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**YOUTH ASPIRATIONS IN 'DESAKOTA':
The Case of Klaten Regency, Central Java, Indonesia**

A Research Paper presented by:

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Disclaimer:

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Abstract

This study focuses on youth aspirations in the 'desakota' area, with a case study of Klaten Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. This is important since most studies on youth are drawn into either large urban cities or rural areas. Thus, a study in the context of an in-between region will showcase a unique specificity where traditionality and modernity intersect. This study explores how youth narrate their aspirations, in relation to their perception as youth, the complexity of the socio-spatial context in the digital age, and their efforts to make use of opportunities to realize their desired future. The questions are addressed through qualitative exploration, adopting 'adult-decentering' methods and a relational approach with the notions of identity and generations. This study found that youth in the 'desakota' creatively use the traditional aspects in which they live to develop their modern aspirations. Here, their social interactions within the broader social reproduction shape their identity, building the foundation of their aspirations.

Keywords

Youth; aspirations; desakota; identity; generation.

Chapter 1

Inquiry on Youth Aspirations in Klaten Regency, Indonesia

Klaten is located between two education hubs, Yogyakarta province and Surakarta city. With ongoing development, ten local tertiary education institutions available. However, despite its gross enrolment rate in upper-secondary education exceeding 100%,¹ its tertiary education enrolment has been low over the past decade. This study aims to understand these paradoxes through qualitative exploration by looking at Klaten's youth aspirations on education and beyond, especially of those enrolled in secondary education or recently graduated. This study posits aspirations as socially embedded, which consequently rooted in a spatial context. Therefore, this chapter will discuss youth aspirations within the socio-spatial dynamics, the context of Klaten, the research problem and questions I want to address.

1.1 Youth Aspirations within Socio-Spatial Dynamics

Youth aspirations has long been the focus of research on life trajectories, which sees youth as an important phase to acquire skills necessary to navigate future life (Furlong, 2009, p. 95). Huijsmans, Ansell and Froerer (2021, p. 3) defined aspiration as “an orientation towards a desired future.” Although it is future oriented, by “imagining possibilities, doubting trajectories, and navigating the relations through which futures unfold,” aspiration gains significance in the present (Ibid.). However, aspirations are collectively shaped and deeply rooted in social interactions which recognizes the role of institutions, social relations, and daily experiences in shaping, changing, or diminishing aspirations (Appadurai, 2004, p. 67; Huijsmans, Ansell and Froerer, 2021, p. 3).

It should be noted that both youth and social interactions are embedded in geographical locations. Thus, studying youth aspiration must be contextualized within their socio-spatial specificity. Numerous research has underscored the impact of socio-spatial factors, such as geographical proximity, gender, poverty, and birth order, on educational opportunities (e.g. Furlong, 2009, p. 2009; Ansell, 2017, p. 312; Lees and Demeritt, 2023, p. 121). Moving beyond material aspects, studies found that the ideational domain, such as religious doctrines, citizenship values, and shared hopes inherent to a socio-

¹ The Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) is the ratio of students enrolled at a specific education level, irrespective of age, to the population of the official age group for that level. In Indonesia, the designated age group for upper-secondary school is 16-18 years old. A GER exceeding 100% indicates enrollment of students outside this age range. In my study, nearly all my participants entered upper-secondary school before the age of 16.

¹ Figures for Klaten and Central Java are derived from the annually published *Statistik Pendidikan Provinsi Jawa Tengah*. Figures for Indonesia are obtained from the BPS website. The figures for Central Java and Indonesia are higher in another database published in BPS websites, but it does not display data for the years of 2011-2014.

spatial backdrop could profoundly influence youth's aspirations (e.g. Naafs, 2018; Schut, 2019; Minza and Herlusia, 2022).

However, research on youth frequently focuses on either large urban areas or rural settings (e.g. Ansell, 2004; Archer, Hollingworth and Halsall, 2007; Panelli, Punch and Robson, 2007; Allen and Hollingworth, 2013). Therefore, this study aims to address the gap by exploring the in-between regions. Terry McGee (2007, p. xv) coined the term 'desakota' to refer to the areas near big cities emerged in Southeast Asia. Originating from Bahasa Indonesia, 'desa' means village and 'kota' means city, signify a blend of rural and urban characteristics where social and political forces intensely negotiate, contest, and reconcile (Ibid., pp. 51, 224). Considering these factors, studying youth aspirations in 'desakota' would highlight a specificity where modernity and traditionality intersected.

Furthermore, specificity in terms of historical juncture should be considered. Zipin *et al.*, (2015) showed the importance of temporal specificity as it shapes the social and cultural conditions in which young people develop their aspirations. In this study, I locate youth within the digital era which calls for an appreciation of youth culture. Following Buckingham (2008, pp. 11-12), technological revolution is not "the driving force of social change," but rather as part of "broader social and historical development." Besides locally specific, digital technology allows youth to share the same culture with their global cohorts (Bayat and Herrera, 2010, p. 10), explicitly showing the multispatial interaction.

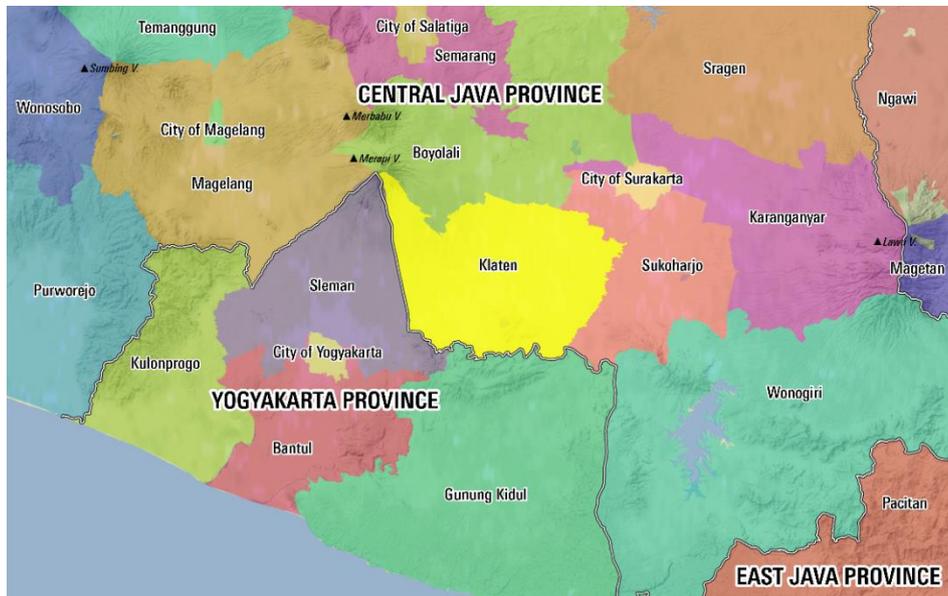
Contrary to the concept of aspirations, research on youth culture argue that youth may not always perceive their everyday as merely preparatory for the future (White, 2016, p. 5). They may focus on crafting an identity as 'successful youth' rather than on becoming 'successful adults' (Naafs, 2012, p. 15). To mediate this, scholars suggest that worrying about the future is part of the experience of growing up (Uprichard, 2008, p. 305; Bayat and Herrera, 2010, p. 6). Thus, this study will follow Frye's approach on aspirations as "assertion of present identity" (Frye, 2012, p. 1598). Naafs and Skelton (2018, p. 1) argue that participation in secondary and tertiary education carries social status and shapes young people's job preferences, desired livelihoods, lifestyles, and their self-perception as educated persons.

1.2 The Context of Klaten Regency

Klaten is strategically located between two urban centres of Yogyakarta (or Jogja) province and Surakarta (or Solo) city (Figure 1). Yesiana (2014, p. 57) noted that Klaten is developing as it has undergone considerable land conversion and economic growth compared to other districts in the province. However, she also found that even Klaten's so-called urban areas exhibit rural characteristics, such as relatively low population density, limited educational facilities, and high social control and interaction (Ibid., pp. 60-63). Agriculture remains a primary economic sector in Klaten, and the local government continues to view Klaten

as a hinterland, supplying food and agricultural products to the two neighboring cities (Pemkab Klaten, 2021, pp. II–1). Historically, Klaten was indeed an important region that connects two sultanates, Kesultanan Yogyakarta and Kasunanan Surakarta, in Dutch East Indies era.

Figure 1. Map of Klaten Regency and Surrounding Cities/Regencies



Source: Sawungrana, A., (unpublished work), based on Indonesian Ministry of Home Affairs, 2019 & Stamen Terrain, 2023.

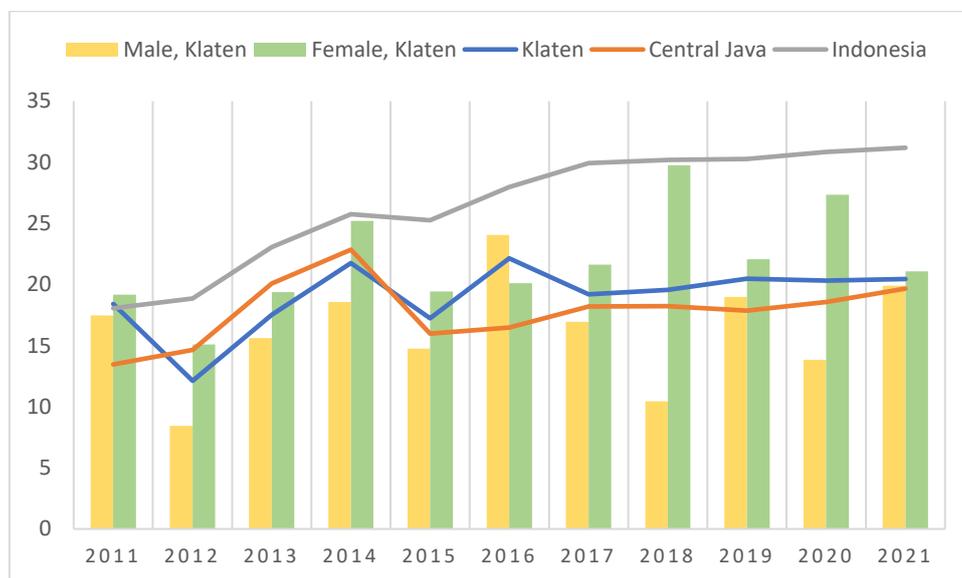
I lived in Klaten for a year before moving to the Netherlands for my study. I observed that the regency is developing, with some multinational restaurant chains arriving, and people have started complaining about an increase in traffic congestion. In 2021, the commuter train system, KRL Jogja-Solo, began operating, stopping by Klaten and Sukoharjo regencies. There are only two such train systems in Indonesia; the other one operates in the capital city Jakarta and its surrounding cities. I have used the commuter train several times and was surprised by how crowded it gets during the morning and afternoon rush hours. When I came back for fieldworks, I used the train in one trip during weekend and it was also crowded, though there are more train schedules in day offs. During the recent year-end and Eid holidays, six schedules were added, meanwhile, four schedules were added during the last school break (Rusqiyati, 2022; Adi, 2023; Wasita, 2023).

I came from Malang regency, East Java province, which is 366 kilometres away from Klaten. Before knowing my husband, who came from Klaten, I was unfamiliar with the regency, but it is not unusual. My husband says that if anyone from another province asked, many of his Klaten friends would claim to be from Solo, as people would be more familiar with this city than they would be of Klaten. My surprise at the crowded commuter train likely stemmed from not expecting people in Klaten and nearby regencies to be so busy as I thought of

Klaten as a small and humble town. I think the term ‘desakota’ indeed reflect how the current Klaten is.

