Performing the state: Everyday practices, corruption and reciprocity in Middle Indonesian civil service
Tidey, S.

Citation for published version (APA):
Tidey, S. (2012). Performing the state: Everyday practices, corruption and reciprocity in Middle Indonesian civil service

General rights
It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations
If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: http://uba.uva.nl/en/contact, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.
Chapter II

A divided town: State, class, and family

One of the first things to strike a newcomer upon arrival in Kupang is the overwhelming physical presence of the state. A short motorcycle ride from the airport to the old center of the city will inevitably lead one past enormous majestic government buildings: the impressive city parliament on El Tari II street, the multiple storied Department of Finances, which is the tallest building in Kupang, the majestic governor’s office and, subsequently, his official residence, the big police station and the military base located in the old Dutch fort in the center of the city. A closer look at street images of Kupang, furthermore, will lead one to see the many small governmental offices that can be found among the houses and shops throughout Kupang. City level administration counts no fewer than three hundred and fifty five government institutions.

The ‘state’ is thus a very visible presence in Kupang. This visible pervasiveness of the state is echoed in a more general state dependency. The ‘state’ provides the vast majority of the city administration’s revenue, is the main provider of (formal) employment, and the main source of direct, indirect, and illegal/illicit income. Most importantly, however, this pervasiveness of the state also influences social stratification in Kupang. The ability to extract economic resources from the state, namely, enables the formation and maintenance of what Jacqueline Vel has called a ‘political class’ (2008). Although political class indicates social rather than economic stratification, access to state resources is crucial for inclusion in this class. Conversely, lacking access to state resources plays an important role in exclusion from this class. Popular discourse (see for instance Liliwery 1993; Dagang 2004) holds that ethnicity is central in processes of social differentiation. I argue, instead, that this (exclusive) access to state resources forms the main marker of social differences. This chapter and the next argue against the popular ‘ethnicity’ storyline and, in particular, against the idea that ethnicity is a useful analytical tool for looking at processes of differentiation. This chapter aims to do that by looking at the physical lay-out of the city. I will use characteristics of the physical city itself as a vignette for looking at Kupang’s social fabric. A comparison between the physical lay-out of Kupang during colonial times with present-day Kupang shows that, even though Kupang started out as an ethnically segmented town, its current lay-out reveals the physical segmentation of a ‘political class’, which is closely tied to state resources. We will stay within the physically and socially segmented confines of this political class for most of this dissertation until we return to questions of interaction between political class members and non-political class members in Chapter Seven.
The visibility of the development of a class-based segmentation in the physical landscape of Kupang, is not only a post-colonial development and should be seen as a continuation of previously existing urban class segregation. Freek Colombijn (2010) claims that historians have been giving too much attention to the importance of ethnicity in colonial times at the expense of social class (Colombijn 2010: 13). After careful analysis, Colombijn concludes that urban segregation in Indonesian cities before decolonization was based more on income disparities –class- than on ‘ethnicity’ (Ibid.: 73-102). The ethnic homogeneity of ‘ethnic’ neighborhoods in colonial times can thus be questioned and, therefore, Kupang’s initial ethnic segmentation should be taken with a grain of salt and not be viewed as too rigid.

Nevertheless, as mentioned, the assumption that ‘ethnicity’ matters –characterizes social friction (Liliwery 1993) or influences informal favoring in civil service (Dagang 2004)- is a popular one in Kupang. Because of this I want to focus on the physical city and consider what the development of post-colonial new residential areas says about social stratification. On this more urban anthropological endeavor I loosely use Setha M. Low’s concept of ‘divided city’, which hints at processes of social, economic, and political segregation that find material resonance in the city (Low 1996). For familiar examples, we can think of the separation of ‘West’ from ‘East’ through the Berlin Wall, the production and perpetuation of racism and racial segregation through American ghettos, or the class-connotations of ‘up-town’ and ‘down-town’ (Ibid: 288-389). I thus want to see how physical divisions in Kupang are telling of social differentiation. This approach leads me to the claim that the development of new residential areas shows the physical separation of an emerging political class. Class, not ethnicity, is helpful in understanding social stratification in Kupang.

However, most of the cities Low draws upon in her various images and metaphors (Ibid.: 387-399) concern sizeable US cities (for instance Portes and Stepick 1993; Goode and Schneider 1994; Keith and Cross 1993; Wacquant 1994; Abu-Lughod 1987; Holston 1989; Davis 1992). In a provincial town with approximately 300,000 inhabitants such as Kupang, there is no rigid segmentation between classes -whether in residential areas, at work, or in social interaction. It thus occupies an interesting niche between the Gemeinschaft of small villages and the Gesellschaft of larger metropoles (Tönnies 1963[1887]). The ‘divided city’ of more rigid class relations thus gives way to a ‘divided town’ in which class is a permeable

20 In the past, urban anthropology has challenged anthropology at large by, for instance, countering structural-functional assumptions of homogenous, stable and bounded populations. A focus on cities, furthermore, also spurred new ways of thinking about social relations and social interactions –for example, that urbanization does not entail a breaking down of kinship relations (Brettell 2000: 130). Criticism that arose in the 1970s, nevertheless, claimed that urban anthropology appeared to focus more on an anthropology in cities rather than on an anthropology of cities (Gulick 1975; Fox 1977; Jackson 1985). As a response, a number of scholars began to question notions of cities as homogeneous and similar entities, and engaged in studies of cities in their particular contexts (Brettell 2000: 130-131; Rollwagen 1975; Smith 1975). This move towards a focus on an anthropology of the city thus opened up the possibility to look at the particularities of cities and the way they are shaped by their own, social, cultural, historical and economic trajectories.

21 Only under the images of ‘gendered’, ‘sacred’ and ‘traditional cities’ does she refer to cities outside of the United States, which are still sizeable cities (for instance Levy 1990; Lynch 1996).
concept, social stratification is shaky, and social mobility hinges on the exchange of various forms of capital (Bourdieu 1986). Even though the physical segmentation of a state dependent political class suggests a strong social segmentation as well, the new residential areas are not ‘Berlin Walls’ or gated communities. In fact, in provincial town Kupang everybody pretty much knows everybody else and –with a bit of effort- can probably even discern some kind of family or in-law connection to everybody else. This is of interest to us, since –as we will see in subsequent chapters- in Kupang every connection is potential ‘social capital’ that can be called upon for favors or support. This logic of reciprocal obligations implicit in social networks is crucial for understanding social mobility in Kupang. This comes to the fore most clearly in family circles, therefore, to exemplify the shakiness of class and the role of capital in social mobility, I will zoom in on reciprocal obligations in family networks and, with the help of a case study, show how reciprocal obligations in family circles facilitate upward social mobility. A look at the physical development of Kupang thus reveals boundaries between political class and those excluded from it, but also shows that class relations are far from clear-cut and hinge on reciprocal obligations within social networks. The kind of ‘class’ that is most helpful to look at social stratification in Kupang is therefore Vel’s concept of political class.

**Political class**

The kind of class segmentation I discuss is a social rather than an economic one. Nevertheless, this class derives its income mainly from state resources. Because of this, it is useful to look at state-related class thinking in a more economic sense before looking at the concept of political class more closely, also because a more economic conception of ‘intermediate classes’ has inspired the In Search of Middle Indonesia research program of which this project is a part.

To start with, the concept of intermediate classes provides a way of looking at a considerable group of people that are dependent on the state for an accumulation of capital. Originally coined by Michael Kalecki (1972) in relation to Egypt and Indonesia’s transition to mature capitalism, intermediate classes are characterized by a lack of contradiction between labor and capital, as opposed to the classical Marxist conception of class. His intermediate class is an entrepreneurial class consisting of, for instance, self-employed small farmers and civil servants. The latter can be considered self-employed *de facto* due to income derived from bribes and fraud. Intermediate class accumulation is tightly connected to the State due to this class’ capital constraints and imperfect markets. Therefore the interests of these intermediate classes coincide with state capitalism (Kalecki 1972: 163). In order to understand the direction and pace of development it is the intermediate classes, instead of the monopoly capitalists, that are most influential.
Barbara Harris-White (2003) recently found the concept of intermediate classes, after its adaptation to the Indian context (see Jha 1980; Khan 1972), still useful in understanding the workings of India’s informal or black economy. Looking at the State as a structure of accumulation at the local level, she reveals the role of the State in creating informal markets. State-society boundaries are thus not rigid, but rather, ‘(t)he keys to an understanding of the local State … are the plurality of state forms and the meshing of State and society …’ (Harris-White 2003: 100). The intermediate classes are therefore to be understood as an economic class consisting of a hotchpotch coalition of, among others, small entrepreneurs, local bureaucrats and small-scale manufacturers that are all, to a large extent, dependent on the ‘state’ for profits. In terms of stratification on a national level the intermediate classes are challenged by large-scale capitalist enterprises and a central state favoring a more neoliberal take on capitalism, but in the provinces these classes dominate the economic strata.

As we will see in the next section, provincial Kupang lacks a thriving trade-, industrial- or manufacturing sector. The (central and local) state is the main source of revenue and income, therefore the ‘state’ is the main structure of accumulation at the local level. This unique economic dependence on state resources influences social stratification and facilitates the emergence of what Jacqueline Vel has termed a ‘political class’ (Vel 2008). In the neighboring island of Sumba Vel studied the role of the state in class formation. In an age of regional autonomy Vel observes the coming into existence of a separate social class, which derives its income mainly from the state, whether through formal salaries, state assigned projects, or informal means (Vel 2008: 16). This class, dubbed ‘political class’, due to its connections to state resources and its ability to influence political decision making processes, consists not merely of those with formal ties to the state but also encompasses others with the capacity to appropriate state resources such as businessmen, retired officials, and family members of those with formal state positions (Ibid).

For the sake of clarity and due to the prominent role the political classes play in this dissertation it is important to address some key concepts Vel uses to illuminate the concept of political class and its place in (Sumbanese) social stratification. As said, the political class encompasses everyone who obtains revenue and income from the state, be it through salaries, state-issued projects, or via informal means (Vel 2008:52). This entails upper- and lower civil servants, contractors with government contracts (virtually all contractors in Kupang) as well as politicians. A small part of the political class consists of the political elite (Ibid.: 16). While the political class as a whole is motivated by their own economic and social security, the smaller political elite distinguishes itself by its steering capacity with regards to government policy, control over resources and power interests (Ibid.). Most of the civil servants, contractors, and politicians described in this dissertation are members of the political elite.

