



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Gintingan in Subang : an indigenous institution for sustainable community-based development in the Sunda Region of West Java, Indonesia

Saefullah, K.

Citation

Saefullah, K. (2019, April 30). *Gintingan in Subang : an indigenous institution for sustainable community-based development in the Sunda Region of West Java, Indonesia*. Leiden *Ethnosystems and Development Programme Studies*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/72202>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [Leiden University Non-exclusive license](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/72202>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/72202> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

Author: Saefullah, K.

Title: Gintingan in Subang : an indigenous institution for sustainable community-based development in the Sunda Region of West Java, Indonesia

Issue Date: 2019-04-30

Chapter IV RESEARCH SETTING: INDONESIA AND SUBANG

This Chapter presents an overview of the Republic of Indonesia, and the research area, Kabupaten Subang, and its geographic location within the West Java Province. It contains a brief description of the geographical and historical background of Indonesia, commencing from its geographic location and socio demographic figures, its ancient history, through to the Dutch period up to and after independence. While the details of the villages where the research was carried out are elaborated in a separate chapter, this chapter will briefly introduce the sociography of Subang. This includes a description of the history and socio-demographic, economic development and cultural description of the municipality, including their people and the Sundanese culture, which influence the livelihood in the society.

4.1 Indonesia: A Developing Country at a Glance

This Section briefly elaborates the brief description of Indonesia as the country where the research has been done. The elaboration is divided into two parts: the geography and historical background, and the recent socio-demographic and socio-economic development of the country. Describing the history of Indonesia is rather difficult as the country itself, which has a huge geographical area and is heterogeneous in cultures, does not have a single narrative about its own history. There have been official histories, which play up nationalism and unity in ways that paper over the cracks in the national edifice. These are usually histories of state heroes and big events and do not say much about the experiences of ordinary Indonesians (Vickers 2013). However, to describe the history of Indonesia from an oral historical view is also uneasy as it has numerous angles to take and needs a longer time spent to consider it. As mentioned by Brown (2003), the use of the word ‘Indonesia’ in the historical view is quite problematic as the name probably did not exist until the mid-nineteenth century when the term was used in various ways. While a British geographer, James Richardson Logan, refers to Indonesia as the vast territory with many thousands of islands, many European writers refer to Indonesia as an extension of the Indian subcontinent, particularly from a cultural view, as the term might be retrieved from the two words of ‘India’ and ‘nesos’ (which means ‘island’ in Greek). The British also used the term ‘Further India’ to describe the region, while the Dutch named their colonial possessions as *Nederlands Indië*, meaning ‘Dutch India’ or ‘Dutch Indies’. Only in the early twentieth century Indonesia starts to be recognised in the political and social area, both for the people in the territory who wish to get their independence, and also by the Dutch who occupied the regions for more than a century. Then, in the late 1920s, the nationalists were using the word ‘Indonesia’ as the name of their political parties, representing themselves as Indonesians and referring to their language – a modernized Malay – as Indonesian (*cf.* Brown 2003; Munoz 2006; Vickers 2013).

This Chapter considers the use of the word ‘Indonesia’, meaning a nation which was established after 1945 until the present time. In the context of the geographical, historical, and cultural meaning, the other names of Indonesia, *i.e.* Dutch Indies, Nusantara, Malay Archipelago, and Sundaland, are used interchangeably. The elaboration is then followed by a consideration of the physical environment within which the history of the nation and its people are located. It includes a brief discussion of the societies that were in existence in the region at the beginning of the Common Era, which dates back circa 2000 years ago.

4.1.1 Geography and Historical Background

Indonesia covers a huge geographic area. It has a total of 1,910,931.32 km² of mainlands, spread over about 16,775 islands, of which more than 7,000 are uninhabited. The total area extends 5120 km from the east to the west and 1760 km from the north to the south, which covers a strategic geographic area, as it lies amidst the continents of Asia and Australia and the two oceans, the Pacific and the Indian. The sea territory of Indonesia is four times larger than its land territory, which is approximately 1.9 million square kilometres (including an exclusive economic zone) and encompasses about 81 % of the total area of the country. The total land is excluding the area of the sea, which consists of 284,210.9 km² of the territorial sea, 2,981,211 km² of the Exclusive Economic Zone and 279,322 km² of 12-mile sea zones. It has borders with other countries, *i.e.* 820 km borderlines with Papua New Guinea, 2,004 km with Malaysia (in the Island of Kalimantan) and 269 km borderlines with Timor Leste in the Island of Timor, with a total length of coastline of 104,000 km, the second longest in the world, after Canada. The country is predominantly mountainous with approximately 400 volcanoes, of which 100 are still active. This brings it into a vulnerable situation of a possible disaster, while at the same time it also provides quality in its soils. It supports enormous types of plants and animals. Various rivers water the country and serve as useful transportation arteries in certain islands. The Musi, Batanghari and Indragiri in Sumatera are among the biggest rivers which are used for daily uses as well as transportation, similarly with the Barito, Kapuas, Rejang and Mahakam rivers in Kalimantan and the Digul and Memberano rivers in Papua. In Java, rivers such as the Bengawan Solo, Ciliwung, Citarum and Brantas are mostly used for irrigation and not for transportation (*cf.* Asiainfo 2010; BPS 2015)

The geographic location of Indonesia, which is between two continents and two oceans, makes Indonesia possess a cross-strategic position. Apart from that, the position at the equator line affects the tropical climate, with an average humidity of between 70 – 90%. It has two main seasons in Indonesia: dry season and wet season, and it alternates every six months. The wet season mostly occurs from September until February, while the dry season mostly happens from March to August. In such a geographically diverse country, it is not surprising that about 746 local languages and dialects are spoken by different ethno-cultural groups of the inhabitants. Those local languages are mostly used by people of various ethno-cultural groups in their daily life, apart from their lingua franca, '*bahasa Indonesia*', which is used mostly for education, business and official purposes. Economically, Indonesia became an international hub for trading and transportation (*cf.* Encyclopedia 2007).