As ‘desakota,’ Klaten’s youth likely benefit from the availability of, and the proximity to, education facilities. Gross enrolment rate in upper-secondary education in 2020-2022 exceeded 100% (BPS Klaten, no date). However, statistics show that enrolment rate in tertiary education among youth in Klaten has only slightly increased over the past decade, reaching only 20.46% in 2021 (Figure 2). Klaten’s figures are not very differed to Central Java’s, which persistently ranks as the one of the lowest among all provinces (BPS, no date b). In stark contrast, the neighbouring Yogyakarta province boasts the highest national tertiary education enrolment rate at 74.90%, while Surakarta surpasses the national average with a rate of 46.92% (Ibid.).

Figure 2. Gross Tertiary Education Enrolment Rate of Klaten, Central Java, and Indonesia

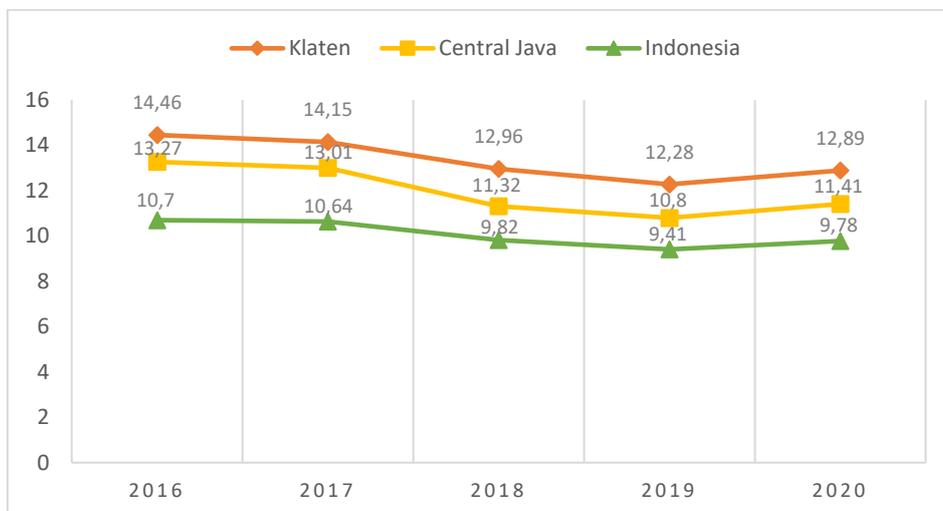


Source: Own elaboration, based on (BPS, no date c) *Statistik Pendidikan Provinsi Jawa Tengah 2011-2021* and (BPS, no date a) *Angka Partisipasi Kasar (APK) Perguruan Tinggi (PT) Menurut Jenis Kelamin 2011-2021*.²

It seems that proximity to Yogyakarta and Surakarta known as education hubs and the existence of ten private tertiary institutions in Klaten do not significantly impact local youth participation in tertiary education. Low enrolment might also be due to poverty. Klaten has a high poverty rate, which consistently surpasses both Central Java’s and the national poverty rates (Figure 3 & 4). With this condition, many youths in Klaten might prefer to work right after graduating from upper-secondary level.

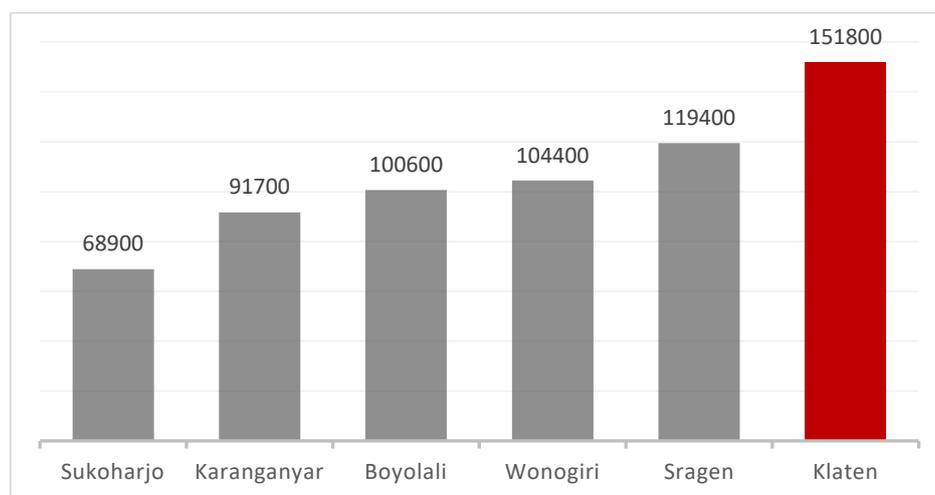
² Figures for Klaten and Central Java are derived from the annually published *Statistik Pendidikan Provinsi Jawa Tengah*. Figures for Indonesia are obtained from the BPS website. The figures for Central Java and Indonesia are higher in another database published in BPS websites, but it does not display data for the years of 2011-2014.

Figure 3. Poverty Rate of Klaten, Central Java, and Indonesia



Source: Own elaboration, BPS Klaten, 2021 in Pemkab Klaten, *Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Daerah (RPJMD) Kabupaten Klaten Tahun 2021-2026*.

Figure 4. Poor Population in Klaten and Neighbouring Regencies, 2021



Source: BPS Klaten, 2021 in Pemkab Klaten, *Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Daerah (RPJMD) Kabupaten Klaten Tahun 2021-2026*.

In 2020 and 2021, young people aged 16 to 30 that works with upper secondary diploma in Klaten was indeed the highest among all regencies in Central Java (BPS Jateng, 2021, p. 115, 2022, p. 115). Enrolment in tertiary education among young women is higher than that of men in Klaten (Figure 2). Hypothetically, the increase in household expenses over time could necessitate dual-income households, thereby encouraging women to pursue tertiary education in preparation for employment. On the other hand, given Klaten’s rural nature as noted by Yesiana (2014), where social control remains robust,

young men might still be expected to be the primary breadwinners if they wish to marry, leading them to immediate employment. This is particularly relevant since premarital cohabitation is not commonly accepted in Klaten (nor in Indonesia at large).

1.3 Research Problem

At a time when secondary education has become norm and with increasing tertiary education enrolment in Indonesia, it is puzzling to discern whether youth in Klaten are diminishing their educational aspirations or simply do not deem tertiary education as essential. This study does not necessarily see that youth should aspire for tertiary education. Instead, this study aims to comprehend why Klaten's geographical proximity to two educational hubs and the presence of local universities are not followed by a significant increase in tertiary education enrolment.

The question is addressed through a qualitative exploration of the aspirations of young people who are currently enrolled in, or have recently graduated from, upper secondary school. As youth are not always preoccupied with preparing for their future, this study views aspirations as part of their experience of growing up and as reflections of their current identity. Through interviews and fieldwork observations, I aim to illustrate how social dynamics, deeply embedded in spatial context, with consideration of time it occurs, has shaped, and added complexity to, my participants' aspirations.

1.4 Research Question

Main question:

How do young people enrolled in, or have recently graduated from, upper secondary school in Klaten narrate their aspirations in the context of 'desakota'?

Sub-questions:

1. How do they think about, and express, themselves as young individuals?
2. How does the socio-spatial aspects, at time where digital engagements are prevalent, complicate their aspirations?
3. How might they navigate, or fail to navigate, the current opportunities and constraints to realize their desired future?

Chapter 2

Researching Young People by ‘Decentering’ Adults

This study takes a position within the realm of interpretive research, which acknowledges the presence of multiple, socially constructed ‘truths’ that culturally derived and historically situated (Crotty, 1998, pp. 10–11; Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012, p. 4). Instead of being collected, I believe that data were “co-generated between researcher and research participants,” as well as other researchers as we work using “research-related documents and other materials” (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012, pp. 78–79). As I did not aim to draw generalizations or represent population, as typically done through quantitative surveys, the samples in this study are quite small and qualitative in nature. Here, I aimed to delve into the complexities of youth aspirations and their contextual dynamics.

Moreover, this study acknowledges young people’s agency in the knowledge production. Drawing on Pattman (2015) and Pauwels (2009), I used participatory interviews and photography methods to engage them deeper in data generation process. By adopting interpretive research, it was important for me to learn from young people during fieldworks, thereby being flexible in reformulating research questions, focus, and conceptual design in relation to the ‘reality’ I encountered (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012, p. 55). In other words, the design of this research was conducted through an iterative process. Moreover, this method aims to amplify the voices of youth, yet it would be inaccurate to label this study as youth centered. Instead, following Huijsmans (2016, p. 7), it seeks to “decenter” adults.

2.1 Data Generation

This study is primarily based on field visits to Klaten regency, Indonesia, in July to August 2023. Nearly all my participants were secondary school students aged between 15 and 18 years old, with only one having recently graduated from upper-secondary school (SMA). With this group of young people, this study aims to discuss the aspirations of relatively well-educated youth in Klaten.

Participant recruitment was primarily facilitated by my father-in-law, who is a vice principal at an SMA in Klaten. He introduced me to officials from both SMA and vocational upper-secondary schools (SMK) to distribute posters and digital flyers to students. I used the term *harapan* (literally, ‘hope’) and *impian* (literally, ‘dream’) in posters, flyers, and interviews since the term ‘aspiration’ is not commonly used in everyday conversation.

Five participants were asked by their teachers or even school principal to participate. Four other participants were self-motivated to apply. In a Google form application, they shared contact details and answered questions regarding gender, school, birth order and engagement with paid or unpaid work. To ensure

interviews being conducted individually and lasting one to two hours per session. Three participants from the same school requested to be met with collectively during the first meeting. Consequently, I engaged with them as a group before proceeding to conduct individual one-hour interviews with each of them in turn.

I decided to conduct follow-up interviews because a one-time interview might not yield the depth and insight required to comprehend youth aspirations, which is context dependent. Seidman (1998, p. 11) concurs with scholars that understanding behaviours requires situating them within an individual's life context and warns that a one-off meeting risks insufficient context. In this study, follow-up interviews helped me to avoid misunderstandings about participants' class backgrounds, as some were initially hesitant to disclose their socio-economic conditions, and it seemed unethical to probe these topics with people I had just met.

In practice, I used the first interview mainly to learn basic facts about my participants and to establish trust by approaching it as a friendly conversation. I believe this approach is effective for interviewing young participants, as evidenced by the second interview where some participants disclosed feeling nervous prior to our sessions and expressed a wish to modify their initial answers. The follow-up interviews were conducted about a week apart, though some were delayed due to participants' busy schedules, allowing them time to reflect on their earlier responses and enabling a deeper exploration of topics that emerged in our discussions.

The interview questions were semi-structured. For this, I have identified broad themes (see Annex 3) and pick up on issues my participants raised, like suggested by Frost et. al (2002 in Pattman, 2015, p. 83). In total, there were 26 interviews, totalling approximately 46 hours.

Additionally, I made 9 visits to 5 schools, 1 visit to alternative school in which I gained no participant, and 6 visits to the homes or neighbourhoods of 4 participants. I also resided in the same neighbourhood as one participant, attend a youth event which is the grand finale to select youth ambassador for a government program, and visited places that are popular among youth. Conversations with teachers, a school counsellor, school officials, and the participants' families during my visits also provided insights for this research.

Photography

In ethnographic study, images can be used as both visual fieldnotes and forms of representation (Marion and Crowder, 2020, pp. 15, 28). Similarly, I use two kinds of photos in this study, the ones that I took as an effort to look at "the depicted world" and those taken by respondents to look at their depiction of world. Pauwels (2009) has noted that despite of growing interest on using visuals in research, the method has not been well established. Therefore, and given my limited understanding in photographic knowledge, in this study the method was employed more for exploratory purposes than as a robust research technique.

