspective (Chapter three), as influenced by mainstream development.



Image 5. A child’s drawing of a church, crops, livestock, a house, tomb, car, and road

This chapter looks at children’s experiences of a shift towards hybridity: indigenous and mainstream knowledge, especially the clash between “being” and “becoming” (James and James 2004; Mason and Noble-Spruell 1993; Anderson-Levitt 2005; Cashmore 2002). From a theoretical point of view, the children’s narratives of “being” and “becoming” are presented by James and James:

“The child was regarded as ‘becoming’, rather than ‘being’, and it was the very materiality of childhood – the fact that children do flow into adults, physically, psychologically and socially – which permitted childhood socialisation to be conceived of as ‘the way to give the desired shape and order to future adults and to future society’”(2004:27).

If this hybridity occurs, two conflicts are experienced: the way children navigate their aspirations, and negotiate the complexity of their religious identity. Starting with the first strategy, the next section will explore the voyage towards aspirations concerning what is considered an acceptable action, which is related to responsibilities at school, work, and self-care. The following section unpacks the voices of children; both “becoming” and “being” need to be taken into account.

Navigating the Aspirations of ‘Becoming’ and ‘Being’

Sweating in the tropical heat after school, the girls and boys were gathered together in the PPA. Like the other children present that day, 13-year-old Monica, sitting near the front door, was hot and dripping with sweat. She seemed tired and pale, after her eight-hour school day. She came to me, showing a bit of a worksheet assignment, and I opened her diary, and read her entry for today:

Today, I was so tired because my maths teacher asked me to write out my multiplication table 50 times (July 27, 2017).

Monica seems to spend their times at home, school, church, and PPA. She wakes up at 5 a.m., and goes to school from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. This overlaps with her PPA programme, which is from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. At home, she does some household chores. She goes to bed at 9 p.m.

These aspects of children’s lives are sociocultural processes, in which a Sumbanese family can be considered “a unit of economic maintenance” (Weber 1956, cited in Alanen and Mayall 2001). It requires the constant and demanding social action of all members of the household; “...it is nevertheless the case that most children are (even if only for some of the time) in [a] position of structural disadvantage” (Allerton, 2016:6). As we have seen, caregivers are beginning to give increasing priority to education, rather than limiting children to chores and other duties.

Despite gendered segregation in the patriarchal culture, gender roles do not apply in school. During focus group discussions, I directly asked the children to consider their experience in education. For some research participants, there is a gap between their school and aid-programme experience, what adults want of them, and their personal experience. Some young participants were transparent about the nature of their “study” experience. As 12-year-old Elfin said:

“In the evening, I have to prepare for the next day’s lessons, or at least read a book; and I have to work even harder in middle school. I read the Bible; that’s also a part of my studies. I wake up at 4 a.m., do some chores, and go to school until 3 p.m. On Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, I attend the PPA from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m” (July 27, 2017).

A FGD with older children (aged 12-14) is much more fluid than for younger ones (aged 9-11). Numerous girls were eager to share their school experience:

“The teacher in my middle school is ‘bad-tempered; if a student fails to memorise a multiplication task, we are punished by having to salute in front of our red-and-white [Indonesian] flag during the day” – Girl 1.

“Our shoes should be black; even red or white stripes are not allowed. If we were to wear such shoes, the teacher might burn them” – Boy 2.

This supports the argument of Anderson-Levitt: “...children in the global South [have a] strong extrinsic motivation to stay in school and to succeed” (2005:996). In any event, the idea of “creating” children “for the sake of their future well-being” fails to consider their well-being in the present (Fattore et al., 2007; Cashmore, 2002; Mason and Noble-Spruell, 1993). When I considered the “normality” of children following such school rules, in my discussions with children, I looked at the purpose of “studying,” correlating it firmly with the idea of performance, achievements, and purchasing power. These opinions also emerged in the discussions I had six children (July 27, 2017):

- Girl 1 : To be better than others
- Girl 2 : To learn new thing
- Girl 3 : To reach my dreams
- Girl 4 : To be a good person
- Boy 1 : To get good marks

This certainly corroborates the notion that “childhood is shaped by state policies, religious rituals, laws and institutions” (Allerton 2016:12), supporting the view of the children that education is a contemporary moral evaluator and the way to be ‘someone’. Both their schools and the church seek to shape local children’s sense of moral responsibility, to be an Indonesian child and a child of God.