Brown (2003) divides the history of Indonesia into eight historical periods: 1) The 'Rise of the States', which is dating back to the years 1 to 1500 AD; 2) The 'Age of Commerce', 1400 to 1700; 3) The 'Period of Economic Demise and Political Decline', 1600 to 1800; 4) The 'Establishment of the Empire', 1800 to 1900; 5) The 'Period of Times of Change', 1900 to 1945; 6) The 'Period of Revolution to Authoritarian Rule', 1945 to 1957; 7) The 'Period of Guided Pancasila Democracy', 1956 to 1998; and 8) The 'Reformation Period', also known as the 'Post-Suharto' era, 1998 until recent times. Although this Chapter will not elaborate each of these historical period of Indonesia, each of the historical period of Indonesia has contributed to the shape of Indonesia today, particularly to the Sundanese Culture. For instance, the religion and trade which were influenced by the first period of 'the rise of the states' while the local initiative was developed mainly during the Dutch colonialisation and Japanese occupation. For instance, indigenous institutions of *Gintingan* and *perelek* in West Java and *jimpitan* in East Java provinces are some examples of these bottom-up initiatives which were established during the colonialisation period of time. In addition to that, the 'Post-colonialisation' after 1945 has also influenced the socio-economy, and socio-cultural conditions of the country, including the establishment of *Pancasila*, the ideological and philosophical basis of the Republic of Indonesia,

which consists of five inseparable and interrelated principles. It was inspired by the urge for unity and for the achievement of common goals and for democracy, built upon the age-old Indonesian concepts of *Gotong Royong* ('Communal and Mutual Assistance'), *Musyawarah* ('Deliberation of Representatives') and *Mufakat* ('Consensus'). According to Brown (2003), the national motto of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* ('Unity in Diversity') was also established during the period of time of the revolution to authoritarian rule between 1945 to 1957. The great economic development under the military control happened during the period of time of 1957 to 1998, until President Suharto stepped down in 1998. The era after the fall of Soeharto is usually called the 'Reformation Era'. Between 1998 and 2014, the country has had five Presidents, namely: B.J Habibie (1998-1999), Abdurrahman Wahid (1999-2001), Megawati Sukarnoputri (2001-2004), Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who has been elected for two terms (2004-2014), and Joko Widodo (2014-today). During President Habibie's short administration, political prisoners were released and some controls on freedom of speech were lifted. Elections for the national, provincial and sub-provincial parliaments were also held. In general, these periods of time of governancies have been highlighted as the democratisation era, as the voices of the people have been accommodated in the formal systems of the country. However, there are challenges to the livelihood of the indigenous knowledge, systems and practices. While the government has been trying to redevelop the country after the monetary crises in the late 1990s with the massive developments in various sectors, including huge projects on infrastructures, there are threats to the livelihood of indigenous knowledge, systems and practices as they have been considered in various cases as obstacles to the progress of development, which is in fact criticised in this study (cf. Ricklefs 2001; Brown 2003; Djen Amar 2010; Britannica 2017).

4.1.2. Administrative and Socio-Demographic Figures

Local Administrative System

In terms of administrative units, Indonesia has 34 provinces, 98 cities, 416 districts, 7,024 sub-districts, and 81,626 villages. About 12,827 villages or circa 15.61% are located in coastal areas while another 69,363 villages or circa 84.39% are located in non-coastal areas. The administrative structures were designed to ensure that the plans and policies set by the government will be executed effectively. Figure 4.1 shows the local administrative structure in Indonesia. Local Community in the Indonesian development refers to the administrative structure from the district level (*Kabupaten/Kota*) to the lowest level (*Rukun Tetangga* or RT). RT is a sub-group of households in the groups (*Rukun Warga* or RW) of a sub-village (*dusun, kampung*) or a village (*desa, kelurahan*). A sub-group (RT) is the lowest democratic system in the community in Indonesia. This sub-group was mainly established as a representative of the households to facilitate any interest which is related to the need of the people, from administrative matters, *i.e.* applying for identity cards, social gatherings among the nearest neighbourhood, as well as a democratic channel in which the head of the RT will bring the voice of the people to the higher administrative structure (RW). Although the roles of this group and sub-group are more voluntary, its important role in the community cannot be neglected. As the number of villages in Indonesia reach 80,000 villages, the number of sub-villages, groups, and sub-groups are therefore reaching hundreds of thousands. When the Indonesian government started to launch the community-based development Programme, the idea of the community empowerment approach was based on the local administrative structure connected to the central government. This approach is rather insufficient as the indigenous concept of local community was not accommodated as foreseen in the projects. *Lembaga Adat* and its indigenous structures which have existed in many ethno-cultural groups in Indonesia were not completely accommodated in the community approach used by the government.