22 That only the political elite, and not the political class as a whole, is characterized by this steering capacity, control of resources, and own interests has been confirmed to me by the author (personal communication, 22/06/2011).
political class but do not, or not yet, have the steering capacity that characterizes the political elite. As political elite I consider district heads, those upper level civil service officials strategically planning getting ahead, and certain major contractors with the capacity of manipulating the size of the budget and projects of the Department of Public Works.

Outside of the political class Vel distinguishes two other groups, the political public and the tani class. The political public finds itself outside the political class and political elite, is generally educated, is not dependent on the state for economic resources, and has other possible means of influencing regional politics. Journalists, NGO employees --'civil society-- are part of the political public (Ibid.: 149). Finally, the tani class comprises those people who consider themselves to be too low in status to exercise any kind of political influence. As such it is an emic term, and includes not only farmers (tani), but also unemployed who describe themselves as tani. In Kupang, minibus drivers, market salespeople, newspaper vendors, and motor taxi drivers come to mind as members of the tani class.23

The political class thus forms the top layer of society and is tied together by an economic dependence on the state. In this sense, economic capital is crucial. However, as Vel shows, success in Sumba depends on more than economic capital. Political leaders (members of the political elite Vel focuses on most) owe their success to their ability to accumulate, exchange and transform various forms of capital drawn upon from different normative spheres -be they cultural, religious, economic or political (Ibid.: 10-13). Therefore, a Bourdieuan focus on forms of capital is important in understanding the concept of political class: political class membership as a type of social stratification can only be obtained and maintained through the accumulation and transformation of more than economic capital. In this sense, although at times dealing with the same people, such as civil servants, in similar conditions of economic state-dependence Vel’s concept of political class proves to be a more helpful way of looking at class relations in Kupang than Harris-White’s concept of intermediate classes.

Important in the transformation of one type of capital into another is reciprocity. As Vel notes, ‘reciprocity is crucial in the Sumbanese way of thinking’ (Ibid.:16). How reciprocal obligations influence the accumulation and transformation of capital within the political class is central to this dissertation. This dissertation therefore mainly focuses on the political class and the extent to which the political class is embedded in a society in which reciprocal obligations and expectations play a part. What is emphasized most strongly, consequently, is the role reciprocal obligations play in processes of inclusion into political

23 It is, however, important to note the volatile and dynamic character of the political class. Instead of something inherited, class-membership becomes inherently unstable: class membership can be obtained and consequently lost. Retired government officials and their wives can still be a part of the political class due to persistent good ties and influence, but a lower-level civil servant employed for twenty years might not. A minibus driver with influential relatives might be considered a member of the political class. The daughter of a Department Head who dropped out of school pregnant and got married off might not be or no longer be a political class member, whereas his wife probably is.
class as well as internal strife. Its role in processes of exclusion –of the political public and the *tani* class, however, will be touched upon in Chapter Seven.

**A state in stats**

In the introduction I touched upon the visible overwhelmingness of the state. Let us now look at the importance of the state in Kupang’s economy, since access to state resources is imperative for inclusion in the political class and, simultaneously, for the exclusion of those outside it. I present two different indicators to suggest Kupang’s relatively high dependence on the state in terms of finances. First, I consider the most important sources of income the city of Kupang has, which are part of the city’s Regional Budget Revenue and Expenditure (*Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Daerah*). This indicates Kupang’s heavy reliance on intergovernmental fiscal transfers in order to finance its own expenditures. Second, I look at the Gross Regional Domestic Product as an indicator of the market value of all final goods and services produced in Kupang. This shows that a remarkable proportion of Kupang’s GRDP is raised by state services. I will thus look at financial state-dependence in terms of both the city’s income as well as the composition of the city’s economy. Because a relative high dependence on state resources is not uncommon among Indonesia’s regions. I will also compare Kupang to three other cities from the In Search of Middle Indonesia research program –Pekalongan in Central Java, Cilegon in Western Java, and Ternate in North Maluku. Similar to Kupang these towns form regional hubs rather than major cosmopolitan metropolises or small villages, and are comparable in terms of number of residents. A comparison between Kupang and these similar cities underlines Kupang’s relative financial dependence on the state, be it central or regional, even more.

Table 2.1 presents an overview of the most important sources of revenue that make up a city’s total income per city. To finance their own expenditures local governments have two major sources (Murniasih 2007; Brodjonegoro 2004). The first is Own Source Revenue, which comprises various types of taxes and charges on public services, such as building development rights, piped water distribution, and garbage collection. The second important source of income concerns intergovernmental fiscal transfers, which are money flows from central government to local governments and which are intended to equalize vertical imbalances between local and central governments as well as horizontal imbalances between the different local governments. These intergovernmental fiscal transfers consist of three parts. Revenue sharing is a channeling back of revenue obtained by the central state from

---

24 For a complete overview of all the components that make up the Budget for Regional Revenue and Expenditures (*APBD*) per province, regency, and city in Indonesia for 2010 see the website of the Directorate General of Financial Imbalance (*Direktorat Jenderal Perimbangan Keuangan*) of the Ministry of Finance: http://www.djpdk.depkeu.go.id/datadjpk/72/.

25 But notably not the most profitable kinds such as Personal Income Tax or Property Tax which are raised by central government and then partly channeled back to the regions via the revenue sharing component of intergovernmental fiscal transfers.
certain types of taxes and from natural resources. Although the central state legally receives the revenue from these sources, it nevertheless partly returns this through revenue sharing. A high level of revenue sharing, therefore, indicates relative economic prosperity and/or abundance of natural resources, whereas a low level of shared revenue points to economic lagging and/or lack of natural resources. Another kind of intergovernmental transfer consists of General Allocation Fund (Dana Alokasi Umum –DAU). This equalization fund aims to balance the horizontal and vertical discrepancies in fiscal capacities as a result of low Own Source Revenue and insubstantial income via revenue sharing, and is meant to provide each local government with the financial means to provide minimum standard basic services for residents. Money from DAU is spent mostly on civil service salaries. Although DAU funds are (still) received by every region, the third type of intergovernmental fiscal transfer, Special Allocation Fund (Dana Alokaso Khusus –DAK), is only given to regions with a serious fiscal deficiency. DAK funds are meant specifically to balance inter-regional imbalances and are to be spent on health, education, infrastructure, and reforestation (Murniasih 2007; Brodjonegoro 2004).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Middle Indonesia towns/ Sources of revenue 2010 (*million rupiah)</th>
<th>Total revenue</th>
<th>Own Source Revenue</th>
<th>General Purpose Grant</th>
<th>Special Purpose Grant</th>
<th>Revenue sharing (taxes + natural resources)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kupang</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>absolute</td>
<td>476,148</td>
<td>40,033</td>
<td>340,862</td>
<td>31,014</td>
<td>27,619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relative</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>8.41</td>
<td>71.59</td>
<td>6.51</td>
<td>5.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pekalongan</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>absolute</td>
<td>383,654</td>
<td>38,186</td>
<td>266,793</td>
<td>20,788</td>
<td>26,644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relative</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>9.55</td>
<td>69.54</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>6.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cilegon</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>absolute</td>
<td>598,204</td>
<td>138,393</td>
<td>279,128</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relative</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>23.13</td>
<td>46.66</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ternate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>absolute</td>
<td>433,302</td>
<td>31,010</td>
<td>281,285</td>
<td>24,654</td>
<td>51,905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relative</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>7.16</td>
<td>64.92</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>11.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1: Comparison of the main sources of revenue for Middle Indonesia’s towns

To assess state dependency with regards to cities’ total income it is important to compare the non-state related sources of income (Own Source Revenue and revenue sharing) to state-related sources of income (DAU and DAK). Compared to the other Middle Indonesia towns Kupang has a relative low amount of Own Source Revenue. Only Ternate has less...
income from taxes and public service charges.\textsuperscript{26} Furthermore, out of these four towns, Kupang has the lowest relative income through shared revenue, which, as mentioned previously, indicates a lack of natural resources and a lagging economy. Unsurprisingly, with 17 percent, industrial town Cilegon boosts the most impressive level of shared revenue income. Even more telling, Kupang is also the only city in this comparison whose shared revenue income is lower than the amount of DAK received. In fact, in Kupang DAK and DAU funds form an absolutely and relatively bigger part of the city’s total income than in any of the three other cities. Although DAU funds are received by all local governments and generally form the main source of cities’ income\textsuperscript{27}, as mentioned previously, DAK funds are only given to regions with a serious fiscal deficiency. When looking at its major sources of income Kupang is thus characterized by a lack of own sources of income (through natural resources, direct taxes, or taxes through revenue sharing) and a dominance of state funding (reliance on DAK and DAU), even more so than comparable Middle Indonesia cities.

As a second indicator used to assess financial state dependency we turn to the size of Kupang’s economy and the role of the state as expressed in Gross Regional Domestic Product. Again, I compare Kupang’s GRDP with that of the other Middle Indonesia towns, as shown in Table 2.2. GRDP is divided into three major sectors - agriculture, industry sector, and service sector, and represents the market value of all final goods and service produced in a region. Therefore the composition of a city’s GRDP shows which sectors contribute to its overall produced value. Especially interesting with regards to assessing the role of the state in Kupang’s local economy is by zooming in on the service sector and the relative contribution made to GRDP by government sector services. A relatively high contribution by this sector indicates a lack of non-state contributors to a region’s economy and therefore a relatively stronger financial dependence on local state resources.

Table 2.2 shows that the vast majority of Kupang’s GRDP stems from the service sector. This is not dissimilar to the GDP of ‘Western’ economies, with the exception that Kupang’s service sector is dominated by government sector services instead of private sector services. Over two-thirds of Kupang’s service sector services consist of government sector services, and less than one-third of private sector services. This means 18.22 percent of Kupang’s GRDP stems from the local state. Kupang’s reliance on the service sector, therefore, does not indicate a shift to a private sector service economy, but rather a lack of an industry sector and a high dependence on state resources.

