The 2010 Greater Jakarta Transition to Adulthood Survey

Policy Background No. 3

Markers of Adulthood

Peter McDonald, Anna Reimondos and Iwu Dwisetyani Utomo

The transition to adulthood is marked by the experience of particular life course events including leaving home, entering the labour force market, marrying or and becoming a parent for the first time. In this background paper we examine the timing of these life course markers, and examine how the speed at which the markers are reached has changed across time for young men and women.

The moment through the four demographic markers of adulthood (leaving home, entering the labour force, marrying, and becoming a parent) for men and women in our sample are shown in Figures 1 and 2. For both men and women, leaving home below age 18 is associated with obtaining the first job. Early home leavers were selective of those that left school early and were often migrants to Jakarta who moved away from their parents to the city to find work. 41 per cent of our respondents were migrants to Jakarta but many of these had moved to Jakarta with their parents. After age 18, however, both men and women tended to remain at home with their parents while they entered the paid labour force. Labour force entry occurred over a relatively brief period, between ages 18 and 25. However, 20 per cent of both men and women were still at home with their parents at age 35 even though virtually all of the men and 86 per cent of the women had entered the labour force by age 25.

For men, first marriage occurred on average well after entry to the labour force and well after they had left home. Women also married well after they had entered the labour force but departure from the parental home was simultaneous with marriage until age 25. After age 25, women were more likely to have married than to have left the parental home implying that many married women were living with their parents. Men, on the other hand, were more likely to have left home than to have married at all ages up to age 35 suggesting that, where married couples are living with parents, they are more likely to be living with the wife’s parents. This is consistent with more traditional behaviour among the Javanese and Sundanese ethnic groups. First birth follows closely upon first marriage in most cases; we have found that 15 per cent of first births for women in the sample were conceived outside of marriage and a third of these were born outside of marriage. By the age of 35, the proportion of women that had had a first birth was a little higher than the proportion that had married. Very few of our respondents cohabited before marriage.
What can we say from these results about progression to adulthood? While entry to the labour force is completed for almost all of our respondents by age 25 and occurs sharply between ages 18 and 25, the other three progressions are much more spread out with no age thresholds. 25 per cent of men have not married by age 35 and 20 per cent of both men and women are still at home with their parents at age 35. It would be difficult to suggest that these 35 year-olds were not adults. Thus, of these four markers, only entry to the labour force appears to be a viable marker of adulthood.
Has the timing of reaching the different markers changed over time? To answer this question we split the sample into three age cohorts and compared the percentage in each cohort who had attained each of the four markers by age 20. The results are presented in the table below.

The sample is split into those aged 20-24 (born 1986-1990), 25-29 (born 1981-1985) and 30-34 (born 1976-1980). At age 20, we can see that the percentage of young adults who had already left home was significantly higher for both males and females in the older cohorts. For example, by age 20 about half of women aged 30-34 had already left the parental home, compared to just one third of women aged 20-24.

For entering the labour force, in contrast, there was hardly any difference in the percentage of young adults who had achieved this life course marker by age 20, across the generations.

In terms of marrying and childbearing, for males the difference across cohorts in the percentage who achieved these markers is small and not necessarily consistent across time. However for women a much clearer trend emerges. Among the younger cohorts, the percentage of those who had married or had children by age 20 is considerably lower compared to the older women. For example, among women born in the late 1970s (aged 30-34) one third had already married by age 20, compared to under 20 per cent of women born in the late 1980s (aged 20-24).

Table 1. Percentage of respondents who had reached each adulthood marker by age 20, by age group and sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Markers</th>
<th>Males</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>30-34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left home ( per cent)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entered the labour force ( per cent)</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married ( per cent)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a child ( per cent)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Females</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>30-34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left home ( per cent)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entered the labour force ( per cent)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married ( per cent)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a child ( per cent)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The 2010 Greater Jakarta Transition to Adulthood Survey
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The 2010 Greater Jakarta Transition to Adulthood Study Description:

This study on transition to adulthood is being conducted in Jakarta, Bekasi and Tangerang. This study is the first comprehensive survey on transition to adulthood conducted in Indonesia. The study is funded by the Australian Research Council, WHO, ADSRI-ANU and the ARI-NUS. The sampling involved a two-stage cluster sample using the probability proportional to size (PPS) method. In the first stage, 60 Kelurahan (District) were selected using PPS. In the second stage, five counties (Rukun Tetangga) were chosen within each selected Kelurahan by systematic random sampling. The 300 selected RT were then censused and mapped. The census collected information on the age, sex, marital status and relationship to head of household of all household members. From the census, a listing of all eligible respondents (aged 20-34) living in the Rukun Tetangga was compiled. Eleven eligible persons were then selected by simple random sampling from the eligible county population. This resulted in a sample of 3,006 young adults.

Two survey instruments were employed. The first questionnaire administered by a trained interviewer covered all demographic aspects of the respondents, including their parents and spouse (if the respondent is married): education, work and migration histories; income and economic status; working conditions; living arrangements, relationships and marriage; number of children, family planning practices and abortion; physical-mental health related issues and happiness; smoking and drinking; religiosity and affiliation to religious and or political organizations; gender norms, values of children and world views. The second self-administered questionnaire covered issues relating to sexual practices and behaviour, safe sex practices, STDs/HIV/AIDS knowledge, access to reproductive health services, and drug use. After completion, the respondent sealed this questionnaire in an envelope before returning it to the interviewer. The study also includes 100 in-depth interviews with randomly selected respondents from the survey.

This study will produce a series of policy briefs and if funding is made possible will be continued as a longitudinal panel study following the livelihood, demographic and career aspects of the respondents over 10 years. The same respondents will be interviewed once every three years.