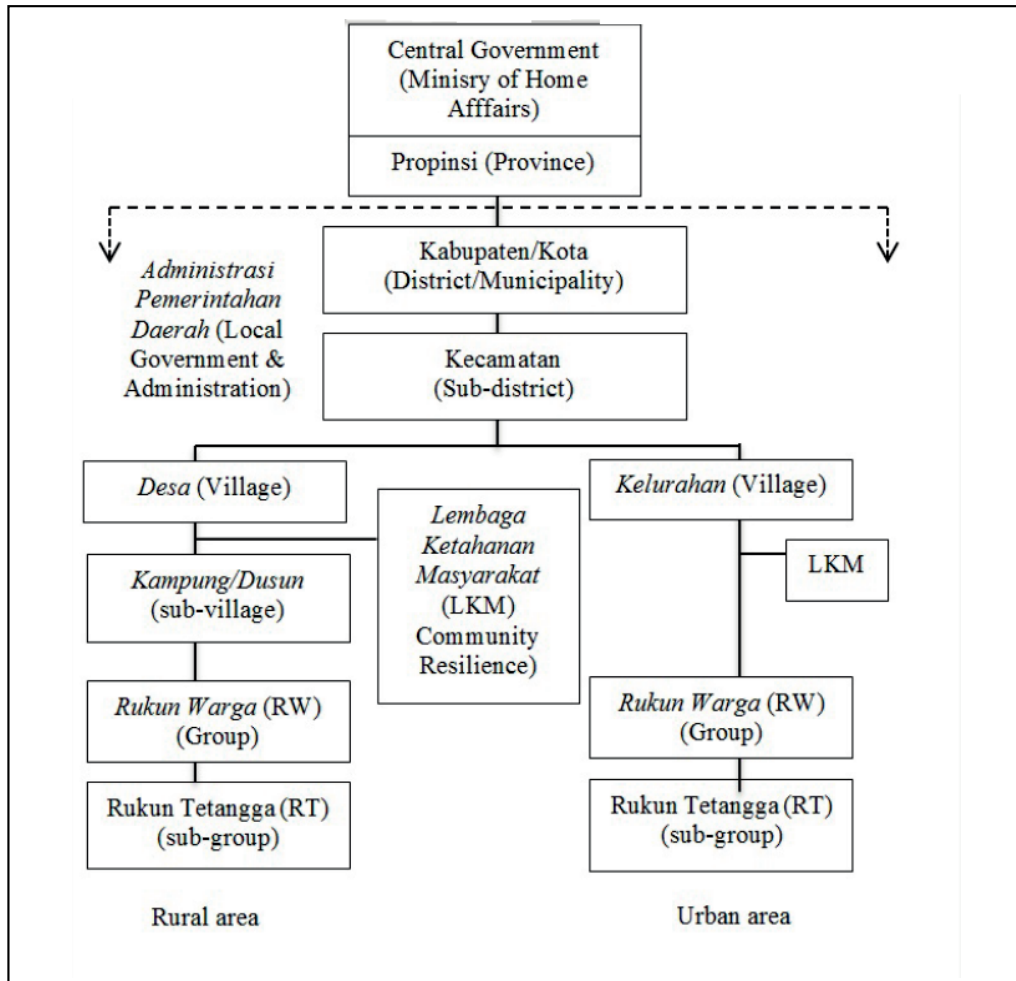


Figure 4.1 Local Administration in Indonesia.

Source: Fang (2006) and adapted from Indonesian Law N. 21/2001, No. 6/2014, No. 23/2014 and No. 47/2016.

Note: LKMD = Lembaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa (Institution of Community Security at village level)

The use of a local administrative structure is important in understanding Indonesian development figures. As the country has been implementing regional autonomy since the early 2000s, the understanding about this structure would support any development planners to analyse the roles, policies and governances in each of the administrative levels. There are some areas in Indonesia which are granted to become a special area with an authority to implement its own culture or customary law. The Aceh and Yogyakarta provinces are examples of such areas, which are granted special administrative authority, as *Daerah Istimewa* (Special Administrative Area). The special authority allows the provinces to implement their customary law, in addition to the national law. The cultural dimension of the people is accommodated in various local regulations. For instance, Aceh province is allowed to implement Islamic law, whereas Yogyakarta province

implements a regulation regarding limited ownership of land, as there are some areas in the province which are subjected to the customary land owned by the Yogyakarta kingdom (*cf.* Fay; Sirait & Kusworo 2000; Fang 2006; Mulyono 2014).

Demographic Figures

Indonesia has about 255.46 million inhabitants consisting of 128,366.7 million males and 127,095 million females. Indonesia is facing a possible ‘demographic dividend’ or ‘demographic bonus’ in population, where the share of working-age groups of people in Indonesia (15 to 64) would be higher than the share of non-working-age groups of people, particularly from the year 2015 to 2030. During those periods, it is estimated that those working people in the total population would have the potential to be more productive and contribute to the economy significantly. The United Nations Populations Fund (UNPFA) states that this condition would boost the performance of the economy of the country (*cf.* UNPFA 2016). The possible ‘demographic dividend’ could be seen in Figure 4.2.

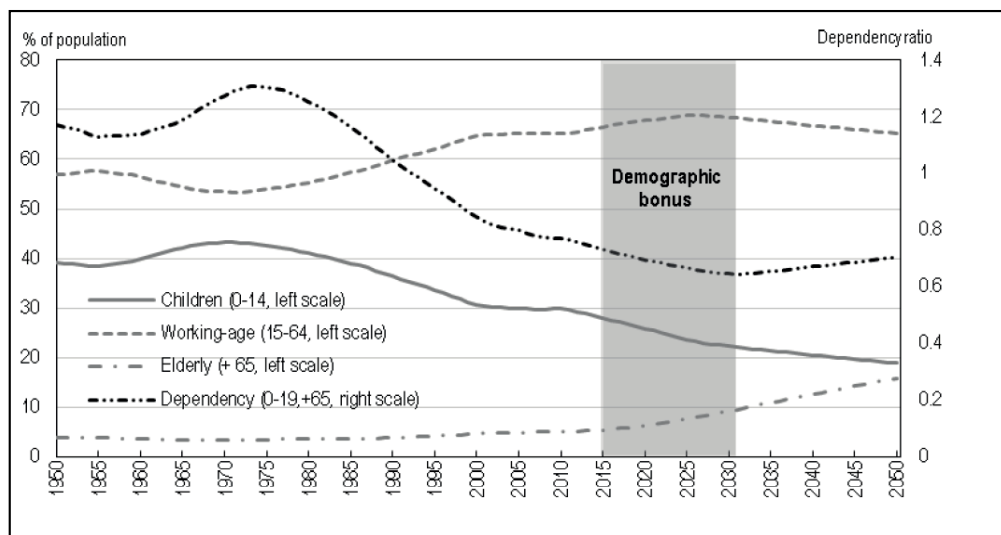
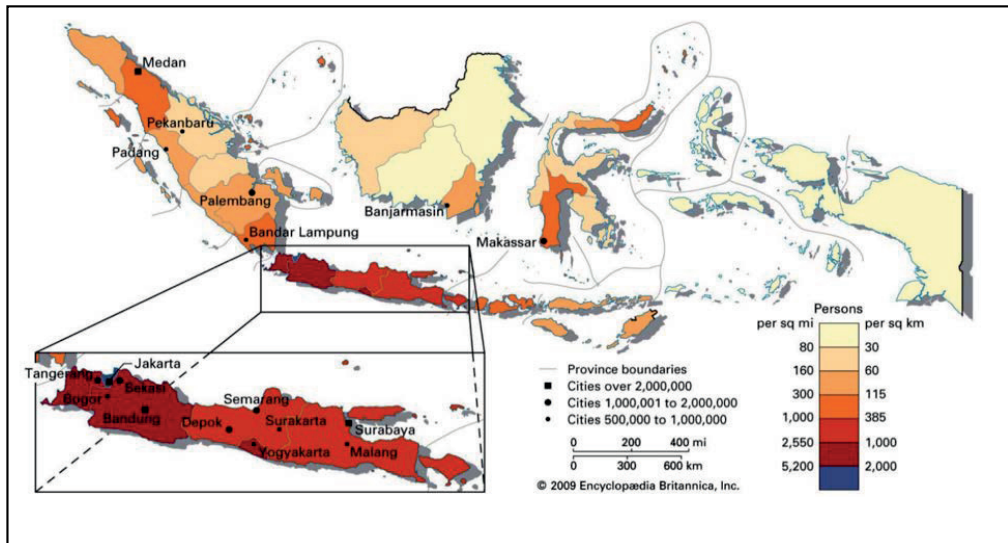