\textsuperscript{26} This low level of Own Source Revenue is not unusual in Indonesia, since it consists of taxes raised from hotels, restaurants and so forth. As a consequence certain regions with specialized revenue raising report high Own Source Revenue whereas many other regions do not. As an example, the Own Source Revenue per capita in municipalities/cities in Bali in 2007 was 71% higher than that of those in East Nusa Tenggara (Murniasih 2007: 13-15).

\textsuperscript{27} In 2006, for instance, the national average for municipalities/cities in 2006 was a DAU percentage of 74% of the total budget (Murniasih 2007).
When comparing Kupang to Pekalongan, a batik manufacturing city, for instance, we see that the majority of Pekalongan’s GRDP still comes from the service sector, namely 12.99 percent, but notably less that Kupang’s. Pekalongan leans more towards the industrial sector, and in particular towards manufacturing. Manufacturing contributes a whopping 20.04 percent to Pekalongan’s GRDP, but only 3.18 percent to Kupang’s. When we include Cilegon, an industrial town, we see that only 1.70 percent of its GRDP stems from service sector services, thereby indicating a very small contribution from the local state through government sector services. Instead, Cilegon’s economy is dominated by the industry sector: it contributes 64.80 percent to Cilegon’s GRDP. Manufacturing alone produces over half the city’s GRDP (56.12 percent). Having a mere two water companies, twenty-three eating facilities, eighteen wood processing shops, and four textile shops, Kupang is no match for this industrial giant. In Ternate, agriculture forms a larger contribution to the GRDP than in the other cities, but the service sector still takes up most of its economy. Nevertheless, the relative contribution of the service sector services as a whole (17.91 percent) is still smaller than that of Kupang’s government sector services.

In short, both in terms of sources of revenue and size of the local economy, Kupang shows a relatively heavy reliance on (central and local) state resources. The comparison with three other Middle Indonesia towns indicates that this state dependency is strongest in

---

Table 2.2: Comparison of Gross Regional Domestic Product of Middle Indonesia’s towns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>agriculture</td>
<td>205 680.48</td>
<td>257 096.79</td>
<td>444 553.25</td>
<td>120 257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of agriculture to GRDP</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>7.97</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>14.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>industry sector</td>
<td>747 877.68</td>
<td>1 174 127.24</td>
<td>12 947 868.77</td>
<td>108 767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of industry sector to GRDP</td>
<td>18.56</td>
<td>36.41</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>13.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>service sector</td>
<td>3 075 524.14</td>
<td>1 793 395.30</td>
<td>6 589 707.61</td>
<td>604 820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of service sector to GRDP</td>
<td>76.33</td>
<td>55.62</td>
<td>32.98</td>
<td>72.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*specification service sector*

| services                     | 1 078 054.89 | 418 889.06 | 340 476.67 | 149 306       |
| % services to GRDP           | 26.76        | 12.99      | 1.70        | 17.91         |
| government sector services   | 734 228.83   | 345 742.90 | X           | X             |
| % government sector to GRDP  | 18.22        | 10.72      | X           | X             |
| private sector services      | 343 826.06   | 73 146.16  | X           | X             |
| % private sector to GRDP     | 8.54         | 2.27       | X           | X             |

| total GRDP                   | 4 029 082.30 | 3 224 619.33 | 19 982 129.63 | 833 844       |

---

28 For a more detailed specification of the regional incomes of these four towns see Kota Kupang in Figures 2009; Kota Pekalongan Dalam Angka 2009; Cilegon in Figures 2011; Kota Ternate Dalam Angka 2010.
Kupang due to a lack of revenue generating possibilities from industries, agriculture, private sector, or natural resources. For current purposes, it is important to note, first, that the type of class this financial preponderance of the state facilitates is a state dependent political class. Furthermore, due to the insignificance of other economic resources the accumulation and exchange of capital of members of this class is unlikely to be threatened. Finally, for those outside the political class, access to state resources becomes an important way of gaining membership. Similar to Vel I therefore suggest that appropriation of state resources enables the coming into being of a ‘political class’. Social stratification in Kupang, as in Sumba, is better explained in terms of access to the local state than in terms of ethnic segmentation, ironically even more so after the neo-liberal inspired implementation of regional autonomy. A close look at the lay-out of Kupang supports this formation of a state dependent political class and shows how, from the colonial era onwards, ethnic segmentation has ceased to characterize physical segmentation, while a political class has visibly carved out its separate geographical spaces in the city.

Seeing a state
As we have briefly seen in the introduction, this prominence of the state in the city’s economy is reflected in a very visible pervasiveness of the state. This, however, does not mean that the state is equally visible in all of Kupang. It also does not mean that the political class characterized by its exclusive access to state resources is equally present everywhere. Before we move to the urban spaces carved out by the political class it is important to note that the most fundamental spatial division in Kupang is not one between the ‘haves’ (general political class) and the ‘have mores’ (political elite part of the political class) but, rather, between the relatively affluent urban inner core and the poor semi-rural periphery. Most of the poor, the tani class, in Kupang live in the town’s rural outskirts, districts Alak and Maulafa, whereas most of the rich live in or near the densely populated old town, such as the western part of districts Kelapa Lima and Oebobo, and the inner edges of districts Alak and Maulafa (see Map 2.1).

29 The richest sub-districts are found in district Kelapa Lima. Sub-district LLBK, for instance, has an estimated 83 percent of household that are ‘well-to-do’ (mampu), and Merdeka approximately 85 percent. Kelapa Lima as a whole has an estimated percentage of poor household of under 30 percent. The poorest sub-districts are found in district Alak in the southeast of the city (see Map 2.1). In sub-district Nunaun Delha, for instance, only around a quarter of the households are classified as well-to-do, while over 35 percent as classified as very poor. Alak reports a total percentage of poor households of over 40 percent. Districts Oebobo and Maulafa in the center and southeast, by contrast, have estimated household poverty rates of 30-36 percent and 37-39 percent respectively (Badan Pusat Statistik 2006). This is not surprising. The easternmost part of Kelapa Lima is known as kampong Cina - the Chinese area. This area counts as the economic heart of Kupang with many little shops offering items varying from clothes through imported beauty products and motorcycles. Even though the new Flobamora mall in district Oebobo might be a more prestigious place to buy goods, kampong Cina is favored because of its perceived cheaper prices. The impression that driving around the southern parts of districts Maulafa or Alak leaves is indeed that the area is more sparsely populated and that it lacks the impressive big government buildings, shops, little restaurants and internet cafes of the center, but not that it is strikingly poorer than other areas of Kupang. In fact, some of the city elites have taken up residence here such as in the private
It is, nevertheless, these ‘haves’, and the physical spaces they inhabit in the city that we turn to. The rectangle drawn in Map 2.1 roughly depicts the old town and its surroundings, the area where most of the haves are to be found. This is also the area where the ‘state’ is most visible. One way of looking at the importance of the state in Kupang, namely, is by literally seeing it. To underline this physical pervasiveness of the state in this area I present three maps of Kupang below. The first depicts Kupang as it is without marking any specific areas. The second shows Kupang with the administrative offices of city, regency and provincial civil service blackened out. The third gives an impression of the city without the ‘state’. Not only are the government offices blackened out, but also all building, areas and infrastructure dependent on the presence of the state.
Civil servants' residential areas are gone. The hotels, which thrive more on civil service training courses and seminars than on tourism, are gone. Some of the banks have disappeared,
since they mainly accommodate civil servants. The biggest shops in Kupang –selling motorcycles- have vanished: the majority of people able to get credit at a motorcycle dealer get it on a civil servants’ paycheck. The smaller shops are gone –who but civil servants have the extra cash to splurge on unnecessary commodities? With many office areas, residential areas, and shopping areas gone, many of the roads disappear as well. This map, therefore, serves to illustrate the extent to which Kupang’s physical lay-out is influenced by a physical presence of the state.

Without the state, not much is left of Kupang’s population as well. At city level administration Kupang employs 6.326 civil servants (NTT In Figures 2010). When adding the number of civil servants of regional and province level government also working in Kupang the total number of civil servants is closer to 18,000, or approximately fifteen percent of Kupang’s labor force. However, keeping in mind that not just civil servants are dependent on the state for resources but also others, such as temporary government employees, businessmen, family members and so forth, the part of Kupang’s population dependent on the state becomes much bigger. I estimate that the political class comprises close to half of Kupang’s population of 299,518 inhabitants. In comparison, the tani class makes up approximately one-third of Kupang’s population.

Not surprisingly, a ‘state image’ of unity, strength and coherence (Migdal 2001) is thus constantly encountered when moving through the town. Even when not in the direct vicinity of a government building of some sort it is hard to escape state images. The ‘state’ leaves a visible imprint in other ways as well. Civil servants in their recognizable khaki uniforms form a visible and very mobile example of state presence that makes it hard to ever completely forget about the ‘state’. Early in the morning dutiful husbands dressed in khaki give their khaki-clad wives a ride to their offices. Throughout the afternoon khaki-clad couples can be seen on their way back home. Around lunch time little road-side food stalls, cheap, and fancier restaurants get inundated with a flood of civil servants on their lunch break. The khaki uniforms do not necessarily come off after work hours: I was told by neighbors, for instance, of a young man who was so proud of his civil service status that he kept his uniform on even after coming home from work. He would even wear it on Sundays. Another anecdote relayed by my neighbors was that an additional occasion outside the office environment to wear the government uniform for a young man is when asking his girlfriend’s parents for her hand in marriage. No parent-in-law would turn down a suitor who so clearly

---

30 See NTT In Figures 2010. Although the regency has moved its administrative center and Departments to the town of Oelamasi, approximately 35 kilometers from Kupang, at the time of my research all regency level Departments were still in the city.

