Success as social:

Exploring young people's understandings of success in rural Java

By

Rara Sekar Larasati

A thesis

submitted to the Victoria University of Wellington

in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Cultural Anthropology

Victoria University of Wellington

2018

Cover photo: Young people participating in *entas-entas*, a spirit purification ceremony to commemorate the 1000th day since the passing of a relative. This ritual is part of the *adat* in Ngadas.

Source: Rara Sekar Larasati 2017

Abstract

Using the case of *desa wisata adat* (official tourism and traditional cultural village) Ngadas, East Java, Indonesia, this thesis explores the meanings of success from the perspectives of rural young people and how the particular local context of Ngadas shaped their understandings of success. Unlike many rural young people in Indonesia, young people from Ngadas are known for their land ownership, successful farming, low rate of urbanisation and low participation in formal education. With its particular social, economic and cultural background, young people from Ngadas serves as a valuable case study to understand Indonesian rural youth success as it is situated within the village.

In this research, I utilise Bourdieu's theory of practice to focus on the practices of young people for success and explore the capitals and habitus within Ngadas (the field). In doing so, I explore how the *adat* (customs, rituals, values) is significantly embedded within young people's practices for success in three key aspects of their lives: work practices, familial/relational practices and religious practices. Drawing on six weeks of ethnographic fieldwork with six youth participants and four village leaders, data were collected through focus group discussion or *klumpukan*, auto-driven photo-elicitation, individual interviews, and participant observation.

My study shows that for young people in Ngadas, their success practices were underpinned by a form of social capital that is founded on reciprocity or a gift exchange which is embedded within and shaped by *adat*, and in turn also serves to maintain *adat*. The significance of social capital for young people's success explains how success in Ngadas is founded on strong relationships, reciprocity, a sense of belonging, and a sense of community to maintain harmony or *guyub rukun*. Thus, social capital for young people's success holds a symbolic value not only for the individual, but also for the field of Ngadas. The case study of young people in Ngadas also presents an understanding of success as *illusio*, a sense of purpose that is gained from investing in social relationships. It is an understanding of success as a sense of being and belonging with and for others that ties young people's individual success to the collective success of Ngadas as an economic, social and cultural community.

Acknowledgements

If I were to ask myself the research question of this research, I would answer that this thesis is part of my success, and similar to what my findings suggest; I believe that success is indeed social. For this, I am indebted to a number of people and organisations whose support, love, and encouragement contributed significantly to the completion of this thesis.

Firstly, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to my supervisors, Lorena Gibson and Bronwyn Wood. Lorena, thank you for your endless support, your knowledge and guidance that gave me the confidence to finish this research. As a newcomer in anthropology, I thank you for always believing in me and my work, and reminding me of the power that knowledge possesses for social change. Bronwyn, thank you for your intellectual insights, questions and critical discussions that come from a place of care. Your guidance encouraged and inspired me to become a better and more critical thinker, and I am forever grateful to have had the chance to work with such a caring and knowledgeable person like you. I would also like to thank my lecturers in the Cultural Anthropology department who have inspired me, intellectually and personally, with their wealth of anthropological knowledge especially during my first year here: Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich, Jeff Sissons, Caroline Bennett, Catherine Trundle and Hal Levine.

I would like to thank New Zealand Aid-ASEAN Scholarship for giving me the chance to pursue my master's in Wellington and learn so much from living in a caring, sharing, and enabling society like New Zealand. I also thank the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences' Small Faculty Grant, and Association of Social Anthropologists of Aotearoa/New Zealand's Kākano Fund, that have provided financial support for my fieldwork in Ngadas.

To my friends in Room 916: Bryony, Jesse and Sam, my anthropology friends Zoe and Josh, and also my good friend Hemo, thank you, all of you for always being there. Thank you for sharing the burden of post-graduate life, for always supporting each other, providing ideas, feedback and the much-needed affirmation on drafts; you have made this experience bearable and enjoyable. I wish you the best of luck in your future endeavours and I hope our paths will cross again in the near future.

A special thank you to my family in Indonesia: my dad, Sapta, my mom, Luana, and my sister, Isyana. Thank you for wholeheartedly believing in me and always supporting me to pursue what brings meaning to me. You are the reason I am here today and I could not ask for a better family.

To Ben: my informal supervisor, my mentor, my life partner, thank you. For your unconditional love, endless support and care for my well-being in the past year. Without your patience, your understanding and your unshakeable faith in me, this thesis would not have come to fruition. I hope I can do the same thing to support the next step in your academic career.

I am also very much indebted to my friends in Indonesia without whom I could not have done my fieldwork in Ngadas: Ichwan Susanto, Andi Brata, Satrio Binusa, Yoppy Pieter, and Delfiani Tomasowa . *Terima kasih.*

Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my participants and the people of Ngadas, who have welcomed me into their homes with open arms. Thank you for your hospitality, your generosity, your kindness and the gift of knowledge that you have given me. I hope one day I can reciprocate this gift in some way to you, for which I am forever grateful for. *Matur nuwun.*

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	3
Acknowledgements	4
Table of Contents	6
List of figures.....	8
Glossary	9
Chapter One: Introduction.....	11
Ngadas as the case study	12
Motivations for Research	14
The political imperative to study rural young people's success in Indonesia.....	15
Positive anthropology and an anthropology of success	16
Prior studies on rural youth aspirations.....	18
Understanding young people's success in Indonesia	20
Research questions	22
A conceptual framework for success: Bourdieu's theory of practice	22
Thesis outline.....	28
Chapter Two: Methodology	30
Chapter Introduction.....	30
Ethnography as methodology	31
Early decisions: Key participants	32
Entering the field, meeting participants	33
Inviting village leaders into the research.....	36
Data collection methods	36
<i>Klumpukan</i> : Focus Group Discussion, Ngadas style.....	37
Auto-driven Photo-elicitation	38
Semi-structured individual interviews with village leaders	42
Participant Observation	42
Data analysis methods.....	43
Reflections on methodology and methods.....	45
Chapter Conclusion	46
Chapter Three: Ngadas.....	48
Chapter Introduction.....	48
Profile of Ngadas Village	50
Young people in Ngadas.....	51
History of Tengger and Ngadas.....	54
Ngadas: The face of contemporary Tengger	57
<i>Bukan Petani Biasa</i> (No Ordinary Farmers): Farming in Ngadas	58
<i>Desa Wisata</i> : Tourism in Ngadas	60
Ngadas as <i>Desa Adat</i>	63
Religion in Ngadas	65
Chapter Conclusion	68

Chapter Four: Practices for success	69
Chapter Introduction	69
4.1. Work practices for success	70
4.1.1. Successful farming in Ngadas	71
4.1.2. Work and family: Making parents happy, filial piety and <i>berbakti</i>	72
4.1.3. Work vs Education	79
4.1.4. Work, family and education: Finding the middle way	81
4.2. Familial/Relational Practices for Success	85
4.2.1. Work or family?	85
4.2.2. The gift of family: reciprocity and care	87
4.2.3. Receiving care: <i>motivasi</i> and support for success	89
4.3. Religious practices for success	90
4.3.1. "He must not forget his religion": Religion and youth success in Ngadas	90
4.3.2. Success, religious habitus and religious values	92
4.3.3. Religion, belonging and harmony	95
Chapter Conclusion	99
Chapter Five: Adat for success	101
Chapter Introduction	101
The role of <i>adat</i> in the practices for success	102
The 'Misfit': The case of Rahayu	108
Chapter Conclusion	110
Chapter Six: "Ngadas: Segalanya wis!"	111
How does the particular context of Ngadas influence young people's understandings of success?	111
Adat, belonging and Ngadas: Sense of cycle to maintain collective success	114
Conclusion: What does success mean for young people in Ngadas?	115
Final remarks	117
References:	120
Appendix 1: Ethics Approval (Information and consent sheets)	130
Appendix 2: Interviews	135

List of figures

Table 2.1 Description of youth participants.....	35
Table 2.2 Description of village leaders interviewed	36
Figure 2.1 An example of coding data from photo-elicitation interviews into tables.....	44
Figure 2.2 Identifying relational aspects of success during coding	45
Figure 3.1 Map of Ngadas, located inside Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park	50
Figure 3.2 Young women in Ngadas wearing their sarung on the way to betek. For unmarried young women, the knot of the sarung (also known as kekawung) is not tied in the middle but on the sides. Photo: Rara Sekar Larasati.....	53
Figure 4.1 A photo of a silver coin. Photo: Vino.....	73
Figure 4.2 A typical view of potato farms in Ngadas. Photo: Vino.....	75
Figure 4.3 Ida's younger sister, playing with stickers at the family's warung. Photo: Ida	78
Figure 4.4 SDN 1 Ngadas, the only elementary school in the village. Photo: Nyoto.....	81
Figure 4.5 Paket school in Dawuhan village. Photo: Nyoto.....	83
Figure 4.6. The only junior high school in Ngadas. Photo: Tono	84
Figure 4.7 Pawon, where both cooking and api-api conversations take place when the temperature drops. Photo: Mudita	85
Figure 4.8 A photo of Reboan, a weekly meditation and prayer ritual session held at the sanggar. Photo: Tono	90
Figure 4.9 A picture of Mudita's watch with Ngadas hills in the background. Hours on the watch are written in Mandarin and are described with Buddhist philosophy of time such as 'time is happiness'. Photo: Mudita.....	93
Figure 4.10 A blurry photo of Adam Makna, the holy book of Buddha Jawa Sanyata. Photo: Tono.....	98
Figure 6.1 A photo of the entrance gate of Ngadas Village. Photo: Nyoto.....	117

Glossary

The following is a section of key Indonesian and Ngadas-Javanese terms used in this thesis.

Terms in Indonesian:

agama – religion

balas budi – to reciprocate, usually in the context of what parents have given us

berbakti – to be devoted; usually to parents

bukan petani biasa – no ordinary farmers

cadar – niqab

cita-cita – life aspirations; life ideals

desa wisata – official tourism village

desa adat – traditional cultural village

ikhtiar – loosely translates as working hard to reach one's dreams (both in the world and in the hereafter). The word is adopted from Arabic and commonly used by Muslims in Indonesia in everyday conversations.

mandiri – independent, self-sufficient

membahagiakan orang tua – to make parents happy

motivasi – motivation

ojek – motorbike taxi; a motorbike transport service

pak – (from *bapak*) Mr; or used for father

sekolah paket – a high school equivalent exam school

sukses – success or successful

warung – a small stall, usually selling snacks, cigarettes and household goods

Terms in Ngadas-Javanese:

adat – in Ngadas *adat* refers to rituals, ceremonies, customs, manners, values that are strongly upheld in the community

api-api – to sit by the fire in the kitchen

betek – festival labour; when women help to prepare an abundance of food for their neighbour's or relatives' ceremonies as part of *adat*

dukun – ritual priest, also known as *dukun adat*

entas-entas – spirit purification ceremony to commemorate the 1000th day since the passing of a relative

guyub rukun – togetherness in harmony

klumpukan – a gathering of people for a particular purpose

mbak – older sister; or could be used to call an older female with respect

sanggar – in this context, people in Ngadas refer *sanggar* to the Buddhist monastery

semedi – prayer, in the context of Buddha Jawa Sanyata religion

sinoman – festival labour; when men provide help for their neighbour's or relatives' ceremonies as part of *adat*

slamet – safe; secure

sumbangan – a ritual exchange system in Ngadas; a system of reciprocity in Ngadas where people give gifts to sponsor each other's festivals; this is part of *adat*

tugel kuncung – haircutting ceremony for young girls; this is part of *adat*

Chapter One: Introduction

Nyoto was the first person to do a photo-elicitation interview with me. I handed his photos to him and asked if he could first choose the ones that represented his understanding of success the most. I watched him carefully looking at the photos that he had taken with the disposable camera I had given him three weeks ago. He seemed excited with the results. “Who’s this?” asked his girlfriend who was watching him lay out the photos on the carpet, including a photo of her. “She’s... just a good friend of mine,” answered Nyoto jokingly. “So just a friend?” she asked. Everyone in the room burst into laughter as his friends threw more teasing comments to both of them. It was 7pm. Nyoto, his girlfriend, four other young people, and I were sitting in a circle in the middle of the Buddha Jawa Sanyata monastery in Ngadas village, waiting for Nyoto to reveal all of his photo. I had been looking for an opportunity to do these interviews since the very first day I arrived in Ngadas. I was curious to learn how Nyoto and the other young people photographed and understood success, especially coming from a village with a particular socio-economic and cultural background. I was intrigued by the last photo of success that Nyoto chose to show me. It was a photo of the village entrance gate (see [Figure 6.1](#) on page 119 below), which he said symbolises Ngadas as a whole as his definition of success. “Why is success, Ngadas?” I asked Nyoto. “Because, Ngadas is... segalanya, wis! Segalanya.” (It’s just, everything. It’s everything.)

(Fieldnotes, 31 July 2017)

This thesis is about young people from Ngadas, a *desa wisata* (official tourism village) and *desa adat* (traditional cultural village) located in East Java, Indonesia. In particular, this thesis explores the meanings of success from the perspectives of rural young people in Ngadas; it is a village known for its particular social, economic and cultural background: having access to land ownership; stable livelihood and farming success; low rate of urbanisation and low participation in formal education; and still practising and maintaining their *adat* (rituals, ceremonies, customs, values) that is believed to hold the

community together. The case of young people in Ngadas is valuable to understand how youth success is situated *within the village* as most of the young people prefer to work and stay in the village. In this thesis, I explore young people's understandings of success by closely examining how the local context of Ngadas shapes young people's notions of success.

Utilising Bourdieu's theory of practice, my research examines how the capitals and habitus that young people hold shape their practices for success in the field of Ngadas. In particular, I explore young people's work practices, familial/relational practices and religious practices and the *adat*, (the rituals, ceremonies and the responsibilities that come along, unwritten and given regulations or traditions, manners, or customs, and social values) that they describe is deeply embedded within them. My study shows that success in Ngadas is underpinned by three main factors: the current agricultural infrastructure particular to Ngadas that enables stable livelihood; the need for young people to maintain social capital, i.e. strong family and community relationships, trust, respect and reciprocity through filial piety, religiosity and *adat*; and a sense of belonging and community that bind young people's personal sense of being and success with the collective success of Ngadas as an economic, social and cultural community.

As discussed in Chapter Two, this thesis is based on a suite of ethnographic methods, including a participatory visual method, with participants of this study. Data collection methods included focus group discussion or *klumpukan*, auto-driven photo-elicitation, semi-structured individual interviews and participant observation. The ethnographic data was collected from July to August 2017 through the participation of six youth participants and four local leaders in the village.

Ngadas as the case study

I was first introduced to Ngadas by my husband, Ben K. C. Laksana, who had gone there in 2014 to accompany his friend, Yoppy Pieter, on a photography assignment. The aim of that assignment was to document Ngadas as one of the very few remaining Buddhist pockets in Indonesia that still maintains a complex mix of Tengger and Javanese traditions in their rituals (Pieter 2015). Ngadas is an enclave village situated 45

kilometres east of the city of Malang, East Java, Indonesia, and is part of the Tengger highlands (Hefner 1985). It is also one of the only villages that is located inside the Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park. Ngadas is famous for its *adat* rituals, ceremonies, and the responsibilities and values that surround them. Earlier in 2017, Ngadas was given the title of *desa adat* (traditional cultural village) and *desa wisata* (official tourism village) (see Chapter Three for the historical and contextual background of Ngadas). I thought of Ngadas as the case study for my thesis because I was intrigued by the distinct religious and cultural background that is unique to Ngadas, and I was interested in knowing how the particular locale of Ngadas influences young people's view of success.

Further discussions with Ben, Yoppy, and other local photographers, such as Ichwan Susanto and Andi Brata, who have been documenting and researching in Ngadas for years, revealed information about the lack of participation in education and youth mobility in Ngadas. Young people from Ngadas are seen as unique (Susanto, personal communication, June 18, 2017), not only for their religious and *adat* background but also for their attitude towards the current 'modernisation' narratives in Indonesia. Unlike other rural youth, young people in Ngadas are known for their unwillingness for out migration/urbanisation to pursue educational or employment opportunities. Having no high school in the vicinity, the majority of young people also end their education at junior high school. In Ngadas, only 25 people – less than 2% of the total population – have a high school degree, and only 8 people have a diploma or bachelor's degree (Profil Desa Ngadas 2017). With 99ha of the total land in Ngadas utilised for potato farming (2017), young people in Ngadas mostly prefer to do farming in the village instead.

As a case study, Ngadas raised many important questions that could be explored in this research. For instance, while a great number of rural youth are competing to migrate to urban settings, why do these young people prefer to stay in the village? How do young people in Ngadas view success and what are the necessary resources and conditions for success to take place in Ngadas? Also, how does the social, cultural and economic background of Ngadas shape their aspirations for success? These are the key questions that guided me throughout my research process.

Motivations for Research

I have long been interested in alternative perspectives on well-being for development. At the end of my time in the development sector in 2014, I became aware that some of the empowerment projects I had helped to manage were deemed unsuccessful as they were not meeting the key indicators required by the project (and the donors). Participants of these projects were apparently not enthusiastic about the idea of empowerment through entrepreneurship training, and although they eventually decided to take part in the project, most of them were “underperforming”. At that time, my co-workers and I attempted to address these failures by looking back at our need assessment results and regular monitoring surveys with our project participants. However, we were still puzzled by the unanticipated and disappointing outcomes, as we did not fully comprehend the reasons behind their lack of interest in the project or the lack of what anthropologist Tania Murray Li terms as their “will to improve” (2007). Out of desperation, blame was mostly directed at the participants for not wanting to ‘prosper’ through the empowerment project.

This experience inspired me to further consider the social and cultural factors that might have shaped the participants’ views of what it means to be better-off, more ‘developed’, or *successful*, and how these differed to what was expected by the project. In other words, I questioned whether empowerment projects, including my past projects, were actually empowering the community at all due to fundamentally different ways of understanding well-being or success, which were often overlooked. Furthermore, I observed how the quantitative needs assessments and evaluation surveys that were done in short periods of time for project efficiency and productivity were actually incapable of documenting the social and cultural factors that significantly influenced the hopes, desires and aspirations of communities to be “better” (Fischer 2014, 5). This motivated me to conduct an anthropological examination of local perspectives of well-being (through the lens of success), which I believed would be a useful way to further understandings of contemporary development and although beyond the scope of this thesis, also support social policies to better meet the needs of the people. As argued by anthropologist Norman Long (2000), I agree that an anthropological approach is able to apply a perspective that incorporates agency, the impact of collective actors, changes in value,

livelihood and social domains that is not only central to studies on contemporary development practices but also challenges homogeneity in and for development practices.

Although inspired by prior personal experiences in the development field, this thesis is not an anthropological study of development projects. Instead, it is concerned with the more fundamental aspects of everyday life by exploring the “conditions and possibilities of being human” (Ingold 2017, 62) through the lens of young people’s success in a particular rural context. By focusing on the meanings of success based on the local perspectives of young people from Ngadas village in Indonesia, this study sits at the intersection of contemporary studies of positive anthropology, rural youth aspirations, Indonesian youth, and Tengger culture. The topic of this thesis aligns with the existing body of work on young people that aims to challenge limited notions of youth success, which only emphasise success in educational, employment or economic terms.

The political imperative to study rural young people’s success in Indonesia

On a larger scale, I believe that there is also a sense of urgency to conduct studies on rural youth in Indonesia to better understand both the challenges and opportunities that exist within their particular contexts. As noted by Naafs and White (2012, 4) most youth studies on Indonesia focus on young people in urban contexts. The lack of research on rural youth in Indonesia is concerning, especially noting that one third of Indonesian youth currently live in rural areas (White 2012, 1), and that the biggest single source of income for young people is still agriculture and, small-scale farming with uncertain futures (AKATIGA and White 2015).

Rural sociologist Ben White, who has been studying rural youth in Indonesia for decades, notes the critical challenges that many young people in the villages face: underemployment, landless and precarious farming with less than half of the farmers in Indonesia owning their land, high rates of urbanisation, and a lower rate of participation in post-primary education that eventually poses challenges for rural youth to pursue employment outside the village (AKATIGA and White 2015). Along with infrastructural

barriers, White notes that one of the factors that contributes to young people turning away from farming is the perception of farming and rural life as not modern, backwards, and poor. It is these developmental challenges, faced by many rural young people in Indonesia, that compelled me to think further about success in the rural context. What does it mean to be a successful farmer? What does it mean to be successful as rural young people in Indonesia? What are the conditions that enable the success of rural young people in Indonesia today? My choice of young people in Ngadas as the case study of my research was deliberate to represent the exception in Indonesia. From the research that I conducted prior to fieldwork, I became cognisant of the farming success in Ngadas, the strict custom (*adat*) on land ownership that prevents people from becoming land-poor, the very low rate of youth urbanisation, and also the low rate of participation in post-secondary formal education. An anthropological inquiry into how young people in the village of Ngadas view success, I believe, is capable of exploring the specific social, economic and cultural aspects that shape rural young people's success, and perhaps, bringing to the fore alternative and local understandings of rural youth success as a 'critique of developmentalism' (Tirtowaluyo 2016, 23) and the modernisation project in Indonesia.

Positive anthropology and an anthropology of success

Success is arguably a concept that is under-researched within the discipline of anthropology. One of the challenges in conducting this research was the lack of anthropological studies on local perspectives of 'success' that I could draw on, let alone anthropological studies on young people's views on success more generally. My use of the term success for this research was indeed very particular to the Indonesian context. Here the word 'sukses' is frequently used in everyday conversations to describe aspirations related to education, work, family, or even the good life (for example, see Parker and Nilan 2013). It would appear that a more commonly used term in anthropological studies today, particularly anthropological studies of wellbeing or happiness, is aspiration.

Although very limited, recent anthropological studies on wellbeing, happiness and the good life have emerged, foregrounding the role of aspirations and proposing that

wellbeing (and the subjective factors that shape it) should be at the centre of anthropological studies of morality, development, human rights, health and mental health (Thin 2009, 36). Edward Fischer, an avid proponent of the constructive possibilities of positive anthropology, asserts in his book *The Good Life: Aspiration, Dignity and the Anthropology of Wellbeing* (2014, 5) that an understanding of the good life, or one's wellbeing from "the ground up through the dialectic engagement of fieldwork," is salient. He argues that this approach is important as it provides "the possibility of another approach" to better grasp the "subjective factors that drive engagement with the world", which includes people's desires, aspirations and hopes. Anthropologists working in the field of wellbeing and happiness also believe that anthropology has the capacity to contribute an approach that focuses on meanings, purposes, and things that are meaningful for the people while still attending to the social, cultural, moral and political dimensions of human experience (Walker and Kavedžija 2015, 6).

As an anthropological project, my thesis builds on the body of work of positive anthropology by focusing on success as a form of aspiration for young people in Ngadas. However, I concur with Fischer that in understanding aspirations, we must also include the *opportunity structures* that facilitate the effectiveness of aspirations (2014, 6). Hence, an anthropological inquiry into success should not only focus on the stated aspirations shared by participant in the study, but also understand the "cultural systems, as combinations of norms, dispositions, practices, and histories" that "frame the good life as a landscape of discernable ends and of practical paths to the achievement of these ends" (Appadurai 2013, 292). This particular approach to anthropology has led me to apply a conceptual framework that allows the exploration of both the wills and the ways of success as aspiration for young people (a description of conceptual framework is provided in the latter part of this chapter; see also Chapter Four and Chapter Five).

Prior studies on rural youth aspirations

Although the theme of aspiration has been recently explored by anthropological studies on wellbeing and happiness, more scholars from rural sociology or youth sociology, have specifically studied rural youth aspirations. However, I found that most of these studies only focus on youth aspirations in the context of education or employment. For example, Corra (2015) examines the factors that influence post-secondary plans of rural youth in Kentucky, USA. Her research shows that aspirations and decisions for career or college of the rural youth were mostly influenced by family and the rural community. In a similar vein, Howley's (2006) research in the United States on rural children's educational aspirations illuminates how the rural context significantly influences life chances of young people. Based on a longitudinal survey with American families, her research shows that rural youth tend to have lower educational aspirations and, due to their coming of age in a familial context with a strong attachment to place, Howley discovers that these young people were more likely to refuse employment opportunities in order to remain in the community.

Social capital has been found to be significant in shaping rural young people's educational aspirations (Byun et al. 2012; Kilpatrick and Abbott-Chapman 2002). For example, Kilpatrick and Abbott-Champan (2002) conducted a study on young people's work/study aspirations in rural Australia, with a particular focus on the role of family social capital in shaping young people's aspirations. The research discusses ways that family and community social capital influence young people's work and study values, and argues that networks and information gained from family are mostly limited and concentrated in rural areas thus influencing the decision for rural young people to find a job at home.

In a 2015 study, Theodori and Theodori also confirm a strong relationship between community attachment, sense of community, educational aspirations, and migration intentions in the case of rural youth in Texas. Emphasizing the role of young people in community development, their research shows that young people's strong attachment to place and community is capable of supporting community development through rural youth staying in the community or preferring return migration over urbanisation (Theodori and Theodori 2015).