Figure 4.2 Demographic Dividend in Indonesia 2015-2030.
Source: OECD (2015).

The shaded area shows the ‘demographic bonus’ period in Indonesia, which is predicted to progress the economy positively; therefore, it is a challenge to the government of Indonesia to create jobs as well as for investments to provide the working-age people with jobs. However, the ongoing debates on the development policies between ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ approaches would challenge both central government and local government, in terms of job creation. The challenge would be in the question of whether the central government would empower local government to create job opportunities by accommodating local potential and resources, or on the contrary, the central government would decide what sectors should be empowered and what sectors should not (*cf.* Pike, Rodriguez-Pose & Tomaney 2006). In this context, Crescenzi and Rodriguez-Pose (2008) suggested an integrated approach to answer the challenge. For some huge development projects, e.g. infrastructure, transportation, etc, an intervention of ‘top-down’ policies would secure job creation in these sectors, as it would require a huge investment. However, for some local dynamics, a ‘bottom-up’ approach would not only create suitable job creation based on diverse local conditions, but it would also empower local people and

government to participate in the decisions of development plans and objectives for their situation (*cf.* Crescenzi & Rodriquez-Pose 2008). For Indonesia, which has been experiencing ‘top-down’ policies since its independence in 1945 until the monetary crisis hit the country in 1997-1998, when the big companies collapsed, the fact that small-medium enterprises could survive during the economic turmoil suggests ‘bottom-up’ policies. Thus, it is not surprising that since 2000, the country has applied local autonomy and governance, including local development. Estimated population numbers in 2015 were 255,461,462 with a mean population density of 133,5 inhabitants per square kilometer. Map 4.1 gives an illustration of the Indonesian archipelago and its population which shows an uneven distribution.



Map 4.1 Population Density in Indonesia.
Source: Encyclopædia Britannica (2017).

The island of Java (red color) is the densest island, with a mean density of over 250 inhabitants per square kilometer. Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, is the densest city in Java, with a density of 15,327 inhabitants per square kilometer. About 66.6% of the Indonesian population are urban. With the total number of the population at around 255 million inhabitants, Indonesia has various numbers of population density in its different regions, as shown in the geographic distribution of the inhabitants in Indonesia in Map 4.1. The average population density of Indonesia is 133,5 people per square kilometre. As shown in the map, Java (with red color) is the most dense island in Indonesia, with an average population density of more than 250 inhabitants per square kilometer. Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, is the most dense city in Java, with a density of 15,327 inhabitants per square kilometer. Some cities and districts have inhabitants with more than 2 million people, i.e. Bandung, Medan, Bogor, Surabaya, while some other regions have just under 30 to 80 people for every square metre (*cf.* MoH RI 2015; BPS 2016; Geospatial Information Bureau 2017; Encyclopædia Britannica 2017).

Lee, Mason & Miller (1998) state that a country with high population density followed by the rapid process of industrialisation is mostly challenged by various environmental problems, *i.e.* high level of poverty and deforestation due to the exploitation of natural resources as well as other ecological deterioration, particularly if the government has low-resource administrative governance. The poor are more likely to feel the impact of the pollution and the environmental

problems and natural disasters. Nevertheless, environmental disasters in Indonesia became more complicated after decentralization and the cost of the environmental degradation is considered high. For instance, the total economic losses due to limited access to safe water and sanitation problems in Indonesia are estimated at ca. 2% of GDP per year. Moreover, the annual spending to tackle air pollution problems reaches around \$400 million per year. The administrative and regulatory framework in Indonesia cannot yet meet the requirements of sustainable development, in spite of a long history of support for policy and capacity development both from within the government and with international donor support. Indonesia's approach to improve the environment and natural resources management is rather difficult. There are two explanations for the difficulties: *Firstly*, despite the substantial investment in environment and natural resources policy and staff development, actual implementation of rules and procedures has been poor and slow due to weak commitment by sector agencies, low awareness in local departments and capacity challenges at all levels. *Secondly*, there is little integration of environmental considerations at the planning and programmatic levels, especially in the public investment planning process and in regional plans for land and resource use (*cf.* World Bank 2014; Indonesia-Investments 2016).