My initial interest in using the participant-generated photography method was to view Klaten through the eyes of its youth and to use their photos to elicit the meanings they attribute to a place. Initially, I instructed the first two participants to photograph a place associated with their 'hope' and 'dream'. However, I soon realized this might lead them to focus narrowly on workplace as in Bahasa Indonesia, 'dream' often relates to aspired occupation. Furthermore, their aspirations might not relate to a place. Consequently, I adjusted my approach, asking them and subsequent participants to take a picture they thought most representative of Klaten, as this better aligned with my goal of seeing Klaten through their perspectives.

Additionally, this method proved insightful for grasping how youth interact with technology. Despite my request for a recent photo of a place, one participant chose to share a selfie with a place as the backdrop, another refused to provide a recent photo due to busy schedules of internship and organizational activities, and a third offered a photo which, upon investigation, turned out to be an exact match to one available online. These prompted me to further reflect on youth agency facilitated by technology, a topic I will delve into in a later chapter.

2.2 Data Analysis

The data analysis includes translation and interpretation. As interviews were conducted in a mixed of Bahasa Indonesia and Javanese, the conversation used in analysis part will be translated into English. Though translation will never perfectly grasp the context, it helps to deliver the voice of youth. However, some terms which represent vernacular concepts will be explained instead of translated. Meanwhile, the data interpretation in this study followed an iterative approach, involving repeated listening of interview recordings, field notes re-reading, and thematic groupings. I then induced relevant concepts to shed light the data, and the conceptual framework will be explained in the next chapter.

2.3 Ethics and Positionality

I understand that researching youth presents ethical challenges, notably power imbalances due to age difference. Young participants might not know that they have the right to refuse to answer my questions or even withdraw from the research entirely if they feel uncomfortable. Therefore, prior to the interview, I explained to my participants what my research is about, potential question sensitivities, data usage, and their rights as participants. Drawing from Schelbe and colleagues (2015, p. 513), I provided examples on how to decline a question, suggesting phrases like "skip," "next please," or requesting a break if they needed time to compose themselves.

One participant, Ingrid, used her right to skip a question regarding family as it makes her tear up whenever she discussed such topic. All interviews in my study were also recorded, except interviews with Emi as she objected to be recorded. It was also the reason why there is no direct quoted conversation

with her in this paper. However, I wrote some of her statements in my fieldnotes and we had a chat through WhatsApp.

I also provided compensation during our first meeting or on the first day of the interview, emphasizing that they could still withdraw even after receiving this compensation. This approach ensured that participants did not feel compelled to finish the interview, especially if the compensation influenced their initial decision to participate (Ibid., p. 518). In my study, the compensation was either a bag of souvenirs or Rp250.000 (approximately €15) in cash.

I secured written consent from my participants but consistently verified their comfort throughout the research. For instance, I ensured they were at ease with my questions and offered breaks as needed. In practice, one participant opted to skip a question when I offered the chance. After interviews, I also invited them to share concerns via WhatsApp if they do not comfortable saying it directly, yet no one did this.

As most of my participants are under 18, the legal age in Indonesia, I should have obtained consent from their guardians. However, this was not always ideal as some participants might have been hesitant to discuss sensitive topics due to fear of parental or guardian oversight. This became apparent when I visited the home of one participant and his grandmother was present; I observed that he was more reserved compared to our meeting in a café.

I used pseudonym and school's initial to refer to my participants to protect their privacy (see Annex 4). However, some participants and school can still be identified. To address this, I used initials in certain cases and altered some facts, such as replacing the name of organisation they involved in or the role they perform and creating fictional place without disrupting important facts.

Other concern is my positionality as a master's student in a Western so-called developed country that has resulted in selection of participants who are considered 'model students.' Moreover, my participants might prefer not to share their honest thought while discussing sensitive topic, like sexuality. Thus, I reflected on these while making arguments and claims during analysis process.

2.4 Limitations

This study was conducted in only five districts in Klaten and within a limited timeframe. Consequently, its findings represent specific characteristics and may vary if the fieldwork and analysis were more extensive. Additionally, this study does not explore the aspirations of certain groups, including school dropouts, youth with disabilities, and LGBTQ youth.

Chapter 3

Youth Aspirations in Relational Approach

The data in this study will be comprehend using relational approach, meaning as “tying together different things, actors, dimensions, dynamics, or forces” to move beyond agency-structure binaries (Huijsmans, 2016, pp. 3–4). Here, building on Frye (2012) and Huijsmans, Ansell and Froerer (2021), aspirations are treated with the notions of identity and generation to understand how youth are inspired to have, motivated to realise, lose hope in, or even abandon, their desired future through social interactions during their life course and changing social context. This also means that this study is bound within temporality of my participants’ current life phase. Therefore, I will first discuss transitional approach that underscores the life phase of youth, followed by the concept of identity and aspiration, as well as generation.

3.1 Youth Transition and Education in Development Discourse

Study on youth emerged with G. Stanley Hall’s work about adolescent in 1905 (Jones, 2009, p. 7; Furlong, 2013, p. 2). This psychological approach views youth as a developmental stage filled by emotional challenge. Some scholars suggest that immature frontal lobe in youth may result in poor judgment and risk-taking behaviour, yet some argue that aspects, such as well-being and relationships, play a role (Furlong, 2013, p. 2). In 1933, Charlotte Bühler defined youth as a period of experimentation between psychological and social maturity (Jones, 2009, p. 86). This relates to the sociological approach in 1970s through the notion of ‘life course’ as “the social biography of the individual” that see youth as a transition from childhood to adulthood, education to employment, to partnership, parenthood, and independent living (Jones, 2009, pp. 87–89).

This transitional approach relates to how childhood and youth are seen in development discourse. Neoliberal development recognizes educated individuals as assets, hence educating children and youth is considered an early investment with the anticipation that it will ultimately contribute to economic growth. Peter Drucker (1968) highlighted the importance of knowledge for economic production. The idea of knowledge contributing to economic growth has earlier roots in Adam Smith’s work, which was later developed into human capital theory (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1964; Romer, 2000). Governments and international organizations, especially since the 1990s, have employed human capital approaches to shape education policies and discourse, reducing youth to economic units and potential entrepreneurs (Spring, 2009, p. 30; Naafs, 2012, pp. 4–5).

Both transitional and developmental approach to youth have been highly criticised. The critiques to transitional approaches problematize the non-linearity and complexity of youth experiences, such as becoming a parent before completing education or, in modern societies, spending a longer time studying,

thus delaying independence (Heinz, 2009, p. 3; Jones, 2009, p. 89; Furlong, 2013, p. 4). Here, youth is seen as a social and cultural construction, as “being young is not universal, but varies according to different places and historical condition” (Jones, 2009, p. 1; Naafs, 2012, p. 12). Meanwhile, Foucault’s notion of governmentality is often used to examine the developmental approach to youth as discourse deployment to transfer responsibility to individuals, to be an entrepreneurial self (Besley, 2009, p. 171). This concept parallels with the process of what Ulrich Beck called as “individualization” in modernity of the late twentieth century (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002).

3.2 Identity, Youth Culture, and Aspirations

The study of identity initially grounded in psychiatry and psychoanalysis, yet Erikson’s theories expanded it into an interdisciplinary field (Buckingham, 2008, p. 3; Côté, 2009, p. 375). Erikson positions adolescence as critical phase for identity formation, where individuals develop self-awareness and navigate uncertainties. The concept of identity was also adopted by social sciences. Rather than “raging hormones,” early sociology-driven studies on identity focus on how social uncertainties, such as poverty and inequality, complicate youth transition phase (Buckingham, 2008, p. 4). However, social historians see ‘youth’ as a modern construct emerging from compulsory schooling and the onset of wage labour that varies in different societies (Ibid). Transitions to adulthood are rapid and prescribed in pre-modern societies, whereas in modernity, they are longer with greater scope for personal choice in identity formation (Côté, 2009, p. 379), thus creating ‘youth’ as a life phase.

On the other hand, research in youth culture advocates for recognizing youth as a current state of ‘being’ rather than future ‘becoming’. Youth may construct their identity more by enjoying the present and trying to be “successful in the eyes of their peers as youth” rather than preparing “to become successful adults” (Naafs, 2012, p. 15). This approach explores youth subjective dispositions and activities like ways of speaking and dressing, asserting young people are both the consumer and producer of culture (Wyn and White, 1997, pp. 72–73). Common experiences of adolescence foster youth cultures, with some creating distinct subcultures, yet dominant cultures often prevail as schools and media influence youths’ options, leading to cultural dominance and subordination (Ibid., pp. 75-76). However, youth identity is not just what imposed on young people as it is a process that involves a variety of resources, choices, and pressures embedded in a collective journey (Ibid., pp. 73, 86).

The studies on youth culture with a present-oriented focus contrast with the future-oriented studies on youth aspirations, which lean more towards a transitional approach. Some scholars mediate this by using the Bourdieu’s notion of habitus, for example to explain young people’s concerns about their future as integral to their youthful experiences (Naafs, 2012, pp. 15–17). This relates to what Frye (2012, p. 1598) approach aspirations as “assertion of present identity.” She found that educational aspirations of young women in Malawi are built upon collectively constructed moral values through which “youth fashion their present

selves” as “forward thinking and morally worthy” (Ibid., pp. 1608–1609). Building on Frye (2012) and Johnson-Hanks (2005), Huijsmans *et al* (2021, p. 3) suggest that aspirations may not necessarily a product of rational choice, rather “refinements of young people’s narratives about themselves whereby they seek to ‘transcend their present reality.’”

3.3 Generations and Youth Aspirations

In a seminal work ‘The Problem of Generations,’ sociologist Karl Mannheim defined generations as cohorts of young adults sharing the same historical and cultural context (Pilcher, 1994, p. 490). However, it requires collective consciousness and engagement in the process of social transformation to be a ‘generation as actuality’ (Ibid.; White, 2015, p. 8; Huijsmans, 2016, p. 15). On the other hand, studies on youth in modern societies proposed a conceptualization of generations from a life course perspective (Pilcher, 1995, p. 73; Wyn and Woodman, 2006, p. 496). These studies examine how the social, political, and economic contexts at a specific historical juncture shape people’s experience during their life stage as youth, which may continue to influence their life as adults. Instead of focusing on generational consciousness, these point out the difference of youth experiences from those of previous and subsequent generations.

The interpretation of generation in both Mannheimian and life course perspective differs to cohort in the sense of kinship (Pilcher, 1994, p. 483) and relative age in general. Generation in this sense sees young people in relations with their parents or possibly elders in the “fictive kinship formations” (Huijsmans, 2016, p. 11), and adults in their living environment, such as teachers and older colleagues. This results in intergenerational dynamics characterized by reciprocity, negotiation, and socialization processes. Responding to Wyn and Woodman (2006), Goodwin and O’Connor (2009, p. 29) contended that viewing generations as isolated entities is misleading as it ignores the interactions between young and older individuals that lead to shared experiences across generations (Ibid., p. 23). Using Norbert Elias’ project from the 1960s, they demonstrated that in workplace settings, young workers value their interactions with older colleagues as crucial for their experience of growing up and this engagement made the young workers more adult in their behaviour (Ibid., p. 29).

Huijsmans, Ansell and Froerer, 2021, p. 4) brought the notions of generation to understand youth aspirations. This aims to examine how social interactions and experiences help individuals to understand “the viability of specific sets of aspirations” (Ibid.). It explores how these interactions can inspire a sense of belief and motivation to act, or conversely, lose their intensity, as young people experience them in “changing social-life contexts” (Huijsmans, Ansell and Froerer, 2021, p. 4; Zipin, Brennan and Sellar, 2021, p. 153). These changes in aspirations are influenced by both the dynamics of youth life course and the wider social change. It should be noted that “young people are never just young people,” as their identity is shaped by “gender relations, social classes,

caste positions, ethnic groups, religious communities and so on” that make them “share social characteristics with older people” (Huijsmans *et al.*, 2014, p. 4).