31 To estimate the size of the political class and the tani class I used data on employment (Kota Kupang In Figures 2010: 58-71). The total work force of Kupang is 128,557, of which 18,362 are unemployed and 110,194 are employed. I compared data on types of main occupation of the total employed population aged fifteen and over with those on main employment for the same category to make an approximate estimation of tani and political class. I, then, extended these estimates to the non-economically active (children, students, homemakers). These estimates are a rough indication and merely serve to give a general impression.
demonstrates his steady civil service position (and income). Besides office uniforms, office vehicles are also gladly put to use for purposes other than work. These ‘red number plate’ (plat merah) cars and mopeds tend to be appropriated by civil servants for private use. Visible reminders of the state are thus inescapable even when not in the vicinity of government buildings, since you will find them parked in front of the night club on a Saturday night or by Tablolong beach south of Kupang on a Sunday afternoon.

The ‘state’ in Kupang thus not only plays a significant part in the town’s budget, but is a prominent physical presence as well. ‘State images’ (Migdal 2001) permeate even the most intimate aspects of social life—proposing marriage while wearing an office uniform, for instance. When shifting the gaze from government buildings and state images to new residential areas in the city, however, it becomes even clearer that the ‘state’ is not only an impressive visible presence but also a driving force behind the development of a political class dependent on access to state resources. A short historical overview illustrates how Kupang has developed from an ‘ethnically segmented’ town to a class-based one.

**From an immigration town to administrative & educational hub**

The first people to occupy the area where Kupang is located nowadays were the Timorese Helon—people belonging to a single political unit, namely that of the kingdom of Helon. The city of Kupang, nevertheless, has been home to immigrants from many other places than its native Helon for a long time. Before Europeans reached Timor the island had already attracted Chinese and Indian traders due to the abundance of high-quality sandalwood. As early as 1436, Chinese reports mention the existence of twelve ports on Timor (Fox 1977: 61).

In 1511 the Portuguese were the first Europeans to reach the Lesser Sunda Islands after the conquest of Malakka. Over fifty years later, motivated by pressure from the Dominicans, they built a fort on Solor, an island north of Timor and east of Flores in 1556. For decades uncontested, the Dutch East India Company (VOC) embarked on a series of conquests of this stronghold from 1613 onwards and in 1646 finally announced their definitive occupation of the fort. Not long after this, however, in 1653 the Dutch—also urged to do so by the Helon king—decided to move their stronghold and therefore the hub of their transaction in the Lesser Sunda regions to Kupang naming their new castle Fort Concordia (Boxer 1947: 1-5; Farram 2004).

When looking at the initial development of residential areas in Kupang a division based on ethnic segmentation can indeed be observed. During the VOC period the Dutch strategically surrounded their settlement with clusters of immigrants as support against the Portuguese. Besides finding (subordinate) allies in several Timorese kings, the Dutch also imported people from other islands for support against ongoing attacks from the Portuguese. The Muslim Solorese had accompanied the Dutch at the time of their move from Solor to
Kupang, but the Dutch also imported people from the nearby islands of Rote and Savu. This resulted in the development of a kampong (neighborhood) Solor, some kampongs Rote and several kampongs Savu. The Timorese immigrants in turn had their own areas. Additionally, the Chinese and the Arabs resided in their own (commercial) neighborhoods. To this day therefore, kampong Solor and kampong Cina are still referred to as such, and Kupangese can still point out kampongs Rote, Savu and so forth. After initial settlement of peoples with origins to other islands and areas, subsequent chain migration lead to clusters of people with links to the same areas of origin. Because of this, Kupangese I interviewed claim that sub-district Fontein (district Oebobo, see Map 2.1) is still known for its large Savunese population, Fatufeto (district Alak) for its Alorese inhabitants, and Oesao (in district East Kupang of the Kupang regency) is said to be mainly occupied by residents with Rotenese roots. Kupang thus initially seemed an immigration town characterized by an ethnic segmentation of neighborhoods.32

The early immigrants thus settled in Kupang motivated by opportunities for trade (Chinese, Arabs) or out of politically strategic reasons (Dutch, Atoni, Solor, Rote, Savu). As the Dutch began to intensify their colonial rule over Timor in the late 19th and early 20th centuries Kupang’s importance as an administrative and educational center increased resulting in even more immigration, especially from the nearby islands of Rote and Savu - islands that happened to have profited most from educational opportunities offered by the Dutch and by missionaries.33 Throughout Timor then, Rotenese and Savunese were well-

32 Nevertheless, we should keep in mind that we cannot too readily assume that these kampongs were ethnically homogenous or were solely made up of indigenous inhabitants. Drawing on various Indonesian cities during colonial times Colombijn shows that kampongs were far from being exclusively indigenous neighborhoods, but, rather, consisted of ‘Chinese’, ‘Eurasians’ as well as ‘Europeans’ (Colombijn 2010: 103-140).
33 See James Fox (1977) for an excellent historical overview of Dutch-Rotenese and Dutch-Savunese relations. Even though the Dutch had been present in nearby Kupang for almost fifty years and had made contract with various Timorese rulers, it took until the 1700s for an intensification of Dutch-Rotenese relations. The Rotenese tended to be organized in, for the Dutch, understandable units of clans that reside in an endogamous state (Fox 1977: 81). Because of relative ‘legibility’ and a realization on the side of Rotenese rulers that close affiliations to the Dutch might prove advantageous, these rulers were quick to grasp the opportunity presented by Dutch contracts to legitimize their ‘states’ and thereby making them official. Pemekaran thus has long roots. Furthermore, from 1729 onwards Rotenese Lords and their families began to convert to Protestantism, and soon afterwards started requesting schoolmasters. Conversion to Christianity had as one advantage a rise in social status, and as a second the security that no slaves would be extracted from Christian states. Far before the implementation of education and religion had started in East Nusa Tenggara therefore, a religious and educational system had been put into place in Rote, where they were given all the time to amalgamate with existing beliefs and practices until fully adapted and incorporated (Ibid: 92-112). During the early years of the Dutch presence in Timor some Rotenese settlements were strategically placed in the vicinity of the fort for protection against the Portuguese. Much later, in the early 1800s, Dutch resident Hazaart moved more Rotenese to Timor both as a source of soldiers and buffer, but also to stimulate wet-rice cultivation on the Babau plain. As a result of this the pain area around Kupang became clustered with Rotenese settlements (Ibid). Finally, in the 1900s the Rotenese took up many of the available teaching and bureaucratic positions, due to their advanced educational background.

It took the Savunese a bit longer, but eventually they reached an educational advancement similar to that of the Rotenese. Initially Savu held little attraction for the Dutch, either as a place for retreat or as a source of food. Local ways of organizing political and religious affairs were also greatly confusing to the Dutch (Ibid: 83). Despite being politically and religiously unintelligible, the Savunese were of interest to the Dutch due to their reputation as fierce warriors (Ibid: 112). Dutch contracts from 1756 in Savu therefore obliged the Savunese
represented in government services. That this had not changed much in later decades becomes clear when Ormeling comments, ‘In 1953 it looked as though Timor was governed by a Rotenese minority’, also noting that the Savunese were the other group heavily represented in schools (cited in Fox 1977). At the time of late colonial rule Kupang’s ‘ethnic mix’ thus largely seemed to be dominated by those of Rotenese and Savunese descent.

After independence Kupang continued to develop as an educational and administrative hub, attracting more and more immigrants. Kupang-born Professor Dr. Hendrikus Ataupah - currently in his eighties - remembers how in the 1950s the number of elementary schools, junior and senior high schools in Kupang increased and how children from other parts of the province were sent there. In the late 1960s and early 1970s three universities –Universitas Cendana, Universitas Kristen and Universitas Katolik- were established and the city offered other possibilities for tertiary education as well. Also, in 1959 the city of Kupang became the capital of the East Nusa Tenggara province. Furthermore, in 1978 it changed administrative status from district of the city of Kupang (kecamatan Kota Kupang) to municipality region level II (Kotamadya Daerah Tingkat II), creating more civil service positions. More people thus came to Kupang in search of education and employment. For the time being students found housing with family members or in boarding houses. After graduation, however, some lingered on trying to find a job. Additionally, new and aspiring civil servants of city, regency and provincial level needed housing as well.

So, Kupang started out as an immigration town and in many respects still is. Initial immigration was largely motivated by the Dutch need for protection, but increasingly because of administrative need and educational opportunities. For a long time immigrants settled in ‘ethnic’ clusters which in my view partly explains why ethnic stereotypes are still popular and why assumptions regarding informal ethnic favoring, which I will address in the next chapter, in civil service exist. In the 1970s, however, it was time for the development of new residential areas to provide housing for the steady flow of new immigrants. The residents of these residential areas are not characterized by ethnic homogeneity but, rather, have something else in common.

From ethnicity to class-based segmentation
To ensure cheap housing for those in need of a place to live, the government initiated the construction of perumnas housing. The development of Kupang’s new residential areas –both perumnas and private-sector initiated ones- most clearly exemplifies the physical segmentation of a political class, which supports my suggestion that social stratification in Kupang is better understood in terms of access to state resources than on ethnic (or religious) to supply the Dutch with men to assist them in campaigns on Timor. The Savunese at first were equally disinterested in the Dutch, although from the 1860’s onwards they did open up to education and Christianity and caught up with the Rotenese (Ibid: 160).

34 From personal interviews, conducted in November 2008.
background. Perumnas is an abbreviation of the National Urban Development Corporation (Perusahaan Umum Perumahan Nasional). This state owned corporation was founded in 1974 as an initiative of the Body of National Housing Policy (Badan Kebijaksanaan Perumahan Nasional) to provide ‘a healthy house for every family of the people’ (Perumnas). The National Urban Development Corporation offers national guidelines for building that regions can follow in order to create cheap housing for the population. Those eligible for living in a perumnas house can then get a loan from national bank Bank Tabungan Negara to pay off the mortgage.

Kupang’s first perumnas complex was built in the late 1970s/early 1980s in sub-district Pasir Panjang (currently sub-district Nefonaek) which is located in district Kelapa Lima. During an interview, one of the former planners of this project explained to me that the main motivation for building houses was to accommodate the stream of new civil servants coming to Kupang after it became the capital of East Nusa Tenggara.

At that time urbanization started to happen. Inhabitants from various regencies from all over East Nusa Tenggara came to Kupang for employment, since Kupang had become the provincial capital. It was therefore necessary to build perumnas.