The idea of school as a social contributor leads to ideas of obtaining market commodities. In this sense, gender also functions in children’s path to “become” something. In this sense, girls’ “becoming” is more abstract than that of boys. The question: “What is your biggest dream?” was answered in the following way, in games I played with 47 children:

- | Girls | Boys |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| • Be blessed | • Teacher |
| • Find my dream | • Police |
| • Get more knowledge | • Doctor |
| • To be a good person | • Army |
| | • Civil servant |
| | • Money-maker |

As has been noted previously, daughters think they are “outside” the patrilineage system, and are expected to show that they have developed good female morality, as a future backbone of the family, regardless of whether their achievements in school are bet-

ter than those of boys. While girls outline non-specific dreams, boys clearly describe their dream about how they will make money. This narrative explores the difference that gender causes to “becoming” within the patrilineal context, linking it firmly to cultural responsibilities. On the whole, mainstream development (see Chapter three) has affected the way children navigate their “becoming,” leading them to follow the human capital model approach.

How they will they achieve their “becoming” aspiration seems to clash with their “being,” in the context of their priorities. This is shown by the limitations placed on children’s “leisure” for the sake of studying and working. According to Riel, “My parents will beat me if I go outside, not doing my household chores, playing until the evening.”

By asking them these questions, I facilitated the children’s subjectivity to define and rank their priorities and understanding of “working,” “studying,” and “playing.” The report shows that “studying” has the highest priority, followed by “working.” “Study” is perceived as constituting mixed activities at school and church, such as:

- Learning science, language, social sciences, civics
- Writing
- Reading
- PPA programme
- Reading the Bible
- Arithmetic

What emerges from the above is how concerns of responsibility are framed by the child’s worldview; influenced by [a] normative of the contemporary social constructions of childhood (Alanen and Mayall 2001). Studying is seen as an investment and desirable to succeed in the adult world, while working is considered as making a labour contribution to the household. Both are categorised as “productive” labour, while playing is considered “unproductive.”

In the absence of rules and responsibilities, children define self-care though a mix of school activities and working:

- Taking yams from dry cultivation, picking guava
- Jumping a rope, card games
- Hide and seek, toys, drawing
- Sports at school: volleyball, football, etc.

As we have seen, “playing” in the Wewewa cultural context is not always clearly distinguished; in this cultural setting, a combination of “playing when working” and “playing through schooling” shows “blurred categories in the context of children’s activities” (Allerton, 2016:162). Middle-school students (aged 12-14) feel ashamed to use the term “play,” instead talking about physical activities at school. The understanding of playing also blurred in case of Mira (aged nine), for whom “going to the cultivate field, digging yams, and pick vegetables with my siblings for dinner” is categorised as ‘playing,’ as well as labour.

To summarise, there have been big changes for locals in this area, and there is still confusion, in the areas of moral responsibility, double burdens, and self-care. Still, childhood experiences bring “additional” responsibilities in work and study. The journey to the adult-desired condition is motivated by the market imperative to survive in the future, with children sacrificing what they enjoy in their “present” well-being.

To come to understand the child’s perspective of “current” well-being, self-reports from children are essential, to know their feelings and social relations (Wood and Selwyn 2017; Lippman et al. 2011). The way children tell us about their own well-being can be seen in Dirli’s diary:

“My parents were angry with me at home, as was my teacher. I was so sad at school because I was naughty, my teacher was staring at me, and I cried. When I arrived home, my parents asked me to fetch six jars of water. On the way, I met a strange man who threw a stone at me. I was sad, and cried. While I arrive home, I sometimes have a break, have my lunch, and collect wood. I don’t like collecting wood because our farm is too far from our house.”

