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 V

Performative shifting: ‘Family’ networks in offices

In the previous chapter I emphasized how the repetition of a regulatory norm plays an important part in the maintenance of an authoritative discourse, as Butler has so persuasively argued (Butler 1993: 10). Repeated encounters in everyday life with the regulatory norm of civil service propriety—hierarchy, loyalty, subordination for instance—can therefore solidify the truth and legitimacy of civil service discourse. This, however, is not the only possible effect of reiteration. Constant replication of the form of authoritative discourse might also lead to, what Yurchak calls, a ‘performative shift’ (Yurchak 2006: 24-26): a sliding apart of the performative and constative dimensions of a discourse. This, on the one hand, leaves the performative dimension potentially empty of its constative truth. On the other, this enables the possibility of new meanings and practices emerging through the performance of the form (Ibid.).

This is a line of thought I want to pursue further in this chapter. I want to suggest that the repeated performance of civil service discourse brings about such a performative shift. Constant replication helps to maintain a state image of coherence, wholeness and well-organized governance, but at the same time—when disconnected from its constative meaning—it also enables a continuation of ‘KKN’ practices in Indonesia’s civil service. The successful disciplining of hierarchical civil service networks that emphasize loyalty and subordination not only disciplines civil servants into a Weberian-style rational bureaucracy, but also prepares aspiring civil servants for existing patron-client networks that characterize Indonesian bureaucracy. Instead of disposing aspiring civil servants with the ‘Good Governance’, anti-KKN habitus to counter this institutionalized Bapakism—as clientelism in Indonesian bureaucratic institutions is often referred to (Fagg 1958; McVey 1967; McVey 1971; Oostingh 1970; Shiriaishi 1997), I claim that the disciplinary techniques described in the previous chapter actually help maintain the family-istic patron-client networks of Indonesia’s bureaucracy. Besides support ‘from above’ through disciplinary techniques that emphasize loyalty and subordination in hierarchical networks, existing patron-client networks that hinge on family analogies are also supported ‘from below’ in Kupang, where—as I showed in Chapter Two—reciprocal obligations play such an important part in family networks.

In this chapter I thus claim that the successful disciplining of civil service networks, as described in the previous chapter, unintentionally enables the kinds of networks Good Governance ideology hopes to counter. This is possible, first of all, because the constant
replication of the performative dimension of civil service discourse has enabled a performative shift; secondly, because the values of hierarchy, subordination and loyalty within civil service networks emphasized in disciplinary contexts such as STPDN and diklat fit neatly into existing informal networks in civil service; and thirdly, because the reciprocal obligations embedded in family relations in Kupang are easily transferrable to office relations that hinge on family analogies.

**Performative shift and unanchored meanings**

In Chapter Four I gave several examples of how disciplinary techniques used on civil servants encourage an adherence to form rather than content – for instance the mock-question asking of instructors during diklat lectures that aimed more at bringing participants back in line (proper form) than testing them on the contents of the lecture. I also described how this adherence to form is reiterated in a wide range of civil service performances. As mentioned, I propose to follow Yurchak and view this constant replication of form as opening up the possibility of a performative shift -a disconnect between performative and constative dimension of discourse that leaves the performative dimension quite empty of its constative meaning, while also enabling new possibilities for meaning making. To further support this suggestion, I give a description of the process of creating an office document, as an extreme example of adherence to form over constative meaning. I want to draw attention to the meticulous care involved in the form of designing it, without yet wanting to reveal what kind of document it concerns:

*Early Friday morning at the Department of Governance (Pemerintahan) the department head calls sub-department head Mohamed to his office. A letter has to be sent out. As the head explains, sending out a letter is not a matter of fact business, the process leading up to the letter actually being sent out is a rather lengthy process. It is not possible to just write a random letter. For every possible type of letter there is a formulated design that has to be followed when composing that specific type of letter. These designs can be found in the book ‘Kupang Mayoral Regulations’. First of all, a concept letter had to be written. This is the task of sub-department head Mohamed. Mohamed opens a Word document on an office computer and writes a draft. He prints out this concept letter and gives it to his colleague, staff member Diana. Diana then takes this printed letter to the Department of General Affairs (Umum). At General Affairs she asks a staff member to assign a number to the letter. The staff member explains that this type of letter*