Several themes emerge from this literature that are relevant to my study. First, from an anthropological perspective, these studies show the importance of attending to the local context in understanding rural youth aspirations: the role of family, education, community and rurality as a dynamic place. This also supports rural youth scholars who propose revisiting rurality as a diverse and complex context (Bushin et al. 2007, 69). Moreover, these studies of rural youth aspirations also correspond to my research interest in Ngadas, showing that the phenomenon of young people having different educational aspirations or preferring to stay in the village is not a condition unique to Ngadas, but is in common with other global rural contexts. In particular, the significance of social capital, family and community in shaping young people's aspirations are highlighted by such studies and support the choice of a Bourdieusian conceptual framework for understanding youth success that I will discuss later in this thesis. However, these cited studies are predominantly from western countries and we know much less about rural young people from the Global South, which is one further area I intend my research to contribute to.

Finally, the findings of these studies also guided me to look at similar patterns or commonalities of understandings of success that go beyond cultural differences, particularly pertaining to relationships and belonging. However, as my research interest in understanding young people's success stems from a positive anthropological approach that proposes a ground up, ethnographic, and participatory study, I argue that limiting understandings of aspiration, or in my case, success, to educational or employment aspirations, would limit the core of the anthropological project which aims to unravel alternative ways of being and becoming human. To fill in this gap in research, I turned to recent studies on young people in contemporary Indonesia to support my exploration of success beyond educational or employment aspirations. Some of the contemporary youth studies in Indonesia have, in fact, investigated topics of youth aspirations, notions of the good life, and *sukses*. The studies, discussed in the next section, serve as a crucial contextual background for my thesis to understand young people in Indonesia and their views of success.

Understanding young people's success in Indonesia

In searching for prior research on Indonesian youth and success, I came across just two important research projects which had similarities to my study. In 2013, Lyn Parker and Pam Nilan published *Adolescents in Contemporary Indonesia*, the first comprehensive study of young people in Indonesia. Grounded in two field sites, Central Java and West Sumatra, Parker and Nilan draw on findings collected from interviews, ethnographic fieldwork and a national survey which they conducted in 2011, involving more than 3,500 youth respondents from both urban and rural locations across Indonesia. The study explores the lives of young people in Indonesia by analysing their perceptions of adolescence, adulthood, media, family, community, religious and national identity. This study provided me with important insights into shared youth aspirations, hopes, dreams, and understandings of success, which are addressed in the authors' analyses of how young people in Indonesia view the meaning of education, their *cita-cita* (life ideals), and the good life.

In the context of educational success, the authors discussed the three key words that are important in the discourse of young people's success and schooling: *prestasi* (achievements or performance), *disiplin* (disciplining the self) and *mandiri* (independence and self-sufficiency) (Parker and Nilan 2013, 92-100). The authors argue that these perceptions, along with the understanding of schooling for success as modern Indonesian citizens, reflect the significant role of 'received wisdom' or the 'hidden curriculum' that young people learn from schooling (101). This provided context for my study and shed light on two important aspects of success: the role (or the lack) of education for young people in Ngadas, and whether *prestasi*, *disiplin* and *mandiri* play an important part for success or are perhaps expressed differently in Ngadas.

The results from their survey indicated that having a good education, a harmonious family, maintaining religious faith, and health were the top four elements of the good life that many young people in Indonesia perceive as important. This means for young people in Indonesia, the good life as it was perceived by young people in Indonesia. The good life "appears to be strongly orientated to family and the affective domain" and was underpinned by a strong religious faith that influences their aspirations (Parker and Nilan 2013, 147). While 'success' was not the particular entry point to explore young

people's aspirations, this study provides an expanded understanding of youth success that not only acknowledges that economic context and structures influence youth educational or employment aspirations (Nilan et al. 2011, 716), but also how other aspects such as family and religion were equal, if not more, important in shaping young people in Indonesia.

Parker and Nilan's study has contributed significantly to knowledge of shared aspirations of young people as a national phenomenon in Indonesia. However, as the authors' intention was to understand what most likely form the "aspirational middle class of the future" (Nilan et al. 2011, 712) in Indonesia, it does not specifically explore how success is locally understood in rural contexts. Therefore, the gap in in-depth studies on rural youth aspirations leaves the question of how rural youth, within their specific context, would see success differently. How would a particular rural context shape young people's work, education and life aspirations?

The second important recent study is a PhD dissertation by Tirtowaluyo (2016, 13), who continued this discussion on youth aspirations in Indonesia by focusing specifically on "aspirations and narratives of success of a sub-group of youth in Indonesia, in light of experiences of schooling, working, and growing-up in a rural context". Utilising Foucault's theory of the subject and subjectification, her study provides a deeper analysis on the differing narratives and discourses of success that are discursively constructed by and for young people in Lampung, Sumatra. Tirtowaluyo (2016, 14) investigates the power relations that are embedded within different success discourses that shape young people's agency and choice as successful subjects. She also explores discourses of success that exist within relational aspects that involve family-relationships and community, reaffirming what Parker and Nilan (2013) analysed from their youth survey. The understanding that success is relational significantly shaped how I approached young people's understandings of success in Ngadas.

However, while Tirtowaluyo approaches success as discourse that is embedded within power relations, my study aims to explore how understandings of success are not necessarily a matter of dominance or resistance, rather how they are underpinned by social, economic and cultural exchanges that give value or meaning to young people. Tirtowaluyo's research influenced me to continue the discussion on rural youth aspiration through a conceptual framework that is able to show the forms of capital and habitus that

emerge with distinction through a variety of practices in a given field (Bourdieu 1990). This highlights the most valued capital for young people's success in Ngadas while closely attending to the affective and relational domains of rural youth success.

Research questions

Having been informed by these prior studies on youth aspirations and the political realities as my point of departure, the research questions below guided my inquiry:

1. How do young people in Ngadas understand success? What are the most important aspects of life that underpin their understandings of success?
2. How does the specific social, economic and cultural contexts of Ngadas influence young people's views of success?

A conceptual framework for success: Bourdieu's theory of practice

As I started transcribing the focus group discussions, interviews, and compiling my field notes, I realised that I needed to read deeply into these conversations and not fall into the trap of romanticising the other, just because my participants come from a particular traditional village that upholds a different *adat* or religion to me. I guess this is the challenge of doing anthropology: to understand what it means to be different and similar at the same time. This particular understanding was inspired by Michael Jackson's *Life within Limits: Well-being in the world of want* (2011) which I read at the time of coding my findings. *Life within Limits* may not directly support my study but as an ethnography, it was so powerful that the stories of the Kuranko tribe made me reflect deeply not only on my subjective experiences today but also on the fundamentals of the social structures in which I am situated in. It was, in a way, an experience of making the strange familiar and "making the familiar strange" (Van Maanen 1995, 20).

This experience, unconsciously at that time, heavily influenced the way I understood my findings about Ngadas' youth success. While I was reading what my participants shared with me, I sometimes found myself reflecting on what success means for me and how I would apply my participants' understandings of success into my context. This reflective process led me to search for a social theory that avoided the duality of subjectivism and objectivism to transcend what Bourdieu regards as false antinomies "which collude to obfuscate the anthropological truth of human practice" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 10). As an anthropological research, I believe that a conceptual framework that "weaves together a 'structuralist' and a 'constructivist' approach" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 11) would be useful to consider not only the objective structures that define the limits of interactions and representations, but also "the immediate, lived experiences of agents in order to explicate the categories of perception and appreciation (dispositions) that structure their action from inside" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 11).

Thus, Bourdieu's theory of practice in particular his concepts of habitus, capital and field, is a useful framework for my purposes. Using Bourdieu's conceptual triad – a set of open concepts rather than a closed or completed theoretical edifice (Harker 1990, 99) – allowed my research to illuminate "a way of understanding the world" (Reay 2004, 439) that speaks to both the complex and rudimentary aspects of Ngadas youth's understanding of success. The adoption of a Bourdieusian framework is central in this research as it is capable of deepening "one's understanding of the interrelationships between objective structures and personal lived experiences" (Hardy 2014, 249).

In *Distinction* (1984), Bourdieu outlines his theory of practice in the following equation:

$$[(\text{habitus})(\text{capital})] + \text{field} = \text{practice} \text{ (Bourdieu 1984, 101)}$$

This equation describes how an individual's actions and dispositions (practices) reflect the interplay of capital, habitus and field. In this thesis, I conducted a close examination of how young people in Ngadas practise success to explore the capitals and habitus that emerged within the field of Ngadas. I explore the capital which emerged with distinction, in other words, emerged with a symbolic value in the field. A field is essentially the social space where interactions, transactions and events between social agents (individuals and groups) operate (Bourdieu 2005, 148, 148) and in my study, Ngadas becomes the field for young people's success. Thus, Bourdieu's theory of practice is useful for examining

which forms of capital and habitus emerge with distinction in Ngadas as the field and for explaining why they are distinctive for young people's success. In particular, this approach became important in helping me to understand how distinction or what holds symbolic value in the field of Ngadas is not necessarily a matter of difference, but a matter of belonging and/or inclusion in the community (see Chapters Five and Six). However, as my point of entry to understanding success was from the perspectives, actions and experiences of young people (their practices), an inverted version of Bourdieu's theory of practice below better reflects the approach that I undertook in this study:

$$\text{Practice} = [(\text{habitus})(\text{capital})] + \text{field}$$

Habitus

The concept of habitus was developed by Bourdieu to understand how structures within a particular milieu are capable of generating a "schemata of perception, appreciation, and action" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 16, 16), or *dispositions*. Bourdieu's concept of habitus focuses on the "ways of acting, feeling, thinking, and being" and "how we carry within us our history, [...] into our present circumstances" to "make choices of to act in certain ways" (Maton 2008, 52). Using Bourdieu's concept of habitus, illustrates the interconnectedness between young people in Ngadas as individuals with particular dispositions, aspirations and choices of success and their social milieu. In other words, it shows how young people's perceptions of success do not happen within a vacuum and are not entirely attributable to the individual, but are also shaped by the social structures.

However, in the context of understanding Ngadas' youth success, habitus should not be regarded as a determined prescription or social conditioning for young people, but as a relational and dynamic process that serves as a source of choices for youth success. But these choices are not without limits. As Threadgold and Nilan (2009, 53, my emphasis) suggest, habitus "loosely constitutes the *parameters* of social and cultural understandings and practices within socioeconomic groups, including those pertaining to choice and expectations of the future ambitions and obstacles". The dialectic relations between objective chances and the agents' aspirations (or in the case of young people in Ngadas, their aspirations for success) will at some point give rise to the 'sense of limits' or 'the sense of reality' (Bourdieu 1974) which is important for this study as it shows how the "perception of success is very much a factor of the structural location of the perceiver" (Harker 1990, 91).

With regards to the sense of limits, habitus strongly links to place as it instils “a sense of one’s place” (Bourdieu 1984, 466) which, in the case of Ngadas, may at times also be informed by *doxa*, the unquestioned shared beliefs that influence one’s dispositions and actions. This often manifests in *amor fati*, where the individual is “content with what one is and has” (Bourdieu 1984, 573-574), therefore is unwilling to pursue educational or employment opportunities beyond his/her particular habitus (Threadgold and Nilan 2009, 53). This relationship between habitus, doxa and sense of place also supports the formation of a sense of belonging, “the ways in which everyday practices over time build the layers of an affective experience of place”, and how “young people build meaning through their connection with people and places over time” (Cuervo and Wyn 2017, 2), which I will discuss later in this thesis.

Capital

Bourdieu’s use of the concept of capital seeks to move it beyond solely associations with economic or monetary exchange, as he attempts to “relocate the narrow instance of mercantile exchange away from economics into a wider anthropology of cultural exchanges and valuations of which the economic is only one (although the most fundamental) type” (Moore 2008, 101). Bourdieu proposes three types of “capitals” that can be pursued by individuals: *economic, cultural, and social capital*. These types of capitals act as important interrelated resources in a given social arena (field), and a holistic understanding of one should be in relation to others (Holland 2008). Capitals are the resources that young people require in order to become successful in Ngadas. One form of capital could also improve and transform into another hence demonstrating the interrelation between capitals for achieving success in Ngadas.

Economic capital usually refers to financial and material assets. For young people in Ngadas, economic capital manifests in the form of access to land ownership in relation to potato farming or other means of production, such as owning a *warung* (small shop) or food stall which are usually inherited from the family.

The concept of *cultural capital* refers to knowledge, mannerisms, cultural objects, taste, and credentials which are acquired within a particular social space (field). Cultural capital is usually produced and reproduced within a certain social context (for example, family or school) and can also be identified in the form of know-how, perceptions and values. According to Bourdieu (1986), cultural capital comes in three forms: embodied

(within corporality and mind), objectified (cultural goods) and institutionalised. In the context of Ngadas youth, the way that religious values shape practices for success (embodied cultural capital), the existence of *Adam Makna* as a holy book of Buddha Jawa Sanyata community (objectified cultural capital), and a middle school degree (institutionalised cultural capital) are but a few examples of cultural capital in action that may underpin their understanding of success.

Social capital refers to the sum of resources accumulated as a result of membership in relationships, social connections, networks and groups (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992), which enables action. According to Levitte (2004, 45, as quoted in Corra 2015, 14-15), the networks and relationships that enable the accumulation of social capital are also “imbued with values, norms, and attitudes” which facilitate “trust, reciprocity, and the collaborative production of tangible resources like services and money”. In other words, social capital is enacted, maintained and reinforced in and through social exchanges (Bourdieu 1986, 21). For Ngadas youth, *social capital* exists in relationships, social networks, sociability and reciprocity. Through photographs and conversations, my participants continuously emphasised the importance of relationships for their success; their success can only be realised with the support of others, such as family and friends, that success is achieved for the happiness of others particularly family and the wider community, and that success can only be achieved when it is done together with others.

The accumulation of one or all of the three types of capital could amount to a particular social recognition that individuals pursue in order to give meaning to life (Hage 2013 as quoted in Gibson 2011, 15). Although other types of capital also play an important part in formulating the understanding of success for young people in Ngadas, this framework helped me to understand how social capital emerged with distinction as the most valued capital, the capital that holds symbolic value for young people’s success. When an accumulation of capital is able to hold a symbolic value, it can also be called a *symbolic capital*, “the acquisition of a reputation for competence and an image of respectability and honourability” (Bourdieu 1984, 291).

To further understand how social capital emerged as a symbolic capital in the field of Ngadas, I explore young people’s work practices, familial/relational practices, and religious practices and how these practices are underpinned by *adat*. With a focus on the relationship between *adat* and practices for success, I explore the interplay between habitus,

capital and field, and identify the social capital processes in these practices; the accumulation and exchanges of capitals in order to obtain symbolic value for young people in Ngadas.

A close examination of what holds symbolic value or symbolic meaning in the field of Ngadas also illuminates the relationship between success and being. Bourdieu's notion of *illusio* is useful for understanding this relationship as he sees "society primarily as a mechanism for generating meanings for life" (2005, in Gibson 2011, 14). *Illusio* refers to a "way of *being in* the world, of being occupied in the world" (Bourdieu 2002, 135), a concept of being that refers to "a meaningful human life, one's sense of identity, significance and purpose" (Gibson 2011, 14). Using *illusio* to understand the lives of young people is not new. For example, in a study on young people and DIY culture in Australia (Threadgold 2017), the concept of *illusio* illuminates how ideas of success were not expressed in material terms, but were contingent to young people's ability to maintain opportunities and their interests even if it requires them to live in relative poverty. In my research, the concept of *illusio* enabled me to understand the relationship between young people's notions of success in Ngadas with their sense of being or purpose, which was enabled and maintained through social relationships.

Additionally, in supporting my findings on social capital as a symbolic capital for young people's success, I also refer to Nicole Schaefer-McDaniel's (2006) use of social capital that was developed specifically for studying young people which includes three interrelated elements: social networks and interactions, trust and reciprocity, and a sense of belonging or place attachment. This framework supports my findings on how social capital in Ngadas is underpinned by reciprocity or what Marcel Mauss terms as the gift exchange ((1925) 1990) and how social capital strongly relates with inclusion and belonging. To refer back to the use of *illusio* in my research, employing an understanding of success as a form *illusio* thus further expands Schaefer's-McDaniel's framework by showing the significance of social capital not only for maintaining social interconnections and a sense of belonging, but also for cultivating young people's sense of being that contributes to "a meaningful human life, one's sense of identity, significance and purpose" (Gibson 2011, 14).

Overall, Bourdieu's conceptual tools provide an opportunity to develop an understanding of success beyond the accumulation of economic capital, cultural capital through education, or merely success as profession, as it also closely attends to the social aspect

of success that is built on *adat* that maintains strong relationships with family, friends and a sense of belonging to the community. Exploring how young people in Ngadas view success through a Bourdieusian lens seeks to recognise the symbolic value that *adat* holds not only as practices (rituals or ceremonies), but also as a sense of belonging, a collective identity and sense of community that permeates everyday practices of young people and is valuable for both young people and the continuity of Ngadas as an economic, social and cultural community.

Thesis outline

In the next chapter, I describe the methodology and methods used in this study. **Chapter Two** describes ethnography as the main research methodology and the qualitative and participatory data collection methods undertaken to examine how young people in Ngadas understand success. This is followed by a discussion of the data collection methods undertaken during fieldwork which were focus group discussion or *klumpukan*, auto-driven photo elicitation, semi-structured individual interviews and participant observation. Following this, I discuss the stages of data analysis which highlight the role of field notes, transcription, translations, and coding in shaping the analytical process. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the limits and challenges of the methods used in this research.

Chapter Three focuses on Ngadas and elaborates on the historical, geographical, demographic, social, economic and cultural background that situate young people. In substantiating this section, previous literature on Tengger and Ngadas is put in conversation with findings from the field. This chapter covers the socio-economic and cultural context of young people in Ngadas such as farming, tourism, the role of *adat* and religion in Ngadas.

Chapter Four presents how participants in my study articulated their notions of success through their work practices (and its relation to educational practices), familial and relational practices, and religious practices. I provide illustrations from photographs and conversations to show how in these practices, social capital emerged as the capital with symbolic value. I also illustrate how these practices, that are shaped by *adat*, are also

underpinned by the gift exchange of social capital to maintain good relationships, reciprocity, trust and harmony in Ngadas.

Chapter Five continues with an analysis that specifically focuses on the relationships between *adat* and ‘social capital as exchange’ and how this relationship underpins work, familial/relational, and religious practices for success in Ngadas. I emphasise the social capital processes that take place behind the accumulation and exchanges of capitals and explain how in order for social capital to hold symbolic value as success for young people in Ngadas, *adat* must be maintained to ensure social capital as exchange, and in turn, social capital as symbolic capital must be maintained for the preservation of *adat*. I then briefly explain about the exclusionary element of social capital: how not participating in *adat* poses risks for young people to be excluded from the community, and eventually from achieving success.

I conclude in **Chapter Six**, where I first revisit my research questions and provide a final analysis as to how the context of Ngadas shapes young people’s understandings of success and their preference to stay in the village. In doing so, I explore success and its connection to young people’s sense of belonging, a sense of community, *adat* and Ngadas as their place in the world. I then summarise what success means for young people in Ngadas as a form of *illusio*, a sense of being and belonging with and for others. I end this chapter by identifying the limitations of my thesis and providing suggestions for further research in Ngadas and the topic of rural youth success.

Chapter Two: Methodology

Chapter Introduction

Doing anthropological research with young people required me to carefully consider the appropriate methodology and methods prior to conducting fieldwork. I was first aware of one of the key methodological foundations of contemporary youth studies, which insists on the need “to study young people from their own right and from their own perspectives” to fully understand their lifeworlds (White 2016, 4). This influenced me to ensure my approach was not ‘researching on’ but ‘researching with’ young people (White 2016, 19). Other researchers working with children found that acknowledging their social agency, encouraging active participation, and addressing issues of power significantly changed the research findings to be more engaging and representative as it enabled the researchers to enter the children’s ‘cultures of communication’ (Christensen 2004) in order to better “hear the voices of children in the representation of their own lives” (Christensen 2004, 165). This approach was useful for my research as it highlights the importance of having an element of participation which acknowledges the role of young people as social actors within this research.

In what follows, I discuss how I used ethnography as the main research methodology, and the qualitative and participatory data collection methods I employed to examine how young people in Ngadas understand success. I begin by explaining why ethnography was the most appropriate methodological approach for this research. I go on to describe the data collection methods undertaken during fieldwork and the rationale behind each method used, which included: focus group discussion or *klumpukan*, auto-driven photo elicitation, semi-structured individual interviews with village leaders, and participant observation. Following this, I briefly discuss the stages of data analysis, which is provided to highlight the role of field notes, transcription, translations, and coding in shaping the analytical process. This chapter concludes by reflecting on the limits and challenges of the methods used in this research.

Ethnography as methodology

Ethnography is an iterative-inductive research methodology that combines a family of methods which engages with deep listening, enquiring, and participation to produce “richly written accounts that respect the irreducibility of human experience” (O'Reilly 2009, 3); it is at the heart of cultural anthropology, although I agree with Tim Ingold (2014) that cultural anthropology cannot be reduced to ethnography. The use of ethnography as methodology (combined with participatory methods I discuss below) in this research furthers the principles of anthropological inquiry to enable “long-term and open-ended commitment, generous attentiveness, relational depth and sensitivity to context” (Ingold 2014, 384).

Ethnography enabled me to experience ‘research’ and ‘fieldwork’ as “a protracted masterclass in which the novice gradually learns to see things, and to hear and feel them too, in the ways his or her mentors do”; in other words, “an education of attention” (Ingold 2013, 2). The range of ethnographic methods applied within this research, from focus group discussion, auto-driven photo-elicitation, individual interviews to participant observation, together forms a practice of deep attending that I believe is at the heart of anthropological studies. Ethnography as methodology thus clearly supports anthropological analyses as it attends “to what others are doing or saying and to what is going on around and about” (Ingold 2014, 389). Such an approach also follows “along where others go and do their bidding, whatever this might entail” and perhaps takes the researcher to (Ingold 2014, 389).

The practice of ethnography – that is writing to elucidate the lifeworlds of people within a specific local context – enables the researcher to solidify the anthropological study of “the conditions and possibilities of being human” (Ingold 2014, 388). My research objective to explore how young people in Ngadas understand success required an approach that was deeply engaged with the participants’ lifeworlds in order to attend to the nuances of their lived experiences, definitions and perceptions of success from the perspectives of young people themselves. Thus, ethnography – an engaging and participatory methodology that produces knowledge through close social interaction – served as an ideal methodology for this research.

Furthermore, ethnography as methodology not only acknowledges the role of anthropological and social theory in shaping the research outcomes, but also the researcher's positionality and reflexivity within the research process, as well as the dialogical relationship in the production of knowledge between the researcher and the participants (O'Reilly 2009). In this research, I came to realise that reflexivity is inseparable to the writing-up process and that it notably influences the representation and legitimisation of ethnographic data. By linking the findings with my personal observations and experiences from the field, it became impossible to not acknowledge how "the selves and identities of the researcher and researched affect the research process" (Brewer 2000, 126). Thus, reflexivity in ethnography makes explicit that "ethnographic truths are inherently partial – committed and incomplete" (Clifford and Marcus 1986, 7). This also highlights the co-creation of knowledge in the research – how it was created by particular individuals, relationships and possibilities that allowed it to come about.

Early decisions: Key participants

In the early stages of my research, I envisaged working with a total of six young people in Ngadas. I developed the following criteria for these key participants: young people aged between 16-20 years old, who had graduated from junior high school, and were currently living or working in Ngadas. The last two criteria were important to understanding why young people in Ngadas prefer to stay in the village after junior high school and not pursue educational or employment opportunities outside the village. Prior to fieldwork, I also hoped for a balanced gender representation in key participants, although I was cognizant of my inability to do any substantial generalisation from a small-scaled research as such. It was with these criteria in mind that I 'entered' the field in June 2017. With the support of my friends who have been witnessing and photographing Ngadas rituals for almost a decade, I was introduced to the village chief of Ngadas during my first pre-fieldwork visit. After two weeks of securing research permits from local government bodies in the regency of Malang, I returned to Ngadas on the 2 July to commence fieldwork. I left Ngadas in mid-August 2017, after six weeks of undertaking field research.

Entering the field, meeting participants

Many anthropologists have discussed how fieldwork does not go as planned. As for me, my first day of fieldwork presented a challenge due to an accommodation plan fiasco. The village chief, whom I had contacted earlier via text and phone calls completely forgot to arrange accommodation for my 6-week-stay. I had been in contact with him because I understood that it was customary in Ngadas for all visitors to go through the village chief. Only with his permission can visitors stay or witness rituals in the village. Without the village chief's plan in place, I was worried that I could not start my fieldwork immediately. As a *desa wisata* (tourism village), there were several homestays in Ngadas but none were available at the time I arrived. It was late in the evening and I was already thinking of going back to Malang to postpone my fieldwork. Finally, after calling as many people he could, the village chief said he managed to secure a place for me to stay.