It was thus decided to expand the city eastwards where there was more space, and so 535 ‘units’ were built in Pasir Panjang on parcels of 35m2 each.

Initially, the complex was not a very desirable place to live. Leo Nisnoni, son of the last king of Kupang and former civil servant at Kupang regency level, recalls how he refused to accept parcels in the complex despite being offered them repeatedly. He was asked to move there in order to motivate others to do so as well by showing how enjoyable living in the complex was. He, however, found the parcels too small and too far away from the city and therefore declined the offer. Looking back on his decision he, nevertheless, slightly regrets it. A retired mechanic, additionally, who has been living in the complex since the beginning also remembers the initial unpopularity of the Pasir Panjang complex,

Before, when the houses were just built, it was maybe three to four kilometers to the next households. It was very deserted (sunyi). So at first me and my wife would only spend the nights here. In the afternoons we would be at my parents’ house in Oeba [‘old’ city center].

Nevertheless, for all those in search of housing -in particular the increasing flow of civil servants- and with a steady income, the complex offered an affordable place to live: a retired civil servant couple told me they paid an initial down payment of IDR100,000 (approximately $150 in 1982) to the bank when they first moved there in 1982, followed by a monthly amount of IDR20,000 (about $30 in 1982) directly taken out of their salaries to pay
off the mortgage over the duration of twenty years, something they considered very affordable.  

When riding through the Pasir Panjang complex nowadays little is left of the original small houses that were delivered by the National Urban Development Corporation. Little also remains of its former reputation as an out of the way and unpopular location. Most houses have added new rooms - sometimes a second floor, a gate and colorful paint or tiles on the outside walls. Some of the houses even cover two parcels. It is no longer a place where residents just come to spend the night. Due to expansion of the city and development of infrastructure, furthermore, the city center does not seem that far away anymore and is easy to reach by car, motorcycle or bemo, the mini buses that serve as public transportation.

---

Perumnas house in original state

Enlarged and decorated Perumnas house.

---

35 For the IDR-USD conversion rate in 1982, see http://fx.sauder.ubc.ca/etc/USDpages.pdf.
Conversations with long-time residents and government officials who were in charge of planning the perumnas reveal how the Pasir Panjang complex has developed over the past three decades. It also provides some clarity on the backgrounds of those that moved into the complexes. One of the requirements to qualify for a perumnas house was (and is) having a steady income. Therefore, the first flow of residents consisted mainly of couples of which one partner had a position in local civil service. Private business owners could use their company as collateral but, nevertheless, it was mainly civil servants who moved in at first. Over time, some of the initial residents moved out—to build a house on newly purchased land or to work elsewhere—and sold their house in the complex. Because Pasir Panjang in the meantime had turned from being a no man’s land into quite a desirable location, those that moved out were able to make a decent profit off their houses. According to residents, the second wave of people moving into the Pasir Panjang complex consisted of private sector residents, sometimes buying two adjacent parcels to create bigger living spaces. As one resident explains,

Actually, the perumnas land is meant for civil service employees and others with steady jobs in the private sector. They were allocated perumnas housing. But a lot of those have left, so now there is a different situation. Business people now look for land here to create a home. They feel more at home in a perumnas because it is neatly arranged and already has all facilities. They buy perumnas houses for IDR100 million or even IDR160 million.

While recognizing the influx of private sector residents and well aware of the profit that can be made from selling their perumnas house, not all initial residents are equally set on selling their perumnas residence, however, as one resident makes clear,

These days the majority of people who live in perumnas are private sector people who buy houses from the initial inhabitants. At the time that East Timor became independent someone wanted to buy my house for IDR180 million but I did not want to sell it.

This same trend of occupational differences between first wave and second wave inhabitants can be witnessed in other new residential areas of Kupang as well. The Pasir Panjang complex is but one example of a government-initiated residential area meant to provide housing for those ‘in need’. Similar complexes are perumnas Baumata, RSS Liliba and RSS Penfui, all built after the completion of the Pasir Panjang complex from the 1980s onwards. These complexes are located to the east and south of the ‘old’ city (see Map 2.5). A new one is currently being developed in the west, close to the harbor. Some of these complexes are meant for ‘general society’ (masyarakat umum) whereas others were built
specifically to offer housing to civil servants. The requirements for those interested remain supplying proof of a steady income. Again, this implies that initially primarily civil servants qualified. As with the Pasir Panjang example, however, over time initial residents sold their houses for a good price to other interested people including non-civil servants. In RSS Liliba some of the original small houses remain unaltered, but the majority has been expanded and decorated like the units of the Pasir Panjang complex.

Unlike in the older kampongs described earlier it is difficult to discern a dominant ‘ethnic’ or religious group in the Pasir Panjang complex. As I mentioned earlier the neighborhoods that make up ‘old’ Kupang started out as ethnic clusters, strategically assigned by the Dutch. Consequent chain-migration added to the ethnic (and religious) coloring of these neighborhoods. The newer residential areas, such as the Pasir Panjang complex, are more heterogeneous. As one long-term female Pasir Panjang resident muses,

In former times there was indeed ethnic localization. Certain areas would be for specific groups. For instance, [subdistrict] Airmata was for the Malay, Arabs, people from Lembata [in Flores], and also many Alorese. These were mainly Muslims. This was also the case in [sub-districts] Bonipoi and kampong Solor. Until this day these kampongs are still like that while elsewhere it is already a hotchpotch of many ethnicities –Sumba, Rote, Savu, Java. This is what intermarriages (kawin-mawin) do –everybody is related (bersaudara).

Another older male resident, furthermore, claims,

here we have many ethnicities (suku) and different religions. And all live together in peace and mutual respect. … This is a heterogeneous area and neighbors are like very close family.

Although these residents may have painted an overly romantic picture of intra-residential relations in the complex to appease the inquisitive researcher, the perumnas complexes do appear to be more heterogeneous than for instance sub-district Fontein (district Oebobo), located close to the old center, where I spent a lot of time. Kupangese characterize Fontein as a Savunese dominated sub-district. Indeed, every party and family gathering I attended there consisted primarily of others of Savunese origin: neighbors, family members and in-laws. In contrast, when I was invited by a Javanese Muslim aerobics friend to join a Lebaran party to celebrate the end of Ramadan in a perumnas complex, I found myself surrounded by not only our mutual aerobics friends -most of whom were Christian and from various ‘ethnic’ backgrounds- but also by a number of her neighbors in the complex, who were neither family, Muslim, nor Javanese, and who had come to celebrate this event with her and her family.

The perumnas and RRS complexes thus form ethnically and religiously heterogeneous residential areas. Marriages and religious celebrations cross-cut ‘communal’
divisions. Nevertheless, the residents in all of these government-initiated residential areas do have one thing in common, namely a dependence on state resources. A requirement for the first wave residents was proof of a steady income to qualify for housing which in Kupang is more or less synonymous with working as a civil servant. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of first wave residents in the Pasir Panjang complex consisted of civil servants. Since a number of initial residents sold their perumnas houses to private sector employees and business people the perumnas residential areas are no longer solely occupied by civil servants. However, this does not mean that the second wave residents are less dependent on state resources.

In provincial town Kupang even the private sector is closely tied to the state. A good example of this is the construction sector, the most vibrant part of the private sector in Kupang, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six. The construction sector is of central importance to economic growth and is an employer of growing importance in Indonesia as a whole (Van Klinken and Aspinall 2010: 141-143). The sector, however, is largely dependent on government projects. According to World Bank estimates, as much as 80 percent of the construction contractors rely on government projects (World Bank 2001: 21). This dependence is thought to be even higher in the provinces. Even the construction sector thus relies heavily on the state. The residents of Pasir Panjang therefore –both the ‘first wave’ civil servants and the ‘second wave’ private sector- residents are therefore dependent on the state as a source of accumulation.

Map 2.5: Development from ‘ethnic’ segmentation of old city center to class segmentation of new residential areas
This assumption still holds true when we move from the residential areas of the general political class constructed by the government to those constructed by the private sector which cater mainly to the political elite, such as Walikota in the neighborhood surrounding the mayor’s office in sub-district Oebufu, Perumahan Artha Graha in sub-district Oebufu, the area south of El Tari II road in sub-district Liliba, and BTN Kolhua in sub-district Kolhua (see Map 2.5). In the Artha Graha complex in sub-district Oebufu, for instance, private investors bought a large plot of land, provided it with infrastructural facilities and small houses and then sold these as separate units on the open market. Artha Graha’s residents generally seem to have a higher income level than those living in the government-initiated complexes: the houses are bigger, more lavishly decorated and more often have a car parked in front. This is an area for businessmen and upper-level civil servants with access to extra money –thus moving towards the political elite segment of the political class. The state-connection emerges, for instance, from the ‘red number plate’ cars parked within the gates of a number of the houses there. Driving along a small street in Artha Graha my companions pointed out two houses on each side of the street. The one on the left was painted in bright colors and was fenced. The one on the right was spread out over two plots of land, and was separated from full view by a tall hedge. It was even more impressive than the first. Both belonged to a former head of the Department of Public Works. In the car it was questioned how a former civil servant – albeit a department head- was able to afford not just one, but two of such houses. Continuing our drive we passed through the even more impressive private sector residential areas of sub-districts Liliba and Kolhua, where I was shown the colorful palaces of the mayor, well-known pastors and businessmen.