70 And I briefly mentioned the centrality of the performative dimension in other disciplinary contexts such as schools, the military, and scouting.

gets code number 005. She gets out a small booklet concerning number ‘005’ letters and tells us from looking at the previous entries in her booklet this is the 358th 005 letter that has been designed this month. In her booklet she writes down that 005 letter number 358 goes to the Department of Governance. She then rips out a red carbon paper copy of this note and staples it to the concept letter. The original note and a yellow carbon copy remain in the booklet. Upon return to the Department Diana hands the concept letter with attached red note back to Mohamed who enters the number given by General Affairs into the concept letter’s Word document and prints this out again. He signs it with his paraf (initials) and then wants to return it to the department head. Unfortunately, the head is out, therefore Mohamed waits till he comes back. As the department head he has to read every concept letter to see if there are any mistakes or oversights. Whispering out loud as he reads he makes some small corrections in the concept letter. The head then sends the letter back to Mohamed and instructs him to rewrite the letter. Mohamed opens up his Word document again and starts working on the corrections. He prints out the concept letter once more, signs his initials, and hands it back to the head. The head re-reads the letter, expresses his satisfaction with the letter’s design and comments on the logo printed at the top of the letter. Thankfully it is yellow –the appropriate color, and therefore the letter does not have to be printed out again. The head sign his initials on the concept letter and hands it back to Mohamed. Mohamed calls again for Diana to take the letter to the second floor to the Acting Regional Secretary’s office so he can check it once more. In case he still sees some mistakes, he will send it back to the head. If not, he will approve and sign. Since the Secretary signs the letter, the First Assistant, department head and sub-department head have to place their initials on the letter. If the mayor would sign this letter, however, the initials needed are those of the Regional Secretary, First Assistant and department head. The rules (aturan) state that letters signed (ditandatangani) need the initials of the three levels below the one signing it. Unfortunately the Acting Regional Secretary is in a meeting, and is thus unavailable to sign anything. Diana returns to her department. The letter remains on Diana’s table. So far this procedure of designing the letter has taken about two and a half hours. Around 13:30 Diana calls the Acting Regional Secretary’s office, to see if he is available, which is not the case. Since it is Friday afternoon she decides to leave it to Monday. Early Monday morning Diana again takes the letter to the Acting Regional Secretary, who is available and signs the letter without requiring further corrections to be made. Now the letter is completely approved, signed by sub-department head, department head and Regional Secretary. After final initials and approval from the First Assistant the letter is ready to be sent out a (work) day and a half after its start.

The process of the design of this letter shows painstaking care and attention. It shows concern with aesthetics in the assignment of proper numbering, checking correct color of the logo, signing of initials and signatures by the appropriate officials. In short, it displays great care for adherence to form. It also shows reverence of hierarchy since three levels of
government have to check the concept letter and are able to suggest corrections. The completion of this letter therefore depends on the approval of government officials of different rank. The process of designing the invitation took a day and a half to complete (with a weekend in between) and would have taken longer if those signing added more corrections or were out of the office and therefore unable to sign. What kind of letter could involve such care, decorum and three-leveled official approval? The letter in question happened to be an invitation letter, which could be read from the code given to it -005. This letter was intended to invite four community figures from sub-district Oepura to the office a subsequent Tuesday to discuss disagreement concerning the election of a neighborhood head (Rukun Tetangga).

The purpose of this letter –arranging four people to be present in the same room at the same time- seemingly could have been reached by making a simple phone call to these four people. The need of adherence to form - the proper execution of the performative dimension of document design, as carefully spelled out in the ‘Regulations’ and no doubt repeated meticulously in all the 357 invitation letters preceding this one in the month of October- took precedence over that what the document was supposed to do –its constative meaning of getting four people in the office. Similar to the examples of adherence to form mentioned in the previous chapter, this extreme example of bureaucratic performance displays the importance of form and of hierarchy, but downplays a constative dimension.