Fortuitously, I was able to start my fieldwork that day as Pak Pri, a potato farmer and village tourism coordinator, invited me to stay with his family. Although Pak Pri did not have an extra room for guests, he said he wanted to help me with my research. I ended up staying at his house throughout my time in Ngadas, sharing a room with his granddaughter Ida, who was 16 going on 17 years old. Little did I know then that Ida would play a significant part in my research and become my entry point to engaging with young people in Ngadas. Not only was Ida my first participant, she was also the person who later introduced me to Ngadas, from her beautiful escape spots to friends, neighbours and village leaders.

After a week of living together, Ida and I became good friends. We spent almost every day together, from cooking, taking care of her young sister, helping her sell cigarettes or snacks at the *warung* (stall or small shop), farming with the family, helping out at the neighbour's ceremonies (*betek*), going for rides around the village and taking photos of her and her cousin, Rahayu, for their Facebook profiles. I also accompanied her do village tours for foreign tourists, even translating historical and cultural information about Ngadas for her next tour. I was totally immersed in this relationship, up to the point where the line between research and friendship became rather unclear.

After a week had passed, Ida was concerned that I was unable to do research, so she offered to arrange a *klumpukan* (gathering) of young people for my research. She initiated a BBM (Blackberry Messenger) and Facebook group chat for friends that she thought would be interested in taking part in my research. Unfortunately, the *klumpukan* Ida organised never took place as many of the young people cancelled last minute or were unable to gather on the scheduled dates due to having other responsibilities. During daytime, it was common for young people to work on the farm, and then in the evening, I came to know that most Buddhist youth had to go for *semedi* (prayer) at the monastery. One of them was Nyoto, a 17-year-old young man I met once when he visited Pak Pri's house for a meeting.

Knowing that many young people would be at the monastery every evening, I decided to message Nyoto on Facebook asking if I could watch and perhaps join their *semedi*. Nyoto was very kind and welcomed me to join the *semedi*, every evening at six. It was through Nyoto that I was able to meet my other participants from the Buddha Jawa Sanyata youth group. After watching the *semedi* for the first time, I stayed along with some of the young people at the monastery and told them about my research. They told me to come again the next evening and stay after *semedi*. The next evening, I was surprised that Nyoto and his friends had already arranged a *klumpukan* for me, where they introduced me to around fifteen other young people, and also asked them to introduce themselves to me. It was during this *klumpukan* I had an opportunity to introduce my research in detail, inviting them to take part if they were interested. Most of them were actually very interested (particularly after I told them that it involved photography and disposable cameras), but only five of them were 16 years old or above. Four of the five, including Nyoto, agreed to take part in the research. All of them then took part in another *klumpukan* that I organised and participated in auto-driven photo-elicitation.

Despite not being able to host a *klumpukan* at home, Ida and her cousin, Rahayu who was also 16 years old, wanted to take part in the research. As planned, a total of six participants took part in my research (see Table 2.1). Participants of my study consisted of three young men and three young women between the ages of 16 and 17. All of were junior high school graduates and were currently living and working in Ngadas as either farmers, tour guides, or helping the family at home to do care or housework.

No.	Name of participant	Age	Sex	Education	Occupation	Religion
1.	Ida	16	Female	Junior high school. Currently enrolled in <i>paket</i> ¹	Part-time student, phone credit seller, <i>warung</i> (stall) keeper and local guide.	Islam
2.	Rahayu	16	Female	Junior High School. Wanted to continue to High School but was not allowed by family.	n/a	Hindu/Islam
3.	Mudita	17	Female	Junior High School. Currently enrolled in <i>paket</i> .	Part-time student, farmer and monastery assistant	Buddha Jawa Sanyata
4.	Nyoto	17	Male	Junior High School. Currently enrolled in <i>paket</i> .	Part-time student, farmer and monastery assistant	Buddha Jawa Sanyata
5.	Tono	16	Male	Junior High School	Farmer	Buddha Jawa Sanyata
6.	Vino	17	Male	Junior High School	Farmer and local guide	Buddha Jawa Sanyata

Table 2.1 Description of youth participants

The reason behind this lengthy description of how I met my participants is mainly to acknowledge “the element of luck and contingency in our tactical interaction” (Kalir 2006, 44) in the field. Had someone other than Pak Pri offered me a place to stay, it is likely that I would not have been able to live with and share a room with my participant. Had I not met Nyoto who allowed me to join *semedi*, I would have possibly encountered different situations in Ngadas that would eventually shape the findings of this research

¹ *Paket* or *sekolah paket* is what participants refer to a high school equivalent school that takes place on weekends in the village of Dawuhan, one hour from Ngadas.

into a different direction. Finally, I believe it is important to make visible how chance influences the researcher's "positioning process in the field" (Kalir 2006, 244) to remind us again of the role of the relationships and encounters that contribute to the construction of knowledge as ethnographic data.

Inviting village leaders into the research

Apart from young people, I also interviewed village leaders to supplement my knowledge of contemporary Ngadas. I did not manage to interview the current village chief as I had initially planned due to his busy schedule. However, through people I met during *api-api* (by the fire) conversations at Pak Pri's home, I established good relationships and was able to do a number of interviews with other village leaders (see Table 2.2. below). These interviews were useful for complementing my findings, highlighting any tensions or differences in aspirations of success, and they enabled me to observe the influence of family and society (more on habitus, see Chapter Four and Chapter Five) in shaping young people's understanding of success.

No.	Name of participant	Age	Sex	Occupation
1.	Pak Supomo	49	Male	Former village chief, <i>tokoh masyarakat</i> (public figure)
2.	Pak Gugun	63	Male	Local leader, respected elder
3.	Pak Aidit	41	Male	Religious leader, member of the village tourism board
4.	Pak Budi	30	Male	Junior High School teacher

Table 2.2 Description of village leaders interviewed

Data collection methods

The data collection methods for my research included focus group discussions or *klumpukan*, auto-driven photo-elicitation, semi-structured individual interviews, and participant observation. These ethnographic methods allowed me to pay close attention

to the intricacies of young people's understanding of success, its interconnectedness to the social, economic and cultural relations in Ngadas and how they shaped each other. I selected this range of methods to generate a more holistic understanding of young people's success that also enabled diverse means of expression to avoid young people and children being confined to verbal communication skills only (Christensen 2004, 167). For example, in a study of the narratives of youth success in Lampung, South Sumatra, Tirtowaluyo (2016) notes that a limitation of her study was that the quality of the knowledge produced with her youth participants was highly dependent on their ability to verbally articulate their ideas of success. I sought to avoid this by engaging with various research methods that allowed my youth participants to explore and experience different ways of communicating their understandings of success.

***Klumpukan*: Focus Group Discussion, Ngadas style**

It is widely known in the social sciences that a focus group discussion is a group interview that is led by the interviewer in a moderator role that explores participants' perceptions, values, ideas, and feelings on a particular subject of the research through the conduct of conversational discussion (Johnson and Christensen 2010). However, as mentioned earlier, in Ngadas, a cultural practice with similar intention exists with a different name: *klumpukan*.

Klumpukan loosely translates to a gathering of people for a particular purpose. As much as I attempted to conduct a proper by-the-book focus group discussion, for example reading the focus group rules prior to discussion, I could only allude to the rules and ethics of research during the discussion indirectly and then simply "surrender to the field" (Hannerz 2010, 75) and take part in conversational discussion in ways that were customary in Ngadas. The difference between *klumpukan* and a formal focus group was not the end goal, which was also to explore views and experiences of participants, but more the approach to discussion. What I first noticed from *klumpukan* is that an open and informal environment must be maintained to allow anyone to have the freedom to be both attending to their everyday lives and participating in a discussion. My experience of *klumpukan* showed that for them, it was unnecessary to separate the two. For example, during *klumpukan* many of my participants had to leave for a couple of minutes to take a

phone call, answer a friend's question (unrelated to the discussion), or even get more snacks, yet they always returned to the discussion. Due to the need to maintain this informal setting, I decided not to take notes during discussions or read from my question guide. Also, the role of the researcher as the moderator was less visible in *klumpukan* and more flexible as conversations could be steered by participants into directions that the researcher did not expect.

I conducted two *klumpukan* in total. The first *klumpukan* was held at the Buddha Jawa Sanyata monastery with four participants and lasted for forty minutes. With consent, I recorded the discussion and later transcribed and translated it from a mix of Ngadas language and Bahasa Indonesia to English. The second *klumpukan* was attended by Ida and Rahayu, and took place at the kindergarten's playground after school hours; it lasted for one hour, and again I audio-recorded it, then transcribed and translated it from a mix of Ngadas language and Bahasa Indonesia to English.

I started my data collection with group discussions in order to obtain a meaningful photo-elicitation question and explore key themes related to young people's success in Ngadas. From *klumpukan*, I was able to gather information on my participants' *cita-cita* (life ideals) and how it connected to their understanding of success, their views on education, employment and *adat*, and the key relationships that supported their success. It was indeed effective in gathering themes, shared or collective experiences, and common perceptions of success from my participants prior to conducting other research activities that focused more on individual experiences. At the end of each *klumpukan*, I invited my participants to take part in the auto-driven photo-elicitation activity discussed in the next section. I also used the findings from *klumpukan* to modify the photo-elicitation question from asking to take photos of the things that mattered most to them to asking my participant to "tell me what success means to them" using the cameras provided.

Auto-driven Photo-elicitation

Photo-elicitation was originally developed by anthropologist John Collier (1957) as a technique that inserts photographs into the research interviews, where the photographs are used as prompts to "invoke comments, memory and discussion" (Banks 2007, 65). Through interviewing with photographs, Collier believes that the potential scope of data

collection “enlarges beyond that contained in the photographs themselves” (Collier and Collier 1986, 99), thus fostering a richer understanding between the researcher and the participants’ reflective process and lived experiences. For my research, I opted to conduct *auto-driven photo elicitation* with my participants. In auto-driven photo-elicitation, instead of using photographs produced by the researcher, participants were invited to answer a research question by taking photographs. After conducting a basic photography workshop with my participants, which included the ethics of photography, I gave six participants a disposable camera (consisting of 39 frames) and asked them to take photos of what success means to them over the course of one to two weeks. Then, I asked participants to reflect on the significance of their photographs in relation to their understanding of success during the interview.

As previously explained, I believe using participant-produced images in photo-elicitation provides greater potential for participatory and emancipatory approaches to the production of knowledge during fieldwork. Photo-elicitation is known for its merit in stimulating agency for youth participants and its ability to take the research in unanticipated directions, places and possibilities (Ammerman and Williams 2012, 123-127). Auto-driven photo-elicitation is capable of somewhat reducing the authority of the researcher in the process, as my participants were the ones who contributed significantly in terms of knowledge production in both the visual and the verbal process. Contrary to other research methods that are less participatory, the use of auto-driven photo-elicitation in my research made possible the “transfer of power and authority from the ‘researcher’ to the ‘participant’” (Packard 2008, 68), at least to some extent. As argued by Sarah Pink, the emancipatory power of conducting participatory visual methods shapes ethnography “as a process of negotiation and collaboration with informants, through which they too stand to achieve their own objectives, rather than as an act of taking information away from them” (Pink 2007, 44).

This was evident in my research, particularly how participants’ photographs invited me to enter their most private spaces. My participants shared photos of themselves resting at the farm with parents, selfies with close relatives after an intimate *curhat* (pep talk), photos of one’s bed, and even photos of significant others.² These were photos of spaces

² While all photos produced by participants were used for analysis, photos with identifiable traits were not published in this thesis and will not be used publically to protect my participants’ confidentiality.

and moments that I would not have had access to due to the limitation of my gender, time, relationship, rapport, and chance.

Furthermore, auto-driven photo-elicitation stimulates reflexivity; it is an effective self-evaluative and reflective process of 'mutual discovery' (Packard 2008, 65) for both the researchers and the participants. The ability it holds for 'breaking frames' (Harper 2002, 20) for both the researcher and the participants is crucial in shaping a reflexive and dialogical methodology – ethnography – and for me, in producing an anthropological study of young people's success. Other sociological and anthropological research that practised participatory visual methods (see Samuels 2004, 2007, 2010) confirms these merits and further notes that using auto-driven photo-elicitation is, in fact, more productive than relying on verbal interviews or surveys only. For my participants, photographs also became visual reference points to explore and deconstruct the layers of understanding their success. For example, when Vino explained how a photo of himself meant that success depends on his hard work, he reflected on how the photo was taken (by me, as a test shot). He then changed his mind, saying that "actually my success very much depends on the help of others". On the other hand, for me as the researcher, the photographs, memories, emotions and narratives attached to them challenged my preconceived notions on topics and themes related to success that I might not have regarded as important, had I relied solely on interviews.

As much as photographs can depict a story of one's experience, I would argue that to treat photographs as the only source of ethnographic data is problematic as photographs are only capable of partially describing one's understanding of success. Thus, I concur with Sarah Pink (2007) that images and words must be combined to contextualise each other and form new knowledge and understandings of success. It is therefore common for researchers using photo-elicitation methods to also conduct interviews after the photo-taking process is finished (known as photo-elicitation interview or PEI). According to Rose (2007, 242), interview is a vital stage for clarifying the meaning of the photos taken by the participants, especially as the material representation within the photographs might not always represent the memories, ideas, or narratives behind the photographs. Using a PEI as the method, as other researchers have revealed, I noticed that my

participants' photographs were polysemic – capable of generating different layers of meanings (Becker 1986a, Schwartz 1989).

I conducted a total of six interviews: one with each of my six participants. While two interviews were conducted separately at their respective homes, the interviews conducted at the monastery with four of my participants were a fusion of interview and *klumpukan*. At their request, interviews were held in turn in a group setting where participants were able to see and comment on each other's photos. These interviews lasted between 20-30 minutes each and I audio recorded, transcribed and translated from a mix of Ngadas language and Bahasa Indonesia to English.

As most of my participants were not able to take 39³ photos of success, I usually began the interviews by asking them to separate photos related to success from those that were not directly related to success. Ten or less was the average number of photos that my participants shared. I then continued with the question, "Can you tell me about these photographs that you have taken?" to first elicit information about the photographs and initiate a conversation. I found that PEIs provided the opportunity for my participants to interpret their own photographs, reflect on their active participation in the project, and eventually guide the direction of the interview (Buckley 2014, 724). This was most apparent at the end of each PEI when I asked my participant to choose photos that represented their success the most and then tell me a story of the selected photos.

It became obvious that during photo-elicitation interviews, I used the photographs as a tool to gain understanding while at the same time my participants used the photographs "to provide a unique way to communicate dimensions of their lives" (Clark-Ibáñez 2004, 1512). Finally, PEI as an ethnographic method also helped in establishing better rapport between me as the researcher and the participants. As noted by Collier, "no type of fieldwork requires better rapport than an intimate photographic account of family culture" (1957, 51). Discussing photos that represented the most important relationships in my participants' lives was indeed a special and intimate engagement that allowed me to more deeply grasp their understanding of success.

³ 39 is the limit of frames in each disposable camera.

Semi-structured individual interviews with village leaders

As an ethnographic method, interviews are approached as conversations, which suggests a natural and egalitarian relationship between the researcher and the participant that also upholds give-and-take at the heart of the interview (Kvale 1996). In Kvale's words, "interviews are conversations where the outcome is a coproduction of the interviewer and the subject" (Kvale 1996, xvii), and within this 'construction site of knowledge' (Kvale 1996) the interview seeks to understand the participant's understandings of "his or her lifeworlds, his or her interpretations, meanings and narrations" (Skinner 2012, 9).

To complement my participatory data collection in the field, I conducted a series of individual semi-structured interviews with village leaders in Ngadas to collect a body of information about the history of Ngadas, how Ngadas is connected with Tengger culture, and the Buddha Jawa Sanyata religion of Ngadas. As previously mentioned, I conducted interviews with a total of four village leaders in Ngadas. Interview lengths varied from 30 minutes to two hours. With the exception of one interview with Pak Gugun, I recorded all interviews with a digital recorder and later transcribed and translated them from Bahasa Indonesia to English. These interviews also contributed significantly by providing meaningful insights in understanding young people in Ngadas through social, religious and cultural lenses. I discovered that repeated interviewing with several of the village leaders, including the religious leaders of Ngadas, generated a qualitative difference over time (Kenny 1987, 75) and contributed to my overall knowledge of Ngadas (see Chapter Three).

Participant Observation

While most of my data were taken from interviews and discussions with my participants, I also undertook participant observation for my research. My intent of conducting close involvement through participant observation was similar to what Brewer (2000, 59) suggests as generating data "through watching and listening to what people naturally do and say" while adding "the dimension of personally experiencing and sharing the same everyday life" as my participants. In doing participant observation, I also became cognisant of the double roles of being both a *participant observer* and what Harvey

Bernard (2011, 279) calls an *observing participant*. When I joined *semedi* at the monastery with the Buddha Jawa Sanyata youth or joined Ida to help prepare food for her neighbour's ceremony (*betek*), for example, I was a participant observer. Meanwhile, on several occasions where I was following and supporting Ida and her friends to give village tours to foreigners, I was an observing participant. As most of my observations were based on my own experiences and were recorded as what Simon Ottenberg (1990) terms 'headnotes', I did not request explicit permission from people involved in the occasion. In the case where participant observation involved conversations and informal interviews with people, for example my interview with Pak Gugun, I sought permission to record both in verbal or written format.

Data analysis methods

I began the coding and analysis phase after I completed transcribing and translating all recorded discussions and interviews. During this phase, I also referred back to my field notes where I mostly documented series of experiences, observations and initial analyses from the field. My field notes consisted of a combination of description and inscription taken from my scratch notes (Clifford 1990) that were also extended with asides and reflections. A quarter of my field notes were handwritten in a designated note book for this research, while the rest were transferred from chats on my cell phone that I sent to myself during fieldwork. These chats were then transferred to my laptop and compiled into one big document.

I discovered two main uses of 'chatting to myself' as a new form of effective note-taking in Ngadas. First, I realised that I was able to document situations with my cell phone (through writing and photos) immediately after or while it happened without having to change the atmosphere into a formal research situation (i.e., with notebooks and digital recorders). This was also due to cell phones now being regarded as a normal object for people to have in Ngadas. Second, compared to writing in my note book at Pak Pri's home, the family I stayed with respected my personal time more when I was on my cell phone as they always thought I was talking to my husband in Wellington, which worked in my favour in documenting many important occasions related to my research. To write longer

notes on observations and initial analyses on my notebook, I had to find quiet spots, such as the rooftop of the elementary school, or the kindergarten's playground in the afternoon. Field notes played an important part of my research as they represent the importance of writing as an ongoing procedure where the process of "writing as thinking" (Becker 1986b, ix) should not be restricted to the end of the research (Brewer 2000, 133).

At the coding stage, I first transferred photos by my participants, photo descriptions in both Bahasa Indonesia and English, and related themes that I gathered from my transcriptions of photo-elicitation interviews into a table format to aid my coding and analysis process (see [Figure 2.1](#)). Presenting visual data in tables is a common method used by researchers in Photovoice projects (see Bukowski and Buetow 2011).

8.		<p>T: Kuburan.</p> <p>T: Ya itu.. Itulah kesuksesan kita nanti. Hahahaha.. Yaa, jika kita.. bisa bersih tadi.. bisa rukun... dan memanfaatkan kesuksesan kita tadi dengan berbuat baik. dengan membantu orang yang membutuhkan tadi.. dan kita bisa berbuat kebajikan ke semua makhluk.. dan kita meninggal nanti, terlahir di dalam kehidupan yang lebih bahagia, itu menurutku, itu kesuksesan yang tiadaandingannya lagi.</p>	<p>T: The cemetery.</p> <p>T: Well that... That is our success later on. Hahaha. Well, if we... if we can keep our cleanliness as I said before... we can live harmoniously... and make us of our success to do good, with helping others who are in need as I mentioned... and we can do good to all creatures... and when we die later, we will be born in another life that is happier, that I think, is an unmatched success.</p>	<p>Death, Religion Religious value, Buddha Jawa Sanyata, nibbana, happiness, sharing happiness</p>
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Figure 2.1 An example of coding data from photo-elicitation interviews into tables

From this table, I identified emerging codes or themes related to young people's success, which I then used to guide my line-by-line coding (Glaser 1978) of *klumpukan* and other interview transcriptions. For example, the photo in Figure 2.1. was then categorised under the theme of 'religious practices' for success (see Chapter Four). I also took note of themes that were overlapping (Barbour 2008) and themes that were not listed in the photo-elicitation as additional references. I found that themes related to relationships were often overlapping. In [Figure 2.2](#) below, for example, the photo represented the relational aspect of success that involved support from both friends and family:

5.		<p>M: Mungkin ini adalah teman-teman yang konyol..</p> <p>M: Hahahahaha..</p> <p>R: Menurut kamu, teman-teman...</p> <p>M: teman-teman, penyemangat.. penyemangat kedua, dari kesuksesan saya.</p> <p>R: Hm.. Kalau yang pertama? 10:00</p> <p>M: Pertama itu orang tua. Berbakti dulu.</p> <p>R: berbakti dulu, baru teman-teman ya.</p>	<p>M: These are just my silly friends..</p> <p>M: Hahahaha...</p> <p>R: So for you, your friends?</p> <p>M: My friends, are, motivators.. The second motivator for my success.</p> <p>R: Hm.. What about the first one?</p> <p>M: The first are my parents. <i>Berbakti</i> (devotion) first.</p> <p>R: Right, so devotion first, and then friends.</p>	<p>Relationships, Friends, support system, Family, <i>berbakti</i>, success and motivation, motivators for success</p>
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Figure 2.2 Identifying relational aspects of success during coding

The result of my coding process led me to identify four recurring regularities (Patton 2002) in themes of success among all participants: family, work, religion and community/*adat*. Finally, the bridge from coding, analysis and writing-up was done through memo-making (Charmaz and Mitchell 2001) as I connected them with related literature and a conceptual framework.

Reflections on methodology and methods

On reflection, I recognised that many of the methodological limitations of my study revolved around the issue of time. First, a longer timeframe for my participants to undertake auto-driven photo-elicitation could perhaps provide more freedom and opportunities for them to visualise their understanding of success. I realised that half of my participants found it challenging to finish the roll of 39 shots in two weeks, in order to meet all of the required shots for the disposable camera to be eligible for processing. On a bigger scale, a longer timeframe to undertake ethnographic fieldwork would allow me to spend more time with my participants and perhaps involve more participants in this research. If I had additional time in Ngadas, I would also have conducted more intensive participant observation and had the chance to spend more time with each individual, particularly at their home or on the farm. Moreover, I believe that having more participants in this research would possibly address the limitation of my study in regards to the lack of gendered perspectives of success among young people in Ngadas.

Finally, one of the major concerns that I faced in Ngadas was the issue surrounding consent. My research received ethics approval from the Victoria University Human Ethics Committee on 22 May 2017⁴ and along with it, I prepared consent forms for fieldwork. However, the use of written consent forms was not appropriate for my participants because providing signatures (as part of research ethics) was considered as an uncommon practice for many local communities in Indonesia including in Ngadas. Therefore, most of the consent that I received from my participants were gathered orally, after talking through the information and consent sheets (see Appendix 1).⁵ However, the challenge for me was not to gather consent *per se*, but how to make my participants understand the implications of their providing consent for my research. This was particularly apparent when I gave the option to protect their identity through pseudonyms, but in response, my youth participants allowed me to use their real names and all of their photos (including identifiable photos) instead. However, after reviewing the content of the data I collected from fieldwork and referring back to my ethics application, at my discretion as the researcher, I decided to give pseudonyms for all of my participants and not use photos that were considered as identifiable to protect their confidentiality.

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter I have described ethnography as the methodological basis for this research and how the use of visual participatory method also supports the strength of ethnography for an anthropological study of young people's understandings of success. The chapter continued by discussing how I gained access to my participants, highlighting the importance of ethnographic reflexivity and relationships with participants in the co-creation of knowledge for ethnographic data. I then described the suite of data collection methods in detail which constituted *klumpukan*, auto-driven photo-elicitation, semi-structured individual interviews with village leaders and participant observation. Following this, I also briefly explained the stages of data analysis which involved

⁴ Reference number RM 24579.

⁵ This was mentioned in my ethics application and was later approved by the Human Ethics Committee (see Appendix 1).

transcription and translation of interviews and discussions, coding of interviews, discussions and field notes, which contributed to the emergence of four recurring themes of success (work, family, religion and *adat*) that will be later explored in my analysis chapters (see Chapter Four and Chapter Five). I closed this chapter with a reflection on the methodological limitations of my research which revolved around the lack of time and challenges on issues of consent in the field.

Chapter Three: Ngadas

Chapter Introduction

I arrived in Ngadas for the first time on 21 June 2017. My friend who drove me to Ngadas, finally found a small parking spot just across from the public cemetery. My heart had been racing along the way. I was both excited and anxious to see Ngadas. I had seen photos of Ngadas from photo-documentary projects, online travel blogs and recently on social media too, but I wondered if these photos were taken only to capture the rituals, the religion, the *adat* in stillness, without paying attention to the changes that might be happening outside the frames. “Let’s go meet the village chief! I know where he lives”, said my friend, while fixing his *sarung* on his shoulders. The *sarung* he was wearing was typical of those worn in Ngadas, with a particular floral batik motif. The *sarung* is important when visiting Ngadas, he said. “It serves as a password, so that we can enter the national park area without having to pay tourist fees.”