Chapter 4

Studenthood, Leisure, and Aspirations

Since all my participants are students, with one recently transitioning to a university student, their aspirations are inherently linked to their current identity as students, yet at the same time as consumers of culture. Thus, this chapter focuses on how studenthood and their activities as youth shape my participants' present identity and their narratives of aspiration. The approach of identity formation used here diverges from the traditional psychological focus on adolescent cognitive development and the Eriksonian emphasis on the influences of social interactions. Rather, this study situates individual interactions within the broader system involving social institutions, like education and development, in shaping youth identity. This highlights how this process can privilege certain youth while marginalizing others and adding complexity to aspirations.

4.1 Model Student and Identification of Self

I first met Gadis in the evening because her daytime schedule was packed. She had to do an internship as she was already in her final year at SMK A, and she also had to train her juniors in the flag-hoisting troop, with just a week left before Indonesia's Independence Day. On that evening, her voice was hoarse from shouting during the troop's training, prompting me to pause the interview several times to allow her to drink water and rest.

Gadis was selected by school officials to be my participant. A school official I met during my visit stated they will choose the students, so that they were not talking nonsense. In addition to being an active member of her school's national flag-hoisting troop, she was also a member of ranger scout.

When I asked about the ideal young people envisioned by the scouts, she cited those who uphold the tenets of the Scout Law, such as devotion to God, creativity, and a love for nature. Yet, she observed that these principles are seldom practiced by today's generation. She said:

“I take a smaller scope, in my class. For instance, if there is a competition in school, an inter-class competition, they are passive, just like ‘okay, let's not participate then’, even though it is mandatory. Alright, if you're lazy, but I think what's important is to participate first. But they are very reluctant. So, their enthusiasm is lacking, their creativity is lacking.”

(Recorded Interview, 10-08-2023)

When we shifted the conversation to her experience in site during internship, she shared about fieldworkers who smoke. I then asked if any of her male friends smoked. She then mentioned a particular stall known as a hangout for “*anak-anak nakal*” (literally, ‘naughty kids’), she mentioned that “*anak-anak organisasi*” (literally, ‘organization kids’) were aware about this place. Gadis said:

“So, near the school, there’s a hangout spot called That place is where the so-called naughty kids hang out. Those who smoke and loiter, the vocational high school boys. ... If there’s a raid or something, the so-called organization kids already know that’s their base. They definitely hide cigarettes and stuffs there.”

(Recorded Interview, 10-08-2023)

Gadis is clearly part of the “organization kids,” which in her statement contrast with “naughty kids.” Buckingham (2008, pp. 1, 6) noted that identity is not only what distinguishes us from others, but also what we share with people whom we assume are similar to us.

Similarly, Cantik, a member of student council and national flag-hoisting troop, was selected by her teacher to be my participants. She attends what considered as a non ‘favourite’ school. Due to a late application, Cantik could not secure an acceptance from ‘favourite’ school nearby. During my visit, Cantik’s schoolmates shared that they were often ridiculed for attending their school by those attend the other school. However, though one of Cantik’s neighbours attends the ‘favourite’ school, Cantik showed no sense of inferiority as she has more “*prestasi*” (accomplishment). This is our conversation:

Cantik : “In terms of accomplishment, I think I’m better (than her)”
Me : “You mean, accomplishment like being a member of flag-hoisting troop?”
Cantik : “Yes. She’s like, less active.”
Me : “Is your (academic) ranking better than hers?”
Cantik : “Yes.”
Me : “Are you ranked first here?”
Cantik : “Yes, both for the end and the mid academic year.”

(Recorded Interview, 31-07-2023)

I recognize that educational institutions have their own definitions of success. My status as a master’s student abroad and the students chosen to be my participants align with these definitions. Here, activeness and academic achievements are clearly among what success means. As authoritative figures at education setting (Freire, 2000), teachers play role in defining a student’s success or failure, making them significant in youth identity formation. As adults, they occupy a higher position in the generational order, making their recognition and approval important (Goodwin and O’Connor, 2009).

The generational hierarchy is particularly visible in Cantik’s school. During my visit, a teacher scolded a student for not dressing neatly, reminding the student to maintain the school’s image in my presence. Moreover, I noticed Cantik and her friends conversing with their teachers using *Krama Inggil*, a high-level form of the Javanese language reserved for elders or respected figures. Despite speaking Bahasa Indonesia in class, the use of Javanese outside of class

reinforces a hierarchy where students are seen as subordinate to teachers.³ This is accentuated as teachers, being older, typically respond in *Ngoko*, a lower-level form of Javanese.

Several of my participants admitted that they seek to get recognised by teachers, yet this was strategic decisions rather than signs of respect or obedience. A participant, Andi, joined various school organizations as a strategy to gain favour with teachers. This is our conversation:

Andi : “If you join a school organization, you can curry a favour with the teachers, that’s the blunt way to put it, but it’s not about [pause].”

Me : “So, it’s about getting recognized, right?”

Andi : “Yes, getting recognized. Like, there was a time when I got a dispensation to miss school for a few days for an event. At that time, I forgot to submit the permission letter, ... but the teacher knew that I was on dispensation. So, it helps in getting more recognized by the teachers. It indirectly affects our image, where they might think ‘oh, this student is smart or good.’ As a result, it could even help in getting better grades.”

(Recorded Interview, 29-07-2023)

Similarly, Ingrid used her passion for singing to gain visibility by participating in performances at school. Besides being selected by teachers to compete in singing competition and to be my participant, she won the student council presidency as she also got recognised by her peers. However, she noted that sometimes she felt exhausted doing all her activities. Here what we discuss:

Me : “You said that a lot of your time is spent on (organizational) activities, but did you do it for accomplishment or preparing for the future?”

Ingrid : “For preparing the future and for accomplishments too.”

Me : But do you want to reduce your activities because you want to enjoy your time as youth more, or something like that?

Ingrid : “Yes, there are times like that.”

Me: “Is there any time when you want to be lazy? Or what kind of activities that you don’t feel to do what you usually do?”

Ingrid : “Usually my ‘refreshing’ method is by looking at sceneries or watching Korean series as an escape.”

Me : “But as a young person, do you feel burdened or worried about your future?”

Ingrid : “Yes, worried.”

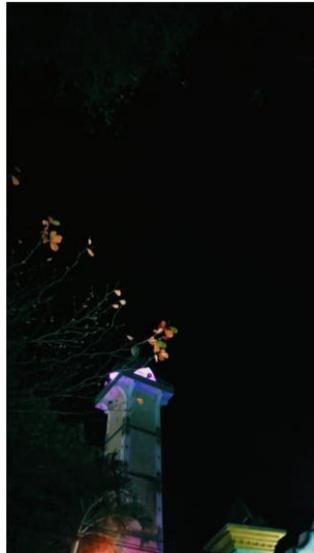
Me : “Why are you worried?”

³ The choice of language in schools seems to be influenced by the urban-rural dynamics, although Klaten is generally more peri-urban. Elisa’s school, having more rural characteristics such as limited public facilities and a small population, sees more prevalent use of traditional language. During my visit to Febri’s school in a less rural area, I noticed students using a mix of *Krama Inggil* and Bahasa Indonesia with teachers. In contrast, at schools closer to the downtown area, like those attended by Andi and Dian, students predominantly used Bahasa Indonesia with teachers and lower- or medium-level Javanese with peers. While the use of Javanese reflects hierarchy, Bahasa Indonesia tends to be more egalitarian as it only has formal and informal variants.

Inggrid : “What if in the future (I am) not successful, what if the goal is not achieved?”

(Recorded Interview, 29-08-2023)

Figure 6. Alun-Alun



Source: participant-generated image

This echoes with Budi, who is a member of student council and recently won a competition. Through his picture (Figure 6), he saw that being visible even limits his expression as youth. Here is our conversation:

Budi : “The sky represents freedom, Budi’s freedom to dress, ... to act ..., to express ideas. That’s actually what it means.”

Me : “But, honestly, do you feel that you are not free or not free enough?”

Budi : “Yes.”

Me : “What are you not free to do?”

Budi : “I didn’t really realize that. I always want to do something that isn’t something bad, like going somewhere. Just because I had this business, that business, so I chose to go take care of this rather than take care of my own business. ..., there are times when Budi can’t feel free to explore.

Me : “You feel like you can’t do something because there are so many activities, but why did you choose that activity? What made you do that?”

Budi : “Is it addictive? I also don’t know why I chose that, because, if I may change what I said before (in our previous meeting), It’s not that I didn’t think about the future, because Budi is getting older, it’s like, ‘if you use your youth only for traveling, looking for freedom, I don’t think I will be able to shape today’s Budi in the future.’ Well, Budi does what he can, and finally Budi joins this organization, that organization.

Me : “That’s one of your efforts to prepare for the future, right?”

Budi : “Yes”

(Recorded Interview, 19-08-2023)

Methodologically, this is interesting as the instruction given for taking a photo was what location represents Klaten the most. Yet, their depiction represents the depicter themselves. Here, one of the objects in the picture is a tower top in Klaten’s “*alun-alun*” or town square. While the town square represents Klaten, the sky represents Budi as the depicter.

All these showed that some participants have constructed their identities as ‘model student’ by being a member of organization, having accomplishment, or joining school activities and competition. However, youth efforts to realise opportunities may make them sacrifice their youthful experiences. Wyn and Woodman (2006, p. 508), building on Wright & Burrows (2004), argued that “youth are under pressure to become,” and “are expected to take responsibility for diet and exercise in terms of future-oriented activity.”

4.2 Leisure Time and Youthful Expression

Emi frequently visit a Seblak stall in their sub-district with a group of friends. When I visited with Emi during Islamic Friday prayers, the stall was crowded with female students. This is common as students return early from school on Fridays, and the stall offers free drinks for Friday charity. I was intrigued to see the menu offering Korean snacks like Tteokbokki and Odeng. I observed some students eating Seblak directly from small woks, a practice uncommon in Indonesian cuisine but typical in Korea, at least as I’ve seen in Korean series.

Figure 7 A Korean Snacks Local Stall



Note: “Bakso Drakor” or literally, ‘Korean drama meatball soup’ (right), which is located in “Kuliner Jalan Bhali” or literally, ‘Bhali Street Culinary’ (left)

Source: Researcher-generated image

Figure 8 Lawson in Klaten



Note: Queue in Lawson (left), Lawson next to KFC in a restaurants block (right)

Source: Researcher-generated image

The widespread influence of Korean culture in Indonesia is evident, with numerous Korean food stalls in Klaten. Emi usually enjoys affordable Korean street food from local vendors. When I asked whether she has visited Lawson, a Korean-style convenience store with dining space, she mentioned she has not tried it yet, but she knew it from TikTok. She imagines that eating Korean snacks there would be enjoyable, she said, “the vibe is like (we’re) in Korea.”

Probably, it was because of the proximity or the snacks’ price that makes Emi has not visited Lawson. When I visited Lawson, located in the city center, I found young people lining up, and the shop was so full that dining in was not an option. Being a multinational convenience store from Japan, Lawson’s prices are relatively high, costing double or even more compared to local shops selling similar Korean street food (See the difference in Figure 7 and Figure).

Emi is a fan of the K-Pop boy group Super Junior (Suju), which debuted in 2005, a year before she was born. When asked why she is a fan of an ‘old-generation’ K-Pop group, she shared that their fandom is different from most K-Pop fan bases, which often engage in fan wars. Additionally, their songs give her *semangat*, an expression in Bahasa Indonesia that depicts attitudes of enthusiasm and encouragement. This is our WhatsApp conversation:

Emi : “The reason why Emi becomes a fan of Super Junior is because Suju’s songs are easy listening, so it makes you enthusiastic every time you listen to it. ... it makes everyone who hears the song become even more energetic in carrying out activities Listening to Suju’s song is like giving positive affirmations, for example, when Emi is studying and bored, Emi plays Suju’s songs to become enthusiastic about studying. If Emi’s not in the mood, hearing Suju’s songs feels like recharging energy.”