The above self-report shows how a child navigates his “present” experience, which can help policymakers decide how to respond to the clash between “future labour” desires and “present labour” responsibilities in the care economy. Parents and teachers do not really know what to be concerned about. Dirli describes experiences of emotional abuse and feelings of insecurity, due to both known adults and strangers. Furthermore, the voice of Dirli emphasises a severe deprivation, such as poor access to water and sources of energy and in doing so, he takes into account his “present” well-being.

The lack of a “present” well-being policy for children especially hits disabled children who have a “limited” learning process. The village has not provided “special” assistance to such children because it is thought that they will “contribute less” in the future. Yuni (aged 15) and Ito (aged 11) attend a regular public school. Both are unable to read or write properly. As a consequence, Ito has remained in the second grade, while Yuni is in the fifth grade in primary school.

He suffers from health issue such as night blindness and malaria, as does Yuni. She also has acute asthma and febrile convulsions. Her tongue is short, so she cannot speak clearly. “She was crying in front of me when I thought of removing her from school and the PPA,” said Yuni’s mother, Ina Son. “I was embarrassed because she cannot follow the ‘normal’ school lesson, but she prefers at school rather at home.”

As has been discussed, the new child-focused policy in Wewewa creates social exclusion for special needs children. Their voice is never heard because they do not have a prospective “becoming” in society in the future. All actors need to take into account the agency and rights of the child to ensure their best interests are met.

In the end, the way children navigate their journey into “becoming” someone is driven by the market, preparing children to become future “productive” workers, which gives rise to the question: Are they happy now, rather than will they be happy later?. Do

they feel an extra burden now in order to achieve adult-desired?. The clash between “being” and “becoming” also occurs for children’s religious identity. In the next section, we will see how children adopt a strategy to deal with two religious rituals and identities, those of Marapu and Christianity.

Negotiating the Complexity of Religious Identity

The indigenous belief of the people in Sumba is Marapu. According to this belief, people’s forefathers exercise authority over the fate of their living descendants. For this reason, a large amount of material expenditures are allocated to ceremonies to maintain social and spiritual relations with one’s ancestors. The Indonesian government accepts animism as a cultural manifestation under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, rather than as a religion, and it is not acknowledged by the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

The trend towards conversion to Christianity has led to a disconnection between ancestral rituals and living people. Currently, the Sumbanese Christian church is considered the most influential institution in society, and it is rare to find people who still actively practice the Marapu. Society values and hence blends together new forms of knowledge, and people often subscribe to elements of both Marapu and Christian beliefs. Both doctrines play an important role in shaping a contemporary child well-being, which influences the way children make strategic choices between the state-accepted religion and their tribal obligations.

Indonesian law requires each citizen to possess one affiliation with recognised religions. The first of principle of Indonesia’s philosophical foundation, *Pancasila*, is that “the nation is based upon belief in one Supreme God,” through six religions. These are Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Buddhism, and Hinduism, while after the Reformation era, Confucian is also required. After 1965, the pressure to have one of these religions grew, as the New Order government used the doctrine of Indonesia as a socio-religious society for its anti-communist political ideology. This approach is embedded in the school curriculum, where one has to follow a religious course. However, Marapu is not categorised as an official religion in Indonesia, which has led to Christianity growing at the expense of Marapu.

In this way, all children of a Marapu background who attend school are obligated to choose to learn about one of six religions. Mariska said, “Vinto became Christian when he reached sixth grade, when the public school required him to take a final exam in an official religion.” The country’s national ideology placed restrictions on non-recognised religious groups that were deemed “atypical”; “Due to there not being an exam in Marapu, parents or children choose the most dominant religion in the village,” she added (July 23, 2017).

In the same way, the church encourages people to be church-goers, Marapu children are voluntarily converted to Christianity. Accordingly, as per Durkheim, the sociology of

moral life plays an essential role in constructing people's social life. In this sense, the strategy that makes children choose a state-mandated religion puts individuals into a social group of people who "feel bound to one another because of their common beliefs" (Lynch 2012).