It was a very foggy day, something that Ngadas is quite famous for: its cold and misty weather. As my friend, his wife, his son and I walked uphill, closer to the village center, I could not help but notice the massive housing construction that was happening in the village. It was as if everyone was renovating their houses at the same time. But what was more interesting to me, was not the number of houses being built or rebuilt, but the style. Most of these houses were two to three storeys high, embellished with gold pillars and realist paintings of fruit baskets on tiles which decorated the façades. I also noticed sacks of potatoes stacked in front of their front doors, somehow presenting a mix of the old and new. Some of these houses were being renovated with fences and carports for new cars and jeeps, for tourism I thought. As I passed by four to five *warungs* (small stalls) along the main road, I could see small patches of spring onions squeezed in between these houses.

The main road in the village was a narrow and busy road. There were many young men going back and forth, speeding on their motorbikes, carrying sacks of potatoes and other crops on the back of their motorbikes. On these young men's shoulders hung the traditional *sarung* commonly worn in Ngadas as part of their Tengger identity, embodying their relationship with the *adat*. I noticed that their hair was dyed, either blond or red. On our way to the village chief's house, we passed by the *balai desa* (community center) where most of the village leaders were attending a *desa wisata* workshop with the Ministry of Tourism. I peeked in to see if the village chief was present, and instead found that they were in the middle of a discussion about strategies to improve their village programs as a *desa wisata*. A Word document was projected on the screen, stated "Empowerment of human resources for sustainable tourism".

My first impressions of Ngadas present a picture of rurality that is not static, or merely exotic, but complex, changing and dynamic. I believe this is important to establish at the beginning of this thesis, as understanding young people in Ngadas would be incomplete without understanding the particular context they are situated in. The uniqueness of young people in Ngadas is significantly shaped by their being in Ngadas, and in this chapter I will explore the complexities and recent changes in Ngadas as both a *desa adat* (traditional cultural village) and *desa wisata* (official tourism village) by providing its historical, geographical, demographic, social, economic and cultural backgrounds. The first part of this chapter provides a profile of the village and an overview of young people in Ngadas. I then continue with a brief history of Tengger culture and where Ngadas sits within the Tengger constellation as the face of contemporary Tengger. In substantiating this section, I will put previous literature on Tengger and Ngadas in conversation with my findings in the field. This is followed by a focus on changes in the socio-economic sectors in Ngadas which comprise farming and tourism, and an elaboration on the central role of *adat* and religion in Ngadas.

Profile of Ngadas Village

Figure 3.1 Map of Ngadas, located inside Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park

Ngadas village is located within the administrative area of Poncokusumo district, Regency of Malang, East Java (see [Figure 3.1](#))⁶. It was first discovered and developed (*babat alas*) by Mbah Sedek in 1774 who is believed to have led the major escape from the Mataram Kingdom.⁷ Ngadas comes from the word *adas* (fennel). Legend has it that the reason why Mbah Sedek chose this particular spot to build a community because he saw an abundance of fennel which he associated with land fertility. Ngadas is situated 45 kilometres east of the city of Malang, a one and a half hour drive. It is one of the very few villages that is located inside the Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park and is therefore considered an enclave village of the national park (Pramita, Indriyani, and Hakim 2013, 54). As an enclave village, the area of Ngadas is considered final and can never be subject

⁶ This figure was taken from the official website of Regency of Malang. Link to the image can be accessed here: <http://poncokusumo.malangkab.go.id/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Picture1.jpg>

⁷ This information is based on the official website of Ngadas village that was created by students from Brawijaya University in Malang as part of the student community service programs (Kuliah Kerja Nyata). More information on Ngadas Village can be accessed in this link: <http://dewiadadas.blogspot.co.nz/>

to *pemekaran* (the expansion or merger of village areas). Ngadas is geographically located in close proximity to six mountains, with two of them being the active volcanoes of Mount Bromo (2,392m) and Mount Semeru (3,676m). At an altitude of 2,175m above sea level, it is one of the highest villages in Indonesia. The constant presence of mist creates a feeling as though the village is floating amongst the clouds. For this, Ngadas is therefore known as “*negeri di atas awan*” (the land above the clouds).

Ngadas itself is divided into two *dusun* (hamlets), Dusun Ngadas and Dusun Jarak Ijo. My research specifically focuses on Dusun Ngadas where I was allocated a homestay by the village chief. Most of the key village events usually take place in Dusun Ngadas as it is where the village office, the village meeting hall, the monastery, the temple and the mosque are located. It is also where the *dukun* (ritual priest) lives and goes around to perform rituals and where most of the Buddhist population resides. In contrast, all of the population in Dusun Jarak Ijo have converted to Islam and some even say that they have gradually left behind the *adat* for religious reasons. Despite this divergence, Dusun Jarak Ijo still remains under the administration of Ngadas village to date. The total population of Ngadas village in 2017 was 1,897 people with slightly over half of the population male. There are 521 households in Ngadas village, which spans across 395ha (Profil Desa Ngadas 2017).

Young people in Ngadas

Like most Indonesian rural youth, Ngadas youth are working youth (White 1975). However, coming from a very specific local context, a day in the life of a young person in Ngadas may involve a different set of responsibilities and work in contrast to other youth, or even other rural youth in Indonesia. Most of the village leaders that I interviewed also agreed that even if the work of Ngadas youth is not considered as ‘formal’ work and they mostly do not continue education post-middle school, young people in Ngadas cannot be regarded as idle youth (Supomo, personal communication, July 23, 2017; Aidit, personal communication, July 21, 2017). These young people are busy and bounded by many responsibilities at home and in the village.

Over the course of my time in the village, I observed that at home, both young women and young men between the ages of 16 and 25 play an integral parts in sustaining the household. Young men start their day by fetching water from the nearest sources, and if not enrolled in school anymore, they would go straight to the potato farms with the family and then come home before sunset. Many of the young men also worked as *ojek* (motorbike taxi drivers) to transport crops and other goods to and from farms, earning almost NZ \$10-15 per day (Budi, personal communication, July 22, 2017). After work, some of the young men would also help their parents prepare dinner and perform other domestic work; this was something that I noticed when I was invited to have dinner with my male participants, Nyoto and Tono and their family.

Young women would usually begin their day by preparing hot drinks and breakfast for the family and guests. They would then continue with cleaning the house, doing the washing, taking care of younger siblings, and with a lesser frequency compared to the men; they would also join the family to do some farm work in the afternoons. Both young men and young women were entitled to inherit land from the parents, which had the effects of reducing gender inequality in my opinion. I also learned that in Ngadas, land inheritance is not given on the basis of gender, but on the basis of care. The child who decides to take care of their aging parents will be given extra land that was previously cultivated by their parents.

At the village level, all young people are expected to take part in the conduct of *adat* rituals and ceremonies. Both young women and young men have *adat* responsibilities in ensuring the success of their neighbours' and relatives' ceremonies through *betek* for the young women ([Figure 3.2](#)), *sinoman* for the young men (festival labourers) and *sumbangan* (a reciprocal system of gifts) (Hefner 1985, 221). *Adat* in Ngadas does not exclude young people. In fact, young people are central to ritual reproduction in Ngadas. In rituals such as *entas-entas* (spirit purification ceremony) or *ujung-ujungan* (rattan fight) during the festival of Karo, young people are key to the success of *adat* as their participation is important in these rituals (Pikiran Rakyat 2017). The recent development of Ngadas as an official tourism village also requires more young people to be trained as tour guides for their official village tour programs. There are currently around 10-15 young people involved in the tourism program and today, these young people work part-

time as tour guides based on occasional projects organised by the village with external tour and travel companies.

Figure 3.2 Young women in Ngadas wearing their sarung on the way to betek. For unmarried young women, the knot of the sarung (also known as kekawung) is not tied in the middle but on the sides. Photo: Rara Sekar Larasati

However, Ngadas youth's uniqueness is particularly evident in their perception and attitude towards education. As previously mentioned, unlike other rural youth from farming families in Indonesia who are aiming for urban 'indoor' career opportunities (Naafs and White 2012, 12), Ngadas youth are known for their preference to stay in the village, not pursue higher education, and to do whatever work is available in Ngadas instead. Some researchers (Elder and Conger 2000; Elder, King and Conger 1996; Howley 2006; Johnson, Elder and Stern 2005) suggest that it is possible that the "lower" educational aspiration of rural youth "may result from strong emotional attachments to their families and rural communities and from their match with the low-skilled jobs available in their communities" (Byun et al. 2012, 361). My study sought to explore this further to understand Ngadas as a cultural community and a particular context where the

young people are situated in. To illustrate this, I will first explain the historical and cultural background of Ngadas and *adat* which is strongly connected to the Tengger culture.

History of Tengger and Ngadas

As part of the Tengger highlands, Ngadas also shares the culture of the Tengger people. To understand where Ngadas sits within the Tengger culture, in this section I will first explain the connection between Ngadas and Tengger by drawing on previous literature on Tengger. In the late 1970s, anthropologist Robert Hefner visited the Tengger highlands in East Java with the aim of studying the *wong Tengger* (Tengger people). Hefner conducted his fieldwork in the Tengger highlands for nineteen months from 1978-1980 and from this research he produced two monographs on the study of Tengger people: *Hindu Javanese* (1985), a book on Tengger tradition and the influence of Islam and Islamisation in Java, and *The Political Economy of Mountain Java* (1990), an ethnographic and interpretative history of agrarian change and its impacts on cultural and economic developments in the Tengger highlands. Both monographs are the first and possibly the most comprehensive anthropological study on the Tengger people to date. Although a number of local and international scholars have conducted research on the Tengger people since then (see Mujiburrahman 2010; Trilaksono 2015; Hisyam and Ali 2015; Fadli 2016; Ningsih et al 2017), Hefner's monographs are still regarded as seminal texts on Tengger as they cover not only the intricate details of the cultural aspects of Tengger, but also the socio-economic context that situates Tengger people, in both of which are still relevant for understanding Tengger today.

The Tengger people, who are essentially Javanese in roots, are believed to be direct descendants of the Majapahit Empire who escaped the invasion of the Islamic kingdom of Mataram in the sixteenth century (Mujiburrahman 2010, 24). These non-Islamic Javanese fled to the mountains to preserve a religion called *agama Buda* (Buda religion), while some of them escaped to the island of Bali (Hefner 1985, 6). They are well-known for the complexity of their cultural roots as an amalgam of Hinduism, Buddhism, *kejawen* or a Javanese local belief, and animism (Hefner 1985, 3). As discussed by Hefner, the

name Tengger itself is interpreted differently; some believe that Tengger in Old Javanese means “highlands” thus *wong Tengger* meaning highland people (1985). There is also an ancient Javanese saying “Tenggering Budi Luhur” that is often referred to as the origin of the name. The word Tengger in “Tenggering Budi Luhur” literally means to stand straight or stillness, while the sentence roughly translates to having a sign of noble character. However, a popular belief amongst the Tengger people is that the name is a combination name inspired by their ancestors: Rara **Anteng** and Joko **Seger** (Teng-ger).

The Tengger massif itself is located around 40 kilometres from the city of Malang, the second largest city in the province of East Java. The total population of the Tengger people today is around 100,000 people, which is an increase of 60,000 since Hefner conducted his research in 1978. Administratively, the Tengger people are spread over four regencies, namely Probolinggo, Malang, Lumajang and Pasuruan and comprise thirty-six villages. Ngadas is one of these villages. In his book *Hindu Javanese*, Hefner’s research encompasses the village of Ngadas as part of Tengger. Although he shares his encounter with Ngadas in a brief vignette of how he first entered the Tengger highlands via Malang, in his analyses Hefner mostly refers to the names of the villages with pseudonyms, thus any specificities of Ngadas are not elaborated upon and tend to be incorporated under a blanket of a general Tengger, and mostly Hindu culture. This is understandable, bearing in mind the aim of his study was more to critically explore the problematic identity of the Tengger people and their relation to Javanese religious history and culture (Hefner 1985, 6). In this chapter, I build upon Hefner’s research on the Tengger people by focusing on Ngadas as a particular local context.

As mentioned earlier, it is believed that the Tengger people escaped to the mountains to preserve a religion called *agama Buda*. However, many of the indigenous Buda population converted to Hinduism during the Hindu reformist movement, particularly in the Tengger north (Hefner 1985). The Hindu Reformist Movement successfully changed the dominant religion in the Tengger highlands to Hinduism. Furthermore, in the first decade of the twentieth century, a wave of Islamisation also changed the religious composition in Tengger, resulting in a major decline of the Hindu population and the indigenous Buda communities in Tengger (Hefner 1985, 244). Hefner also discovered that later the movements of large communities of immigrant Javanese and Madurese who were mostly Muslims isolated the indigenous Buda population in small hamlets around Mount Bromo.

Ngadas, thus, became an interesting case as it is one of those surviving indigenous Buda population that was and is still isolated in a hamlet. Perhaps its relative geographic isolation and location in an enclave explains why Ngadas is the only Tengger village that is home to the descendants of the indigenous Buda community that still embraces *agama Buda* in the Tengger highlands today.

Understanding who the Tengger people are, how they came to be, and where they live, is an important historical context for understanding Ngadas and where Ngadas sits in the Tengger constellation. Although the only village that still has a significant indigenous Buda population amidst the strong Hindu Tengger villages, Ngadas is still considered as part of Tengger as Ngadas generally shares similar rituals (*adat*) that are still performed today. There are, however, some differences in the interpretation of ritual practices between Ngadas and the Hindu Tengger community.

For example, the second week of my fieldwork was the week where the Tengger people were celebrating one of their largest festivals: the Kasada festival at Mount Bromo. Kasada is celebrated each year on the last month of the Tengger calendar where everyone presents offerings as sacrificial goods to God (embodied in the form of Mount Bromo or *Brahma*) which is based on the ancient legend of their ancestors, Rara Anteng and Joko Seger (Hefner 1985, 46). I was invited to join the whole procession including the preparation and blessing of offerings ceremony at the house of the *dukun* or ritual priest of Ngadas which started around 10pm on Saturday, July 8, 2017. There, I was accompanied by several photographers from around Indonesia who came to Ngadas that night just to document Ngadas' Kasada celebration. For these photographers, the timing of Kasada in Ngadas is unusual. Compared to other Tengger villages, Ngadas celebrates Kasada one day earlier and the 2017 Kasada was even more special as Ngadas also held an inauguration ceremony for a new *dukun*, whereas other villages did not.

The difference in the interpretation of time for rituals is only one of the disagreements that exist between Ngadas and the nearby Hindu Tengger villages. My interview with the Hindu religious leader in Ngadas also clarified the role of the holy book as an authoritative source of cultural knowledge in Ngadas, which is different compared to the whole of Tengger. He explained that the early Hindu reformist movement in Tengger influenced the majority of the Hindu Tengger people to acknowledge the Weda as their holy book and ritual guidelines, including a small number of people in Ngadas that have converted

to Hinduism. This does not apply in Ngadas, where cultural knowledge about rituals stays unwritten and circulates orally from the *dukun* (ritual priest) or from the elderly to the young. Interestingly, despite some of these crucial differences, these differences still do not undermine public perception of Ngadas as identifying with Tengger (Jawa Pos 2017; Syafili 2017).

Ngadas: The face of contemporary Tengger

Located inside the Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park, Ngadas today plays quite an important role in representing the Tengger people. In 2007, Ngadas was inaugurated by the Indonesian government with the title of *desa wisata* (official tourism village) and recently in January 2017 with the title of *desa adat* (traditional cultural village) in recognition of its commitment to preserving the *adat*, the local traditions and rituals that are true to both Ngadas and Tengger. With the recent developments of tourism around the Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park, including better road access to Mount Bromo via Ngadas, Ngadas thus becomes one of the more popular gateways to the Tengger highlands.⁸ Moreover, it is known that every year during the second month of the Tengger calendar, many tourists flock to Tengger highlands as it is the time when the Tengger people celebrate the Karo ceremony that extends over a two to three week period: “Karo is a ritual invocation of ancestors and guardian deities writ large – large as the village, in every village which calls itself Tengger” (Hefner 1985, 117). It is perhaps the most extensive ritual that involves all of the layers of society in Tengger. In 2017, the provincial government of East Java’s “Jatim Festival” (Jawa Timur or East Java Festival) even selected the celebration of Karo in Ngadas as one of the main ‘cultural tourism destinations’ (Syafili 2017).

In addition to tourism, Ngadas has also become an attractive site for university research projects, student community service programs such as KKN (*Kuliah Kerja Nyata*), and

⁸ During my fieldwork, I found that this information was often shared by people of Ngadas especially those who claim themselves as active stakeholders in Ngadas tourism programs when describing how tourism has impacted Ngadas recently. This claim can also be found in many media articles including the official tourism website of Ngadas that can be accessed in this link: <http://www.indonesia.travel/fr/en/inspiration/travel-info/ngadas-a-serene-village-above-the-clouds-at-mt-bromo-east-java>.

development programs conducted by local and international NGO due to it being seen as an example of a successful *desa adat* in the Tengger highlands (Jawa Pos 2017). Throughout my stay in Ngadas from July to August 2017, I was surprised by the number of activities that were happening simultaneously in this rather small village: two groups of student community service programs from public universities in Malang (with each group consisting of 20-30 people), two university research projects in cooperation with the local village bodies, and one ecotourism development program organised by a partnership of local and international NGOs. Not to mention a number of government organised tourism events that took place in between. With this in mind, including Ngadas' new titles as *desa adat* and *desa wisata*, it is perhaps appropriate to say that the recognition that Ngadas receives in Indonesia today differs from that of the 1970s; also, it is important to note that this recent attention is not without socio-economic and cultural consequences. Thus, in the following sections, I will provide more details of the socio-economic context in Ngadas, which includes farming and tourism, and the role of religion and *adat* in shaping Ngadas as a community and its young people today.

Bukan Petani Biasa (No Ordinary Farmers): Farming in Ngadas

As an agricultural village, Ngadas is recently known for its successful potato farming. In terms of land use, 99ha (or a quarter) of the total land in Ngadas is utilised for potato farming (Profil Desa Ngadas 2017). Over 75% of the population identify themselves as potato farmers who, contrary to other rural farmers in Indonesia, mostly own their own land. Land ownership in Ngadas is unique as it also protected and maintained by *adat* (customs) that prohibits the selling of land to outsiders. Many people in Ngadas also deliberately limit the number of children to two or three to maintain the quantity of land that is inherited by their children (Aidit, personal communication, 14 July 2017). Apart from potato farming, Ngadas farmers also grow cabbages and spring onions as a secondary source of income. With regards to farming as the main source of livelihood, it is worth noting that the production of potatoes today in Ngadas is impressive and unlike other villages in the Tengger highlands. They are even considered as *bukan petani biasa* (no ordinary farmers) by other Tengger villagers (Budi, personal communication, July 22, 2017). From the 99ha land, the village produces around 450 tonnes of potatoes per

annum in total (Profil Desa Ngadas 2017). Research conducted in 2012 revealed that every five months or one season, the village earns around Rp 4.200.000.000 or NZ \$450,000 from potato farming alone (Trilaksono 2015, 45). It is therefore not surprising that for young people, farming is considered as the most profitable work that is available in the village.

Secondly, it is important to highlight that in recent years, there has been a significant increase in the selling price of potatoes in the local market. In 2012, the village reported the average selling price of potatoes was around Rp 5.000 or 50 cents per kilogram (Trilaksono 2015, 45). In mid-2017, the selling price of potatoes doubled; it was around Rp 10.000 – Rp 12.000 (NZ \$1 – \$1.20) per kilogram and has been quite stable within that range for the past few years. According to the former village chief's observations, the recent success of farmers in Ngadas can be seen in the increase of car and motorbike ownership in the past four years (Supomo, personal communication, July 23, 2017). He also mentioned how prosperity has changed Ngadas recently: how people in Ngadas now refuse to receive assistance from the village chief, such as the rotating cattle program, and that it is now difficult to find landless farm labourers in Ngadas.

Rara: Why is it difficult?

Supomo: It's difficult because... Well, now everyone has everything. For example, to be classified as poor, there are 14 criteria right [from the central government]. Now people here, who are seen as poor have two motorbikes. Have a TV. Have a cow. That's poor.

Lastly, the 2016 Mount Bromo eruption affected many of the surrounding Tengger villages, but luckily not Ngadas. Due to the destruction of much agricultural land in nearby Tengger villages, Ngadas attracts a significant number of landless farm labourers from the surrounding villages every day to work on their potato farms (Aidit, personal communication, July 14, 2017). In the words of Budi, a middle school teacher in Ngadas who is originally from a nearby Tengger village, Ngadas farmers today are indeed *bukan petani biasa* (no ordinary farmers) like in most villages around Indonesia. They are technically kulaks, villagers who are wealthy enough to own a farm and hire landless farm labours to work on their farms.

In the context of human and land relationships, particularly the link between indigenous communities and environmentally sustainable practices, it is again important to

remember how Ngadas is very much known for its Tengger culture, sometimes its label of “indigeneity”, and the preservation of their local *adat*. In an ethnobotany project on the Kasada ceremony in Ngadas (Pramita, Indriyani, and Hakim 2013, 60), the researchers conclude that the people of Ngadas conduct conscious conservational efforts to preserve the local biodiversity to obtain a harmonious and balanced ecosystem for the people; this is based on their study of the plants used and preserved by the people for the Kasada ceremony. However, unlike their findings, my field observations show that the way the Ngadas farmers approach farming and view land does not necessarily represent their so-called indigenous worldview or *adat*. In fact, most farmers I spoke to, particularly the older farmers, viewed their potato farms mostly as the key source of economic capital. They are also used to highly chemical treatments for their crops such as fungicide for potatoes and formaldehyde baths to preserve potato seedlings from rotting. It is unclear who first introduced these chemical treatments to Ngadas but many of the elderly that I met shared their experiences of how farming was very difficult in the past, especially without the introduction of these products. The combination of land ownership that is preserved by *adat* with productive and profitable farming resulted in Ngadas sustaining its livelihood through agriculture. In contrast to other rural young farmers in Indonesia who are facing hardships and structural challenges in their villages (AKATIGA and White 2015), the availability of work in the village to ensure financial security is indeed a special advantage that young people in Ngadas can benefit from.

Desa Wisata: Tourism in Ngadas

Change in the accumulation of capital in Ngadas has not only occurred in the agricultural sector, but also in the tourism sector. The amelioration of wealth in Ngadas is actually quite apparent by the splendor of housing renovations and construction work happening in 2017 alone. Thus, it is not only visible but also physical. As described in the beginning of this chapter, my first impression of Ngadas when I arrived in mid-June 2017 was rather disappointing and full of questions due to the lack of ‘expected’ rural characteristics; in the words of Hefner when he first stepped foot on Ngadas in the 1970s, “my expectation of the exotic was frustrated in recognition of the familiar” (Hefner 1985, 5). I was surprised by the amount of construction work happening around the village to the extent

where it did not resemble any other *desa adat* I have encountered before. The modern look of the renovated houses made it looked more like a middle-sized town in East Java. After discussing with the locals, I discovered that the answer to my confusion was apparently homestays. Many people in Ngadas were renovating their houses with additional rooms in order to be registered as homestays for the burgeoning tourist market.

The recent mushrooming of homestays is closely related to the development of Ngadas as *desa wisata* (official tourism village). The decision to title Ngadas as a *desa wisata* is based on Undang-Undang No.4/2017 on Villages and the Decision of the Constitutional Court No.35/PUU-x/2012 dated 16 May 2013 (Purmono 2017; Jawa Pos 2017). However, it was only in 2017 when efforts to develop tourism in Ngadas skyrocketed. This excerpt below from my interview with Pak Aidit, who is one of the members of *Kelompok Sadar Wisata Dewi Adas* (Dewi Adas Tourism Conscious Group) in Ngadas further explains why development efforts for tourism were currently under the spotlight:

Rara: When Ngadas was titled as *desa wisata*, that decision was given by the central government, right Pak?

Aidit: Yes, so now [in Indonesia] we have ten official tourism destinations, and Bromo is included. I think Bromo is number two, actually.

Rara: What's number one? Bali?

Aidit: Number one... Yes, Bali I guess. So that's how it is. In particular, from Malang, the closest village to Bromo is Ngadas. Yes. Earlier [this year], Ngadas village was titled as *desa adat*. And then Jokowi's program was initiated, the ten official tourism destinations in Indonesia. Now in relation to *desa adat*, that is why I named [Ngadas] as *desa wisata adat* (official tourism and traditional cultural village). Shortened to *Dewi Adas*.

Rara: But when named as *desa wisata*, did the village leaders refuse, Pak?

Aidit: Well it was seen more as an opportunity so nobody refused. But in reality, we weren't ready, really. For the preparation, only little has been done. And when we were given that title, there were no homestays. Now we have a couple of homestays, and more people are registering. Many are renovating [their homes].

Rara: Oh, so that's why many people are renovating their houses?

Aidit: So now people are still renovating, upgrading. Later when all is finished, we'll have around 50 homestays.