Me : “I see, does Emi feel that listening to music is part of enjoyment or is it more like an escape from academic, organizational, or other activities that is considered ‘productive’?”

Emi : “It’s both, because listening to music awakens Emi’s enthusiasm to do something, it’s like, that’s an encouragement.”

(WhatsApp Chat, 14-11-2023)

Different to Ingrid that consumes cultural products as a way to temporary escape from her exhausted days filled by future-oriented activities, Emi does not necessarily see it as an escape. Rather, it is part of her youthful activities that she enjoys as a leisure time. When discussing this, Emi ended our conversation with a creative word combining Korean and English: “*arigathanks*.” The first two syllables come from an informal Korean word “*arigatou*” that means ‘thanks.’ I found this as a unique youthful expression. Here, Emi gave the nuance of what previously argued by Wyn and Woodman (2006) about stressful youth that might be relevant to some, but not to others.

4.3 Model’s Student Aspirations

Cantik wants to pursue tertiary education, feeling that being just an SMA graduate is not enough. Citing her mom, SMA graduates are lack of working skill compared to SMK graduates, so that going to college is a necessary step. Yet, Cantik mentioned that her male friends humorously remark that “going to college is delaying unemployment.” Despite acknowledging that college graduates also struggle to find jobs these days, she continues to see great value in higher education. Interestingly, she brought up how a teacher encouraged students in class to emulate my academic path, citing my studies in the Netherlands as an example. Indeed, I had a conversation with this teacher prior to our meeting.

Similarly, Gadis and all my participants, who fit the criteria of ‘model student’, aspire for tertiary education. Their positive attitude towards tertiary education is partly influenced by social media. Gadis expressed interest in tertiary education due to the social media contents that share enticing glimpses of college life. Gadis said:

“University life has many activities, and I often follow influencers who are very active during their university days. This made me interested in going to college.”

(Recorded Interview, 10-08-2023)

Additionally, Gadis noted from her on-site experiences as an SMK student, that college graduates are more respected by fieldworkers. She believes that a college degree will secure her leadership roles in future employment. She said:

“Most of my friends who want to (immediately) work prefer to be supervised, to be ordered around, they don’t want to be the ones giving orders. Why don’t you want to be the boss? You should think about becoming the leader, why do you want to be ordered around continuously? Working under pressure is not pleasant.”

(Recorded Interview, 10-08-2023)

Meanwhile, Ingrid was inspired to pursue tertiary education abroad as she follows an 'education influencer' on YouTube whose background is like hers, a Christian coming from a humble family. This is our conversation:

Ingrid : "I personally look at someone like Jerome Polin, they say he's a pastor's child."

Me : "Ah, you feel relate to him?"

Ingrid : "Yes."

Me : "And then?"

Ingrid : "When he was in elementary, he studied in an international school, but his family wasn't well-off, yet he was there on a scholarship."

(Recorded Interview, 29-08-2023)

When I suggested that Jerome's success might be due to his upbringing in the urban city of Surabaya with better facilities, unlike Klaten, Ingrid countered with a firm belief in the payoff of hard work. She recounted how she achieved a perfect score in a subject by staying up late to study, overcoming her initial doubts about preparing just a day before the exam.

Another influencer followed by Ingrid is Maudy Ayunda, whose TikTok account followed by Jelita. Maudy is an Indonesian celebrity that can be considered as 'education influencer' due to media covering of her academic achievements. Once she went viral because of posting her acceptance letter from Stanford and Harvard, sharing that she confused which to choose. While Jelita's aspiration for tertiary education is not directly influenced by Maudy's social media content, she still regards Maudy as an inspirational figure.

My participants' aspiration for tertiary education reflected what Frye (2012, p. 1576) terms "ongoing narrative" of their present identity, influenced by the future self they aim to become. It was not solely the work of individuals, but rather collectively shaped, in this context, by older generations, social media figures, and youth themselves. While youth are reflective about their ideal future choices, the dominant discourse that privileges tertiary education should not be overlooked.

Chapter 5

Sexuality and Female Youth Aspirations Surrounding Womanhood

This chapter will discuss how dominant discourse on sexuality, likely rooted from cultural and religious norms, pose some constraints, yet at the same time fashion youth, especially female, with identity as a 'valuable' individual. This, in turn, shaped their aspirations on partnership and motherhood. I will first shortly discuss the Genre program, which represents the State, as a form of institutionalization of dominant discourse regarding sexuality that complicate youth experiences. Then, I will delve into my participants view on premarital sex and unwanted pregnancy. Lastly, I will discuss my female participants aspirations surrounding womanhood which is shaped by their perception of ideal women. Here, discussions highlight the notions of identity and generations as a life phase, while reflecting on the critics of feminist and transitional approach.

5.1 Genre: Dominant Discourse and Normative Transition

Two of my participants competed for the title of Klaten Regency's ambassador of 'Generasi Berencana' (Genre or literally, 'well-planned generation'), an initiative by the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN). Both were among the top ten finalists which allowed them to participate in a grand final event. This gave them a spot in the Genre forum as peer counsellors for 'Adolescent Reproductive Health.'

As part of the selection process, participant A promoted stunting prevention in his neighbourhood's women's forum, highlighting its prevalence among babies of underage couple or large families. On the other hand, participant B chose to emphasize the dangers of pornography addiction that can lead to premarital sex, and this content was delivered to incoming students during the school orientation event.

I attended the grand final event of Genre ambassadorship. At the event, the participants pledged against underage marriage, premarital sex, and drug use, things they believe could jeopardize sexual and reproductive health and the future of youth.⁴ Though BKKBN has been promoting contraception use for adults, youth are advised not to engage in premarital sex as it could result in unwanted pregnancy, followed by underage marriage and child malnutrition.

BKKBN has been part of Indonesian development plan since the New Order with Keluarga Berencana (KB or literally, 'well-planned family') program. It focusses on birth control and is popular with a jargon 'two children are enough' since the 1970s. Now, BKKBN is given the mandate to expedite

⁴ This is a pledge of Genre Ambassadors for Central Java province. As Genre is a national program that is run locally, the principles may vary in each region, yet it still reflects the dominant discourse in Indonesia that tends to oppose premarital sex.

stunting reduction to realise the second target of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end malnutrition (BKKBN, 2021).

Through Genre, youth, identified as '*remaja*' or adolescents, are targeted by the program, and the approach reflects the dominant discourse opposing premarital sex, seemingly adopting the adult's narrative. Moreover, there is a shift from focusing on the family unit to individuals, while at the same time addressing the entire younger generation, which is expected to undergo a normative transition into adulthood.

By appointing peer counsellors, the Genre program as representation of the State, likely reinforce marginalisation towards those deviating from normative transitions, such as female youth who become pregnant before, or without, getting married. In an era where youth is prolonged or even lasting as youth may not want to, or could not, enter adulthood (Wyn and Woodman, 2006, p. 498), Genre further complicates the situation, as sexuality remains predominantly within the adult domain.

5.2 Sexuality and Social Identity

During my visit, I saw Dita deeply engaged in conversation with a group of female students during a break. In our interview, she shared that they were gossiping about a classmate's attitude towards boys, which they considered flirtatious and inappropriate. Dita's perspective on female-male interactions likely reflects adherence to Islamic norms due to her upbringing in a devout family with an uncle being a preacher and her lower-secondary education (SMP) in a *pesantren* or Islamic boarding school.

Once, Dita shared an incident from her first year in SMA where she disagreed with her mother's wish for her to quit school. Her mother's concerns were twofold: financial strain and the possibility of Dita being close to male friends, fearing a repeat of a neighbour's situation involving premarital sex and subsequent school expulsion due to pregnancy, a common consequence in Indonesia, aligning with Islam's stance against premarital sex. However, Dita managed to change her mother's mind with earnest pleas and tears.

Even that norms regulating male-female interaction almost made Dita fail to attend SMA, it is clear that she conforms the norms. She and other participants even saw that school expulsion due to pregnancy is necessary. My participant, Emi, shared that one of her closes friends during SMP was expelled for such reason. While saddened, she thought the decision was fair. She said, "it was a consequence for breaking the school's rules." This performative response echoes with other participants who empathise to the student expelled, but concerned about school's reputation, fearing it might prompt assumptions of widespread premarital sex among students at their school.

During my visit to a school, I asked a student counsellor about any formal policies from the school or the government's education board regarding student marriage and pregnancy. Her response, though indirect, revealed that

while students are generally forbidden to marry, pregnancies often lead to familial pressure for marriage due to shame. If marriage does not occur, the school consults with the government's education board to decide if the student can continue their studies. Pregnant students close to finishing their final exams are usually allowed to complete their studies, especially if the pregnancy is not visibly obvious. Thus, first- or second-year students, especially in prestigious and public schools, are more likely to face expulsion. She knows this as a school counsellor, like teachers, are members of an official teacher forum (MGMP).

The counsellor recounted a case where a student hid her pregnancy from her family, but the school, concerned about its reputation, informed the family, and expelled her, despite her desire to continue studying. When I asked about school's decision for the male student involved, she explained that while most cases involve older, working men. However, some schools permit male students involved in such situations to continue their education. She remarked, "after all, it's not visible in males," highlighting the contrast with the physical changes experienced by the pregnant female student. Furthermore, male students might marry the pregnant student under religious law without official government registration. All these allow schools not to concerns about reputational damage.

Marginalization of female youth through school expulsion or coerced dropout due to unwanted pregnancy reflects greater limitations for young women than men in acquiring social roles, as being a student and a mother is often perceived discordant (Asriani, 2018, p. 76). Even when education alternative settings are available, studies have explored how this issue restricts female youth educational aspirations (Rudoe, 2014; Silver, 2022). In Klaten, the only state-owned alternative school is in the southeast sub-district, necessitating transport costs for those in the west, while 13 private alternative schools come with tuition fees. This creates barrier for lower-class dropouts, yet social exclusion that shames pregnant students may also prevent those without financial issue to access education.

Negative attitudes to premarital sex often stem from a cultural, religious, and social norms, or a combination of them. This is reflected in my participants' views, all of whom identify themselves as someone opposing premarital sex. When I asked why she avoids such practice, Ingrid, a Christian, answered "first, the religious norm was violated, and second, society does not allow it." For Cantik, she avoids it as it leads to shame. This is our conversation:

- Cantik : "I don't want to be gossiped and it's shameful, right? It's like, eww! An incident like that is sure to be remembered. If it doesn't result in pregnancy, she wouldn't let go of her boyfriend. Because it's like (she's) already damaged. . . ., she's afraid no one wants to be with her because she's done that with her previous boyfriend. So, just keep (myself from doing it)."
- Me : "So, in your opinion, compared to religious values, those are stronger, right? (Because) you as a woman can be damaged, right?"
- Cantik : "Yes."

(Recorded Interview, 29-08-2023)

Similarly, Emi, a Muslim, shared that she was afraid of being gossiped more than of being sinful. Gossip might be form of social policing, yet it may, or may not, based on religious norms (Grønli Rosten and Smette, 2023). Reflecting on what Dita and her friends did, as told earlier in this chapter, it is likely rooted in religious norms.

Meanwhile, Participant A and B, expressed ambivalences when I asked their personal opinions on use of contraception against premarital sex prohibition, setting aside their roles in the Genre forum. While both disassociate themselves with premarital sex, Participant A expressed hesitancy toward endorsing contraceptives for sexually active youth to avoid appearing supportive of premarital sex. On the other hand, Participant B leaned towards opposing premarital sex, though he acknowledged that he might feel differently if he were raised in different culture.