4.1.3. The Economy and its Socio-Cultural Context

Economic Figures of Indonesia

The Indonesian economy has achieved strong growth over the past few years. According to the report of the three major development agencies: the World Bank, the IMF, and the United Nations, with an annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 900 billion USD in 2016, Indonesia ranks as the 16th largest economy in the world. This achievement has been achieved by the firm's government policy, the growth of a young labour force, as well as the country's endowment towards natural resources. The growth was boosted by household consumption (56.5%), fixed investment (33%) and government spending (9.3%) (*cf.* Tradingeconomics 2017; CIA 2017).

Table 4.1. Sector contribution to the GDP of Indonesia 1967 – 2009 (in %age of GDP).

Sectors	Year				
	1967	1982	1996	1999	2009
Agriculture	51	23	17	20	16
Construction	na(a)	10	10	8	11
Manufacturing	8	13	26	26	27
Mining & Utilities	na(a)	17	8	9	11
Services	36	37	40	37	35

(a) In 1967 the combined share of construction and mining&utilities was 5%

Source: Adapted from Elias & Noone (2011).

The composition of the GDP of Indonesia shows that the country has developed mainly from the Service sector since 1982, followed by Agriculture and Manufacturing, Mining and Utilities, and Construction. Although the country has been known as an agricultural country throughout history, the figures in the last four decades show a different story. In the most recent data, the contribution of the agricultural sector in the year 2016 was estimated at only 13.7 %, in comparison with Industry (40.3 %) and Services (46%) (*cf.* Elias & Noone 2001; CIA 2017). Out of 125 million people of the labour force in Indonesia, about 32% work in the agricultural sector, 21% in the industrial sector, and 47% in the service sector. Unlike the service sector which is consistent with the contribution to the economy, the agricultural sector contributes to a lesser extent compared to the labour force in the sector. This condition indicates that there are gaps

between the general income, which is contributed by each sector, and the people's income based on sectors. On the other hand, this income gap reveals the poverty incidents in Indonesia. Using these two indicators, Indonesia has been struggling to reduce the number of people in poverty, based on headcount number and the GINI ratio (*cf.* The World Bank 2013; 2014; 2015; 2017).

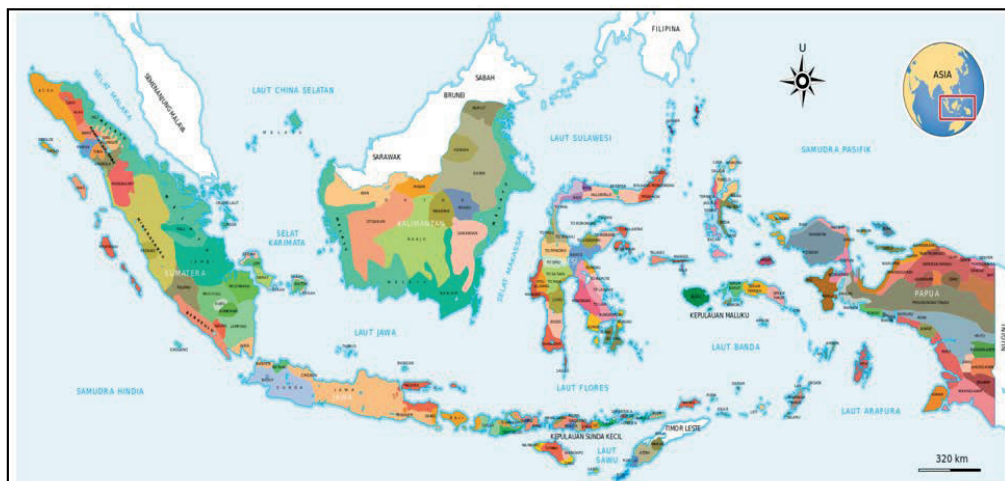
One of the causes of poverty is the inequality of opportunities. Children in the remote and rural areas of Indonesia tend to experience multidimensional inequality of opportunity. They are more likely than urban children to lack access to education, health, and transportation services. The other factor which also contributes to the condition of inequality is the infrastructure gap. About 41% of district roads and 24% of provincial roads throughout Indonesia are in bad condition. This poor condition of infrastructure contributes to poverty, particularly in the eastern provinces of the country. The condition hinders farmers in the rural area to access markets, and at the same time, imposes limitations in various opportunities, including access to public services. It is not surprising that the government of Indonesia, particularly in the period of the Joko Widodo presidency, has taken it seriously to build massive projects in infrastructures. The infrastructure development would contribute to the increased growth of the economy in Indonesia (*cf.* Cockburn *et al.* 2013; Aji 2015; IMF 2016; World Bank 2017)

The financial crisis in the late 1990s which halted the Indonesian economy has given an important lesson for the government of Indonesia. The 'top-down approach' of development has failed to reach equal distribution as well as towards the well-being of the people (Palumbo, Maynard-Moody & Wright 1984). The empowerment at the community level was also being neglected. The need for an alternative to the 'top-down approach' which has been failing to decrease disparities among the rich and the poor is inevitable. A 'bottom-up' approach which incorporates community participation in development should then be proposed. In this context, a community-based economy, which incorporates culture in the development plan and policies, is suggested. However, the huge diversities concerning the ethno-cultural groups in Indonesia challenge the government to determine which plans should be implemented to which particular cultures under various circumstances (*cf.* Warren, Slikkerveer & Brokensha 1995; Davies 2008; Winters 2011; Budiantoro 2011; Latifah 2011).

Ethno-Cultural Figures

The majority of the ethno-cultural groups in Indonesia are Javanese. This comprises circa two-fifths of the population in Indonesia, followed by Sundanese (15.5%), Malay (3.7%), Batak (3.6%), Madurese (3.0%), Betawi (2.9%) and circa one-third from other ethno-cultural groups (*cf.* Britannica 2017). Each ethno-cultural group has its cultural identity and social structure. Understanding these cultural factors is necessary for the analysis of development in Indonesia. While Warren, Slikkerveer & Brokensha (1995) document these various cultural practices in different indigenous communities, including in Indonesia, Sumardjo (2010) divides the social structure in Indonesia into five different social structures. For instance, the ethno-cultural groups of Asmat, Flores, Minahasa and Nias are categorised into a 'dyadic' structure, while the Sundanese, Minangkabau, Bugis, and Batak groups are classified into 'triadic' or three-component social structures. Understanding these characteristics of ethno-cultural groups, their social structure and their knowledge and livelihood systems, then becomes a prerequisite to understand the country and its development.