This is not to say that the routinized, ritualized process of designing documents –or any other type of office performance- is merely show and devoid of meaning. As Yurchak says, ‘(q)uite the contrary, the performative replication of the precise forms of authoritative representation rendered the constative meanings associated with this representation unanchored, increasingly unpredictable, and open to new interpretations, enabling the emergence of new and unanticipated meanings, relations, and lifestyles in various contexts of everyday life (2006: 60). This unanchoredness and unpredictability of documents in Indonesia can, for instance, also be seen in Bubandt’s discussion on the violently provocative power of known forged documents to spur violence in Ternate and Tidore (2009). Siegel (1998), furthermore, addresses some of the new meanings and practices enabled by the importance of adherence to form of official documents when he addresses ‘authentic counterfeit’ (aspal) documents. In Chapter Six I will also elaborate on how adherence to the proper form of documents actually enables new corrupt practices in Kupang’s construction sector.

This unanchoring of constative meaning by extreme concern for form is not just relevant for office documents, but also for other types of performative replications that carry out a state image of coherence and wholeness in disciplinary contexts –the wearing of uniforms, practicing marching, role-call, raising the flag and so forth. The disciplinary techniques described previously thus not only successfully tie civil servants to a particular civil service network, but also discipline an adherence to the form of civil service discourse.
that leaves its constative meaning uncertain, and thereby opens up the possibility for the emergence of unanticipated meanings, practices, and sociabilities of civil servants in government offices.

Security, sociability and santai saja

‘If I had a choice, I would pick the private sector over civil service. Then I would not have to raise the flag every day, pledge the oath, respect my seniors, state that I cannot be corrupt and will work in line with regulations, when in reality practices are not in line with regulations’, spoke a disgruntled sub-department head at the Department of Public Works. Not having received a promotion after the previous mayoral elections he felt passed over and was now counting down the last few years till his retirement from civil service so he could focus fully on his private sector architectural company. His opinion was very much the opposite of the one usually uttered by civil servants in Kupang when asked what they found attractive about their position. Most civil servants I met in Kupang preferred their civil service position over one in the private sector, as a female civil servant with a family to support explained,

In Kupang there are few businesses, only small shops. The private sector offers no prospects for the future, such as a pension. That is why a civil service position is so desirable: every month there is the security of fixed wages. And one also gets a pension. If I would compare the private sector to working as a civil servant, working as a civil servant is a lot more enjoyable. The private sector is also good and the money is fine, but it is difficult to manage your time. When you already have a family to look after working as a civil servant is better. Given the choice, I prefer working as a civil servant over working in the private sector.

Adhering to the civil service performances such as raising the flag, pledging the oath, claiming an anti-corruption stance so despised by the sub-department head quoted at the beginning of this section, thus open up access to a wide range of social benefits for most civil servants. Another department head, for instance, claimed, ‘civil servants have a high social status. Being a civil servant is perceived as higher than average society.’ This was echoed by a middle-aged male staff member who said, ‘people still think that working as a civil servant is an honorable position. The working hours are set and you get to wear a uniform.’ He added, ‘The wages are fixed. What is attractive about this position is the job security, fixed hours and a steady income for the family.’ A young female staff member agreed, ‘we are secure till we enter the grave. This position is a security for old age.’ In short, engaging in civil service performances that are part of the job guarantees a desirable status, a steady paycheck, fixed hours and a pension after retirement.72

72 As we will see in Chapter Six, adherence to the form of proper civil service propriety opens up possibilities for new constative meanings and practices that even run counter to the constative dimension of ritualized form of civil service discourse: sticking to form enables corrupt practices. Yurchak similarly stresses how adherence
Another attractive benefit of the income security guaranteed by a civil service position is the access to financial credit. In Chapter Two a steady income was a necessary requirement for those interested in a perumnas house, which is why the first flow of perumnas residents consisted mainly of civil servants. Motorcycle dealers, furthermore, advertise the possibility of buying motorbikes on credit, thus paying a fixed monthly amount against a certain interest rate, on the condition that the buyer has proof of a steady income. In state dependent Kupang this translates into having a civil service job. Connections between dealers and civil service treasurers, furthermore, allow the monthly payment to be taken directly out of a civil servant’s paycheck. Banks also require proof of steady income and similarly get a cut out of the paycheck before civil servants receive their salary. Bank loans are usually used to finance children’s education, to buy a car, or to buy land and to build a house. Adhering to civil service performances therefore enables access to economic capital which, then, can be exchanged for cultural capital (children’s education) or symbolic capital (a cool motorcycle).