This drive through the new residential areas –both government and private sector initiated- brought into view a physical part of Kupang that I had not yet encountered. Having lived in the ‘old’ Kupang close to kampong Solor and kampong Cina with only a moped for transportation the Pasir Panjang complex was all I had seen of the ‘new’ Kupang. The physical separation of the newer residential areas –in particular the visibly luxurious private sector-initiated neighborhoods in which all residents need a car just to get to town, nevertheless, indicate the existence of a kind of social stratification that had been hidden to me for a long time during fieldwork. Although variations in income levels between and within these newer residential areas are suggested by, for instance, the size of houses, use of decorations, or presence of fences- it is, however, clear that these complexes are not for those without access to Kupang’s main pool of financial resources –the state- whether directly through steady civil service income, indirectly through business deals or, perhaps, even through illegal/illicit means. If a look at the ‘old’ city of Kupang suggests an ethnically
segmented composition, Kupang’s current composition suggests a segmentation based on access to state resources, or, in other words, the physical segregation of a political class.36

A ‘divided town’: permeability and networks

The ‘divided city’ approach used in this chapter has thus far helped nuance one popular assumption about Kupang, namely that social differentiation can be best understood in terms of ethnic friction. Indeed, it suggested that differentiation in terms of the rise of a political class offers a more useful analytical tool. However, now it is time to nuance this idea of class-segmentation and focus on the permeability of class and the importance of interconnectedness in Kupang. The kind of social segmentation formed by the physical segregation of the new residential areas in the provincial town context of Kupang is different than, for instance, the stark and dramatic social segmentation formed by physical barriers in other, larger ‘divided city’ contexts—the social divide between ‘West’ and ‘East’ offered by the Berlin Wall (Elkins 1988), or between different segments of society offered by gated communities (Blakely and Snyder 1999). Whereas the Berlin Wall proved to be virtually impenetrable to those from either ‘West’ or ‘East’, new residential areas in Kupang are far from impervious. Permeability and intertwinedness are key to social stratification and class formation in Kupang, which is reflected in all residential areas.

In ‘old Kupang’, for example, big, lavish houses stand next to small huts. In the government-initiated perumnas such as Pasir Panjang multi-storied houses that cover two parcels are found adjacent to houses in their sober, original state. Even though no small houses -or houses without cars parked out front- can be seen in the private sector-initiated residential areas there is still a marked difference in extravagance between the houses there. Therefore, the divided city of provincial town Kupang is not one of impenetrable boundaries but one of a more nuanced and intricate kind of segregation. Similarly, even though the new residential areas of Kupang do suggest the rise of a class which is dependent on state resources, they also suggest internal differentiation. Social stratification is far from impervious and class-boundaries are far from clear-cut. Taking visible aspects of houses, such as size and lavishness of decorations, as a rough estimation of economic stratification it thus becomes clear that those with higher incomes do not only live in the new residential areas, but are scattered throughout Kupang. The rich live next to the poor, thereby muddling any thoughts on clear-cut class division suggested by the segmentation of newer residential areas. Hints of class differences in the provincial town of Kupang—in economic terms- can thus be discerned within neighborhoods as well by looking at differences between residences. To complicate matters even further, however, even within households ‘classness’ is an ambiguous concept. The intertwinedness of class relations is perhaps best exemplified by

36 It should be noted that the Chinese—one of the first groups of immigrants to take up residence in Kupang, although still present in the area known as kampong Cina in the old center, have also moved out to these new residential areas, therefore adding to the ‘ethnic mix’ of these areas.
zooming in on a single household to show that, even within one house, attempts at social stratifying are difficult.

During my research I spent some time in one of the ‘bigger’ houses in sub-district Fontein in district Oebobo. This house was built with stones and cement. All walls were painted and all floors -except for that of the kitchen- were tiled. The house counted one living room, four bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a kitchen. Most of the time was spent on the nicely tiled front porch, which was shielded from the sun by the overhanging roof that was supported by white-painted pillars. Although civil servants in Yogyakarta or Jakarta might have houses with a gas- or electric stove instead of a pile of wood to cook on in the kitchen, in comparison with most other houses in the near vicinity this one definitely looked the best. In contrast, our neighbors next-door lived in a far more modest residence. It was made out of stone and cement, but none of the walls were painted. The roof was made of rusty corrugated sheet as opposed to our nice and shiny one. The house had a small living room and a small bedroom. They did have a bathroom inside, unlike some other neighbors who had to use a little outhouse. These two houses standing next to each other in sub-district Fontein thus clearly represented a visible difference in terms of economic stratification that I noticed so often when riding through Kupang.

Indeed, with regards to financial means and occupational backgrounds of the residents in both houses there were some clear differences. In my house lived (most of the time at least) three sisters -Ade, Mina and Mince. The oldest, Mina, worked as a civil servant in a junior high schools’ administration. Her three children lived there as well. The youngest of her children was still in senior high school but the older two had jobs –one as a civil servant and the other at government-owned radio station Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI). The youngest sister, Mince, had a civil service position as a teacher. Mince’s husband also lived in the house and had a job as a civil servant as well. Their daughter was still in elementary school. The middle sister, Ade, had completed only elementary school and was therefore in charge of looking after the kids and taking care of most household chores, meanwhile earning a small income by selling snacks and soap by the nearby river, a popular recreational place. The main household expenses -electricity, water and rice- were paid for with contributions from the various civil service salaries. Our neighbors –a middle aged man, his wife and young daughter- had a much harder time making ends meet: the husband was rumored to make no efforts ‘finding money’ (cari uang) to contribute to household expenses and to waste what little money he managed to get on alcohol while his wife diligently scraped together an income by offering her services as a laundry woman to her neighbors. The two young civil servants in our household with no families of their own to support gladly
paid our neighbor to avoid the time-consuming task of washing their own clothes by hand in the river (as did I).\textsuperscript{37}

This neighbor, however, was by no means a mere hired help from a clearly distinct social stratum, but, rather, a member of the same tight-knit network of kin, neighbors and church-members that my household members were a part of. Members of both households classified themselves as Savunese and claimed to be distantly related - as did most residents in the neighborhood. They attended the same church, went to the same birthday parties, gossiped together, ate together and had their children play together. The economic differences, which are reflected in the size of houses thus do not make for an unambiguous social stratification. This is why Vel’s concept of political class as a social rather than economic concept is so appropriate in Kupang (Vel 2008). To recap, political class –although deriving their income and revenue from the state- refers to social stratification. Economic capital is but one resource of power that can be used to move upwards. Social mobility according to Vel in Sumba hinges on the accumulation of various forms of capital –social, economic, and cultural (Vel 2008: 10-11; 42-46). Furthermore, vital to the understanding of how social mobility is played out through the accumulation of various forms of capital is paying attention to the role of reciprocity since, as Vel claims, ‘reciprocity is crucial to the Sumbanese way of thinking’ (Ibid.: 19).

The ideas on social mobility offered by Vel’s concept of political class are a far more helpful analytical tool than a conception of class that focuses mainly on economics. As the examples given in this section on the financial and occupation backgrounds of residents within and between households show, economic differences only partly explain social stratification. People of different economic means are connected –even within households- and mutually respected –neighbors hang out even though one does the others’ laundry. As with Vel’s political class there is more to social mobility than money. Other forms of capital matter similarly, which is something we will see repeatedly throughout this dissertation. What fuels social mobility, furthermore, is the embeddedness of reciprocal obligation in social networks in provincial town Kupang –as Vel already signaled in Sumba. Therefore, in order to answer some of the questions posed in later chapters –how to get a civil service job, how to get a construction contract, or how (not) to become governor, and in order to understand some of the actual practices in government offices that seem to contradict a state image of coherence, it is necessary to see how reciprocal logic seeps into the balancing and exchange of various kinds of capital. This comes to the fore most clearly in family networks

\textsuperscript{37} This thus also exemplifies how ‘state money’ –civil servants’ salaries- circulate within and between households, supporting the idea that many in Kupang are dependent on state resources fro income whether directly or indirectly.
in what must be Kupang’s materialized epitome of reciprocity - the books of donations that circulate during *kumpul keluarga* (family gatherings).38

**Kumpul keluarga and reciprocal obligations: the book of donations**

Books of donations form an important part of almost all parties that take place in what Kupangese refer to as ‘party season’ (*musim pesta*) which lasts from approximately April until October - thus outside the rainy season. During party season it is not uncommon to attend several parties a week or even within one night. Everybody in some way connected to the family hosting the festivities – whether through family ties, work connections, or alumni associations - is supposed to make an appearance. A wedding party as well as most other more expensive occasions, such as funeral ceremonies, is usually preceded by a specific party for a more intimate circle of relations called *kumpul keluarga* (family gathering). During these *kumpul keluarga* gatherings invitees are expected to make a financial contribution to the upcoming party in question. This is where the books of donation come into play.

One day my guest-sister Sinta invited me to join her for a pre-wedding *kumpul keluarga* of one of her best friends. This pre-wedding party took place outside the friend’s parents’ house. The space around the house was filled with plastic chairs ordered in neat rows that are commonly rented for such occasions. On the little porch in front of the house stood a set of speakers, which was connected to a CD player playing regional popular music and a microphone. Every now and then someone – a parent of the bride-to-be or a pastor - would take the microphone and initiate a long speech or prayer. In the kitchen, tables were packed with large plates of a variety of food. As Sinta and I were sitting on the plastic chairs, sipping our water and listening to speeches and prayers Sinta asked those around us if the ‘book’ had already passed by where we just sat down. I had accompanied Sinta to a few pre-wedding parties and other parties already and had noticed books – note-books, hardcover books, books that appeared to be falling apart - circulating before, not knowing what they were being passed around for. When I asked Sinta what the book was for, she explained to me that gatherings of the family (*kumpul keluarga*) such as this pre-wedding ceremony, were not just celebrations of a special occasion – marriage of a child, death of a relative, sending a child to school. These gatherings are also an opportunity for the hosts to collect money to fund these occasions. The hosts, therefore, circulate a book of donations in which all attendants write down the amount they contribute to the occasion.

As I leafed through the booklet, I noticed the contributions ranged between IDR5,000 ($0.55) and IDR200,000 ($23), with IDR20,000 ($2.30) being the most common donation. Sinta contributed IDR100,000 ($11.50), which I thought was quite an amount. Sinta

---

38 I borrow this term ‘book of donations’ from Vel (2009). Even though her book of donations is used in a different context it serves similar purposes.
explained this by telling me that even though the bride-to-be wasn’t a family member she still considered her a very good friend. Besides this, she had a job and could afford this token of generosity. Sinta furthermore told me that when she herself would marry she would expect her friend to return this amount provided she would be in a position to afford it. Sinta’s rather large donation thus revealed how close she felt to her friend. It also contained the expectation that at a certain point in the future her contribution would be reciprocated.