The conversation above clearly illustrates how being located inside the Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park, which was recently promoted as one of the official tourist destinations in Indonesia, was gradually affecting the social and economic dynamics in Ngadas. It somehow created a rupture in the already established pattern of the everyday lives of the people in Ngadas. As a highly productive agricultural village, many of the people I spoke to complained how extremely difficult it was for them to actively take part in tourism programs that were imposed by the central or regional government. But interestingly, a large number of the successful farmers were already preparing for a new phase of tourism in Ngadas by purchasing jeeps and renting them for Mount Bromo tours, SUVs for tourist airport shuttles, and obviously, upgrading their homes for homestays. A number of young people, including those who participated in this research, have also been trained to do village-tours in English designed for foreign tourists as part of a programme organised by a Canadian travel and adventure company. During my time in Ngadas, I was also asked by village leaders to provide English lessons to young tour guides and homestay owners, and to translate a tourism guide book from Bahasa Indonesia to English for people in Ngadas. However, the relationship people in Ngadas have with tourism remains very complex as income from farming is still the most promising compared to any other economic opportunities in the village.

As mentioned earlier by Pak Aidit, the official title of Ngadas is *Dewi Adas*, which stands for *Desa Wisata Adat Ngadas* (official tourism and traditional cultural village Ngadas). From this, it is evident that understanding the future of tourism in Ngadas should not be separated from the role of *adat*. As a matter of fact, my experience in the field proves that critically examining anything in Ngadas, including young people, cannot be set apart from a clear understanding of its relationship with *adat*, whether it conforms to or deviates from it. This converges back to Hefner's analysis of the Tengger people and how the complex history and shared identity in the region played a vital and active role in the social and economic organisation of the society (1985, 46). In the case of Ngadas, it is *adat*. I realise that I have used the term *adat* a great many times throughout this thesis but, what does it really mean? What does it encompass and what is the significance of

adat amongst the people of Ngadas? To answer all of the abovementioned questions, I will specifically expand on *adat* in Ngadas in the following section.

Ngadas as *Desa Adat*

The word *adat* has a complex history. Derived from Arabic, it was commonly used in the earlier times of Java and Islamic areas across the Indonesian archipelago to refer to a region's manners, tastes, customs, and beliefs that is "often posed in opposition to *agama*, a Sanskrit derived term that means religion or divine precept" and is considered more as "social fact, a matter of humanly contrived beliefs, etiquette, and life ways" (Hefner 1985, 37). However, during his fieldwork, Hefner was aware that the Tengger people, rarely used the term *adat*. Instead, they used the Javanese terms of *ngaluri* (ancestral traditions) and *cara* (manners) (1985, 38). Almost four decades later, my experience in Tengger, especially Ngadas, interestingly found that the term *adat* was always used when asked about their relationship with the self, with others and with the land that is usually embodied in rituals, ceremonies, traditions, customs, beliefs, social values, manners and identity.

Furthermore, Hefner argues that in the discussion of *adat*, the separation of divine principles from customs, is objected to in the context of Tengger (1985, 38). However, this is perhaps not necessarily true in the case of Ngadas today. It is known that a large proportion of the population (around 30%) have now converted to Islam and may have opposing views on some of the *adat* ritual practices (which arguably stem from early Hinduism in Indonesia, see Hefner 1985). Interviews and conversations with Muslims of Ngadas revealed that they would prefer that divine or religious practices be separated from the duty of participating in *adat* rituals and ceremonies.

In Ngadas, there is perhaps no single definition of the word *adat*, let alone the intricate cultural knowledge behind each ritual, ceremony, beliefs or values that derive from it. During my stay, I shared many meals with a group of university students who were collecting descriptions of all the rituals and ceremonies in Ngadas for the official tourism website of Dewi Adas. They, unfortunately, had to experience this confusion of authority in cultural knowledge first-hand. They constantly lamented the challenges they faced

during the data collection process as they spoke to the *dukun*, the village chief, the religious leaders, and the elderly about *adat*, but always came back with perplexingly contrasting explanations. Ngadas, like other Tengger villages, thus requires us to acknowledge that “there is a distributional aspect to cultural knowledge, one which insures that not everyone in the same society need have the same understanding of public symbols and actions” (Hefner 1985, 268). However, the unequal distributional aspect to cultural knowledge is mostly problematic when we attempt to obtain only a single explanation of the meanings behind the details of each ritual, ceremony and customs. Alluding back to Hefner, it becomes problematic because we treat one’s experience or understanding of *adat* as a finished social fact, while in fact, “a symbol, a rite, or an utterance alone is not yet a ‘meaning’; a signifier becomes a signified only inasmuch as there is a human being, with a biography and socialization, to make sense of it” (1985, 269).

For my research, I was more concerned with how *adat* is used in everyday conversations and how its meaning is established within the contemporary social context. My understanding of *adat* refers to the four most common ways that people in Ngadas use with the word *adat*: (1) *adat* as rituals, ceremonies, and the responsibilities that come with them, (2) *adat* as unwritten and given regulations or traditions, (3) *adat* as manners or customs, and (4) *adat* as social values. In many ways, *adat* dictates the socio-economic and cultural exchanges that take place in Ngadas. It is at the centre of the people’s lives in Ngadas (the significance of *adat* for young people will be elaborated in Chapter Five). Furthermore, it is important to note that people beyond Ngadas acknowledge this, many people from neighbouring villages and even from other regions, tend to have an image of Ngadas as inseparable from its *adat*. Below, Budi, a middle school teacher from a nearby village who teaches in Ngadas, shared his thoughts on the importance of *adat* for young people in Ngadas and how it affects their engagement in education:

Rara: In terms of *adat*, does it perhaps affect the young people here, *mas*? Has it been somewhat... left behind recently?”

Budi: When it comes to *adat*, well... I don’t think so, for it to be left behind, I really don’t think so. In fact, *adat* is the one that is prioritised. *Adat* is prioritised. If there is an *adat* ceremony, holy day or any other *adat* activities well, *adat*... Instead, schools will be closed. Yes. So here *adat* is more important. The *adat* is still thick. Even the teachers know, they

understand... so when it comes to *adat*, the students will be sent on a holiday. So, what's important here is *adat*, really. Usually, even we have not announced it as a holiday, the students will dismiss themselves from school. (laughs) Yes, so when it comes to *adat*, the *adat* is thicker here. As you know, there are three religions here, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, but to unite all of them, that's *adat*. Because *adat*, well, everyone still practises.

Religion in Ngadas

In the previous sections, I have discussed how successful farming and a new phase of tourism have changed Ngadas. These changes have helped shape the situation that young people face in Ngadas today. *Adat*, on the other hand, is still sustained and maintained by all, including young people to ensure the social and ritual reproduction in Ngadas. There is, however, another aspect of Ngadas that is inevitable to change. Historically known as one of the last indigenous *agama Buda* population in the Tengger highlands, Ngadas has now transformed into a religiously plural society. There are currently three religions that are embraced by the population of Ngadas: Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. The majority of the population are administratively registered as Buddhists with a number of around 60%, with Muslims representing 30% of the population and Hindus 10%. While the majority of the Buddhists in Ngadas embrace a local religion called Buddha Jawa Sanyata, a small number belong to the Mahayana Buddhism strand. The Buddha Jawa Sanyata community is unique, as it the only one in Indonesia and can only be found in Ngadas.

Buddha Jawa Sanyata can be regarded as a hybrid religion between the theology of Jawa Sanyata with roots in an ancient Javanese belief called *kejawen*, and the terminology and philosophy of Buddhism (Pieter 2015). The origins of Buddha Jawa Sanyata in Ngadas is complex and remains open to question. Hefner (1985) only refers to it as *agama Buda* but does not further describe the origins of it. Some believe that the first people of Ngadas escaped the wars between the Hindu and Islamic Kingdoms by confessing their religion as *agama Buda* to obtain safety. This is why *agama Buda* is often called *agama slamet* (the religion of safety) (Aidit, personal communication, July 21, 2017). A study of local religions in Indonesia suggests that the history of Buddha Jawa Sanyata originated from the first king of Java, Ajasaka, who brought "the message of divine revelation through the

Aksara, the Javanese script” (Fadli 2017, 607). Ajisaka then meditated in the wilderness to develop an established belief system for the people of Tengger. In *Hindu Javanese* (1985), there is also an excerpt where Hefner shares his encounter with an urban fellow in a bus station near the city of Probolinggo on his way to the Tengger highlands. The fellow comments on Hefner’s plan to go to the Tengger highlands and adds, “Their religion, is the original religion (*agama asli*) of Java” (1985, 4).

All of the abovementioned explanations may, in fact, have some truth to them. Firstly, it is well known that the origin of the Tengger highlands originated as a haven for people to escape the Mataram Kingdom. Furthermore, the holy book of Buddha Jawa Sanyata, *Adam Makna* (The Source of Meaning), is written in *Aksara Jawa*, which most probably has roots in the ancient Javanese belief of *kejawen*. This book is derived from *Kitab Teles* or *Kitab Basah* (Wet Holy Book), the belief that the universe is the holy book and the verses of life are its content. The book is believed to reveal the secrets of life and the reality of humanity (Su, personal communication, July 26, 2017).

However, Buddha Jawa Sanyata followers today do not only worship *Sang Hyang Wenang ing Jagad* (the God of Universe) and *Eyang Ibu Bumi* (The source of life and fertility of the Earth); they also worship *Ki Semar* and *Sri Raja Mahadewa Buddha* that are embodied in the form of Siddharta Gautama Buddha and Maitreya Buddha. It was only after the 1965 Indonesian genocide of the communists that the people of Ngadas decided to choose an official religion in order to remain *slamet* (safe) from being accused as non-religious, atheists, or communists (Pieter 2015). Also, Ngatono, one of the leaders of the Buddha Jawa Sanyata, confessed that he only decided to read more about Siddharta Gautama Buddha in 1992 and that it was later in 1995 that they were finally registered as part of the official Buddhist organisation (Pieter 2015). Today, the Buddha Jawa Sanyata community still thrives. They regularly practice their weekly worship processions namely *Reboan* (or Wednesdays), followed by a series of Dhamma talks and *Aksara Jawa* lessons for children. Every evening at 6pm, the young people of the Buddha Jawa Sanyata community also hold collective evening *semedi* (prayers) in which on Monday and Friday evenings is usually followed by a session of *Senam Kasih Semesta* (The Gymnastics of Universal Love) that they learnt from monks of the Mahayana monasteries.

In Ngadas, there is one Hindu temple located in the middle of the village. Unlike other Tengger villages, Hinduism is the minority in Ngadas and is represented by only 44 of the

512 households in 2017 (Aidit, personal communication, July 21, 2017). Some of the people I spoke to who were Hindu explained that one of the reasons why they converted to Hinduism in the past was due to the absence of an official holy book that was true to the official religion of Buddhism in Indonesia (Gugun, personal communication, August 1, 2017). *Primbon*, or the Javanese ancient holy book of Adam Makna, to them does not represent official Buddhism, and thus cannot be regarded as an official holy book. Some of them also informed me that one of the reasons behind conversion to Hinduism was because they could rely more on the holy book of *Weda* for explanations about the origins and meanings of *adat*, in comparison to *Primbon*, *Adam Makna* or oral history.

Islam, on the other hand, was the last religion to enter Ngadas but has interestingly gained more followers than Hinduism today. Pak Aidit explained that the first Muslim to enter Ngadas was a teacher who later became the principal of the elementary school in Ngadas, and stayed with his family throughout his life. To continue Hefner's analysis in *Hindu Javanese*, speaking of Islam in Ngadas indeed revolves around change. There is one *mushola* (prayer room) and one mosque in Ngadas that, according to one documentary photographer who has documented and researched on Ngadas for almost a decade, is now home to the disciples of Salafism. These people are mainly outsiders who currently live in Ngadas because of marriage or temporary work opportunities. The presence of locals wearing *cadar* was seen as an issue by many of the people I spoke to, more so as these people have refused to take part in *adat* rituals and ceremonies on the basis of religious difference. This has brought new challenges for the people in Ngadas, particularly to maintain their *adat*, the exchange system that underpins it and eventually harmony in the village.

With its transformation from an all-Buddhist society to a religiously diverse society, challenges to social harmony have, of course, multiplied. However, it is important to note that although religious friction is potential, they are nowhere near critical in Ngadas today. This is perhaps, as believed by the people of Ngadas, because of *adat*. There is a strong desire in people, including young people to preserve the *adat* and maintain it as a uniting factor in Ngadas. *Adat* is therefore, important in Ngadas not only for the sake of ritual and social reproduction, but it is critical for sustaining good relationships, reciprocity, solidarity and harmony as a society that upholds the value of *guyub rukun* (together in kindness and peace).

Chapter Conclusion

To summarise, Ngadas is located inside the Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park, Indonesia and is an enclave village of the national park. Over 75% of the population identify themselves as potato farmers who, contrary to other rural farmers in Indonesia, mostly own their own land. Due to their successful farming, Ngadas farmers are known as *bukan petani biasa* (no ordinary farmers). However, the prosperity that potato farming brings is not without socio-economic impacts. Furthermore, changes in the accumulation of capital in Ngadas are not only in the agricultural sector, but also in the tourism sector.

Given the title of *desa wisata* (official tourism village), this served as a new phase of cultural tourism which gradually affected the social and economic dynamics in Ngadas. In this chapter, I have shown how tourism provided new opportunities for livelihood through homestays, village tours and car rentals for Mount Bromo tours. I have explained how Ngadas also bears the official title of *desa adat* (traditional cultural village) as a village that strongly upholds its *adat*. *Adat* is commonly defined as rituals, ceremonies, and the responsibilities that come with them, unwritten and given regulations or traditions, manners or customs, and *adat* as social values. Alongside *adat*, religion also plays an important part in shaping Ngadas today. In this chapter, I described the three religions that are currently embraced by people in Ngadas (Buddha Jawa Sanyata, Islam and Hinduism) and how the change of Ngadas from an all-Buddhist society into a religiously diverse society generated new challenges to maintaining harmony and their *adat*. Thus, *adat* becomes central not only in sustaining the social and ritual reproduction in Ngadas, but also in maintaining social integration and harmony in the face of new socio-economic and cultural challenges, including religious diversity. Although farming, tourism and the religious population have engendered change, *adat* could be seen as a constant that is actively sustained and maintained by the people, including young people, in Ngadas.

Chapter Four: Practices for success

Chapter Introduction

In this chapter, I present how participants in my study articulated their notions of success. Using Bourdieu's theory of practice, my ethnographic data suggested that understandings of success for young people in Ngadas were strongly linked to three main practices: work practices, familial/relational practices and religious practices. In measuring what success means for my participants, I sought an embodied and performative approach to success that paid attention to not only what young people *said*, but also to what they *did*. This is supported by Bourdieu's theory of practice which describes how an individual's actions and dispositions (practices) reflect and shape the interplay of capital, habitus and field (1984).

However, it is important to note that the definition of success for Ngadas' youth is not limited to these three practices only. I have chosen to analyse success through these three practices as I found that they were commonly acknowledged and shared by all of the participants in this study as key practices in their everyday lives. Furthermore, by choosing to analyse not one but three main practices of success, I also wish to discuss the relationship between these practices, and wherever possible, how *adat* is embedded in shaping these practices of success. Thus, to present the interconnectedness of these practices for young people's success, I deliberately combined my findings from work, familial/relational and religious practices into this substantive chapter. As the most substantive empirical chapter, it also establishes the significance of *adat* and how *adat* permeates practices for success for young people in Ngadas, which will be discussed later in Chapter Five.

In this chapter, I show how Bourdieu's theory of practice is useful in understanding the relationship between young people's practices for success, the accumulation of capitals for success, and how habitus shapes young people's perceptions of success particularly

as situated in the field of Ngadas. In other words, utilising Bourdieu's theory of practice to focus on work, familial/relational and religious practices of young people for success sheds light on the forms of capitals and habitus that emerged with distinction or symbolic value within the field of Ngadas.

4.1. Work practices for success

My engagement with young people in Ngadas found that success, for them was, first and foremost founded on relatively stable access to economic capital, particularly through farming. As all six participants were children of farmers, both young men and young women inherited land and thus were expected to continue their parents' farm. Therefore, it is important to establish that in terms of work for young people in Ngadas, farming was indeed the main source of income for them. Meanwhile, other forms of work that were also available in the village, such as *ojek* (motorbike transport service for farmers only done by young men), tour guide (for both young men and women), and *jaga warung* (small stall keeper, usually for young women), served as secondary sources of income for young people in Ngadas.

Having a stable income or being economically independent was fundamental to Ngadas youth's success. This is similar to the case of many young people across Indonesia as shown by contemporary Indonesian youth studies. Findings from Tirtuwalujo's (2016) study on narratives of success for youth in Lampung and Parker and Nilan's (2013) study on adolescents in Indonesia, for example, show that achieving self-sufficiency, stability, self-reliance (*mandiri*) and economic independence is what many of their youth participants also defined as being successful. But what is interesting from my study in Ngadas is that young people's understandings of success in relation to work practices were not restricted to merely accumulating income or being economically independent. Thus, in the following sections I will show how participants placed a greater emphasis on the relational aspect of success through their work practices, highlighting the importance of maintaining good relationships, mostly with family, in order to be successful in Ngadas.

4.1.1. Successful farming in Ngadas

During my time in Ngadas, I noticed that one of the most popular topics of conversations was indeed their farming success. Many people, especially adults, often shared what their earnings from farming were and usually expressed it with a sense of pride:

Normally when you're about 20-25 years old, your income from farming would already reach hundreds of million rupiahs (tens of thousands of dollars) per year.⁹ Back then, when we tell people that our parents are farmers, we were so ashamed. But now, we are not, *mbak*. We don't feel ashamed because income-wise, it's lot better [to become a farmer]. (Gugun, personal communication, August 1, 2017)

As mentioned in Chapter Three, potato production in Ngadas is impressive, unlike other villages in the Tengger highlands, to the extent that they are considered as *bukan petani biasa* (no ordinary farmers) (Budi, personal communication, July 22, 2017). Almost all households in Ngadas own land which means that most families have access to the means of production. The success of farmers in Ngadas reminds me of a conversation with Pak Aidit one afternoon in front of his *warung* on the importance of land ownership for Ngadas as an enclave village:

People here have this *adat*, that does not allow us to sell land to outsiders. Not allowed. So here we can't have investors, building hotels like that... because the *adat* says so. And this is praised by people in Bali. A local leader from Bali once said to me that now in Bali, most of the Balinese live in the fringes, and in the center, it's mostly Jakartans and foreigners.

This *adat* (here refers to custom) that is strongly upheld in Ngadas allowed them to not become victims to land grabbing or commodification of property by outside investors. Unfortunately, not all farmers in Indonesia can enjoy this practice.¹⁰ As argued by AKATIGA and White (2015), the ability to own land as farmers is extremely valuable yet scarce in Indonesia today, thus farmers in Ngadas could be regarded as the lucky few. This ability is perhaps the reason why most farmers, including young farmers in Ngadas, have the chance to become successful because they could earn a good income from their potato harvest. In other words, farming (and land ownership) serves as a buffer for young

⁹ The average income of Indonesians in 2016 is around \$4,700 per year (Ariyanti 2017).

¹⁰ See (White 2012, 10), also recent peasant struggles against land grabbing in Indonesia, not limited to Kendeng (Sakasi 2017) and Kulon Progo (Muryanto 2017)

people in Ngadas. It provides stable access to financial security, where economic capital through farm work saves them from 'youth precarity' (AKATIGA and White 2015).

I believe that this particular condition also shaped my participants' particular perception of success and how it relates to their work practices. For young people in Ngadas, work was a form of gift that was initially given and later supported by family, and must be reciprocated to the family. Therefore, their perception of farming as successful work did not emerge from a social vacuum but was significantly shaped by their past and present family circumstances – familial habitus (Reay, David, and Ball 2005, 36). As articulated by Harker, "the perception of success is very much a factor of the structural location of the perceiver" (Harker 1990, 91), with family being one of the structural contexts that significantly shape young people in Ngadas. This is an example of habitus as a "structuring structure" (Bourdieu 1994, 170) where in this context, young people's perceptions and dispositions toward work and success (in this case, farming) are shaped by the family's views on the value of a particular type of work and supported by the accumulated capitals and practices within the family context.

4.1.2. Work and family: Making parents happy, filial piety and *berbakti*

Although economic success is relatively achievable in Ngadas, my study discovered that for young people it was not necessarily the amount of income from work that defined their success. Participants' photographs and conversations showed that the way that young people in Ngadas approached the idea of work for success was two-fold: functional and relational. It was functional in that they commonly viewed work in Ngadas as an important way to obtain money and fulfill their basic needs. But it was also deeply relational, as to work meant helping and reciprocating the gift of work and life (more on the gift in [Chapter 4 section 4.2.2](#)) that their parents had given to them, to be self-reliant (*mandiri*) and not become a burden to others.

During our photo elicitation interview, Vino selected a photo of his success that I was having a hard time to decipher (see [Figure 4.1](#)). He first explained, “This is a close-up photo of a silver coin money worth of 5 cents (Rp 500) that I put on the fence of the monastery, *mbak!* I think I turned the flash on and this is how it came out.”

Figure 4.1 A photo of a silver coin. Photo: Vino

He went on to explain:

Vino: So, this photo... [is the reason that] makes me work hard.

Rara: So, for you, success is money?

Vino: No! Success is when I can laugh with my friends. But without money I can't live. (laughs) Because without money, I can't eat nor drink.

Rara: So how important is it, money, for you...

Vino: I think the most important one is to feel good about yourself first. And then, money... The third one would be togetherness... Well... I work hard, to make money, but... it is for my own life. For example, food, clothes. Without clothes, I won't be wearing clothes right now. That would be embarrassing, right? (laughs)

Rara: So... more about independence, I guess? Money?

Vino: Yes... Well, money... for my basic needs.

In another conversation about money and success, Vino emphasised the importance of money and hard work in order to not become a burden for others:

Vino: I think success... Success for me, right? For a young person in Ngadas? Is when... someone is able to stand on his own feet (*mandiri*), without burdening other people. Not to be a burden for other people. To be hard working, really.

Rara: So, does that mean [working hard] to become wealthy? Or?

Vino: No. What is important is... to be grateful for everything we have.

First, what Vino articulated illustrates the importance of obtaining economic capital in order to fulfill his basic needs. But what is crucial to highlight from his case is that the accumulation of economic capital per se did not equal success. The relational aspect of economic capital was what made it more meaningful to him. The acknowledgment (by family, friends or society) of his hard work and his accumulation of economic capital played a key role in Vino feeling that he was “able to stand on his own feet, without burdening other people” or *mandiri*. Therefore, in Vino’s case, economic capital held symbolic value as it could be exchanged with acknowledgement of him being *mandiri*, and also enabled “togetherness”, better relationships and social connections that are imbued with respect and trust, or in Bourdieu’s term, *social capital*. From Vino, we can see how economic capital, in the form of financial security, could be converted into social capital (relationships and social connections imbued with respect and trust) in order to become a symbolic capital (success as the acknowledgment of one’s hard work as *mandiri*), a point Bourdieu makes very clearly as one of the potentials of capitals.

To further highlight the relational aspect of work, the way Vino understood hard work and *mandiri* is also interesting to note here. It supports what Parker and Nilan (2013, 99) found in their study of young people’s dual aspirations: to make parents happy (*membahagiakan orang tua*) and become *mandiri*. From the case of Vino, we can see how his desires to make parents happy and become *mandiri* are two sides of success that are deeply interrelated. One works hard to be *mandiri* (independent, self-reliant, or self-sufficient), not just for the sake of his/her own well-being, but to be able to help, support and care for others particularly their family. This echoes to what Tania Li (2014, 15)

discovers in research with the Lauje highlanders in Sulawesi, that it is “the tensions between autonomy and dependence, working for oneself and caring for others” that form “the texture of everyday life”, which is the case for many societies in Indonesia. This strong relational aspect of independence (in the context of success) for young people in Ngadas, I believe, is what makes it different to the more individualized understanding of independence. For example, farming as work that was given by parents – a gift, must therefore be sustained because of and for the family. It presents an understanding of *mandiri* (independence) that is linked to interdependence, particularly filial obligations. Through this photo (see [Figure 4.2](#)), Vino explained the relationship between potato farming and his desire to make his parents happy:

Figure 4.2 A typical view of potato farms in Ngadas. Photo: Vino

Vino: This is a person (points at a little dot in the photo). These are potatoes, but there's someone down here if you can see.

Rara: Why does this photo mean success for you?

Vino: Hmm... Because I think, for example, when I plant potatoes. What I want to achieve is... for the potatoes to be fertile. So that is when I feel successful. Why so? Because my desire is achieved.

Rara: So, farming is... part of success...

Vino: Yeah.

Rara: Do you go to the fields every day?

Vino: Yes. (laughs)

Rara: Can I say that you want to be a successful farmer?

Vino: Yes.

Rara: Does that mean that you have been given a plot by your parents already?

Vino: Yes, I have, fortunately I have been given a plot. Yes. But... I'm still not a hundred percent successful though. Well I haven't... I mean, my parents' dreams... I haven't... I haven't been able to make my parents fully... happy.