As has been stated, the need to choose an official state religion may give children better opportunities in the future. This strategy can also be followed to avoid the risk of future difficulties, as has commonly happened in previous human rights discourses in Indonesia, whereby many people have been unable to acquire birth certificate for their children, which is essential for them to go to school and gain government employment (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, Government of States 2011). However, the need for locals to identify themselves as affiliated with a recognised religion has not cut people's link with "indigenous" notions of spiritual well-being.

For example, the traditional religion obligates a first-born son, such as Maxi, to pay his late mother's postponed bride-price, as told through the narrative below (July 28, 2017):

Maxi is 25 years old, with four younger siblings. Maxi's father passed away one month ago, while his mother died due to a traffic accident four years ago. He has a teaching degree, an irregular income as a barber, and a lot of debt to pay off, in addition to earning a living.

The death of their parents is not a simple issue for his family and relatives. In the past, his father committed inappropriate ritual behaviour by killing a sacred snake. Moreover, the strongest reason for their situation is because his mother's bride price has never been paid. Although he is a second-generation church-goer, he is still bound by his obligations to his parents: "I need to complete my '*adat*' obligations," he stressed.

"This is a debt," said Maxi. In the Sumbanese tradition, the bride-price does not necessarily take the form of an economic contribution, but is rather valued as a spiritual obligation.

"If I did not pay my parents' debt [the bride-price and other ritual obligations], bad luck can come to the next generation. Our ancestors could do this. I need to earn money to celebrate the ceremony for my parents, and perform a proper funeral ceremony by asking the Marapu-priest how many animals need to be slaughtered," said Maxi.

Maxi may try to bargain for a cheaper ritual obligation. "We have to slaughter at least five animals, and a buffalo costs five to eight million rupiah, so the expenditure can come to around 35-40 million rupiah [2,500 euros]." Of course, if he had a better job, he would have an obligation to slaughter even more animals; "50 animals is also a possibility," he said, taking a deep breath.

The influence of capitalism has led to children and young people negotiating a different approach to these ritual obligations. To do this, they invest in "becoming" to avoid a bad fate and curses from their ancestors. In this sense, their understanding of the "original" sacred aspects of Marapu has been diminished. Below, a number of children, all of whom were aged 13 at the time of discussion, explain what they know about a funeral (July 27, 2017):

Boy 2: During a funeral festival, almost every single day, people drink coffee, tea, and alcohol. At night, men play cards, drink *peci merah* and *peci putih* [a brand of alcohol], and gamble.

Girl 1: Children are summoned to make a coffee for adults, or they ask them to return to their room to study.

Girl 2: The funeral ceremony can be held over three-seven days. The longer it has been since the person died, the longer the festival.

Girl 3: It wastes such a lot of money; rich people may be able to do this, but we are not rich.

Girl 2: All the relatives from our clan get together money, woven clothes, and pigs. Someone will organise the allocation of the ceremonial goods. During the festival, one day will be organised by one family, and the following day by another family.

Boy 1: When we grow up, we will also have to prepare the festivals, and bring sugar, coffee, and pigs.

Boy 2: When I was a primary school student, I loved to play hide and seek at night. I also gambled and made money when playing with other adults – I got money from my aunt. If I bet a lot of money, I earn a lot more.

Children's understanding of funerals has become confused. Children understand a funeral as meaning a waste of money and bad behaviour; rather than as the original sacred practice, the link between one's ancestors and their descendants.

As mentioned previously, children know that they have a future responsibility to continue performing tribal customs; however, they also bargain to lower their obligations for spiritual customs and tradition. Given that today, Indonesia is capitalist, traditional obligations seem to be adjusting to conform to the "new-style" Marapu belief and behaviour system.

The complexity of this new religious identity has had cultural, political, and social effects on Wewewa people's perspective of well-being. Ultimately, they are choosing neither a pure Christian nor pure Marapu approach, but rather negotiate both spheres, bounded by the state ideology.