Sinta’s aunt Mince, on the other hand, gave donations for other reasons. She joined kumpul keluarga parties mainly to show off her own carefully assembled image of affluence. Mince’s self-proclaimed greatest ‘hobbies’ were collecting lipsticks from all around the world—which she would call ‘made in’ lipsticks, and mail-ordering clothes from Java on credit. During Kupang’s party season she would make her husband take her to countless parties, putting great effort into compiling outfits that matched with one of her lipsticks. While getting dressed and putting on make-up she would not look forward to meeting friends or relatives at the party she was about to go to—in fact, she usually did not seem to really like anyone at the parties she attended. She would, however, look forward to possibly receiving compliments regarding her outfits with great anticipation. There was no greater joy for Mince than to appear at a kumpul keluarga or wedding party all dressed up in imported clothes wearing an unusual color of lipstick (‘made in Holland’) on her lips and to be envied by the other women there. She did not care much for expressing closeness to the hosts via contributions written down in the books of donation, and would often lament the practice of giving donations altogether. The merit of the joining parties to Mince lay in parading around the wealth and sense of fashion she could afford for herself, her husband and her daughter on credit.

The contributions jotted down in the book of donations, therefore, are more than mere monetary gifts. To a certain extent the kumpul keluarga parties in which the books of donation are circulated can be understood in economic terms. The parties are meant to raise money for an upcoming costly event. However, organizing a kumpul keluarga—renting the electronic equipment and plastic chairs, preparing food for all guests—is also expensive. More importantly, nevertheless, the contribution given is revealing of the position of the donor, the recipient and the relationship between them. The amount of money given says something about donors and their tie to the recipient: the higher the amount given the richer the donor, or the closer the tie to the recipient. The amount of money given also signals a debt of the receiver to the donor: on a following family gathering thrown by the former donor, the former receiver is supposed to match or surpass the amount given to him or her. In a sense, these books of donations thus form materialized examples of the system of reciprocal obligations within a network of family and other intimates, in which received donations which are also outstanding debts, are carefully documented.
Furthermore, the contributions written down in the books of donation are also in a Malinowskian sense not ‘free’ (Malinowski 1984[1922]: 40-41). By giving a donation donors continue an existing social relationship and thereby make a statement about the current relationship and about future expectation regarding the relationship. Sinta’s quite high contribution shows her friend just how close she considers her to be and that she expects this closeness to continue. Mince’s lamenting of having to give donations and her giving of as little as possible shows her general disregard of maintaining closeness. By giving the bare minimum she shows politeness, but no more. It is not unthinkable that Mince would reciprocate a large contribution once given to her with the minimal polite amount, since she would rather spend her money (or credit) on lipstick and clothes. A certain unevenness and unmet expectations can thus already be read from the practice of writing down a small monetary contribution in the book of donations during a kumpul keluarga party.

I claim that this ‘logic’ of reciprocal obligations which is played out most clearly in family circles via the book of donations is mimicked in other social circles in Kupang – alumni associations, office networks, business circles, and political ‘success teams’. Social stratification in Kupang cannot be understood without recognizing how social mobility in Kupang in any field hinges on the accumulation and balancing of various forms of capital that can be exchanged along the lines of reciprocal obligations so common in family networks. In subsequent chapters I will address this in networks other than family ones. For now, to support this claim further, I want to show how these reciprocal obligations in family networks lead to an accumulation of capital and social mobility over the course of a few generations. By doing this I will once again try to show that the kind of class segmentation that is suggested by the physical segmentation of the newer residential areas is indeed that of a dynamic ‘political class’, and stress once more that social mobility is better understood in terms of an exchange of capital rather than in terms of ethnicity.

Reciprocal obligations and the accumulation of capital over the course of generations

To look at the role that reciprocal obligations play in the accumulation of capital –thereby facilitating upwards social mobility-over the course of three generations, I will return to the members of the household in sub-district Fontein that I referred to in previous sections. Since I spent a large amount of time in this household I got to know its members quite intimately. Therefore the casual conversations, chats and more formal interviews I had with all of the members of the household help provide a more detailed and in-depth picture of social mobility in Kupang. We will meet some of the other inhabitants of this house in later chapters, but for now I will focus mainly on the accounts of the eldest sister of the household, Mina. At the time of our conversations Mina was in her mid-fifties and approaching the age of retirement. She had been working as a lower-level civil servant for a long time. Mina only lived in the Fontein residence part-time. Mina and her husband owned a house in a nearby
sub-district but since all of her children lived in the house in Fontein, where they had grown up and had their friends, Mina spent a lot of time in Fontein as well.

The accumulation of capital in a very literal sense was the topic of a conversation we had one afternoon on the front porch in Fontein. Mina’s youngest son Leonel had just graduated from senior high school and his future was a constant matter of concern to her. With two children well-educated and already settled in good jobs her current fear was that she might pass away without managing to secure a good future for her youngest. The most pressing issue at that moment was getting Leonel into some school for tertiary education. As said, Mina worked as a lower-level civil servant. Her husband held a semi-civil service job at the local branch of the national radio station Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI), and also did not make large amounts of money. Neither of them was in a position to receive many kickbacks to complement their salary, and they did not engage in extra income-generating activities. There seemed to be nothing exceptional about Mina and her husband with regards to income level, yet two of their children had gone to school in Java, and currently held much coveted positions in civil service. In addition, she was plotting how to collect a sizeable amount of money to ensure an education for her youngest. How did Mina and her family accumulate all this ‘capital’?

Looking at her parents’ background there are few indications for her and her children’s current relatively well-off position. Both Mina’s parents were born and raised in the nearby island of Savu. As we recall, educational systems were reasonably well-developed in Savu. Even though advanced education was only possible for children of royalty, Mina’s parents therefore had completed elementary school (the local Volksschool). Mina’s father came to Kupang to escape his strict father in hopes of finding a job. Mina’s mother came to Kupang for similar reasons and made a living working as a household help. In Kupang they met each other, fell in love, and eventually got married. For reasons unclear to Mina, a friendly ‘uncle’ allotted her parents a plot of land in Fontein where they built a very modest family house. Together they had five children: four girls and one boy. In order to make money Mina’s father initially worked at a shipping company at the harbor as a second foreman before his job was taken over by machines. After the shipping company went out of business, Mina’s father became a vendor of small foodstuffs like rice, corn, banana’s and sweet potatoes from a little stall (kios) at the market. In order to get his merchandise he would catch a truck to the then hard to reach village of Baun located outside of Kupang and back.

‘Finding money’ (cari uang) was by no means a task that only Mina’s father engaged in. Mina’s mother added to the household income by weaving cloth. Furthermore, all of the children would help their father out in the market stall. Before and after school Mina would prepare snacks that could be sold, or tended to the stall while her father was in Baun. Her younger brother Bernardinus and younger sister Ade also helped out at the market. Even
though the parents needed their children’s help in order to make enough money to get by, Mina’s parents placed a lot of importance on education. Mina claims they worked hard to be able to send their children to school. And they certainly succeeded. Mina’s eldest sister Rita finished senior high school, as did Mina herself. The third daughter, Ade, showed no interest in pursuing any education and dropped out of school after elementary school. The fourth child, however, Bernardinus, was a diligent and smart student. When in senior high school he had taken up the courageous plan to go to Yogyakarta to attend Gadjah Mada University, one of the top universities in the country. With his parents and sisters helping out financially, Bernardinus eventually succeeded. The fifth child, Mince, attended a local university and got her Bachelor’s degree. The youngest daughter also obtained a Bachelor’s degree and entered civil service. Unfortunately she passed away a few years ago. In terms of capital, therefore, Mina’s parents had very little economic and cultural capital, but still managed to exchange what little economic capital they had for their children’s cultural capital.

Felt obligations that accompanied Mina’s social capital prevented her from accumulating more cultural capital. Mina confessed to me that after she had finished senior high school she had wanted to attend university. In fact, she had already filled out all the necessary paperwork to enter local Nusa Cendana University. She figured she could afford all tuition fees and other costs by continuing to help her father out at his market stall. She was, however, conflicted by considerations for her family. Her elder sister was already married and therefore did not contribute much to her parents’ household anymore. Mina’s younger brother and sisters were still in school. Her father was often sick, which complicated his ‘finding money’ for food and education. With this in mind she decided to join the testing procedure at a provincial government department as well. She figured that if she were to get accepted for a civil service job she would be in a better position to help out her family. Much to her surprise she got accepted, and decided to join the civil service, and therefore – regrettably- put her educational plans on hold. Mina started out at the Department of Education and Culture at Provincial level, but quickly transferred to an administrative position at a local junior high school. This is where she still works. She managed to get promoted and currently works at an average rank (golongan IIIb). Due to her lack of a university degree she is not eligible for another promotion. Partly due to her contributions to the family household Mina’s siblings managed to get their previously mentioned university degrees. Mina thus stalled her plans for the accumulation of her own cultural capital and

39 Golongan refers to the Indonesian civil service ranking system based on level of education and experience within civil service. Indonesian civil service is divided in four ranks (golongan I, II, III, and IV). Each rank, in turn, is divided into four or five grades (Ia-IId, IIa-IIId, IIIa-IIId, IVa-IVe) constituting a total of seventeen service ranks. Upon reaching golongan III civil servants become eligible for entering the managerial eselon system, which refers to a level of a structural position within civil service. The eselon system counts five levels consisting of two grades (Vb-Va, IVb-IVA, IIIb-IIIa, IIb-IIa, Ib-Ia) and is directly related to rank and grade: the higher the eselon, the higher the rank and grade. Mina does not have an eselon ranking.
instead exchanged it for economic capital—a civil service salary. She then used this economic capital for her siblings’ accumulation of cultural capital.

Mina framed explanations of her past decisions in terms of obligations felt toward her close ones. By attending university she felt as if she would disadvantage her family members whereas by joining the civil service she would be able to provide for them. She also stalled plans to start her own family for these reasons: as early as 1976, when she was twenty-one, Mina had met her future husband. They didn’t get married however until 1982. Mina commented,

I couldn’t possibly take care of two families. If I would have got married so soon my younger brother and sisters would not have had a future. I also would not have money for my future schooling because I would have to buy milk for my own children. They [her brother and sister] would be disadvantaged if I got married. I’d have to take care of my own household. Like that.