A less attractive aspect of being a civil servant sometimes mentioned, is that the daily office tasks are thought to be quite boring. When asking about leisure time -what times lunch breaks were and so forth- one male staff member joked that there was no such thing as having a break since all time spent in the office was leisure time already. Such jokes support a general existing image of civil servants as lazy, a stereotype popular for bureaucrats in the Netherlands as well. Indeed, I found –when contrasting office life in Kupang with my own office experiences in the Netherlands- that civil servants found a lot of time to engage in what seems to be the Kupangese favorite pass time of bercerita (chatting, telling stories). However, I also found that whenever certain tasks had to be completed –piles of documents to be checked at the Immigration Office or reports to finish at the Department of Governance- that staff worked hard to finish, even if this meant working till midnight. Whereas in my own past office experiences it seemed there were always more tasks than employees to execute them, in Kupang there often seemed to be more civil servants than tasks. One department head offered an explanation, ‘in Holland when you don’t have a job you get social benefits. In Indonesia there is no such thing. Our social welfare system is civil service.’

Whether or not this idea has a semblance of truth, spending time in government offices in Kupang struck me as far more enjoyable than time I ever spent in any Dutch office. When not typing out documents civil servants in the Department of Governance enjoyed their

---

73 In contrast, according to Herzfeld, bureaucratic stereotypes for German bureaucrats might be ‘efficiency’, for French bureaucrats ‘rationality’, whereas Britons are to detest ‘excessive bureaucracy’ (Herzfeld 1992: 72).
computer for playing ‘Puzzle Bobble’, and for listening to American country music. Ex-
employees of this department that got placed in a new department often returned (during 
office hours) to chit-chat with former coworkers. Department of Governance employees 
praised their head for his strict yet kind guidance, and the department head himself often 
expressed his appreciation of his subordinates. He also paid his respects to his subordinates 
by attending important family parties. Interactions between coworkers –regardless of rank- in 
Human Resources were always laced with little jokes. One female official told me the most 
important thing in the work place was to laugh a lot, and laughing is what they did -often. 
Public Works employees also enjoyed a joking way of interacting, although the jokes 
considered funniest had fierce sexual connotations. Under the intimidating reign of a handful 
of –quite dominant- women no male employee’s private parts were safe from occasional 
grabbing and subsequent jokes regarding size, not even the department head was safe from 
verbal sexual intimidation.

In many ways, therefore, interactions between employees in offices resembled the kinds 
of sociabilities employees would engage in when not at work. From smoking cigarettes in the 
shade of the overhanging office roof, to young men whistling after young women, to 
gossiping and berterita among each other; if it were not for the uniforms one could easily 
mistake the offices for someone’s front porch during a family party, the night market on a 
Saturday, or the Dendeng river during laundry time. Portraying everyday sociability in 
government offices in Kupang in terms of state-society dynamics, it seems as if the 
boundaries between state and society are perpetually blurred (Gupta 2006). If Migdal 
proposed his state-in-society ideas to suggest a new way of looking at state -society dynamics 
(Migdal 2001), a more fitting way of looking at everyday office life in Kupang, in contrast, 
seems to be a ‘society-in-state’ approach that takes account of how much of everyday family 
and friends sociability trickles over into office environments. Or -to stay closer to Yurchak’s 
terminology used in this chapter- adherence to civil service performances enables a 
continuation of the kinds of interactions and sociabilities employees would engage in outside 
the office, with the added benefits of a raised social status, steady income and a pension after 
retirement.

Sticking to office rules, furthermore, can facilitate this trickling over of such kinds of 
sociabilities into office environments. The head of the Department of Public Works whom I 
spoke with objected to his subordinates’ use of official opportunities to hang out with office 
friends during work time. Even though he recognized such excuses as somewhat legitimate, 
he, nevertheless, complained they got in the way of employees’ actual business,

Sometimes colleagues are moved to another office. But whenever they have a meeting in their 
new department they keep on inviting old Public Works colleagues. These meeting have nothing 
to do with Public Works’ business. It is difficult to refuse such invitations, especially if they’re
given out by heads of offices or other important people. I myself have no problem declining, but
sometimes I find my office half empty because my employees joined other department meetings.
’Santai saja’ (just enjoy).