As the second largest ethno-cultural group in Indonesia, the Sundanese people have influenced the population of Indonesia. The Sundanese people live mostly in the West Java and Banten provinces in Indonesia, although there are many who are also living outside of those two provinces, including abroad. One of the Sundanese regions in the West Java province is the Subang District.



Map 4.2 Map of Indonesia based on Ethno-Cultural Groups.

Source: Wikimedia (2017).

During the Dutch colonialisation, the area was known as Tjiasem and Pamanoekan, and Subang was only a sub-district with a lesser area in comparison with its present geographic area. Recently, Subang became one of the districts in West Java province in Indonesia. As this research focuses on the Subang District, the next section will introduce the district figures (*cf.* Warren, Slikkerveer & Brokensha 1995; Posey 1999; Agung 2005; Sumardjo 2010).

4.2 Subang District and its Sociography

4.2.1 Geography and History

Kabupaten Subang is a district in the Northern area of West Java, which comprises the administrative regions of 30 sub-districts and 253 villages. It has about 1.477.483 inhabitants, of which 746,148 are males and 731,335 females. The area of Subang covers around 205,276.95 hectares or 6,34% of the total area of West Java province. The population density of Subang is about 714 people per km². The Sundanese people are forming the most populated ethno-cultural group in the Subang District and the Sundanese language is used in daily conversation. Geographically, Subang is divided into 3 areas: the southern area, the middle area, and the northern area. The southern area of Subang is a highland while the northern part is a lowland. The southern area is known for its tea plantations, forests, and recreation areas, surrounded by natural resources, while the northern area is famous for fisheries and agriculture. The central area of Subang is known for some plantations, *i.e.* rubber, cane, tea and fruits, while the government agencies and industrial activities are also concentrated here (*cf.* BPS Subang 2016).

History of Subang

The history of Subang Regency was not only meant as a regional history in terms of an administrative region, but also part of the territory of West Java Province. The origin of Subang can be found in the story of the folklore and history of the traditional community of Subang. It has several historical views about its establishment (*cf.* Bappeda Subang 2004; Sihite 2007).

- *The first view of Subang history* originated from the name of a woman, which is found in the chronicle of Siliwangi, named *Subanglarang* or *Subangkarancang*. The story goes back to the history of the Padjadjaran Kingdom. In the history of Java, it is documented that in the area of Karawang – near Subang – there was an Islamic boarding school, led by Sheik Datuk Quro. A woman named Subanglarang or Subangkarancang was a daughter of Ki Damajan Jati who were sent to study to Sheik Datuk Quro;
- *The second view of Subang history* is traced back to the period of Dutch colonisation. Subang was a place near Kuningan which is famously known as Pamanoekan and Tjiasemlanden. In that place, there was a company named P & T Land, which was run by PW Hofland. The company ran a rubber plantation and business, also trading in coffee, tea and sugar cane. The employees were recruited from the land named Subang Kuningan. In the old map, the area was known as Pamanoekan and Tjiasemlanden;
- *The third view of Subang history* goes back to folklore where people in Subang believed that Subang was taken from the word *Suweng*. *Suweng* is an ‘earring jewellery’. The word Subang is also believed to be taken from the word *Kubang* or a waterhole. From the story of the Subang people, there was a place named *Rawabadak* where there was a waterhole. The waterhole was used by rhino to soak in. There was possibly a slip in pronouncing *Suweng* and *Kubang*. So, instead of Subang as a different name, it was meant for *Suweng* or *Kubang*.
- *The fourth view of Subang history* goes back to the period of the Dutch colonialisation. This history was documented by De Haan (1912). He wrote: ‘... as the treaty on October 5, 1705 between Mataram with the Dutch, Sunan Kartasura handed over the Governor-General de Jonge, the coastal areas of Java Island from West to East of mountain Dayiloer (Dayeuhluhur) to Mount Sumana or Subang...’ (cf. Bappeda Subang 2004)

From the chronological point of history, the establishment of the Subang District can be traced to thousands of years ago. It started from the pre-historic period of time, with Hinduism influence, in the Western colonialism period, the national movement, and after the independence of Indonesia. Each historical period has contributed to the picture of the Subang District today (cf. Meinanda 2005; Bappeda Subang 2004; Sihite 2007).

4.2.2 The Socio-Demography of Subang

Administrative Structure

According to the administrative structure, Subang has 30 sub-districts (*kecamatan*), 245 rural villages (*desa*), 8 urban villages (*kelurahan*), 1,808 household groups (RW) and 6,182 households sub-groups (RT). The administrative procedures are a combination between top-down policies and bottom-up initiatives. Most bottom-up initiatives are proposed by rural villages, household groups and household sub-groups, while the top-down policies are mainly disseminated by the government agencies at sub-district levels and urban villages.

Population and the Workforce

With an average population growth of 1.05%, the total population in the Subang District is 1,529,388 inhabitants, which comprises 772,416 males and 756,972 females. The average population density of Subang in 2016 is recorded as 745 people per km², with the Subang Sub-district with the highest population density, with 2,916 people per km² and the Legonkulon Sub-district as the lowest population density with 304 people per km². The total number of households in Subang is 445,160 with an average household size of 3.44 inhabitants per households.



Illustration 4.1 A Dutchman meeting the Workers in the Tea Plantation in Subang (circa 1920).

Source: Tropenmuseum archive no. 600433293.