Rara: Fully happy, what's it like?

Vino: To fulfill... All of my parents' dreams.

Initially, Vino emphasised the fertility of land as the goal of a successful farmer. Becoming a successful farmer was thus one form of success that a young person from Ngadas can achieve. But, we then also see Vino not able to separate the relationship between successful farming and fulfilling his parents' dreams (related to farming) as a way to make his parents happy. On the one hand, it is understandable for him not to feel successful yet. As a 17-year old young male, who had only been given a plot of land by his parents about a year or so ago, he was still in the early stages of farming.

On the other hand, this also underlined farming as an expression of filial piety or devotion to one's parents in which the child is expected to follow the desires of the parents even if it demands the negotiation of one's aspirations. The link between work and filial piety is

indeed strong in the context of young people in Ngadas, as other studies of young people from Asian countries have shown (see Ikels 2004, Phua and Loh 2008, Nilan et al. 2011). Mudita, also illustrated the relationship between farming and filial piety quite explicitly during our photo elicitation interview. Here she elaborated why a photo that she took after helping her parents work represented her understanding of success:

Mudita: Maybe... first we must be devoted (*berbakti*) [to our parents]. After devotion... after that... I guess. Well... Just helping out, really.

Rara: You mean, helping your parents?

Mudita: Yes... us as children, when it comes to our father and mother, we can never repay all... what is it? Like, all they have given us since we were young. So maybe with devotion, well... Hopefully we can.

Rara: So, in short, *balas budi* (reciprocation)? I mean *balas budi* to your parents. So according to Mudita, a successful person is someone who can devote, to their parents?

Mudita: Yes.

Filial piety and *balas budi* were repeatedly expressed and emphasised by all of my participants when discussing their views of success in the context of work practices. Even during a discussion on success as *cita-cita* (life aspirations), Nyoto added to the discussion how his *cita-cita* was just to follow his parents:

Nyoto: Well since I was very little, my dream is to just follow the steps of my parents.

Rara: To follow your parents, that means, to do farming?

Nyoto: Yes. To become a successful farmer! Right? (laughs) Because, who else then will be able to make use of the soil? So, I just want to continue what my parents have done.

Rara: Are you already doing it right now?

Nyoto: Yes. So, I think I have reached this [aspiration].

But my study found that participants did not just work because of the gift of work that their parents had given them. Ida, supported by her grandmother's *warung* (small shop) and phone credit top-up business, for example, also wanted to work *for her family*. Below, Ida complemented a photo ([Figure 4.3](#)) of her sister hanging out at her grandmother's *warung* with an explanation of what she wanted to do with her income:

Ida: *Warung*. This *warung* can provide, like an additional job. More money aside from farming right, and we can have extra income from home too. And then the money can be used to buy this, and that! (laughs)

Rara: So, the *warung*... You run it? Does the money go to you?

Ida: No, of course. My grandmother.

Rara: But for phone credit business, that's you?

Ida: Phone credit, that's me.

Rara: For phone credit, what is the average income for you recently?

Ida: \$20 per week.

Rara: From \$20, how much do you save?

Ida: \$15, sometimes...

Rara: Once you save a lot, does your grandmother keep it?

Ida: If I have a lot in my savings, it will be kept by my grandmother. My dream is, when we have the *Sadranan* ritual, I want to buy clothes for my grandmother, my mom and my little sister. From my own income. Well, I'm still learning, right... Still learning, so if I have a little bit of money, I want to buy [clothes] for them... Later if I become successful from farming, I will take them travelling.

Figure 4.3 Ida's younger sister, playing with stickers at the family's warung. Photo: Ida

Like Vino, Mudita and Nyoto, Ida further emphasised the importance of success from work as not just for herself, but in order to make her family happy:

Ida: Hm... Yeah, well [my grandmother] always prays for the best for me. Hoping that I will become a successful person. Hoping that I could take her travelling, before she gets old. That's what she said.

Rara: Traveling, where to?

Ida: Where to *mbak*? Not too fancy really. I just want to find happiness like... [taking her] fishing, that's her hobby! Grandmother and grandfather's [hobby]. And then, maybe just go down [the hill to the local region below]... And just go on recreations, really.

Rara: So... it's important...

Ida: To make your parents... happy.

The above examples show that success that is achieved through work practices is not only about the accumulation of economic capital, it is also underpinned by filial responsibilities, reciprocal care giving such as *berbakti*, *balas budi* and the desire to make one's parents and family happy. For young people in my study, it appeared that work practices were able to achieve symbolic meaning or success when they aligned with reciprocity, a gift system that underpins the exchanges of capitals. It again highlights what was discussed earlier on the interdependence between *mandiri* and making parents happy: that there is a strong relational aspect of economic capital in the context of work. From the case study of work practices for young people in Ngadas, we can see the significant role of social capital and how it is enacted, maintained and reinforced in and through exchanges (Bourdieu 1986, 21) in order for work to hold a symbolic value as success in Ngadas.

4.1.3. Work vs Education

In Ngadas, I found that conversations about work for young people were usually inseparable from the topic of education. The role of familial habitus did appear to be significant in the lives of young people in Ngadas, particularly in influencing their view on farming as work and education. I also noticed how shared unquestioned understandings of one's place and one's limits to social mobility, or in Bourdieu's terms

doxa (1977) shaped how education was regarded in relation to success. During one of my morning *api-api* (by the fire) conversations with guests who frequently visited Pak Pri's house, I was joined by Pak Gugun, a farmer and a 'jeep owner' and the grandfather of one of my participants. After small talk, mostly his testing my Ngadas language skills, we ended up discussing the topic of work and how he thought that qualifications for work in the village setting are very different to that in the urban setting:

If you work in the city, of course you need one, two or even more degrees to be successful! But here in Ngadas, you don't need those degrees! There's plenty of work available and you'll definitely never run out of money if you become a farmer!

He explained to me in his strong and convincing voice:

Bukannya gimana ya mbak, (Well, I'm not trying to belittle [education]) but here in Ngadas, those who continue their education would end up being farmers anyway... and his or her status in the society will still be as a farmer.

Pak Gugun, one of the respected elders in Ngadas, might be an extreme example of a parent's view on work and education for young people in Ngadas, I thought. However, he was not the only one to express this particular view. Conversations I had with other parents and young people in Ngadas affirmed this as *doxa* in Ngadas: the perception towards education and the unquestioned, accepted 'egalitarian' recognition of all people as farmers, regardless of their educational degrees.

Pak Gugun added, "You need to understand. The control of parents to their children is still very significant here in the Tengger society. We are not like the people 'from below'. It is not the same." It is perhaps views of parents like Pak Gugun's that at some point give rise to a 'sense of limits' (Bourdieu 1974) and 'a sense of one's place' when it comes to young people's understanding of success through work. This in a way explains how many participants in my study seemed content with what they had, a manifestation of *amor fati*, to the extent of not being willing to pursue opportunities that were beyond their 'place in the world' in Ngadas. Reiterating what was discussed earlier in Chapter One, this *doxa* in Ngadas resonates with Threadgold and Nilan's (2009, 53) suggestion of *habitus* as the parameters of one's social and cultural understandings, "including those pertaining to choice and expectations of the future ambitions and obstacles". These parameters revealed the forms of capital that could be exchanged for the symbolic recognition of success in the field of Ngadas. Although these parameters positioned formal education as

a low priority in Ngadas, particularly in comparison to farming, my study found that young people in Ngadas today were navigating these parameters by finding a middle way between work, family and education.

4.1.4. Work, family and education: Finding the middle way

“This is the beginning. The beginning of success”, said Nyoto, as he showed me a photo (Figure 4.4) that he took of SDN 1 [the elementary school in] Ngadas. I always found it funny that the name of school needed to be numbered, especially because it is the *only* elementary school in the village.

Figure 4.4 SDN 1 Ngadas, the only elementary school in the village. Photo: Nyoto

“So... Why do you think, education is important for success?” I asked him. “[We can] learn new knowledge from the lessons in class.” Nyoto answered. He went on to explain:

To be honest... Yes. I think we must be [highly educated]. But... Well most people here, not just me, really. We continue this... We, here, in the village have work to do, from our

parents. So, we have jobs, like *ngojek* (motorbike transport business) or something else. Here, we have work to do. So, if we want to be able to work and go to school... We just take the middle way, such as taking *paket* (the high school exam equivalent weekend school) (laughs)! In the end, that's just how it is. *Paket*. We continue to *paket*. After *paket* and then, it all depends on what you want.

Nyoto helped me to realise that young people in Ngadas still had the desire to continue their education, but by attending *paket* instead of ordinary high school. The reason was simple: *paket* only takes place on the weekends. With this flexible schedule, my participants were able to do farm work or care for their family at home on weekdays. I then asked Nyoto curiously, “But for you, after *paket*, what's your plan?” “Just work. Here.” Nyoto answered, while nodding modestly, as if to signal that he had embraced this as part of his life.

It is interesting to highlight how Nyoto defined his decision to attend *paket* school as *the middle way* (see [Figure 4.5](#) for a photo of *paket* school). In a way, the term ‘middle way’ positioned formal education as somewhere in between having to meet family responsibilities and a desire for higher education. This is also an example of the dynamic aspect of habitus in the lives of young people in Ngadas and how their dispositions were able “to formulate aspirations and practices that enable them to evaluate their potential and future endeavours within their social field” (Bourdieu 1983, 352; Jimmie 2013). As previously mentioned in this chapter, the choice of taking *paket* as the middle way shows that habitus should not be regarded as a determined prescription for young people’s success in Ngadas, but more as a dynamic and ongoing process that serves as a source of choices (that are not unlimited, but constrained by circumstances and expectations) where with the capitals they currently possess, in this case, the opportunity to attend *paket* is now included within their life choices.

Figure 4.5 Paket school in Dawuhan village. Photo: Nyoto

Yet, it was never made clear to me why formal education was still considered as important for the success of my participants, knowing that farming as their main work in Ngadas does not necessarily require higher education degrees. This struck me as Nyoto was not the only one who attended *paket* on the weekends. All of my participants, except Tono who had just graduated from junior high school the year I was there, attended *paket*. However, from what they shared, most of my participants valued formal education not because of the degrees that could one day support their ‘career’, or serves as, in Bourdieu’s terms, institutionalised cultural capital. They saw value in education mostly because of the knowledge it gave them (cultural capital) and hoping that the knowledge they acquired from school could be applied in the community (social capital). This was articulated by Tono during a photo elicitation interview, where he highlighted the value of knowledge gained from his favourite subject at school (see [Figure 4.6](#)):

That’s the junior high school. The reason why I photographed education is because... it’s very important for our success. And my personal success as well. And for our success that I mentioned earlier, that is in relation to nature, also comes from education... So... In formal education, in PLH (Environmental Studies) for example. [...] we learn the ways to

process waste, use waste, and care for our nature... and to conserve our nature. That's all taught in there.

Figure 4.6. The only junior high school in Ngadas. Photo: Tono

Like Tono, Ida and Rahayu also saw the value of knowledge in education. But they particularly emphasised on the value of *Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan* (SMK) or vocational high schools that provide special degrees such as agronomy and tourism, because they believed that the knowledge they could gain from SMK would enable them to work in Ngadas, develop the potential of the village and one day give back to the community. One of the main hindrances for their of not continuing to SMK is that there is no educational institution nearby (post-junior high school) that allowed them to attend school while also having the chance to still live at home with their family. This is another reason why *paket* was the middle way in the relationship triangle between education, work and family for young people in Ngadas. This then begs the question, if one day an SMK would be set up in or very close to Ngadas, would they continue to the SMK and perhaps even continue to higher education?

To conclude this section on work practices, my study shows how notions of success for young people in Ngadas are supported by work practices (and educational practices for those who also attended *paket* school as the middle way between work, family and education) that are underpinned by a reciprocal exchange system that highly values the accumulation of social capital. Evidence from my study shows that success from work practices such as farming, was not solely defined by the accumulation of economic capital. Nor was their understanding of success from educational practices defined by having degrees or institutional cultural capital. For participants in my study, for work and educational practices to hold symbolic meaning for them and others, practices must have a strong relational aspect that supports their relationships through reciprocity and care, thus maintaining trust and respect within the community.

4.2. Familial/Relational Practices for Success

4.2.1. Work or family?

Figure 4.7 Pawon, where both cooking and api-api conversations take place when the temperature drops. Photo: Mudita

Like any other day, my day began with morning *api-api* conversations with Pak Pri, his wife Ma' Dede, and Ida's mom by the *pawon* (see [Figure 4.7](#)). Mornings are when Pak Pri's house was full of visiting neighbours and relatives, the time before most of the people in Ngadas left to work on the farm. Normally, I ended up having breakfast with most of these morning guests as it was also the *adat* for the host to feed guests (with substantial meals that included rice and side dishes). Conversation topics varied from farming updates, this week's ritual ceremonies, upcoming *betek* schedules, to information on new tourism initiatives. However, most of the time, the topic veered to my presence. Like a trophy, Pak Pri and his wife loved to brag about my Ngadas language skill to their guests. They would eagerly ask visitors to test my skills and ask me questions in Ngadas language. "Wingi isun nglembet bawang karo Ma'Dede nang gaga!" (Yesterday I *nglembet*⁴¹ with Ma Dede in the farm), I answered one of their questions, exhibiting my recently acquired linguistic skill half-jokingly with a broken Ngadas accent. It was my favourite line. It was usually followed with laughter and awe and more of the everyday topics as the conversations mostly continued in Ngadas language. They did not feel the urge to always shift to Indonesian whenever they wanted to engage in a conversation with me. As a researcher, this felt very welcoming to be in this position; to become part of their everyday and intimate conversations.

But due to this, I was also often caught in conversations that heavily scrutinised my personal matters, especially marriage, children and family. "Are you saying that your husband is alone now in New Zealand?" "Why do you not want to have children?" "Your parents, they don't live with you in New Zealand?" Being apart from both my husband and family was a fact that could not be accepted by most of the people I spoke to in Ngadas. It was unacceptable and wrong, and many times they explicitly (and repeatedly) expressed their pity for my husband and family that I did this to them. It was very difficult to discuss these sensitive topics without having to disagree on the way we look at life. Although I understood this particular view on life choices also derived from the *adat* that Ngadas strongly embrace. "There is this *adat*, the custom here... that ensures no parents have to live on their own. That's just not possible", said Pak Aidit once to me. In the end, I usually concluded the discussion by saying, "Well, I guess this is just the way life is. We

⁴¹ *Nglembet* in Ngadas language means to trim off the dead parts of spring onion plants that is believed to maintain new growth. It is done in a fast pace with bare hands.

all need to sacrifice a little for our dreams.” “Ya, *mbak*... We can only hope that you finish school as soon as possible so that you can be with your husband and family”, so they wished.

The fieldwork story above again emphasises the defining role of family and relationships, as also shaped by *adat*, in the lives of people in Ngadas. To continue the discussion in the previous section, it is clear that work practices for success for my participants were closely linked, even underpinned, by familial and relational practices. In Ngadas, one cannot be successful at work without *berbakti* and *balas budi*, but also, one cannot be acknowledged as successful in the family if s/he does not stand on his own feet (*mandiri*). As argued by Nilan et al (2011, 75) in the case of young Indonesians, “an emphasis on family and kin interdependence and relatedness still prevails”. My data concur with this and suggest that practices related to family and relationships (beyond work) are indeed foundational for the success of young people in Ngadas. To further my discussion, in the following section I will focus on the role of reciprocity and care in family relationships and how it supports and shapes the perception of young people towards success.

4.2.2. The gift of family: reciprocity and care

The well-known French sociologist and influential figure in anthropology, Marcel Mauss, theorised in *The Gift* ([1925] (1925) 2016) that exchanges build relationships. Graham Harvey (2017) draws on Mauss to further suggest that the reciprocity of gifts given by other people is vital to social interactions as it demonstrates the relationship between people: a proof “that they are indeed related people” (Harvey 2017, 13). Similar to what has been discussed about success in work practices, for young people in Ngadas, the gift permeates almost every domain of life as relationships and trust are crucial to be sustained for their success. To give, to receive and reciprocate (Mauss (1925) 1990, 17) are the three main obligations under the gift economy of family relations in Ngadas. For my participants, success in the family revolves around three obligations: to acknowledge the gift of life given to children, to receive the gift of life and work from parents and relatives, and finally to reciprocate (*balas budi*) the gift through care and devotion. As Mudita said to me once, “Us, as children, when it comes to our father and mother, we can

never repay all... they have given us since we're young. So maybe with devotion, well... Hopefully we can."

The centrality of gift exchange in creating and maintaining relationships, particularly in the family, again shows how social capital is a highly-valued capital for young people's success in Ngadas. It is through this gift exchange, i.e. to give, to receive and *balas budi*, that social capital could be materialised and exchanged to further sociality. The importance of relationships with family for young people in Ngadas also indicates that an understanding of success is not one that is exclusive to the accomplishment of individual concerns. Rather, it is interdependent with and underpinned by collective concerns. This reminds me of Theodor Adorno (2005, 217) who said, "There is no love that is not an echo". Maybe if this is also true for relationships, then there is no relationship that is not an echo.

However, this obligation to reciprocate gifts does not necessarily undermine the personal gains within the exchange, although it still exists within a relational framework. In fact, my study suggests that the exchange of the gift of family enables young people to enact personhood and become better persons (Harvey 2017, 13). Like other people, this form of exchange is particularly essential for young people in Ngadas as it is instrumental in defining their place in the world. Ida, for example, viewed *balas budi* to her grandparents as an integral part of her success.

Rara: So, you are saying that *balas budi* to your grandparents is part of your success?

Ida: Yes, it is part of my success. Because, I just want to fulfill their dreams before they leave me one day, *mbak*. Because grandma and grandpa are already old... Also, whom do I go to [besides to them]? Their hopes are not unusual, *mbak*... They only said, 'You have to replace your mom. She no longer can take care of me so when I'm old, you will have to take care of me.' That's why... I feel that I'm so lucky, really... Especially with the fact that they are not my biological grandparents.

To her, the responsibility to replace her mother as the caretaker of her grandparents was the path she needed to take. This responsibility was seen as capable of strengthening the relationship with her foster grandparents as it also demonstrated that "they are indeed related people" (Harvey 2017, 13). In other words, care giving through familial practices, contributes to the accumulation of social capital which amounts to a social recognition that gives meaning and purpose to one's life or *illusio*. Here we can see how Bourdieu's

concept of capital “captures more than economic capital; it is an economic metaphor for being” (Gibson 2011, 15). In other words, the case of Ida illustrates how “the more capital we accumulate, the more being we acquire” (Gibson 2011, 15). Thus, from the examples provided above we can conclude that the gift of family in Ngadas presents an understanding of social capital accumulation that is built on reciprocity, or the gift exchange that also contributes to the cultivation of meaning in young people’s lives.

4.2.3. Receiving care: *motivasi* and support for success

It is important, however, to not only focus on the role of giving or *balas budi* to parents and caretakers in the family. Most of my participants in fact stressed the importance of *receiving care* from family that also contributed significantly to their success. Care, in this sense, manifested in the form of family support and *motivasi* (motivation). Vito, for instance, saw the care and hard work of his parents as a continuous *motivasi* to become “the pillar for the family that always supports others to move forward.” Mudita, through a photo of her and her cousin, explained how the support from family members was important for “the success of the soul”:

Mudita: He's important [for my success], because... When I hang out at his place... He motivates me a lot. For example. When I'm having an argument with someone. I will definitely go to his place, and *curhat* (vent out my feelings). And then, I will feel relieved... Yeah just like that.

Rara: So, the significance, of your cousin or family to listen, for your success...

Mudita: “Yes... Maybe it's success for... the soul maybe. Like, when the problem is finally resolved, it's done, forget it... That's it. I smile again. Talk about stuff again.

From this particular section, it is evident that a focus on reciprocity and care calls attention to an understanding of success that is inseparable from the role of affection, solidarity, and trust, underlining the mutual exchange that takes place within relational practices. These are key elements of social capital for young people’s success in my study. I agree with Schaefer-McDaniel (2004, 163) that it is important to note the interrelatedness between these elements, as well as social networks/interactions, and a

sense of belonging/place attachment in understanding how social capital works for young people. My study also found that a deeper examination of these elements also contributes to exploring “the experienced set of relations, tensions and desires” (Li 2014, 57) that takes place within exchanges of social capital for success.

4.3. Religious practices for success

4.3.1. “He must not forget his religion”: Religion and youth success in Ngadas

Figure 4.8 A photo of Reboan, a weekly meditation and prayer ritual session held at the sanggar. Photo: Tono

Tono: So, this is just my opinion really, rich people, rich people to me... Maybe, they are successful. But, if, he only emphasises on work, only emphasises on money... He must still remember his religion. He must not forget his religion.

The quote from Tono above illustrates how impossible it is for him to imagine success without having religion. As many recent studies on Indonesia have shown, it is very

difficult to exclude the role of religion when studying young people in Indonesia (see Hamayotsu 2011, Nilan et al. 2011, Parker and Nilan 2013, Rosyad 2013, Laksana 2014, Robinson 2015). To illustrate this, in a study on elements of the good life for young people in Indonesia, Nilan et al. (2011) discovered that religious faith was in fact ranked third by young people in Indonesia, showing the importance of religious faith in their everyday lives. Further, the research also shows that claims “to be a good individual in Indonesia strongly implies the moral virtue of religious faith” (Nilan et al. 2011, 715). Having read Nilan et al (2011) and Parker and Nilan’s (2013) work prior to doing fieldwork, as well as being Indonesian myself, the strong connection between one’s understanding of success and religion was indeed highly anticipated.

For young people in Ngadas, religion was an important element of success and was frequently mentioned in conversations and even photographed by my participants. For example, I remembered how during *klumpukan*, Ida suddenly mentioned King Salman (the King of Saudi Arabia) as her role model of success. When I asked her what she saw in him, she answered:

Ida: Well, firstly, *he has good religious faith*. He is also wealthy, and all of his children are also successful because of him. So that means, he is not stingy, he likes to share, and motivate others to not become arrogant even if you’re rich. We must be like him.

As a Muslim, Ida also looked up to the former village chief of Ngadas, a well-respected Muslim leader in a predominantly Buddhist society, whom according to her, “is nice and also has good religious faith.” To refer back to Tono’s quote in the onset of this section, to have faith in religion was something that all of my participants believed was a key criterion for being successful, despite their religious differences.

The role of religion for success, in the form of religious values, practices and rituals, was even more observable in the case of the young people from the Buddha Jawa Sanyata religion. This was made obvious as most of the photographs that my participants took revolved around the *sanggar* (monastery). However, it is also possible that religion recurred as a theme because I interviewed four of the most active members of the Buddha Jawa Sanyata youth group, suggesting that my participants were most likely religious Buddhists. Religious or not, I would argue that the role of religious practices, including religious values, in shaping young people’s understanding of success was evident across all participants. The following sections will further explore how religion through religious

practices was articulated by young people in Ngadas as an essential element of both their personal success and the collective success of Ngadas as a harmonious society.

4.3.2. Success, religious habitus and religious values

The significance of religion for the success of young people in Ngadas in my study was present in connecting success with religious practices. However, I noticed that the role of religion was not limited to merely embracing religion or faith. Rather, most of my participants often drew on religious values, be it explicitly or implicitly expressed, when defining what success meant to them. This was captured at the end of my very first *semedi* with the Buddha Jawa Sanyata youth at the *sanggar*, when Mudita, Vino and Nyoto invited me to watch them practise *senam kasih semesta* (gymnastics of universal love).

I initially found the *senam* bizarre as I expected some form of ritual that was rooted in the origins of Buddha Jawa Santara. Instead, I was entertained with *senam* which was accompanied by a unique ensemble of jingle music, Chinese instruments and Buddhist verses on becoming *dunia satu keluarga* (the world as one family). I later discovered that this *senam* was taught by Maitreiya Buddhist nuns from Malang, one of the recent influences in Buddha Jawa Sanyata, who, along with the Theravadan Buddhists also introduced Vesak (the commemoration of the birth of the Buddha) to Ngadas, unknown to the Buddha Jawa Sanyata prior to this. From the ten songs performed by mostly Mudita and Vino that night, I came home only remembering a verse from the lyrics of one song, "*Waktu adalah kebahagiaan. Waktu adalah kehidupan.*" (Time is happiness. Time is life).

In her photo-elicitation interview, Mudita alluded to the only song I remembered from the *senam* in describing her photo of success ([Figure 4.9](#)):

Mudita: Maybe like, the song we danced to, "*Waktu adalah kebahagiaan. Waktu adalah kehidupan.*" (Time is happiness. Time is life). That's it. Maybe... Because now there are many people... hm... Who put forward their work without paying attention to time. Maybe, like, well I don't really understand. But like, this happiness, happiness and joy... Maybe, it's not just money that we look for. But we all have, time. Time is something that we must put forward.

Rara: Hm... So, time is more important, than just looking for money?

Mudita: Yes... Time with family and friends. So that we can become closer to our family, [therefore] no more quarrels, right?