Therefore, in perfect performative fashion -namely by adhering to the rules regarding the
following of orders from superiors (department heads higher in rank) that were taught and
repeated so well in various disciplinary contexts- Public Works civil servants got a chance to
get out of boring work and catch up with old friends, as sticking to other examples of civil
service performances enabled a creation and continuation of everyday sociability in the
offices. Similarly, Yurchak shows that in the late-Soviet period such networks of friends
were created and maintained both within and outside the office environment by means of the
performative repetition of administrative form that at one and the same time enabled these
networks, and enabled the necessary practices of maintaining office decorum and production
(Yurchak 2006: 77-125).

Thus, in Kupang, as in Yurchak’s example, the disciplined performance of form leads
to both the expected reproduction of proper bureaucratic form as to the unexpected
production and maintenance of new networks of relations. This opening up of new and
unexpected possibilities by adhering to form can also be seen in other Indonesian
institutional contexts. In the context of scouting, for instance, Pujo Semedi (2010) shows how
scouts find room to maneuver within institutional constraints to pursue their own interests.
Adherence to the performative repetition of scouting form does not ensure scouting youth to
turn into ‘docile citizens’, as Baden-Powell’s and Indonesian state ideology might have it
(Semedi 2010a: 2), but it does enable the possibilities of new friendships and social
experiences –for instance hanging out with friends, falling in love, and smoking one’s first
cigarette (Semedi 2010b). In Kupang, however, the kinds of new (hierarchical) networks
enabled by the replication of bureaucratic form have grave political consequences that
surpass intra-collegial santai saja. The familial sociabilities that characterize offices are, on
the one hand, a continuation of the family- and friendship sociabilities so common in Kupang,
and, on the other, also fit neatly into institutionalized family analogies that support
clientelism. I will address this –and the consequences of such familial sociability- in the next
two sections.

‘Family-ism’ & dilemmas
Familial sociabilities came to the fore in various contexts in the government offices I worked
in. For example, every office I spent some time in had an arisan system going on, like the
ones so popular in circles of family and friends. Also, private celebrations were

---

74 A rotating voluntary credit organization held with regular intervals within a group of close ones (family, coworkers, church members etc). Oostingh already noted the function of office arisan in strengthening the corporate feelings of civil servants (Oostingh 1970: 96-98).
acknowledged by coworkers. On the occasion of someone’s birthday the birthday boy or -girl would bring small snacks or soft drinks to hand out to coworkers in the department. When comparing such intra-office sociabilities to my Dutch experiences such little acts of kindness and communality are not at all uncommon. What differed markedly, nevertheless, was the constant emphasizing of office relations as friendly and family-like. A male employee from the Department of Governance said,

> even if we only know each other through work, we do have the habit of collecting a small contribution (sumbangan) when someone has a baby or wedding or something. This also goes for the colleagues that have moved away to other offices. We have very friendly relations at the office, like a family. We give the contribution not because we have to, but because we want to.

It is not just practices such as arisan that give the offices a family-like feel. Civil servants themselves also use comparisons to the ‘family’ to describe office-relationships. Employees of the Department of Governance described their head as a strict yet kind ‘father’ who made sure everything was run right. A sub-department head at Public Works also described his relationships to coworkers in familial terms. He claimed to be very close to all of his coworkers, whether of higher rank (which was only the department head himself) or of lower rank. He told me to view the office as a family with the department head as the ‘father’ and himself as the ‘mother’. The department head’s job, according to him, is therefore to make sure all the work gets done, whereas it is his mothering role to keep all children close to him and to take care of them. When viewing office life in terms of family relations an employee showing up late is not an improper civil servant who digresses from the norm of civil service propriety but, instead, a child that needs a good fatherly talking to. The santai saja approach of sneaking away to a meeting with an official –yet flimsy- excuse is permissible behavior.

The metaphor of ‘family’ in bureaucratic organizations in Indonesia has a long history. Ruth McVey already noted the pervasiveness of a family-based ideology as an analogy and organizing principle for bureaucracy (1967: 137.) Saya S. Shiraishi, while conducting an analysis of modern national bureaucratic organizations in Indonesia, beautifully traces the ideology of this family-ism to the early twentieth century Taman Siswa national educational movement, and describes its spread from schools through graduates and teachers via media and education, facilitated by the adoption of the still ‘unsignifying’ newly adopted Malay-Indonesian language, to its full entrenchment in government offices, where it is now comfortably embedded (1997: 81-95). ‘Family-ism’ is not to be understood as an egalitarian conception but, as Shiraishi shows, contains the contradictory connotations of both revolutionary uprisings of children against parents and a more top-down ‘father knows best’ family dynamic. This peculiar existence of an ‘anti-organization’ in the middle of a modern,
bureaucratic organization, according to Shiraishi, lies at the heart of the apparent oddities of laxness and circumventing rules of civil servants encountered in offices (Ibid.: 95).