Concerning the age structure, the population of Subang consists of 24.55% aged between 0 to 14 years, 8.02% of inhabitants aged between 15 to 19 years old, 29.35% of the population aged between 20 to 39 years old, and 38.08% of the inhabitants aged 40 years and older. The labour force in Subang is 1,156,664 or about 75.6% of the population. Out of that labour force, about 10.04% are unemployed. The inhabitants are spread in 30 sub-districts (*kecamatan*), 245 rural villages (*desa*), 8 urban villages (*kelurahan*), 1,808 household groups (RW) and 6,182 household sub-groups (RT). The area is divided into three geographic divisions: the northern area, the southern area and the middle area, consisting from mountainous, flat and coastal area of the samples (cf. BPS Subang 2016).

Education and Health Care

Concerning the level of education, about 703,858 have finished school, varies from primary to secondary school or higher. Out of that number, about 402,781 have finished primary school, 136,669 have finished secondary school, and 164,408 have finished higher schools and tertiary education. Concerning health care, the Subang District has 51 medical doctors and 17 dentists, 442 nurses, 459 midwives, 40 pharmacies, 35 nutritious experts, 16 medical technicians, 44 sanitation experts and 64 public health officers. ISPA or *Acute Respiratory Infection* is the most common disease in the Subang District with about 48,542 cases reported in 2015, followed by *diarrhea* with 21,947 cases, *myalgia* with 17,421 cases, *essential hypertension* with 15,730 cases, *gastritis* with 14,471 cases, and *febris* with 14,047 cases recorded in 2015 by the Health department of the Subang municipality (cf. BPS Subang 2016).

Religion and Ethno-Cultural Groups

Concerning religion and beliefs, the majority of the inhabitants are Muslims with a total number of 1,510,916 followers, followed by 4,459 Protestants, 1,956 Catholics, 84 Hindi, 467 Buddhists and 36 from other denominations (including local religions). The number of religious buildings recorded are as follows: 5,975 mosques, 30 churches and 12 Catholic churches (*cf.* BPS Subang 2016).

Employment and Occupation

Subang has about 257,982 people working in the agricultural sector, 113,911 in the industrial sector and 308,846 in the service sectors. Although the service sectors now form the majority of the occupations of people in Subang, most people are actually farmers or farm labourers. The economy of Subang has been supported by the agricultural sectors. It is not surprising that the local government recently built a *leuyit* (Sundanese term for rice house) statue at the entrance to the Subang District. The people in the Subang District aim to make a major contribution of paddy rice to the country as acknowledged in the past, when Subang was called the '*lumbung padi nusantara*' (the rice stock for the country). Currently, the Subang District is the third largest supplier of paddy rice in the country, after the Indramayu and Karawang Districts.

4.2.3 The Economy of Subang

Agricultural Sector in Subang

As an agricultural district, the economy of Subang is mainly supported by agricultural products, *i.e.* rubber in the northwest, pineapples and tea gardens in the south. One of the famous pineapple varieties in Indonesia is *Nanas Madu* (*Honey Pineapples*) which come from the Subang region. This pineapple variety is well known as the sweetest pineapple, and could be found in the Jalancagak Sub-district, nearby Cimanglid, one of the villages where the research was conducted. Some other farmers are cultivating oyster mushrooms and fishing, *i.e.* in the Cipunagara village. The total agricultural area of Subang is about 84,570 hectares, which covers almost 40% of the total area of the Subang District. Some other areas of Subang produce food crops, *i.e.* corn which reached 1,243 tonnes in 2014, and cassava with 19,322 tonnes in 2014. With regard to the horticultural plants, the Subang District also produce vegetables. Chili is the most produced vegetable with 5,534 tonnes in 2015, followed by papaya with 1556 tonnes. Pineapples and bananas are still the most produced fruits in the Subang District. Both commodities have been produced by about 136,567 tonnes and 101,455 tonnes respectively in 2015. Some other areas of Subang live from animal husbandry, *i.e.* rabbits, catfish, cows, buffalos and others. There were about 1,038 cattle, 32,219 cows, 3,003 buffalos, 303 horses, 28,298 goats and 242,391 sheep in the Subang District in 2015. These animals were mainly used for the livestock of the people.

In addition to that, about 1,266,196 chickens, 61,400 hens, 7,814,870 broiler chickens, and 527,435 ducks were also recorded in the Subang District in 2015 (*cf.* BPS Subang 2016). In contrast to the southern area, the central area of Subang District is the area of business and industry, including the government offices, schools, public facilities, hospitals and supermarkets. The northern area of Subang heads towards the Java Sea. Besides farming, fisheries are another occupations of people in this area of Subang. There are about fifteen villages spread in the northern area of Subang, which covers 163.8 square kilometres. Ca. four-fifths of the region is a coastal area. The total number of inhabitants in the northern area is ca. 73,668 people, with an average population density of 459 persons/km². Most of those who live in the coastal area work as farmers (53.71%), brackish-water aquaculture operators (4.23%) and fishermen (3.69%). The total production of marine fisheries is about 15,668 tonnes per annum, and from brackish-water aquaculture fisheries about 9,014 tons per year.

There are about 5 fish auctions for marine fisheries and 9 fish auctions for brackish-water aquaculture fisheries all over the Subang District. The total number of boats recorded is 826, owned by the fishermen (cf. BPS Subang 2016).

Trading, Commerce and Transportation

In addition to agriculture production, trading and commerce, particularly the service sectors are playing important roles in stimulating the economy of the Subang District. The total number of traders in Subang in 2015 was 6,438: 2,602 are small traders, 3,153 are middle enterprises and 683 are big merchants. In 2015, there were 15 *pasar lokal* ('local markets'), 28 *pasar tradisional* ('traditional markets'), 1 shopping mall, 4 modern markets, and 180 mini markets. These numbers exclude the number of *waroong* ('small markets'), which operate mostly in the neighbourhood. It was estimated that the number of these types of stores was about 4,514 shop houses, 2,012 *los* ('unrestricted vendors') and 1,179 *Pedagang Kaki Lima* (PKL) ('Street Vendors'). In the service sector, there are about 92 four-star hotels and 82 no-star hotels in the Subang District, with a total number of 1,709 rooms and 2,211 beds. In terms of transportation infrastructure, about 45,33 km are state roads, 146,31 km are provincial roads and 1,054.50 are district roads. About 718,93 km of the roads use paved material and 116,41 km use concrete. More than one-fifth of the roads are in a damaged condition while nearly half the roads are in good condition. These roads are used on a daily basis for about 13,742 vehicles which are available in the Subang District (cf. BPS Subang 2016).