Opinion told by Participant A and B when discussing with me, compared to their roles as Genre members could be seen through Erving Goffman's (1950 in Buckingham, 2008, p. 7) concept of "dramaturgical" social interaction, where people behave differently "on stage" and "off stage". In public settings like social events, individuals often conform to expected norms and roles, while in private, they can be more truthful, even contradicting the public persona they display. What my participants shared about their views on premarital sex, or other matters, could also be a form of "impression management," as they might not want me to identify them differently from how they are presenting themselves. However, critics argued that "off stage" behaviour does not necessarily more sincere than "on stage" as personal identity is not exclusive of social identity.

5.3 Aspirations Surrounding Womanhood

The trope of value or self-worth is a recurring theme among female participants. When I asked whether Gadis has a plan or desire when to marry, she said that she does not want to think about that and citing her mother, it is more important to increase her "value" as a woman, "so that men will come." She also agreed when I asked whether pursuing tertiary education will serve it.

Similarly, Jelita stated that she wants to pursue tertiary education to uplift her "value." I then deepen this conversation through WhatsApp, and this is her answer on question about what she meant by a woman with high value:

"In my opinion, a woman with high value is someone who is morally and ethically sound, like having strong principles, integrity, being open-minded, valuing processes, and having empathy. She focuses on realizing her future goals (dreams/aspirations), and even if she fails, she can introspect and improve herself. She has clear plans for her future. Educationally, she is well-informed and never satisfied with her achievements. She's independent and confident, not overly reliant or hopeful of others. She doesn't focus on premature love. But more importantly, she doesn't forget her God (understands religion and practices it in her daily life). Thus, she can give benefits to herself and others."

(WhatsApp Chat, 12-09-2023)

Jelita's definition of woman with high value that includes morality and religious norms conformity relates to her view on premarital sex that could devalue a woman. This echoes with Gadis's opinion she stated in our WhatsApp conversation:

"It's one of the actions that break normality, but sometimes there are people who want to rise and try to rebuild their lives, which isn't wrong. However, most people have already been viewed negatively because of their past, impacting their value. The views of others also affect one's self-confidence."

(WhatsApp Chat, 12-09-2023)

Though Jelita and Gadis does not want to increase their value by pursuing tertiary education for the sake of marriage, both prefers that their future partners are also a college graduate. Gadis said that she needs someone who is knowledgeable, so that she can respect his opinion, while Jelita wants a partner who value education, just like her.

Moreover, Jelita shared a story about her teacher's rejection to a prospective daughter in-law because the girl does not go to college. The teacher provides a condition to her son that her future daughter in law should minimum has a bachelor's degree. Jelita was furious to hear that, but it makes her even more sure for pursuing tertiary education. This mirrors with Kinanti's view that tertiary education will grant her respect from her future partner and in-laws.

Compared to partnership, motherhood is what motivates Jelita more to pursue tertiary education. She cited an Arabic proverb meaning "a mother is the first school for her children," so she believes that being well educated will make her a good mother.

Before hearing the proverb from Jelita, Dita, who is no acquaintance with Jelita, came up with it as the same reason of why she wants to pursue tertiary education. She shared that she learnt it from her grandfather and teachers in *pesantren*. While her mother against of her aspirations, her grandfather supported her decision and even wanted to finance her education if he could afford it.

Both Jelita and Dita said that their family are pious Muslim, so that they are familiar with such proverb. Interestingly, especially for Dita, religious teachings become both the reason to limit and the driving force behind youth aspirations. This mirrors to Frye's (2012, p. 1567) argument that "aspirations and expectations should be understood as assertions of identity that are shaped by cultural schemas and shared standards of morality."

Chapter 6

Lower-Class Youth's Aspirations: Between Social Mobility and Familial Success

The term “*membahagiakan orang tua*” (literally, ‘to make parents happy’), is a familiar answer when asking Indonesian children and youth about their current hopes and envisioned future. In this study, three participants used this exact phrase. Two others echoed a similar sentiment with the term “*membuat bangga orang tua*” (literally, ‘to make parents proud’). Meanwhile, other participants expressed more tangible aspirations, such as building a house for their parents. While making parents happy or proud may appear vague, I found that it relates to youth socio-economic position. This chapter explores how lower-class youth articulate their imagination of success while keeping their parents in mind. I found that this envisioned success signifies aspirations for upward social mobility and filial piety, as well as embodies emotional redress for youths facing parental absence, a struggle that might not resonate with their middle-class peers. This will be read mainly through generational lens in terms of kinship relations.

6.1 Aspirations for Upward Social Mobility

Most of my participants originate from lower-class backgrounds, a criterion I use to describe individuals whose parents or guardians work in industrial, manual, or unstable jobs, or are small farmers or business owners. One participant, Ingrid, whom I categorize as lower-class, does not exactly fit these criteria, as her parents are employed at a large retail store. Nonetheless, she feels her family's financial situation similar to an influencer known to have a humble background.

I comprehend that all of my participants from lower-class backgrounds see upward social mobility as a key component of a successful future, and all female participants regard an undergraduate degree as a pathway to a decent job. However, acknowledging the financial challenges their parents might face in supporting them, four plan to work while pursuing their studies. Meanwhile, two others consider applying government assistance, and one is counting on support from her older brother.

Interestingly, two female participants, Kinanti and Cantik, also view an academic degree as a direct ticket to heightened social status. They believe that possessing a degree garners more respect from relatives and the broader community. Interestingly, Kinanti noted that while degrees are not always essential for success, it is worth getting one as people often care about educational background of a successful figure. Here, her aspiration for tertiary education also reflects her anticipation for future success.

Among my male participants from lower-class backgrounds, Budi is leaning towards pursuing tertiary education, though he remains unsure about

which major to choose, Husni opts for immediate employment, and Faisal intends to apply for military training. Budi, while prefer working than going to college, he believes that college graduates will get better job than SMA graduates. Conversely, Husni believes that work experience is crucial for securing higher pay and entrepreneurial prospects, as more time in the workforce means more savings for potential business ventures. For him, college is seen as a delay in achieving success. As for Faisal, he is of the opinion that a career in the military will enhance his family's financial and social status.

The strategy of my participants to climb the social mobility ladder are sometimes disrupted or asserted by media. Budi and Husni, who are not acquainted, both stumbled upon TikTok content that glorifies a “*bos muda*” (literally, ‘young boss’ or ‘young entrepreneur’) over a ‘*sarjana muda*’ (literally, ‘young bachelor’). This content has led Budi to question the value of pursuing tertiary education, while it has reinforced Husni’s initial inclination towards employment and later, entrepreneurship. However, Husni also encountered another TikTok post by an SMK graduate suggesting that an SMK diploma might be insufficient in a job market that increasingly favours college graduates. In Faisal’s case, he once shared screenshots of online news articles as a WhatsApp status. These articles featured stories of young individuals from poor family backgrounds who either became or were offered opportunities to become military trainees.

Here, it appears that the youth are highly reflective. Giddens argue that in “late modern societies,” individuals are faced with a wide array of choices, extending beyond mere appearance and lifestyle to broader decisions about life trajectories and relationships (Buckingham, 2008, p. 10). Though digital media plays a role in complicating youth aspirations, subsequent chapter shows that aspirations are not always an individual project.

6.2 Filial Piety: From ‘*Balas Budi*’ to Financing Hajj Pilgrimage

It is typical for lower-class children and youth to aspire for upward social mobility. Yet in this study, their aspirations extend beyond personal success to improving the lives of their parents, siblings, and extended family. Faisal, who aims to join the military to enhance his family’s status, includes his parents, siblings, grandparents, and aunt in his definition of ‘family’ as he grew up with his grandparents and aunt. Inggrid, with both an older and younger brother, initially equated success with “to make parents happy.” In our follow-up interview, she further explained that her definition of success encompasses the happiness of her entire family, placing their well-being above her own. Gadis, who expressed a similar sentiment with the phrase ‘to make parents proud,’ elaborated that she deeply appreciates the financial support she has received from her mother. This reminds me of the term Cantik used, ‘*balas budi*’ (literally, ‘giving back’). Cantik mentioned that she wants to be economically successful to reciprocate for her parents’ deeds.

Budi admitted that he feels the need to reciprocate as well, but to him, economic success is not the sole means. He mentioned that his achievement of being one of the top 5 finalists in the grand final for selecting a youth ambassador for a government program is also a way to give back to his parents. He recalled the moment when his name was announced in the grand final event; he saw his family members looking proud, with some even shedding tears.

Similar to Budi, Kinanti believes that improving her family's financial situation is not the only way 'to make parents happy'. While she is among those who envision a pathway to upward social mobility through tertiary education attainment, it was only her who expressed that this pathway could also make her parents proud. She believes that graduating from college with honours (cum laude) would achieve that. Here, both Budi and Kinanti define success as achievements in the present and the immediate future, not just in a distant one.

The desire of youth to give back to their parents can be termed as filial duty, but I argue that for some participants in this study, it also arises from profound filial affection. Both Ingrid and Emi underscore their close bond with their mother. They told me that they share almost everything with their mother, including their romantic feelings towards a friend, something uncommon among many Javanese youth. While Emi had teary eyes when discussing her parents during our conversation about success, Ingrid cried and chose not to continue the topic when what I asked was just "who is your role model?" It turns out that the answer is her mother, and it makes her emotional every time discussing family topic.

Emi, Gadis, and Budi all envision a successful future in which they can sponsor their parents' Hajj pilgrimage. Given that Indonesia is the largest Muslim-majority country, many aspire to undertake the Hajj, an obligatory ritual in Mecca for adult Muslims with the physical and financial capabilities. Hence, many lower-class youths have such aspiration, even without their parents expressing it. Gadis believes all Muslims share this dream but given that she mentioned her family is not religious, I wonder if her parents genuinely wish to perform Hajj. However, while Hajj represents a spiritual journey, it may carry social prestige for some. In Indonesia, pilgrim returnees are often referred to as '*Haji*' by their relatives and neighbours, a nickname that suggests the person is both religiously committed and financially successful.

My conversation with Budi may illustrate this kind of conflating motivation:

Me : "Some people understand financial improvement as equal to a lifestyle upgrade, like owning a car, and that's valid as a desire. Do you feel the same way?"

Budi : "Actually, Budi doesn't really think about such things, but sometimes Budi gets influenced by what others say. Sometimes, Budi's parents say, 'hopefully, you will become a dermatologist in the future, so you can take care of mama's skin,' 'hopefully, you will have a car in the future so you

won't have to endure the heat when traveling,' and 'hopefully, you will have a lot of money in the future so you can go on the Hajj.'”

(Recorded interview, 19-08-2023)

Here, my participants' aspirations mirror the finding of a study conducted by Naafs (2018, pp. 62–63) that youth “ambitions are being negotiated in dialogue with their families and not necessarily as individualised ‘projects of the self.’” This highlights how the notion of generation in terms of kinship (Huijsmans, 2016, pp. 11–12) could understand how aspirations are shaped.

6.3 Youth Aspirations and Emotional Redress

I asked Faisal to elaborate more about his desire to elevate his family's status. He responded that with a higher status, his parents would not be constantly working, so that they could have more family time and he would receive more affection from them.

“If I were from a higher-status family, maybe I would be given something and attention to one family that doesn't prioritize work over family. If a child lacks affection, it can cause depression in that child. Honestly, I get less attention from my father and mother; only my biological brother and sister always support me. I've felt envious seeing other families laughing and playing together. I've imagined when I could be like them. I once asked a friend what it feels like to be loved and cared for by a family. My friend said it feels good, getting what you ask for, money, and playing with the whole family. I could only respond, ‘Oh, nice to be cared for like that,’ and then daydream about when I could experience that.”