Figure 4.9 A picture of Mudita's watch with Ngadas hills in the background. Hours on the watch are written in Mandarin and are described with Buddhist philosophy of time such as 'time is happiness'. Photo: Mudita

The way Mudita was inspired by lyrics from the *senam* and her watch, illustrated how religion was able to influence her views on the most valued things in life. To her, what was most valuable was not money (economic capital), but in keeping with earlier discussions in this chapter; it was maintaining good and reciprocal relationships with family and friends (social capital). Applying what Bourdieu terms as “embodied history” (Bourdieu 1990, 56) in Mudita, we can also see how religious practice (in this case Maitreiya Buddhism) became internalised and embodied, shaping how she perceived success. Here, we can see how her “perception, appreciation and action” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 16) or dispositions toward success and also life in general, are shaped by the religious (and institutional) habitus of Buddha Jawa Sanyata that also allows this unique blend of Jawa Sanyata, Theravadan and Maitreiya Buddhism to thrive in Ngadas.

For participants who had not traveled or been trained in monasteries outside Ngadas, rather than drawing on Maitreiya Buddhist values, values derived from Buddha Jawa Sanyata's holy book, *Adam Makna*, mostly underpinned their understanding of success. During *klumpukan* at the *sanggar*, Nyoto explained why success for him means to be a successful Buddha Jawa Sanyata follower who is able to practise all the values and rituals that are written in the *Adam Makna*:

Nyoto: For me... we know it that in our holy book. Here we have the holy book of *Adam Makna*, the authentic holy book of Jawa Sanyata. In this book, we use the Javanese alphabet, from *hanacaraka* to *nga*... and from each letter, such as *ha*, there is a meaning behind it. There are many meanings behind it, actually. For example, *ha*, "*Hanakna huripira kang sejati. Hurip mung tunggu pati*" (*Live the true life. Life is merely a prelude to death*¹²). If we can internalise the meaning, and practice it, well... that means we're successful. We, as followers of Buddha Jawa Sanyata. In this religion, we also have many rituals, right. If we can practice all of them, well then, we're successful. Successful as followers of Jawa Sanyata.

Ha (pronounced *ho*) is only one of the 20-letter Javanese *hanacaraka* alphabet that can be found within *Adam Makna*. In it, each letter is accompanied by an esoteric meaning that revolves around life and how to live (Sutarto 2006, 47). Similar to Mudita's emphasis on time for family, the *hanacaraka* letters are also embedded with values to respect one's parents, to be devoted and respectful to them, and to avoid conflicts when engaging in social relations (Sutarto 2006, 47). From this, we could conclude that the link between religious practices, social capital and collective success is once again evident in the case of young people in Ngadas. However, it is important to note that this is not exclusive to Buddha Jawa Sanyata youth only. In a very emotional conversation with Ida and Rahayu, who are non-Buddhists, on how having family problems could hinder her success, Ida resorted to religion and God as a way to endure the situation.

Ida: Well, if we want to be successful, we have to ask right... Because, everything that happens, is because of God's will. So, I think [success] depends on our religion, *mbak*, on how we believe, *mbak*. Because life... Like for me now, I have been given difficulties, and other things as well. But I just surrender, because something bigger is in charge of this.

¹² For the full translation of Javanese *hanacaraka* alphabet used in *Adam Makna*, see Sutarto (2006, 47).

Well, just *ikhtiar*¹³, I guess. Just do my best. Because most of our norms derive from religion. Our conscience, [is] also influenced by religion.

From the quote above, we can identify the cultural capital derived from Islam as her religious habitus. However, in contrast to Buddha Jawa Sanyata youth, an explicit role of institutional religious habitus or a form of *sanggar* was less visible and observable in the case of Ida. Unlike the Buddha Jawa Sanyata youth, verses from the Qur'an, or the role of a religious youth group were not explicitly mentioned in conversations nor visualised in her photographs of success. This is understandable because at the time I was there, Ida did not belong to any Muslim youth group or prayer group in Ngadas, not that I am aware of one existing. Ida and her friends who were also Muslims, from what I observed, are an interesting reflection of contemporary Muslim youth in Indonesia, who often enact their religiosity through social media, and rather than following a certain Islamic prayer or community group, they follow Islamic Facebook pages to receive daily insights on Islam.

Nonetheless, how Ida viewed the power of believing in and surrendering to God is a powerful statement that illustrates how her success, including success in maintaining family relations, depends on her *ikhtiar* and God's will. Ida is another example of how religious values through religious practices played a prominent part in shaping the lifeworlds of young people in Ngadas. The responses from my participants above also echo what has been found in studies on young people and religion in Indonesia. Similar to the case of Ngadas, Parker and Nilan's (2013) research on adolescents in Indonesia and Laksana's (2014) research on religious citizenship of young Indonesians found that there is a strong link between young people's religion and values, both suggesting that the contribution of religion is a defining factor in how young people acquire their values.

4.3.3. Religion, belonging and harmony

One thing that we can conclude from Mudita, Nyoto and Ida's views on religion and success is the centrality of *religious belonging*: the feeling where one's religious views are valued and shared amongst a group of people. A sense of belonging that comes from a

¹³ *Ikhtiar* is a word adopted from Arabic that is commonly used by Muslims in Indonesia in everyday conversations. It is loosely translated to working hard to reach one's dreams (both in the world and in the hereafter).

religious habitus, instilling “a sense of one’s place” (Bourdieu 1984, 466). For my participants who were followers of the Buddha Jawa Sanyata, a strong sense of belonging to the *sanggar* was perhaps more apparent through their depiction of success that centred around Buddha Jawa Sanyata leaders as life aspirations, religious rituals such as *Reboan* and religious values from *Adam Makna* and *dhamma* teachings. The centrality of religion in shaping not only their success, but also their selves, their lives and relationships, also demonstrates “the existential importance that communal belonging holds for people” (Gammeltoft 2014, 231). However, in understanding belonging for my participants, more focus on the relational and spatial aspect is needed to explore deeper the relationship between young people, their success and the success of Ngadas as a community.

In terms of relationships, religious practices and values played an important part in constructing my participants’ sense of belonging to both their religion and Ngadas as their community. Similar to what was discussed in previous sections on success in relation to work and familial practices, participants showed that religious practices are deeply relational and are therefore interrelated with collective practices. In discussing religious practices, my study found that for young people in Ngadas, an understanding of success is beyond the self or the family, it is a collective success for Ngadas.

From a religious perspective, success was often defined as being able to be a good follower of the religion and to live in harmony in a religiously plural society that Ngadas is today. Although this was articulated by most of my participants, I would like to particularly highlight what Tono shared during his photo-elicitation interview at the *sanggar*. Drawing on the teachings of *Adam Makna*, Tono explained why his success could only be achieved if the collective success of Ngadas as a harmonious community is achieved, emphasising the relational aspect of what he believed as being successful in the religious field:

This one, I took a photo (see [Figure 4.10](#)) of the holy book. You once asked me about the religion of Jawa Sanyata. Whether Jawa Sanyata is important or not for success? I think, if we are harmonious, if we can all live harmoniously, we can easily achieve success. And

that harmony comes from here too [points at his photo of *Adam Makna*]. This is what it says in Chapter 3. In Chapter 3 it says. Chapter 3. (I have translated this alongside.¹⁴)

Ingkang wajib ditindaki saben dino. – What must be practised every day.

Siji. Wediya ing luput. – One. Be afraid of making mistakes.

Lara. Nyajan bener nanging kudu bener. – Two. Even when you are right, be appropriately right.

Telu. Kudu sampurna ing budi. – Three. Strive for good behavior.

Papat. Kudu welas marang sapadha-padha. – Four. Give love and affection to others.

Lima. Kudu tepa marang sapadha-padha. – Five. Be tolerant to others.

Enem. Kudu wediya ing hukum. – Six. Be obedient to the Law.

And then there's more below.

Pepali. – Prohibitions.

Siji. Aja mamrih darbeke liyan. – One. Do not desire the possession of others.

Lara. Aja milik sing dudu musthine. – Two. Do not desire what is not one's right.

Telu. Aja deksiya marang sapadha-padha. – Three. Do not do cruel things to others.

Papat. Aja... Sewenang-wenang. – Four. Do not treat others arbitrarily or tyrannically.

Lima. Aja padha jajal dinajat. – Five. Do not mock one another.

Enem. Aja padha wadan winada. – Six. Do not disparage one another.

Pitu. Aja kalimput, sing sabar lan eling. – Seven. Do not let your emotions control you, be patient, alert and careful.

¹⁴ English translation of Adam Makna is taken from Sutarto (2006, 46).

Now, if we can practise all of this... Maybe. We can all live in peace and harmony.

Figure 4.10 A blurry photo of Adam Makna, the holy book of Buddha Jawa Sanyata.
Photo: Tono

Finally, as the idea of belonging is inseparable from place, it is worth noting the important underlying factors that are crucial in understanding why young people's success is situated in Ngadas. Firstly, as previously mentioned in Chapter Three, the population of Buddha Jawa Sanyata can only be found in Ngadas. For my participants who belonged to the Buddha Jawa Sanyata religious group, they saw it as impossible to practice their very distinct rituals and values outside of Ngadas as the combination of Jawa Sanyata, Theravadan and Maitreiya Buddhism they have is unique to Ngadas only. Here we can see how the Buddha Jawa Sanyata habitus does not only instill a "sense of place" (Bourdieu 1984, 466) but also it gives rise to "the sense of limits" (Bourdieu 1974) to their aspirations of success that are bound to a particular social space.

The strong link between success and the sense of place is, however, not limited to Buddha Jawa Sanyata youth, especially noting that religion in Ngadas is closely intertwined with communal affairs such as *adat*. For non-Buddhists like Ida and Rahayu, being a Muslim or Hindu Tengger is a different experience to being a Muslim or Hindu outside of the

Tengger culture. The possibility of *adat* coexisting with Islam especially, is seen as problematic in many parts of Indonesia, even in the already Islamised villages of the Tengger highlands (Hefner 1985). To practise religion and *adat*, side by side, was an important element of success for young people in Ngadas. For Ida, as significant was religion in her life, the idea to undermine *adat* was unthinkable:

Ida: I think it's important to follow the *adat*. Because when it comes to *adat*, we must follow because we live here. But when it comes to religion... I guess, your religion is yours, my religion is mine. To have faith is just for myself, but *adat* is for everyone. I don't think *adat* will ever be abandoned here, *mbak*.

This emphasises two key points: how *adat* is embedded within religious practices for young people's success and how achieving success through religious practices is underpinned by social capital in the form of reciprocity or social exchange that maintains and enhances trust and harmony and "facilitates action and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam 1993, 35) between the self and Ngadas as a community. In other words, the significance of social capital for young people's success provides symbolic value not only for the individual, but also for the field as it involves trust, networks and shared values; the key elements of social capital (Kilpatrick and Abbott-Chapman 2002, 47) that have the capacity as a 'social glue' to hold communities and societies together (Misztal 2001), to maintain cohesion, cooperation and collective action (Holland 2008).

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed how participants in my study articulated their notions of success through their work practices (and their relation to educational practices), familial and relational practices, and religious practices. Based on the photographs and conversations shared by participants in my study, I discovered that young people's perceptions of, and practices for, success were significantly shaped by their familial habitus, community habitus or doxa, and religious habitus. I then analysed how in these practices, social capital emerged as the capital with symbolic value which provides meaning for both the self and the community through reciprocity and good relationships. The emergence of social capital with distinction as a capital that holds symbolic value in

the field of Ngadas through these practices is also shaped by *adat*, i.e. through customs on land ownership, values on filial piety and rituals for maintaining harmony. Descriptions of these practices for success showed how achieving success in Ngadas is essentially underpinned by reciprocity and the social exchanges of social capital that maintain trust and harmony for the benefit of the self and Ngadas as the community.

Chapter Five: *Adat* for success

Chapter Introduction

In this chapter, I continue the description of *adat* provided in Chapter Three, and the discussion of practices for success in Chapter Four by focusing how *adat* and the reciprocity or the gift exchange that is embedded within it, underpins the significance of social capital within the economic, social and cultural practices for success in Ngadas. With a focus on the relationship between *adat* and practices for success, I elaborate on the social capital processes; that is the interaction between social capital and other forms of capitals, and the accumulation and exchanges of capitals from which social capital emerges (with distinction) as the capital which holds the greatest symbolic value, and explains many of the dispositions, actions, perceptions and practices for success in the field of Ngadas. I argue that a deeper understanding of the role of *adat* for success contributes to a relational framework in understanding social capital, where the symbolic meaning of capital as individual success becomes interrelated with the success of Ngadas as a collective.

In the previous chapter, I discussed how work, familial/relational, and religious practices for success contributed to young people's notions of success. What is interesting to note is just how deeply *adat* is embedded within these practices. As *pemuda adat* – young people from a traditional cultural village – my study shows how the role of *adat* is inseparable from their everyday practices. For participants in this study, I found that *adat* plays an important role in shaping their lives, particularly in the form of rituals, ceremonies, and the responsibilities that come along with them, in the form of unwritten and given regulations or traditions, manners or customs, and social values. In this chapter, I pay closer attention to how work, familial/relational and religious practices for success are underpinned by strong social capital that is founded on reciprocity or a gift exchange which is embedded with and shaped by *adat* (customs, rituals, values) in Ngadas. I argue that a focus on social capital as social exchange is capable of capturing the social capital processes behind young people's understandings of success.

The role of *adat* in the practices for success

In work practices, we can first identify how *adat* in the form of custom, allowed young people to have sustainable access to the means of production by inheriting and owning land for farming. In that section (see Chapter Four), I also showed how access to economic capital would only hold symbolic meaning for young people in Ngadas if it contributed to their recognition as *mandiri* and if they were able to use the capital for *berbakti, balas budi*, and make their parents happy. The desire to fulfil filial piety and filial obligations (through familial/relational practices) in young people was also based on deeply held notions of *adat*. This reminds me of a quote by Pak Aidit, where he said, “There is this *adat*, the custom here... that ensures no parents to live on their own. That’s just not possible.” (Aidit, personal communication, July 21, 2017). The examples from both work and relational practices for success illustrate how for the accumulation of economic capital to hold symbolic value or provide meaning for the self (success as *illutio*), it must be underpinned by the accumulation of social capital, primarily in the familial context.

Furthermore, this also supports young people’s preferences to remain in Ngadas and work as farmers, because the symbolic value of economic capital is also greatly enhanced if it serves as a form of social capital accumulation. From this, we can see how what holds symbolic value for young people in Ngadas as success, is not the accumulation of wealth per se, but the ability for economic capital to be exchanged and transformed into the accumulation of social capital to maintain and develop good relationships, trust, and reciprocity with their family. In other words, in the context of young people’s success, the accumulation of capitals also contributes to the cultivation of meaning for one’s being or *illutio* – a “way of *being in* the world, of being occupied in the world” (Bourdieu 2002, 135) that generates a sense of meaning and purpose to one’s life.

The significance of social capital for young people in my study, is not limited to kin relations, but extends to the community level. In the previous chapter, I have shown how young people’s understandings of success were interconnected to their sense of purpose or *illutio* that is gained from investing in social relationships. It supports an understanding of success as a sense of being and belonging with and for others that ties

young people's individual success with the collective success of Ngadas as an economic, social and cultural community.

In particular, the section on religious practices (in Chapter Four) demonstrated the strong link between young people's success, religious practices and values, relationships and communal affairs through *adat*. This section emphasises how achieving success through religious practices is underpinned by the conversion of cultural capital (knowledge and ideas shaped by religious habitus) to enhance social capital (e.g. the role of religion and *adat* in maintaining religious harmony in Ngadas), which aimed to maintain not only one's religious identity, but also trust and harmony in Ngadas as a religiously diverse community today.

My study shows that maintaining trust and harmony in the context of social change was indeed seen as important and valuable, not only for the individual for inner peace and religious identity, but also for the community as a whole (see Chapter 4.3.3). From conversations with young people and village leaders, it seemed that recent changes of religions in Ngadas strengthened this urgency to maintain trust and harmony within Ngadas. On one occasion, Pak Aidit expressed his concern on the recent appearance of Ngadas women in *niqab*:

Aidit: Yes, things have changed. I heard that someone wears a *cadar* (niqab) now! Yes, I was recently told that someone wears that, during *betek* you know. Wow, there's someone from Ngadas that wears the *cadar* like that? Told the girls who were at the *betek*.

This illustration below from my *klumpukan* with the Buddha Jawa Sanyata youth further explains the need for religion and *adat* to go hand in hand in Ngadas:

Mudita: Maybe for now... Well I'm not speaking ill of it really. Wearing the *cadar*, I mean, back then if you want to wear a veil, well just wear a veil.... To be honest, if it's worn here it's not good. Because, like...

Vino: It's not the identity of Ngadas people.

Mudita: Yes, and they also don't... they are not like they were before. They have changed.

Vino: They never take part in our ceremonies like before, such as *Karo*, *Sadranan*, so... like...

Mudita: [It] seems like they are avoiding things here... like if there is *kemenyan* (incense). But that's needed for our ancestors. But they don't want to. [They think it's] a deviation of their religion, maybe.

What is important to highlight here is the significance of maintaining the elements of social capital through religious practices for success. These elements, "expectations and obligations of trust and reciprocity, and establishing norms and values in relationships" (Coleman 1988 as quoted in Schaefer-McDaniel 2004, 156), are based on a strong collective and shared belonging to the village and are deliberately upheld as they are intended to maintain harmony. My findings also show that the absence of participation in this exchange (the lack of social capital accumulation) will then lead to alienation or exclusion. Thus, I found that participation in the practices of *adat* was crucial for community members in Ngadas as it symbolically performed a sense of belonging or inclusion, which also shows how social capital emerges with distinction as it holds a symbolic value of belonging to Ngadas as the field. This reminded me of the story of a *Pak Haji* (Mister Hajj) who had become a social outcast in Ngadas since embracing an 'extreme' form of Islam:

Rara: So, are there people, who have left the *adat* behind, *Pak*?

Aidit: There are. Old people. An old person who now has done *haji* (pilgrimage). And he has disciples who have left it all behind as well. He lives down there. He doesn't do *adat*. So yeah it becomes broken. He basically becomes alienated by people here. Alienated, there is no communication like there was before. His relatives, many of them are Buddhists... But the communication is just on the lips, it doesn't reach the hearts. So, he doesn't... if there's a ceremony he doesn't get invited. I actually feel terrible about it. But because his denomination is like that. Well Islam has many denominations, right. Don't get me wrong, the people from below who are Muslims but their denomination is still NU (*Nadhatul Ulama*), don't even like those [extreme] denominations. He just happens to follow a very extremist school, really. Extreme... Had he still followed NU it would still be... moderate. Still could be, what's is called? Flexible.

As I have previously mentioned in the beginning of Chapter Three, it is important to establish an understanding of Ngadas as a dynamic rural context. While it is labelled a 'traditional cultural village', change is still inevitable in Ngadas. However, evidence from my study suggests that *adat* is the constant that enables and maintains the reciprocity

that underpins social capital for the success of the young people in my study in Ngadas. In defining social capital, Bourdieu (1993, 143) asserts that it consists of social networks and connections, “contacts and group memberships which, through the accumulation of exchanges, obligations and shared identities, provide actual or potential support and access to valued resources”. In this case, we can see how the preservation of *adat* provides access to valued resources to young people’s success. *Adat* in the form of customs, rituals, ceremonies and values not only generate a shared identity, a sense of belonging and sense of community, but on a deeper level, *adat* also represents young people’s access to economic, cultural capital, social and symbolic capital. As the above example shows, failure to maintain *adat* can also result in exclusion. Furthermore, I believe that *adat* also serves as a thread to connect the past and present, thus maintaining a cohesiveness to the community which many other villages in Indonesia (for example, the nearby Tengger villages) have lost. I argue that this is why *adat* plays a central part in the lives of young people in Ngadas, and how it shapes their perceptions, appreciations and dispositions towards success.

The *sumbangan* ritual exchange system in Ngadas – a system of reciprocity in Ngadas where people give gifts to sponsor each other’s festivals – is another strong example to illustrate how *adat* permeates the everyday practices of young people. In *sumbangan*, gifts are carefully recorded in *sumbangan* books and are considered as a basic social responsibility. It is designed to “keep the exchange relationship open” and “the siblingship of that exchange” to “not be broken” (Hefner 1985, 222). To maintain this continuous relationship of giving and receiving at the heart of village social interaction, the amount of the first gift returned must always exceed the earlier gift. In *sumbangan*, we can see how sociability is practised by young people: how social capital is first exchanged with and also enhanced economic capital, which is later converted to cultural capital (and more social capital) that holds symbolic value in the society. *Sumbangan* thus becomes important not only in sustaining the ritual reproduction in Ngadas, but also in reducing the economic burden of families by supplying the economic capital for rituals, and lubricating social relationships and somehow “forcing” active engagement from all members of the society. The latter is indeed true, as Hefner confirmed in 1985 that not engaging in *sumbangan* in Ngadas is “to isolate oneself from village social life, and to risk remaining a social juvenile” (223).

Another example to illustrate the role of *adat* at the heart of Ngadas can be seen through *guyub rukun*. From my fieldwork, I noticed that long and intense conversations that cover the topic of *adat* usually involved discussions about what kind of values were considered as true to *adat* in Ngadas. In other words, the kind of values (*nilai*) that were seen as part of *adat* but also valuable to maintain the *adat*. My interview with Pak Supomo, the former *petinggi* (village chief) explored this:

Supomo: When we talk about values of Ngadas well that is *guyub* (togetherness in harmony). Yes, these are still held firm. If someone wants to build a house, we're still together in [helping] him/her. If someone dies, everyone takes part. Community service (*kerja bakti*), well... Back then, here until *Coban Pelangi* (Pelangi Waterfall), we would only do one community service. On a Sunday, everyone would come and join. So, everything is done in just one day! Because everyone participates.

The word *guyub* is key here in understanding the social value that is strongly upheld in Ngadas. *Guyub* is actually short for *guyub rukun*. It is rather difficult to provide an ideal translation of this term but my interpretation would translate it as “togetherness in solidarity and peace/harmony”. *Guyub rukun* was also used many times during interviews and *klumpukan* with youth participants, especially when my participants were elaborating on what success meant for Ngadas as a society. Tono, for example, found it very difficult to separate the idea of personal success with the success of Ngadas as a whole. “*Rame ing gawe, sepi ing pamrih* (To work hard, to help others unconditionally)”, he said, citing a saying from Buddha Jawa Sanyata that suitably represented his understanding of success. “It’s like, *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation). I think that is also success. To help each other. *Guyub rukun*.” On this basis, I would argue that *guyub rukun* is one of the key underlying values that holds the community together and it is constantly reproduced through the practice of rituals and ceremonies, in other words *adat*. This is especially evident in how rituals and ceremonies affect and are “affected by village social and economic organisation” in which “the requirements and consequences of ritual practice extend across social fields” (Hefner 1985, 216).

The case of *betek*, for example, demonstrates the importance of maintaining good social relationships that is manifested in the abundance of *betek* (festival labourers) which determines the success of one’s ceremony (Hefner 1985, 222). The participation of community members in Ngadas as each other’s festival labourers are integral to the social

and economic organisation of Ngadas as they are not only ritual exchange partners that sustain the ritual reproduction in the village, but they also serve as a form of social capital that reaffirms or even amplifies the social position of the festival hosts in the society. In short, this example shows how *guyub rukun* as part of *adat* values maintains the *adat*, while at the same time, *adat* (through rituals, ceremonies, exchange systems) perpetuates Ngadas as a cultural community, a *desa adat*.

My study also shows that the perpetuation of *adat*, was also influenced by external factors. To illustrate this is the impact of tourism on the preservation of *adat*, and the social exchanges for the accumulation of social capital that underpin it. The recently given title of *desa wisata* for Ngadas, not only served as a money-making endeavour but also as a means to sustain *adat*. This example below illustrates how young people perceived that maintaining good manners (*adat*) are important for tourism:

Rara: What do you mean by [maintaining] *adat*? Is it *adat* in Ngadas, or Javanese? Or *adat* of...?

Nyoto: Ngadas. Our specialty...

Rara: So, what is it, Ngadas' specialty?

Vino: The specialty, especially of Ngadas is, friendliness. So, whenever there's a visitor, well you know about it yourself right, *mbak* because you've been here long. Whenever there's a visitor, he/she will definitely be served drinks. As young people we must, like... not leave behind, these little things. As it is perhaps the highlight of, what is it... the excellence of Ngadas village for...

Nyoto: Tourism!

However, due to the limits of my study, the future impacts of tourism remain unseen. Further research is needed to understand how tourism will affect the economic, social and cultural practices and whether it is capable of changing the social capital processes that underpin the everyday practices of young people in Ngadas.

This chapter has illustrated how the accumulation and exchanges of social capital held the greatest symbolic value for the success of young people in Ngadas. These examples not only illustrated the processes of social capital and the reciprocal exchanges that

underpinned it, but also the processes of belonging: how young people shared a collective identity and community through *adat*. Understanding this symbolic value that *adat* holds also shows how through everyday practices, such as *sumbangan*, *guyub rukun*, and most recently tourism, young people in Ngadas perpetuate *adat*, and in turn, maintain the sense of belonging to Ngadas as their community and place for success. However, during my time in Ngadas, I have also encountered examples of young people who were struggling to be part of Ngadas, *to belong*. This is illustrated below in the case of Rahayu.