4.3 The Sundanese Culture in Subang

4.3.1 The Sundanese People in Subang

The majority of the people in Subang is Sundanese, and the Sundanese language is used in daily conversation. In the northern areas of Subang, people even communicate more in mixed language with the specific accent of *Dermayan*, or a mix of the Sundanese and Javanese language, with a Cirebon dialect. Mutual help and reciprocity of social interaction of the Sundanese people are marked in the social interaction by the people of Subang. *Gotong Royong* is used by the people of Subang in daily activities, from building houses to cultural events. It is not surprising that people uses *Gotong Royong* in their development philosophy. It says, *Subang gotong-royong Subang maju*, which means '(If) Subang implements *Gotong Royong*, Subang would achieve advancement in development' (cf. Illustration 4.2).

In the economic activity, the local government of Subang implements *Gotong Royong* in its policies and programmes. One of the Government Programmes which is supporting the implementation of *Gotong Royong* is the *Lumbung Ekonomi Desa* (LED) ('Village Economic Barn'). This Programme attempts to revitalise the Sundanese tradition of food-stocks hedging for future needs, named *Lumbung Padi* ('Rice Barn'). The government suggested to the people of Subang at the community level to refunctionalise this tradition. Each family is asked to save their rice stocks with the local institution, established by the village administration. The collected rice will only be used for food security in the future, particularly if there is a failure in the harvest period in the plantation (*pers.comm* 2012). Another example, which is elaborated thoroughly in this study, is *Gintingan* ('Traditional Communal and Mutual Support'). Unlike LED, *Gintingan* is a 'bottom-up' initiative by the local people of Subang, which has been implemented for decades by them. The institution is used during *Hajatan* ('Rituals or Ceremonies'), as a socio-cultural and reciprocal activity to support a family with an amount of rice, measured by a *Gantang* ('Wooden Vessel of Measured Rice'). This concept will be elaborated in Chapter VII.



Illustration 4.2 Reference to the Spirit of *Gotong Royong* at the Village Administration Building.
 Source: Saefullah (2012).

4.3.2 Traditional Arts and Foods in Subang

Subang has many traditional arts and cultural activities which are developed and practiced by the people in the community in their daily life on specific occasions or events such as wedding ceremonies and in celebration of the harvest period of the plantation. The influence of Sundanese culture has also shaped their traditional arts, for example: *Doger Kontrak*; *Gembyung*; *Ruwatan Bumi*; *Mapag Dewi*; *Sisingaan*; *Toleat*; and *Nadran*: 1) *Doger Kontrak*. *Doger Kontrak* is Subang folk art which began to grow and develop before the war of independence (1945), when the P&T Lands Company began their plantations in Subang; 2) *Gembyung*. *Gembyung* is a musical ensemble consisting of several *waditra* ('traditional jimbee') with traditional flutes. It is influenced by the Islamic tradition. These musical instruments are usually played during specific occasions such as new year ceremonies, or a new period of plantation, etc.

It is a symbol of how people express their appreciation to God; 3) *Ruwatan Bumi*. *Ruwatan Bumi* is a traditional ceremony of the Subang people, particularly in agriculture areas, in which the farmers show their expression of gratitude to God for giving them well being and prosperity during the harvest period of the plantation; 4) *Mapag Dewi Sri*. *Mapag Dewi Sri* is similar to *Ruwatan Bumi*. It is a traditional ceremony performed mostly by the people of Subang (farmers), as an expression of farmers' gratitude to God; 5) *Sisingaan*. *Sisingaan* is the most famous traditional dance of Subang. The tradition itself is usually shown during special occasions such as wedding ceremonies or a child's celebration of circumcision; 6) *Toleat*. *Toleat* is a kind of traditional flute (aerophone) in Subang. Usually this type of musical instrument is played by herdsmen in the field while waiting for their shepherd; and 7) *Nadran*. *Nadran* is a traditional ceremony of the Subang people who live in a coastal area, particularly when they are entering the fishery period. It is mostly practiced in the Blanakan village as an expression of gratitude by the people of Subang to their God.

In the view of indigenous people, food does not only represent a mode of survival. Furthermore, it represents people's cosmovision: how they observe themselves in relation to other human beings and the universe. Bangladeshi villagers say: *bhat, kapor on shonman niye shukhey thakbo* ('we live in happiness with rice, clothes and respect') (cf. White 2010). Traditional Sundanese foods, particularly in Subang, are mainly made by plants, consumed with the hands, and served by using leaves. There is a cosmological reasoning behind the practices. The philosophical background of Sundanese people, using plants and leaves, is based on its cosmovision towards nature and the environment. Sundanese people believe that humans cannot harm other beings, as the universe will give a bad return if humans do harm. As Sundanese people use plants and leaves for their foods, the usage will not harm the soil on earth, even if they throw the leaves into the ground. In fact, it would help the soil become fertile naturally.



Illustration 4.3 *Tape ketan* (Fermented Rice) of Subang.
Source: Saefullah (2012).

There are some foods which are known as coming from Subang, *i.a.* *tape ketan* (as seen in Illustration 4.3), *gurandil* ('soft bites made by cassava flour'), and *opak* (rice crackers). Most of the foods are made by rice and cassava flours. It is not surprising as the main occupation of people in Subang is in farming. Thus, the type of foods not only transpires through their philosophical foundations, but also through their profession.