On the whole, the most serious issue is how Wewewa negotiate their religious identity in the context of their future "becoming." By pursuing an education, Vinto may have access to better jobs and opportunities in the future, while Maxi and other young people may still complete ritual obligations, but in a different way. Both are dealing with the new, blended mixture of mainstream development and tribal law in order to bring about a better future. Again, the questions arise: Does their lack of agency give them "present" well-being? Do their negotiations make them "better off" today, rather than later?

Chapter 5. Conclusion: Reviewing Well-‘becoming,’ and Requiring Well-‘being’

I started this paper via an illustration of the development of people and place, through a picture of the daily life experience of children in Wewewa area of Sumba, Indonesia. A child’s life is like a journey; they are moving along a path of “surviving” and “being,” as well as “flourishing” and “becoming” someone. By understanding that a child is a cultural producer (Cheney 2007; 2011), this ethnographic approach has framed children’s life experience and its social factors in a certain time, through everyday practices. This research has sought to comprehend how the notions of indigenous perspectives of children’s well-being are being challenged by the child-focused, mainstream development approach, and how children are responding to this change.

It is indubitable that a child’s journey is not only their progress through different stages of life, but is also culturally and politically constructed by their social context (James and James 2004), and is regulated by local beliefs, cultural norms of well-being, and the pre-capitalist structure of a society and economy. Thus, “childhood” in Wewewa is regulated the outset, with childhood being constructed in three aspects: contributing to the economic survival of the household, abiding by gendered concepts of “becoming someone,” and following tribal law responsibilities.

The indigenous perspective of child well-being is, in its material and relational dimensions, changing and entering a new hybridity due to the influences of the state, the market-driven economy, and religious institutions. In line with this thesis of children, youth, and development (Ansell 2016), this hybridity is blended into two separate cultural forms: mainstream child-focused policies and indigenous knowledge. The power of mainstream development trends causes new ways of thinking and tensions with the social structure in contemporary rural Sumba, particularly with regard to education, access to the labour market and resources, accommodating the state ideology, as well as the challenging complexity of tribal rules and new religious aspirations. Despite the promises of the modern state of “contemporary” child well-being, the cultural politics of childhood have placed too much attention on adult-desired outcomes. This hybridity can be seen in the way children navigate between “being” and “becoming,” and negotiating the complexity of a changing religious identity.

Taking an interpretive approach to the child-focused policy, the adult-centred discourse has generally led to an overemphasis on children “becoming” adults, and a much diminished focus on allowing children to share their feeling and thoughts about their being in the present (James and James, 2004; Fattore et al., 2007; Mason and Noble-Spruell, 1993; Cashmore, 2002). By simply breathing, a child is in a state of being, but children’s voices and subjective well-being are typically ignored, and their experiences are often of their limited agency, such as their being socially excluded, experiencing an insecure environment and extra burden, and being only an object of decoration in policies. In a sense, their well-“being” as a child is generally sacrificed to ensure their well-“becoming” as a future adult.

One weaknesses in this study lies with children’s subjective findings about their “being,” which can only with a lot of effort be placed neatly into the standard categories of

studies of the entire community or state. Further mixed qualitative-quantitative research is needed to learn how researchers, civil society, and governments can support a child-sensitive approach into social protection as an entitlement, rather than charity, and as an investment, rather than as basic welfare or a protective intervention (Roelen and Sabates-Wheeler 2012).

This study adds to knowledge of child well-being and its implications for understanding well-being based on children's experiences and perspectives, as well as challenging mainstream child-focused policies, which have given rise to distressing developments with regard to the current well-being of children. In other words, the child-sensitive child approach should not simply concern itself with "well-becoming" children, but rather children's voices need to be taken into account in the legitimisation of the child policy approach, by focusing more on child "well-being" in the present. This research proposes including "children's voices" in policies for children, giving more room to the children to participate and contribute to decisions.

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