The ‘Misfit’: The case of Rahayu

“Hey, why are you still here? I thought you went to school for orientation?” I questioned Rahayu about her high school orientation plan. “No more school”, she answered despondently. “What happened?” She did not answer and just stared at her phone in complete silence. Then Ida responded, “Her family would not let her continue her education.” As much as the majority of my participants stationed their aspirations of success in Ngadas, Rahayu was a case that made me realise that I could not overlook the complexity and nuances of life of young people in Ngadas.

Unlike other young people I met, Rahayu desperately wanted to continue to high school, and I found that her desire to leave Ngadas was also quite strong. To explain, Rahayu has been educated outside Ngadas since middle school, moving from one school to another until she finally settled in an Islamic middle school in a town called Tumpang, a nearby busy town that has a shopping center, small cafes, a lot of minimarts and also where her boyfriend lives. She is the only child and grandchild from parents and grandparents who are potato farmers, but she herself had never done farming or been taught to do farm work before. Although she was raised in a Hindu family (*familial habitus*), she also wears a veil, which embodies the Islam that she learned from school (*institutional/school habitus*). She also demonstrated a fluidity in religion where I found that the performativity of her religion was not confined to one source. Moreover, when I was with her, I often found her complaining about life in Ngadas: “I just can’t wait to go back to Tumpang!” Then she told me that she did not feel that she belonged in Ngadas.

Rahayu is indeed different to the other participants in my study (see Table 2.1). She did not engage in the work, familial/relational and religious practices shared by other young people in Ngadas. She also rarely took part in *adat* rituals which means that she did not engage in the gift exchange system that underpins success in Ngadas for both individual and the community. Rather than spending time joining *betek* or participating in other ceremonies in the village, she spent most of her time connecting with them online, chatting on her cell phone as most of the friends she made were with people from 'below'. We could perhaps say that her social capital was lower in contrast to her peers in Ngadas.

In Rahayu, I noticed a divided habitus, or what Bourdieu terms a *habitus clivé*, "a sense of self 'torn by contradiction and internal division'" (2008, 16), particularly between the desire to make her parents happy, to fulfil her educational and employment aspirations, and the need to belong to a community that shared similar values to hers. During *klumpukan*, she shared that her main *cita-cita* was to make her parents happy and proud, not by becoming a farmer, but by being highly educated and successful "below":

Rahayu: To make my parents happy with my own abilities. So, once I finish school I will have a job 'below' right, and have my own company one day, and then I will get married and of course come back to Ngadas because I'm the only child so I can't leave. Then I will help my mother with farming, while also having a source of income from below. That was my dream, *mbak*.

In addition, conversations with Rahayu suggest that the way she understood success was also not grounded in any religious and communal belonging that was spatially restricted to Ngadas. It was only her strong affective bond to her family that caused her to sacrifice her educational aspirations and stay in the village instead. From Rahayu's case, we can first understand how belonging is not a static concept. Like habitus, capital and field, it is a relational, dynamic, "fragile, contingent, and temporary achievement" that "becomes particularly evident in moments of crisis" (Gammeltoft 2014, 232). However, with her lack of social capital and lack of participation in *adat*, Rahayu also appeared to have less chance of becoming successful in Ngadas. This shows how important social capital, particularly participation in the gift exchange system was for the success of young people in Ngadas and how not participating in *adat* could lead to a feeling of exclusion from a shared sense of belonging and community to Ngadas.

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I focused on social capital as reciprocal social exchanges and how it underpinned work, familial/relational and religious practices for success in Ngadas. I provided examples of the social capital processes that take place behind the accumulation and exchange of capital in order to hold symbolic value as success for young people in Ngadas. I argued that the symbolic value that *adat* holds as a sense of belonging, a collective identity and sense of community shows that what is valuable in Ngadas does not only pertain to individual gains but significantly to collective gains. I also illustrated the urgency to maintain social capital (good relationships, trust, reciprocity and harmony) in Ngadas in the face of social change. Thus, for young people the maintenance of *adat* is important to ensure the accumulation and exchanges of social capital, and that social capital as symbolic capital is maintained for the preservation of *adat*. I concluded this chapter with the case of Rahayu, illustrating the centrality of social capital and *adat* as exchange for the success of young people in Ngadas. The case of Rahayu showed how not participating in *adat*, can make one excluded from having a shared sense of belonging and community to Ngadas.

Chapter Six: “Ngadas: Segalanya wis!”¹⁵

After conducting this research, I came to realise that my two research questions are closely interrelated, where the unpacking of one is dependent on the other. To fully understand what success means for young people in Ngadas, my findings showed that it is important to first understand how the specific social, economic and cultural contexts of Ngadas shape young people’s views of success. As discussed in Chapter Four and Five, I have shown that focusing on young people’s practices for success allows us to explore how young people viewed success. I also discussed how the capitals and habitus unique to the field of Ngadas shaped young people’s perceptions of success. To reinforce what has been discussed in the previous chapters, in this section, I begin by revisiting my second research question to show how important Ngadas is in shaping my participant’s practices, before I summarise what success means for young people in Ngadas.

How does the particular context of Ngadas influence young people’s understandings of success?

One of the questions that guided me throughout my research was why the majority of young people in Ngadas do not want to leave the village. Prior to doing fieldwork in July 2017, I considered this an important question because it reflected the sense of curiosity exhibited by many documentary photographers, researchers and academics that I had previously spoken to about the life trajectories of young people in Ngadas. Further, when looking at it on a bigger scale, their desire to stay in the village was also at odds to the narratives of success for young people upheld by the Indonesian government through the

¹⁵ This is taken from an interview with Nyoto (mentioned at the beginning of this thesis) in which he defines Ngadas as ‘everything’.

promotion of competition, individualism and ‘entrepreneurial’ skills in the national youth policy (White 2012, 1), through schooling (Ingriani 2010), and the upward trend of youth urbanisation and the cultural logics that come with it.

Through these normative expectations of youth mobility and productivity (Cuervo and Wyn 2017, 10), Indonesian young people are expected to become successful by furthering their educational and employment aspirations in ways that comply with the idea of the modern and productive youth of Indonesia. However, after I conducted my fieldwork, the answer to my question was not found in young people wanting to refuse a national narrative of success, or to reject the value of higher education (see Chapter Four on young people’s perception of education), nor in a rejection of urban careers entirely. Through conversations and my participants’ photographs, I came to realise that the reason why they did not want to leave Ngadas was in fact about belonging, confirms other research with rural youth (Corra 2015; Kilpatrick and Abott-Chapman 2002; Howley 2006; Byun et al. 2012; Theodori and Theodori 2015; Cuervo and Wyn 2017) For example, Cuervo and Wyn’s (2017, 2) longitudinal analysis of young people in rural Australia illustrates how “young people build meaning through their connection with people and places over time” where “the ways in which everyday practices over time build the layers of an affective experience of place”, or in other words, belonging.

However, to quote Cuervo and Wyn (2017, 1), “what does it take for young people to say ‘I belong here’ and what does this mean?” The answer to this reflects particular social, geographic and political contexts. For young people in my study, I learned that their strong, affective bonds to Ngadas were commonly expressed in two ways: a *sense of belonging to a Ngadas identity* that is underpinned by a strong sense of responsibility to *adat* (rituals, values and customs) as *pemuda adat* (*adat* youth); and second, a *sense of solidarity and community that is built on strong relationships, trust and reciprocity in Ngadas* as their home and their place in the world. Similar to Howley’s (2006) research, apart from familial and religious belonging, it is this sense of attachment to the community, gained from their everyday practices in the field of Ngadas, that greatly influenced participants’ aspirations for success and their reluctance to leave the village for educational or employment opportunities.

Drawing on what my participants shared during *klumpukan* and interviews, I have come

to realise that an inquiry into young people's success is also an inquiry into how they understand their *place in the world* (Jackson 1995, 99). For my participants, their familial belonging, religious belonging, and communal belonging are the formative elements that contribute to an understanding of Ngadas as their place in the world. This resonates with rural youth studies which have found that deep "interactions within communities reinforce a sense of community which can provide a feeling of purpose and power to individuals" (Corra 2015, 25; McMillan and Chavis 1986), or in the context of my study, social capital as symbolic capital.

Furthermore, to use MacMillan and Chavis' (1986) conceptualization of belonging, the way young people in Ngadas expressed belonging revealed two overlapping components: (1) "membership (sense of feeling part of a group or environment; sense of feeling like one belongs in their environment) and (2) influence (the individual matters to the group; cohesiveness; the group is complete only with the individual)" (as quoted in Schaefer-McDaniel 2004, 163). This affirms Nicole Schaefer-McDaniel's (2004, 163) framework of understanding social capital for children and young people which emphasises social networks and interactions, trust and reciprocity, a sense of belonging or place attachment and the interrelatedness of these elements.

A focus on belonging for success proved valuable to answer the question of how Ngadas shapes young people's aspirations for success, including their unwillingness to leave their village. Putting belonging at the centre of this discussion was crucial "to comprehend how individuals come to project their labour and love in specific directions, forming communities, making sacrifices, and enduring pain" (Gammeltoft 2014, 232). However, an emphasis on belonging also brings forth an exclusionary element. The case of Rahayu in Chapter Five illustrates how her inability or her lack of desire to accumulate, exchange and transform social capital to symbolic capital in Ngadas, excludes her from the gift-giving system that underpins Ngadas as a cultural, social and economic society. Rahayu's struggle to belong demonstrates how belonging is not a static concept, but is dynamic and relational. It also shows understanding success through the lens of belonging makes visible those who are excluded as people who are less successful in the field of Ngadas. The case of Rahayu demonstrated how not participating in *adat*, makes one excluded from having a shared sense of belonging and community to Ngadas. Moreover, Rahayu's inability to identify her 'influence' to the cohesiveness of Ngadas as a community also

shows how the quantity and quality of social capital that one accumulates shapes one's influence or role in the community, which eventually shapes the relationship between one's sense of being (*illusio*) and sense of belonging. I noticed a strong relationship between a sense of being and belonging in my other participants (except Rahayu), particularly in the way they used *adat* to their advantage and how they operated the new tourism opportunities for their own gain, which was also showing quite a lot of agentic creativity – juggling the old and new worlds simultaneously. I found that this agentic opportunity provided by the new era of tourism in Ngadas demonstrated and strengthened young people's influence to the collective success of Ngadas as both a *desa adat* and *desa wisata*.

Adat, belonging and Ngadas: Sense of cycle to maintain collective success

Moreover, the salience of a strong belonging to Ngadas is not only for young people's success, but also for the success of Ngadas as a community. The case study of young people in Ngadas presents an understanding of success that ties personal success with the collective success of Ngadas as an economic, social and cultural community. The reasons behind this are three-fold. First, from discussions in Chapter Four and Five we can see how economic, cultural and social practices for success in Ngadas were underpinned by social capital that was founded on reciprocity or gift exchange which was embedded in and shaped by *adat* (customs, rituals, values). In this context, *adat* could be understood as *habitus* and/or *doxa* that influenced young people's perceptions and appreciations towards the form of capital that could hold a symbolic value. A focus on *adat* thus captures the complexity of the social capital processes for young people in Ngadas. Through photographs and conversations with participants in this study, my findings showed that *adat* was central not only in sustaining the social and ritual reproduction in Ngadas, but also in maintaining social integration and harmony in the face of new socio-economic and cultural challenges, including religious diversity. Although farming, tourism and the religious population have gradually brought about changes in Ngadas, my study showed that *adat* was the constant that was actively sustained and maintained by the people, including the young people in Ngadas. In Chapter Five, I argued that this

was the cycle that was central to Ngadas as a society, maintaining both *adat* in the form of rituals, ceremonies, customs and values, and *adat* and in the form of social capital and social exchanges. Together these underpinned the collective success of Ngadas.

Furthermore, the emergence of social capital as the capital with distinction in the field of Ngadas means that a relational framework for understanding social capital for young people in Ngadas is needed. Using this framework, the significance of social capital as exchange for young people's success provides symbolic value not only for the individual, but also for the field. For Ngadas, these relational processes involved trust, networks and shared values; the key elements of social capital (Kilpatrick and Abbott-Chapman 2002, 47) that holds the capacity as a 'social glue' to keep communities and societies together (Misztal 2001). As illustrated in Chapter Four and Chapter Five, it is a form of social capital which operates for cohesion, cooperation and collective action (Holland 2008, 7).

Finally, these everyday practices for success that were deeply embedded with *adat*, shaped young people's sense of belonging which also influenced their notions of success. This not only shows how and why *adat* was one of the main reasons young people stayed in Ngadas, but it also that by staying in Ngadas, young people played a vital part in maintaining the ritual and cultural reproduction for Ngadas. From my study, I discovered that this cycle of cultural and social reproduction is key for Ngadas as it serves to maintain both *adat* in the form of rituals, ceremonies, customs and values, and the gift exchange of social capital for the collective success of the whole of community.

Conclusion: What does success mean for young people in Ngadas?

To conclude, for young people in Ngadas, success is a form of *illusio*, a "way of *being in* the world, of being occupied in the world" (Bourdieu 2002, 135) that generates a sense of meaning and purpose to one's life. My participants showed that an understanding of success is an understanding of being as belonging with and for others. Success is achieved through the accumulation of capital, particularly social capital that could be transformed into a symbolic capital: "the acquisition of a reputation for competence and an image of respectability and honourability" (Bourdieu 1984, 291). This symbolic capital is achieved

through work, familial/relational and religious practices that are embedded with *adat* and are situated in the field of Ngadas. The embeddedness of *adat* in these practices also illustrates a strong connection between young people's success, a sense of belonging and place. Ngadas for young people becomes, a *thick place* that gives a sense of "fixity and rootedness to family, place and a way of life" that is manifested in everyday practices and "a longing to transmit to their offspring practices that nurture belonging (Cuervo and Wyn 2017, 10). Understanding success for young people in Ngadas thus is inseparable from understanding their sense of belonging, sense of community, their place in the world, and their being.

These practices for success are also underpinned by strong social interconnections, or social capital, in order to maintain good relationships, trust, and reciprocity amongst family, friends and community members. The case of young people in Ngadas demonstrates the significance of gift-giving or reciprocity as a cultural way of maintaining not only the individual's sense of being, but also *adat*, social cohesion and cooperation in society, especially in the face of social changes. It also critiques the understanding that for social capital to emerge with distinction as symbolic capital, it must be accumulated through individual rivalry. In this study, social capital for success was practiced as a form of social exchange founded on reciprocity or the gift exchange system that also defines belonging and inclusion in the field for young people in Ngadas. Following this logic, social capital was a symbolic capital that cultivates one's *illusio* which proposes a relational understanding of *success as being and belonging with and for others*. The reason for this, to requote Tono, success in Ngadas is "*rame ing gawe, sepi ing pamrih* (to work hard, to help others unconditionally. It's like, *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation). I think that is also success. To help each other. *Guyub rukun* (togetherness in harmony)".

However, it is worth noting that this particular understanding of success for young people in my study is in part enabled by the sustainable economic viability, i.e. land ownership and successful farming in Ngadas, made possible by *adat*. This highlights the cycle of success that is particular to Ngadas, where individual and collective success become interdependent because of and with *adat*. All of this perhaps brings us back to the

beginning of this thesis and helps to understand why Nyoto defined the whole of Ngadas as success:

Figure 6.1 A photo of the entrance gate of Ngadas Village. Photo: Nyoto

Rara: "Why is success, Ngadas?"

Nyoto: "Because, Ngadas is... *segalanya, wis! Segalanya.*" (It's just, everything. It's everything.)

Final remarks

I conclude with some final suggestions based on the limitations of my research and for further research in the area of rural youth aspirations. First, due to the constraints on a Master's thesis, I only engaged with six participants and did not specifically focus on gender, religion, sexuality or class difference in shaping notions of success. A closer examination based on these backgrounds with a larger groups of participants, I believe, would provide deeper insights into the different forms of habitus, capitals and practices

that shape young people's perceptions of success and enable broader generalisations to be drawn about the young people of Ngadas beyond this small group of six. Furthermore, I believe that a longer timeframe for photo-elicitation and participant observation would contribute to a more engaging methodology and deeper ethnographic examination in understanding how young people perceive and practise success.

Secondly, with regards to further research in Ngadas, I have briefly mentioned the recent changes that were taking place in Ngadas. Apart from successful farming, further research which focuses on understanding the impacts of tourism, new forms of economic developments, and social media in Ngadas over time, and especially how *adat* plays a role in navigating these changes and responding to the possible growing inequality that development brings to Ngadas would be beneficial.

I also believe that in general, further research on rural youth in Indonesia needs expanding. In my research, Ngadas, is a case study that is founded on particular social, cultural and economic settings as both a *desa wisata* and a *desa adat*. Further studies may focus on the construction of rural youth aspirations in different rural contexts, particularly contexts with a different *adat* to Ngadas – for example, a multi-cultural society that upholds different *adat*, or perhaps rural societies with no distinct *adat* could reveal very different practices than I found in Ngadas. This would serve as a foundation for contemporary comparative studies on rural youth success that has the capacity to inform better policy making and general understanding of the complexities that rural societies face in Indonesia.

Finally, the case of young people in Ngadas not only contributes to the limited literature on Tengger culture with a description and analysis on Ngadas as a dynamic and relational rural context, the face of contemporary Tengger, but it also adds to the growing body of work on rural youth aspirations and positive anthropology. The way young people in Ngadas viewed success proposes a rethinking of rural youth success that pays attention to the relational, spatial and dynamic aspects of rurality, which affirms what has been proposed by many rural youth studies (Byun et al. 2012; Cuervo and Wyn 2017; Kilpatrick and Abbott-Champan 2012; Theodori and Theodori 2015). However, my findings further challenge the normative approaches currently undertaken by development and social policy on rural youth in Indonesia, by providing alternative understandings of success based on a careful examination of the socio-cultural and

economic context, particularly highlighting the role of *adat* and where young people are situated within it. The embeddedness of *adat* that is unique to Ngadas within young people's practices for success explained why success is situated in Ngadas because these practices cannot be experienced elsewhere.

An understanding of success through the lens of social capital that is underpinned by reciprocity or the gift exchange, a sense of belonging and community, and a sense of being or *illusio* poses critical questions on the complexities, tensions, exchanges and negotiations in the everyday practices that underpin and enable young people's aspirations for success and for their well-being. The case of young people in Ngadas shows that success is not just a matter of economic exchange that could easily be replaced, uprooted or 'upgraded' to different contexts. Success is also a matter of belonging, and a matter of being. It illuminates the complex relations as to what brings meaning to life and what it means to be human.

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Appendix 1: Ethics Approval (Information and consent sheets)

Invitation to participate in the research project:
Understanding Success: A Case Study of Indonesian Rural Youth

Researcher: Rara Sekar Larasati, Cultural Anthropology, School of Social and Cultural Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET: YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

Dear Research Participant,

My name is Rara Sekar Larasati and I am a post-graduate student in the Cultural Anthropology, Programme, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. I am currently doing my thesis with an interest in young people's understandings of success. The intention of this research is to understand how young people understand and define success and what shapes young people's understanding of success. For this research, I am particularly interested in young people from Ngadas village in East Java, Indonesia.

What is involved with the research?

Becoming successful is one of the life aspirations that many young Indonesians wish to achieve. In Indonesia, success is often seen as being financially wealthy, highly educated, or having an office job in the city. However, these definitions might not necessarily reflect young people's understandings of success. As it is already very common to hear about the perceptions of parents, schools, or the government in Indonesia on what success means for youth, in my research, I want to understand how you personally understand or define success as a young person from Ngadas.

How can you help?

If you agree to participate, I would like to invite you to:

- Take part in a focus group discussion with me and 5 other young people to discuss about your understanding of success. The focus group discussion is likely to last an hour and will take place at a time and location that all participants agree upon. With your permission, I would like to record the discussion.

If you wish to be more involved in this research, I would like to invite you to do one or all of the following activities, depending on what you are interested in:

- Participate in photo-elicitation, where I will invite you to take photos of the things matter the most in your life. I will provide you with a disposable camera

- that you can use to take photos during the walking tour and by yourself for up to one week after the walking tour. I will print out all of the photos taken by you and give a copy of the photos to you as a gift.
- Participate in a follow up individual interview to discuss about the photos you have taken and to further explore your understanding of success. This interview is likely to last an hour and will take place at a time and location we both agree upon. With your permission, I would like to record the interview.

Do you have to participate?

No, you don't have to take part in this project if you don't want to. You can say no straight away, or you can say yes now and change your mind later on. You can stop taking part in the research at any time.

Who else will participate in this study?

I will talk to other people who are also interested in participating in this research including your parents/family members, teachers, head of the village, and other local leaders.

How will the information be used?

I will use the information I collect to produce a master's thesis, academic journal articles, and conference presentations and papers.

All material collected will be kept confidential and no other person besides me and my supervisors will have access to it. If you agree to participate in either the focus group discussion, photo-elicitation and interview with me, you will not be identified in written publications resulting from this research. I will ask you to choose a pseudonym for me to use.

I will store all recorded material (including recordings and written notes) in a secure location. I will offer you a copy of our interview if I record it. I am also happy to give a summary of your interview to review and edit before any written publications are produced. I will destroy all research data in March 2021 (3 years after the conclusion of the research project).

If you accept this invitation, what are your rights as a research participant?

You do not have to accept this invitation if you don't want to. If you do decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;

ask for the audio recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview

- withdraw from the study. You can choose to pull out of the research at any time before 1st of October 2017;
- ask any questions about the study at any time;
- receive a copy of your interview recording (if it is audio recorded);
- review and edit the summary (oral/written) of your participation;
- choose a pseudonym for me to use rather than your real name;
- be given access to any publications resulting from this project.

What support processes are in place for you?

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this research, please contact me at by email or telephone.

You may also contact the Victoria University HEC Convener should you have any ethical concerns about this project. Associate Professor Susan Corbett, can be contacted by email (susan.corbett@vuw.ac.nz) or telephone +64-4-463 5480. We are all available to provide you with any assistance and support you might need.

Thank you in anticipation of your contribution to this study.

Kind regards,

Rara Sekar Larasati

Contact details (provided):

Rara Sekar Larasati, Cultural Anthropology, School of Social and Cultural Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand

Supervisor's contact details:

Dr Lorena Gibson, Cultural Anthropology, School of Social and Cultural Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand

Dr Bronwyn Wood, School of Education, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand.

Title of research:

Understanding Success: A Case Study of Indonesian Rural Youth

Researcher: Rara Sekar Larasati, Cultural Anthropology, School of Social and Cultural Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH: YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

This consent form will be held for [3] years.

In signing this form, I acknowledge that:

- I have been given the information about this research project, an opportunity to ask questions, have them answered to my satisfaction and understand that I can ask further questions at any time.
- I understand that I will be invited to participate in a range of research activities, and that I will have an opportunity to opt out of these after the focus group discussion if I wish.
- I understand that any information that other participants have provided during the focus group interview I will need to keep confidential.
- If I undertake the photo-elicitation activity, I understand that no identifiable images of people will be used in any public documentation from this research.
- I understand that all interactions with the researcher can be recorded and that I have the right to stop the recording at any time.
- I may withdraw from this study (or any information I have provided) before 1st of October 2017 without having to give reasons or without penalty of any sort.
- If I stop taking part in the project, any information I give will be destroyed and the researcher will not use it in her research.

I understand that:

- Any information I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and that the published results will not use my real name, and that no opinions will be attributed to me in any way that will identify me.
- All data will be stored in a secure and password-protected location with access restricted to the researcher.
- The results of this research will be used for master' thesis and a summary of the results may be used in academic reports and/or presented at conferences.

I consent to:

- Taking part in a range of research activities, including:
 - ☐ A focus group discussion
 - ☐ Photo-elicitation
 - ☐ Individual interview

I would like to receive a summary (oral/written) on the key points of my participation in this research.

Yes/No

I would like to receive a summary of the key findings in the research (oral/written) and have added my contact details below.

Yes/No

Full name:	Date:
Signature:	
Contact details:	

Appendix 2: Interviews

Aidit	: 14 th of July 2017, recorded, 35mins
Aidit	: 21 st of July 2017, recorded, 50mins
Bagus	: 22 nd of July 2017, recorded, 34mins
Gugun	: 1 st of August 2017, not recorded
Ida	: 31 st of July 2017, recorded, 30mins
Ida and Rahayu	: 14 th of July 2017, recorded, 55mins
Mudita	: 30 th of July 2017, recorded, 17mins
Mudita, Nyoto, Tono and Vino	: 14 th of July 2017, recorded, 35mins
Nyoto	: 30 th of July 2017, recorded, 23mins
Rahayu	: 31 st of July 2017, recorded, 10mins
Su	: 26 th of July 2017, recorded, 3,5 hrs
Supomo	: 23 rd of July 2017, recorded, 41mins
Susanto	: 18 th of June 2017, not recorded
Tono	: 30 th of July 2017, recorded, 23mins
Vino	: 30 th of July 2017, recorded, 23mins