Eventually, however, Mina did get married. Her husband held a very acceptable—and, more importantly, steady—position at the local branch of the national radio station RRI. The welcomed their first child, a girl named Sinta, in 1983. Their second child Valentino was born in 1985. Their third and last child, Leonel, was born in 1991. After having started a family of her own Mina intended to make sure her children would get the education she passed up,

I was thinking that even though I didn’t go to university—if God is willing-my children will go. Even though I could not learn English because of money, my children will be able to learn English. I was thinking that English is the language of the world. You have to know that. For a future, you have to know English first of all. If you want to work abroad, you have to know English.

Mina’s eldest child, daughter Sinta, was born in sub-district Mentasi where Mina lived with her husband and parents-in-law. Since both Sinta’s parents had a job Sinta was soon sent to Fontein to live with her aunt Ade who was unemployed and, therefore, had ample time to take care of Sinta. Sinta attended elementary school in Fontein (SD 2). After finishing elementary school, Sinta entered the best public junior high school in Kupang (SMP Negeri 1), and consequently attended the finest public senior high school (SMA Negeri 1). Mina did her best to find out which high schools were ranked highest so she could make sure Sinta obtained the best available education. In addition to regular school, Sinta was made to attend English courses. The kind of job abroad Mina had in mind for Sinta was that of a domestic worker (TKW). As Sinta’s English improved and her high school grades proved to be good, however, Mina saw different possibilities.
Mina’s younger brother, Bernadinus, had successfully managed to get a Bachelor’s Degree at prestigious Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Java. More impressively, he also obtained a Master’s Degree from a Canadian university. At the time of our conversations, Bernadinus had been living comfortably in Yogyakarta for a number of years where he was employed as a lecturer at Gadjah Mada University. Mina thought that if Sinta were to attend university in Yogyakarta -instead of becoming a domestic worker abroad- she could just live with her uncle. An important part of the costs of having a child study on a different island would then be taken care of. Moreover, Bernardinus offered Mina and her husband to cover the costs of Sinta’s educational fees, books and bus money as well. After a year of preparing herself for university in Java at an institute in Kupang, Sinta left for Yogyakarta and enrolled at a local university to study International Relations, and graduated in 2007. Reflecting on why Bernardinus offered to help Sinta, Mina framed her answer in terms of ‘Eastern’ (meaning Eastern Indonesian) and ‘family’ character (sifat),

Eastern character is like that. If I am having a hard time, he is having a hard time too. He feels responsibility. It is custom (adat), a family’s custom to have responsibility to each other. We notice each other when we are in hard times. Back then [when Bernardinus went to university] he had a hard time and I helped him out. Now he already has it good. Therefore he helped out Sinta.

Mina thus, on the one hand, thinks that Bernadinus felt responsible to help out his family members because helping each other out is something inherent to family relations. On the other hand, in Mina’s reflections we also read the kind of reciprocal obligations that we previously saw materialized in the books of donations at kumpul keluarga parties –by helping out Mina’s daughter Bernadinus reciprocates the support Mina has given him in the past that enabled him to complete his studies in Java. Without the hard-earned money sent to Bernadinus from among others Mina, Bernadinus’ education at Gadjah Mada University would have been nearly impossible to accomplish.

Repaying this ‘reciprocal debt’, combined with the general expectation that family members ought to help each other out, also facilitated the entrance into tertiary education for Mina’s second child, Valentino. Valentino was born in 1985. His childhood and early adolescent life more or less followed the same course as that of his sister’s. He grew up in Fontein in the care of his aunt Ade, attended elementary school there, and went to junior high school SMP Negeri 1 and senior high school SMA Negeri 1. Like Sinta, he also took additional English courses. Whereas his sister studied International Relations at a Yogyakartan university, Valentino wished to apply for the Higher School for Domestic Governance (Sekola Tinggi Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri -STPDN), a civil service preparatory school students enter after having finished senior high school.40 STPDN receives

---

40 This school will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four.
only very few students per region per year. Valentino claims that in the year he enrolled, out of a total of one-hundred and thirty-five applicants only two other students from Kupang were accepted.

In terms of capital, having graduated from high school Valentino had acquired the cultural capital necessary to join the selection procedures. In Kupang Valentino took written tests, physical tests and psychological tests all of which he passed. With regards to economic capital, Mina only recalls having to pay for various airplane tickets to Bandung in order for Valentino to join the testing procedures in the selection process there. The STPDN academy does not ask for tuition fees but, on the contrary, actually provides its students with a small monthly allowance. Having passed all selection procedures in Kupang, Valentino joined the final tests aspiring students had to take in Bandung. With the publication of the test results there, however, something peculiar happened. Valentino claimed that at 03:00 in the morning his name was on the list among the names of those who had been accepted. An hour later, nevertheless, his name had disappeared. Valentino suspected tampering with the test results and imagined some student who had not been accepted through formal means tried all available informal powers of persuasion at a higher level to force acceptance anyway—at the cost of having another student eliminated from the list of students accepted. At this point Valentino resorted to what perhaps was his most valuable form of capital: he called his uncle Bernardinus to tell him about his suspicions. As we recall, Bernardinus was employed by Gadjah Mada university in Yogyakarta. More importantly, however, he also happened to be very close to political party PDI-P’s head and former president Megawati. His closeness to Megawati was well-known and because of that he was widely assumed to have substantial political clout. Neither Mina, nor Valentino himself could say with certainty if Bernardinus’ influence had helped, but before long Valentino’s name was back on the list among those accepted.

This case of Mina and her relatives shows the steady upward social mobility of members of one family over the course of three generations. Mina’s parents started out with very humble financial means and very little education. Most of their children, in contrast, obtained degrees from local universities and found employment in local civil service. Mina’s eldest two children attended university in Java and have promising careers in civil service as well.⁴¹ Upwards social mobility over the course of generations in itself is not exceptional, and there are certainly wider structural factors that facilitated this accumulation of economic and cultural capital. Also, certain qualities of the children and grand-children themselves helped moving up. Bourdieu already noted the, ‘dialectical relations between the objective

⁴¹ Valentino currently holds a eselon position at city level administration which is an impressive accomplishment for a young civil servant. We will read more about rise in civil service and great future plans in later chapters. Sinta is currently employed at province-level administration and works at the provincial Electoral Commission Department in the island of Flores. We will see how she managed to get her first steady job at RRI in Chapter Five. Leonel—not interested in a boring administrative job- has recently joined a local academy to become a nurse.
structures to which the objectivist mode of knowledge gives access and the structured
dispositions within which those structures are actualized and which tend to reproduce them’
(Bourdieu 1977: 3). However, with these examples I wish to draw specific attention to the
role reciprocal obligations in family networks played in this upward social mobility.
Valentino and Sinta’s accumulation of cultural capital –university attendance- was greatly
facilitated by their uncle Bernadinus’ willingness to help them out. Bernadinus’ own
accumulated capital, in turn, was made possible by his sister Mina’s financial support when
he was in university. Mina sacrificed her own plans to attend university to help her family
out financially. Mina’s sacrifice, in her opinion, is something inherent to family relationships,
since it is, ‘a family’s custom to have responsibility to each other.’

Social stratification or class differentiation in Kupang can therefore not be understood
without taking into account the intricate and reciprocal character of ties within family
networks. Whereas at first sight the big house in sub-district Fontein may suggest a certain
social distance between its residents and those of the neighboring small dwelling due to
financial differences, upon closer look it becomes clear that not only is social stratification
within one household an ambiguous endeavor –does uneducated Ade belong to the same
‘class’ as her ambitious career civil servant nephew- but also that the existence of close-ties
between neighbors challenges conceptions of class as clear-cut. Similarly, although the
physical segmentation of new residential areas suggests the rise of a state dependent class, it
should be remembered that –just like residents of older sub-district Fontein- the residents of
these neighborhoods are also tied to systems of reciprocal obligations within family networks.
The kind of classness that therefore best describes social stratification in Kupang with all its
permeability, cross-cutting webs of relations and implicit reciprocal obligations is Vel’s
political class.

Concluding
In this chapter I have applied the urban anthropological concept of ‘divided city’ by looking
at segmentation in the physical city as a means to think about processes of social
segmentation. By comparing the composition of colonial Kupang with present-day Kupang I
argue that Kupang has developed from a town characterized by ethnic segmentation –albeit
less rigid than popularly assumed (see Colombijn 2010)- to a town characterized by the
segmentation of a specific social class that depends on state resources for income, namely a

42 The gender aspect of this sacrifice ought to be noticed as well. Perhaps Mina also helped out Bernadinus
because he was the only son and sons’ educational advancement took precedence over daughters’. This,
however, is not something Mina herself ever mentioned.
political class (Vel 2008). This political class, however, by no means entails a class strictly separated from other social strata. Class in Kupang namely is a permeable and flexible conception. Typical of Kupang is a certain degree of interrelatedness. This also comes to the fore in the ‘physical city’-large, luxurious houses standing adjacent to small huts. To grasp social stratification and social mobility in Kupang therefore it also pays to look at this interconnectedness and at the role of reciprocal obligations that are implicit in social networks.

To illustrate this logic of reciprocal obligations in social networks I zoomed in on Kupang’s example of a social network *par excellence* –the family. By using the book of donations and the case of social mobility over the course of three generations I have tried to exemplify just how much this reciprocal logic forms a part of the social fabric and, also, to show how the accumulation and exchange of capital driven by such reciprocal obligations and expectations facilitate upwards social mobility. These family examples are very important to keep in mind while reading the rest of this dissertation. First, they exemplify the importance of reciprocity or gift exchanges in provincial town Kupang, which, as mentioned previously, finds itself somewhere between the *Gemeinschaft* of small villages and the *Gesellschaft* of large metropoles. Second, this reciprocal logic that underlies social interaction in family networks helps shed a light on internal dealings within the political class -that part of the social stratum we enter in the next few chapters. Finally, as we will see in Chapter Seven when we return to interactions between classes, in contrast to what this chapter has shown the embeddedness of reciprocal obligations does not always facilitate upward social mobility by keeping class boundaries permeable. They are also helpful in understanding how some are perpetually excluded from the political class.