(WhatsApp Chat, 07-08-2023)

Figure 9 Faisal's Picture



Source: Participant-generated image

Faisal had lived with his grandparents in Klaten since he was six months old, as his mother was a domestic worker and his father ran a small business in Jakarta, where they lived with his siblings. He said that his parents only visited him twice, both times when he was critically ill.

Here, I think that the picture he sent to me relates to his perception about himself (see Figure 9). When I asked him to give me the picture of a location that represents Klaten, he insisted that he wants him to be in the photo. He said that it represents his “confidence,” yet he shared that he tries to be confident rather than being confident. Wilson, 2016 (pp. 287, 292) argued that care is an important part to have a sense of self-worth.

Similarly, Ingrid is among those who left behind due to parental work migration. Ingrid lives with her mother and younger brother in Klaten while her father is in Bali, working for a grocery supermarket chain. She expressed a deep longing for him and nodded in agreement when I asked if she missed him. Envisioning future success, she aspires not only to travel with her family but also to foster a time when no family member is overly consumed by work.

Me : “You imagine an ideal future with a lot of money, what do you want to use it for?”

Ingrid : “I want to go on vacation with my family, travel abroad together.”

Me : “Oh, because you like traveling?”

Ingrid : “Yes, actually the whole family likes traveling.”

Me : “Do you feel that with the current situation, your family is not flexible to go traveling?”

Ingrid : “Yes.”

Me : “Anything else you want?”

Ingrid : “Everyone in the family isn’t too busy with other things, so we’re more focused on the family.”

Me : “So, do you think because of the current conditions, your dad and mom are busier with work?”

Ingrid : (Nods in agreement)

(Recorded Interview, 29-08-2023)

In cases of Gadis, she once migrated with her parents to an industrial area, Tangerang. Growing up with her mother working in a plastic factory and her father in a car repair shop, Gadis had a lonely childhood as she had to manage her schoolwork alone and rarely had the chance to chat with her parents, who were usually too tired after returning from work. She believes that being financially successful will allow her to be a better parent to her future children than her own parents were to her. She names such ideal family as “Keluarga Cemara” (literally, ‘Cemara’s Family’). Though it refers to the title of a film and television series, Gadis heard such term from her friends to depict a harmonious family.

For Husni, an ideal future encompasses building a home for his parents, enjoying leisurely time with them, and having an intact family. Throughout his life, he has lived in a rented house. Following his parents’ divorce three years

ago, his mother, along with Husni and his younger brother, relocated within Klaten. They now live in a rented place, sharing the space with his older sister's family. To support Husni and his younger sibling, his mother works hard as a gig driver. Here, success is narrated through his experience of being a lower-class youth in a single-headed household.

I comprehend my participants aspirations in this sense as a form of 'emotional redress,' where youth seek to transform their current condition that they perceived as non-ideal. This might also be due to youth reflexivity influenced by social interactions and digital engagement.

Chapter 7

Ambiguous Place, Ambiguous Aspirations: Youth and Mobility

Living in ‘desakota,’ youth may want to stay and utilise the available opportunities to realise their desired future. However, despite the ongoing development in Klaten, my participants do not discount physical mobility as a strategic element in achieving their aspirations, though at the same time, local virtues post some lures to make them want to return. In this chapter, I will discuss how mobility becomes my participants’ strategy to realise their education and employment aspirations. This strategy is not just being imagined as it is actively being prepared by leveraging current opportunities. Here, I will first discuss my participants’ desire to be mobile as a reflection of their perception of certain places. Then, I will show how a participant navigate mobility constraints. These two sections highlight how mobility decision is shaped by identity, intergenerational relations, and class relations.

7.1 Mobility and Perception of Place

All participants who want to pursue tertiary education plan to move to other cities or regencies. When posed with the idea of attending a university in Klaten, only two informants acknowledged considering it as a back-up plan, while the rest had not even thought about it or are uncertain if their desired major is offered by any institution in Klaten. Ingrid was one of those who did not consider studying in Klaten for tertiary education. This is our conversation:⁵

Ingrid : “Honestly, I want to study and try working part-time.”

Me : “In Jogja?”

Ingrid : “Yes.”

Me : “Wait, what is the name of the college you want to attend?”

Ingrid : “Between *ABC* and *DEF*, between those two”

Me : “What does *ABC* stand for?”

Ingrid : (Laugh) “I don’t know.”

Me : “Is there any college in Klaten offering the major you want?”

Ingrid : “As far as I know, there isn’t, there are some in Jogja.”

Me : “Are those in Joga popular in terms of quality?”

Ingrid : “Yes, it’s also a student city.”

(Recorded Interview, 17-08-2023)

In case of Emi, institution choice was based on proximity to home, yet a public college in Jakarta is an exception as it offers scholarships and job guarantees. After failing to pass the entrance test to the college, she applied for a public university in Yogyakarta and now she is currently studying in this institution. She told me that her mother suggested a university in Klaten if she

⁵ The name of institution mentioned by Emi is altered, as it may indicate her current education.

could not secure a place in any public institution. With no public tertiary institutions in Klaten, Yogyakarta was her best option, offering both familial proximity and a chance to get educational assistance.

Similar to Emi, Andi is suggested by his father to choose institution closer to home. As a model student in a 'favourite' school and coming from middle-class background, he aims for prestigious public universities, such as Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in Yogyakarta, Universitas Diponegoro (Undip) in Semarang, and Universitas Sebelas Maret (UNS) in Surakarta. However, there is an exception for Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB) in Bandung, West Java. This is our conversation:

Andi : "When I go out with my dad, my brother, like during family outing, (they take route that) pass by UGM. 'Oh, this will be your campus in the future.' (I'd say) 'Amen, O Allah.'"

Me : "Does that make you enthusiastic?"

Andi : "Yes, enthusiastic. Because my dad indoctrinates me, 'just go to UGM, just go to UGM.' It's not that he forbids, but he suggests institutions close to home. Institution far from home that I allowed to choose is only ITB because it's very good. For UI, it's not allowed, because, again, my dad's consideration is about the *pergaulan* (literally, 'socialization'). If not UGM, then Undip, or UNS, which are still around Klaten.

Me : "So, Bandung seems to be less free in terms of *pergaulan* than Jakarta, right? Wait, but UI is in Depok."

Andi : "Yes, yes, but in Jakarta, the *pergaulan* is known to be free, but in Bandung, it's not that free, it's a big city but not to the extent like Jakarta."

(Recorded Interview, 11-08-2023)

Pergaulan Bebas (literally, 'free socialization'), a term referred to a social life that involves free sex, alcohol consumption, and drug use, is a concern for many parents in Indonesia, especially those from smaller cities or regencies. It is because *pergaulan bebas* is often associated with big cities. In case of Andi, though the main campus of Universitas Indonesia (UI) is in Depok, West Java, it is often perceived to be a campus in Jakarta which is seen to be 'harmful' for youth or children to grow up.

Likewise, Gadis was sent back to Klaten when she graduated elementary school, while her parents working in Tangerang, an industrial city next to Jakarta. As she aspires for tertiary education, institution she wanted to attend is in Surakarta. In our second interview, she shared that she prefers Klaten than Tangerang because of the *pergaulan*. This is our conversation:

Me : "Do you feel more suited to the way of socializing in a city or places like Klaten?"

Gadis : "I prefer that of (places) like Klaten. I mean, it's safe. In my opinion, in cities (socialization) is too free. I still have friends from Tangerang, I usually see their stories (in social media), some of them are already clubbing and stuff. I'm like shocked, is the city that free? I think it's very safe here, ... so there are still binding rules here."

Here, my participant's choice regarding tertiary education could not be seen as personal preferences as it is shaped by intergenerational relations and the discourse circulated about certain places. While the colleges Ingrid wanted to attend may be of good quality, she feels the need to refer to the reputation of Yogyakarta as 'city of student.' Meanwhile, Andi and Gadis agreed to their parents that associate urban cities with moral degradation.

Yoon's (2016) work on school choice in Vancouver, Canada, understand the case of Andi and Gadis as moral panic that is rooted in urban imagery. Mirroring the study in Minangkabau (Parker, 2013), youth in my study "give their consent to" their parents, "displaying a striking commitment to social conservatism, local culture, and Islamic values." Previous chapters have indeed highlighted how my participants identified themselves as (socially) pious individuals which make them reject the practice of premarital sex. This reflects the shared identity between youth and older generation that often tend to conform traditionality instead of modernity.

In relations to place, I did find that many of my participants appreciate Klaten's traditionality, and Kinanti is one of them. Kinanti holds a deep affection for Klaten and plans to return after completing her tertiary education in Yogyakarta. She is not fond of living in larger cities as people no longer conform social norms, particularly how the young people treat the elderly. Kinanti also values Klaten for its rich cultural customs, like the '*sebaran apem*' ceremony, which to her signifies cultural preservation and reverence for ancestors. I spoke with her just three days before the '*sebaran apem*' event, and this is our conversation:

Kinanti : "During the Saparan month like this, everyone gathers, and there's a parade along Jatinom street."

Me : "So, you think that's something valuable, right?"

Kinanti : "Yes."

Me : "Cities have many modern facilities, have lots of cafes; don't you want to live in a place like that?"

Kinanti : "I do want to, but in cities, the traditions are less, so it's just ordinary, less interesting."

Me : "What's the impact of tradition in your life?"

Kinanti : "It lets us know what our heritage is from the past."

Me : "Because of the traditions, do you feel more valued or something?"

Kinanti : "Yes, and when I'm not in Klaten during this month, I really miss the Saparan atmosphere."

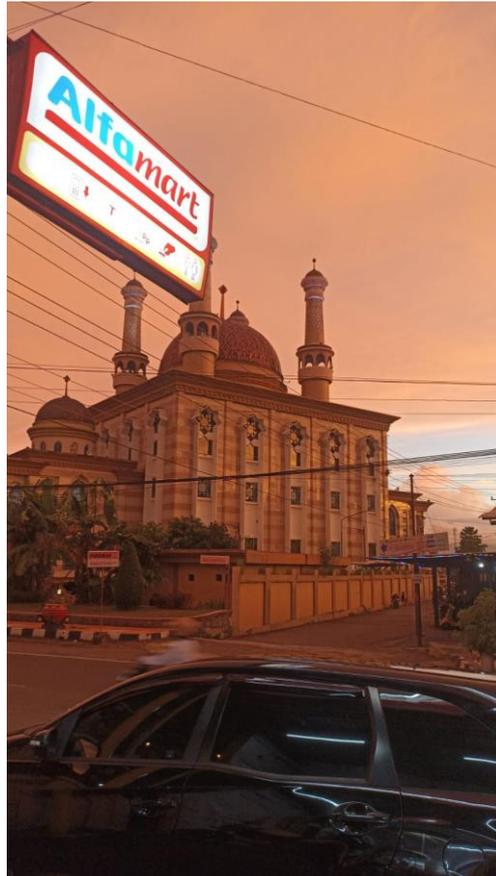
(Recorded Interview, 29-08-2023)

In contrast to Kinanti, Husni, who is the only one among them aspiring to work immediately after secondary education, views Klaten more in terms of its ambiguous development. In his final year at SMK A, he intends to intern in an industrial city and aims to work there, following his teachers' and seniors' advice. They said that an internship in Klaten would be "*nanggung*" (literally, 'halfway'). However, he plans to return to Klaten to start a business once he has acquired sufficient skills and capital. He prefers living in Klaten, as it is not as

crowded and noisy as larger cities. Here, Husni's aspiration as ambiguous as other participants'.

Husni's opinion about Klaten appears to be connected to the photo he shared with me. The subject he aimed to highlight is the Jogja-Solo street intersection (see Figure 10). He selected this image for its strategic location, as it is a common route for those traveling to either Yogyakarta or Surakarta. In my view, Husni's photo depicts Klaten as in-between region.

Figure 10 Husni's Picture



Source: Participant-generated image

7.2 Negotiating Mobility Constraints

Most 'favourite' schools in Klaten, as in many parts of Indonesia, are situated close to downtown, with some neighbouring each other. However, the dynamics at these institutions is shifting due to the school zoning policy that has been implemented since 2017, which emphasizes admissions for nearby residents. Generally, admission to public SMA and SMK are determined by location, achievement, and affirmation policy. Location-based admissions is projected to dominate student intakes, but the exact percentages are determined by provincial guidelines. Based on Central Java's recent policy, location-based admission in each SMA should comprise a minimum of 55% of total enrolment (Diskominfo Jateng, no date).

Now students living outside the zone have a slimmer chance of gaining admission to ‘favourite’ schools. However, many with the resources often bypass the system to gain admission priority by changing their official residency, which likely does not reflect their actual living address (Kusuma, 2023). Andi, who lives outside the school’s zone was also supported by his parents to adjust his on-paper residency. By registering himself in his grandparents’ Kartu Keluarga (KK or literally, ‘Family Card’) whose address is closer to the school, he secured a priority slot to his SMA.

During my visit, the Dean of Students at Andi’s school informed me that many have taken similar actions, with some families even ‘relocate’ their KK to an empty plot of land as their residence. Indeed, SMAs considered as ‘favourite’ schools offers better facilities as it is used to gain more funds compared to non-‘favourite’ schools. For students aspiring tertiary education, ‘favourite’ schools are often prioritised by public tertiary institutions during achievement-based admission as they are known for producing high-quality students.

In general, there are three admission tracks for entering public tertiary institutions in Indonesia: national achievement-based, national test-based, and private test-based. Students applying through the achievement-based track must be recommended by their school of origin, and the selection process considers the historical relationship between the school and the university, quantified as a ‘school index’ (Wulandari, 2023).

Here, Andi has navigated the constraints on mobility in his quest for education, which has even helped him realize his aspirations for tertiary education by utilizing his resources. At the same time, this underscores the class relations that present greater challenges for lower-class youth to do the same. This situation is reflected in the research by Phillippo and Griffin (2016) on youth school choice in Chicago, where affluent youth, along with their parents, bypass the system, resulting in the social reproduction of inequality.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

This study affirms that youth multiple identities provide a foundation for their narrative aspirations. For my participants, these identities are rooted in their complex interactions with adults within a wider structure of social reproduction, especially in relations to their social role as a student, an individual with moral values, and a child in a family. In the context of 'desakota', these young people have creatively used the traditional aspect of their current social identities to develop their future modern personal aspirations: someone who is well-educated and financially successful. Moreover, emerging modernity in 'desakota' that provides infrastructure to support mobility and digital engagement, allow youth to be more reflexive on their aspirational choice. However, adults' and development narratives are still predominated, which pose challenges for those deviates from the normative ideas of being 'successful' or 'valuable'.

By exploring my research questions, I gave the spatial meaning to the notions of identity and generation with consideration of digital media in understanding youth aspirations. Moreover, this study contributes to the geography of education and sociology of youth in general, as well as the amplification of the voice of youth in research.

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Annex 1. Poster

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Lur! Ayo dadi informan penelitian

Harapan dan Impian Anak Muda

Jika kamu merasa tidak punya harapan dan impian, kamu juga bisa mendaftar karena suaramu sama pentingnya untuk didengar!



Syarat

1. Siswa SMA/SMK/SLB atau Peserta Kejar Paket C usia 15-21 tahun di Klaten
2. Bersedia melakukan 3-4 kali wawancara dan mengumpulkan foto tematik (akan dijelaskan di pertemuan pertama)
3. Bersedia menerima kunjungan singkat ke sekolah, daerah tempat tinggal/tempat kerja (bagi yang bekerja atau membantu orang tua bekerja) jika diperlukan

Catatan

1. Informan dapat meminta nama dan identitas dirahasiakan
2. Tersedia kamera bagi yang tidak memiliki kamera/hp
3. Total waktu yang diperlukan ± 5 jam selama Juli-Agustus 2023
4. Jadwal wawancara dapat menyesuaikan kelonggaran peserta
5. Peneliti akan meminta izin sekolah jika kunjungan diperlukan
6. Informan dipilih berdasarkan kebutuhan penelitian

7. Terdapat souvenir dari Belanda/kompensasi berupa uang

Pendaftaran

https://bit.ly/Harapan_Impian

Annex 2. Digital Flyers

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Social Studies *Ezafus*

Lur! Ayo dadi informan penelitian

Harapan dan Impian Anak Muda

Jika kamu merasa tidak punya harapan dan impian,
kamu juga bisa mendaftar karena suaramu sama
pentingnya untuk d' Dengar!



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Syarat

1. Siswa SMA/SMK/SLB atau Peserta Kejar Paket C usia 15-21 tahun di Klaten
2. Bersedia melakukan 3-4 kali wawancara dan mengumpulkan foto tematik (akan dijelaskan di pertemuan pertama)
3. Bersedia menerima kunjungan singkat ke sekolah, daerah tempat tinggal/tempat kerja (bagi yang bekerja atau membantu orang tua bekerja) jika diperlukan



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Catatan (1/2)

1. Informan dapat meminta nama dan identitas dirahasiakan
2. Tersedia kamera bagi yang tidak memiliki kamera/hp
3. Total waktu yang diperlukan \pm 5 jam selama Juli-Agustus 2023
4. Jadwal wawancara dapat menyesuaikan kelonggaran peserta



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Catatan (2/2)

5. Peneliti akan meminta izin sekolah jika kunjungan diperlukan
6. Informan dipilih berdasarkan kebutuhan penelitian
7. Terdapat souvenir dari Belanda / kompensasi berupa uang



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Pendaftaran

https://bit.ly/Harapan_Impian



Annex 3. List of Questions

Theme	Questions	Reasonings	Assumptions
Background	How long have you been living in Klaten?		Youth who have spent a long time living in Klaten may be more aware of spatial changes and how those changes relate to them.
	Do your parents and extended family live in Klaten?		This could be associated with their sense of social citizenship or be a factor prompting them to consider migration to another city.
	How many siblings do you have and are you the firstborn, middle child, or the lastborn?		Youth from lower economic class, particularly those from large families, often face greater barriers in pursuing higher education.
	Do you live with your parents in a nuclear family or an extended one?	This can situate participant as a social actor in relation to their micro space.	In some areas of Klaten, students might not live with their parents who become migrant workers. Residing with relatives may indicate the socio-economic level.
Neighbourhood	Does your mother or father work and where they work?		This can be sensitive questions but can indicate socio-economic level.
	Do you participate in domestic work at home or are you responsible to do certain kinds of house chores?		This could indicate how gender factors influence aspirations, as young women may be tasked with more domestic work than young men.
	Do you usually hang out with friends in your neighbourhood?	This can situate participant as a social actor in relation to their micro space.	
	Do you usually participate in events held in your neighbourhood?		Local youth organisation like Karang Taruna is still common and this may influence a sense of social citizenship
	Do you like your neighbourhood and why?		This may reveal the sense of belonging to youth's localities that drive or prevent them to mobilize

School	What do you like or do not like as a student?	This may reveal how youth think of themselves as educated individual.	
	Do you enjoy studying or do you have other activities that you enjoy more?	This may indicate what motivate youth to have educational aspirations.	
	If you enjoy studying, what subjects do you enjoy the most?	This may indicate personal interest on pursuing education.	
	Do you take courses outside school?		Students take courses outside school indicate their(parents) behaviour towards education
	Do you have favourite teachers and why do you like them?	This can situate participant as a social actor in relation to their micro space.	
	Do you have many friends in school or do you prefer to have a few close friends, or do you prefer being alone?	This can situate participant as a social actor in relation to their micro space.	
	Do you think teachers and friends have influence on you?	This can situate participant as a social actor in relation to their micro space.	
(Im)mobility	What place do you spend your time the most and what place do you like the most?	This can situate participant as a social actor in relation to their micro space.	
	Do you like to hang out and if so, where do you usually hang out?	This can situate participant as a social actor in relation to their micro space.	
	Do you often visit Yogyakarta or Solo and what do you do there?	This can reveal youth's participation on urban lifestyle.	
	Do you like Klaten or cities like Yogyakarta and Solo more and why?	This can help delve into youth's thoughts on modernity.	
	Have you ever visited other regencies, cities, or countries that you really like?	This can help delve into youth's imagination about ideal spaces.	
	Do you want to stay in Klaten or do you want to live in another regency/city and why?	This can help delve into youth's imagination about ideal spaces.	
Education	Do you want to spend more years studying like going to college and why?	This can reveal youth aspirations on education.	

	If so, do you receive supports from your parents, siblings, relatives, or others, and what kinds of support do you get?	This can reveal the social factors that may drive or limit the educational aspirations of youth.
	Is there anything that may prevent you to study further?	This can reveal structural constraints and how youth negotiate those.
	Is it common in your family and neighbourhood that youth going to college after finishing high school?	This may reveal how spaces have influence on educational aspirations.
Employment	Are you currently working or helping your parents make a living?	This may relate how youth think of what 'decent job' is.
	Do you like to work, or do you want to spend your time studying only or having other activities?	This may reveal youth aspirations on employment and beyond.
	Do you like your work now or do you want to get a better job?	This may reveal how youth think of what 'decent job' is.
	What kind of job do you want to have and why?	This may relate how youth think of what 'decent job' is.
	How do you imagine spending your salary?	This may relate youth aspirations on modern lifestyle.
Entrepreneurship	Is it common in your family and neighbourhood that people run their own business for a living?	This may relate how space influences youth aspirations on entrepreneurship.
	Any teachers encourage you to start a business instead of having salaried employment?	This may situate youth as a social actor in thinking about aspirations.
	Do you think you want to start a business someday and why?	This may reveal personal interest on entrepreneurship.
	Is there any support that you will get if you want to start a business and if so, what kind of support can it be?	This may reveal structural challenges to youth aspirations for entrepreneurship.

Partnership	What do you think about being in a relationship with someone?	This may indicate youth interest on partnership.
	Do you want to start a family someday and if so, when do you think to do it?	This may indicate youth interest on parenthood.
	Have your parents talk about marriage to you?	This can situate youth as social actors.
	When do your peers in school or neighbourhood usually start getting married?	This can situate youth as social actors in relations with micro spaces.
Aspiration (General)	What do you like about your life?	This can reveal how youth think about themselves.
	What aspects in your life you want to change?	This can reveal youth aspirations beyond education, employment, entrepreneurship, and partnership or parenthood.

Annex 4. List of Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	School	Method of Recruitment	Numbers of Interviews
Andi	Male	SMA A, favourite, in city center	Personal recruitment	2
Budi	Male	SMA B, favourite, in city center	Personal recruitment	2
Cantik	Female	SMA C, non-favourite, in peripheries	Casted by teacher or school official	3
Dita	Female	SMA C, non-favourite, in peripheries	Self-registered	3
Emi	Female	SMA D, non-favourite, near city center	Self-registered	3
Faisal	Male	SMA D, non-favourite, near city center	Self-registered	3
Gadis	Female	SMK A, favourite, near city center	Casted by teacher or school official	2
Husni	Male	SMK A, favourite, near city center	Self-registered	2
Inggrid	Female	SMK B, favourite, in city center	Casted by teacher or school official	2
Jelita	Female	SMK B, favourite, in city center	Casted by teacher or school official	2
Kinanti	Female	SMK B, favourite, in city center	Casted by teacher or school official	2