This ambivalence of a modern, bureaucratic organization that hinges on analogies to family becomes particularly muddled in state dependent Kupang, in which family relations are of great importance, as discussed in previous chapters. Reciprocal obligations implied in family networks flow over into office contexts prompting dilemmas such as the following one described to me by Anderius. Anderius works as the head of a sub-department in the Department of Governance. He holds a Bachelor’s Degree from STPDN and a Master’s Degree in Sociology from the University of Indonesia, one of the most prestigious universities in the country. In a casual conversation in his department one afternoon, he explained to me the difficulties he experiences balancing what he refers to as ‘the ethical’ (*etika*) and ‘the right thing’ (*kebenaran*). As he explained, by ‘the ethical’ he meant those things one ought to do for family members and close ones, and by ‘the right thing’ he referred to office rules and regulations. Anderius relates the difficulties he faces in his everyday office work to a discrepancy between values he traces back to his small village background and family upbringing, and contrasting STPDN educational values.

Anderius was born in a small village on the island of Flores. He did not have any family members working as civil servants. Nevertheless, Anderius’ family wanted him to get a good education, and therefore planned to send him to Kupang to attend high school. Since this was rather costly they did what every family in East Nusa Tenggara does when needing to raise money for a family affair such as sponsoring a child’s wedding, education or some relative’s funeral: they organized a ‘family gathering’ (*kumpul keluarga*) of the type described in chapter two. At his family gathering a large number of relatives, neighbors and friends came together in his parents’ house. They got dressed up, ate, interacted with other guests, and –of course- donated a small envelope with money to sponsor Anderius’ education. Partly due to this family gathering and the money raised there Anderius was able to attend high school in Kupang, which then enabled him to enter the STPDN academy.

Since so many people contributed to his education he felt he had to work hard and make sure he succeeded, which he did by getting into the prestigious STPDN academy and by subsequently completing his Master’s degree. He told me, however, that after having finished his education he now often feels as if he lives in two different worlds: on the one hand he has his university friends with whom he can discuss governmental issues. This is the world of the ‘right thing’, and he thoroughly enjoys living in it. On the other hand, he has his relatives and friends in Flores that represent the ‘the ethical’ and a different set of conventions. When these worlds collide, conflict arises for Anderius. Occasionally, relatives in Flores contact him asking for his help in getting them a civil service job. Even though Anderius feels the weight of reciprocating the financial support given to him, he finds that helping out his relatives would break office rules. Ultimately, as he sees it, he himself had the
biggest contribution in getting where he is now and therefore does not feel too obliged to help his relatives out in this way. The balancing of ethical obligations and office rules nevertheless remains a constant difficulty to him.

This kind of dilemma is not a recent occurrence in Indonesian civil service, and has been noted by other scholars as well. For instance, Fagg (1958), shortly after Indonesian independence, already noted the friction civil servants experienced in balancing ‘traditional’ familial ways of interacting based on respect (hormat) with new egalitarian principles of independence (Fagg 1958: 239). Oostingh (1970), additionally, described similar tensions between family obligations or a ‘moral code of society’ and modern state demands (Oostingh 1970: 33-34). Returning to present-day dilemmas in Kupang’s government offices, not all civil servants resolve their ‘moral breakdown’ (Zigon 2007) in the manner Anderius has. Jonas Salean, who served as a Regional Secretary of the city of Kupang (second in ranking after the mayor) from 2002 till 2007, described similar experiences when I asked him whether family members had ever tried to use their family connections in order to gain something from his influential position,

That has happened, but the meaning of our life here in Kupang is that family is important. If we have a problem or a difficulty it is in the first place family that is there for us. So several family members have come [to me] and asked, for instance, about their child who wants to become a civil servant or temporary worker. I then order the Human Resources Department to check them. Even though it is family, we don’t want them to embarrass us who have leadership positions in civil service. So they [Human Resources] investigate if they indeed have the skills… If a family member wants to become a civil servant … they ought to be given a position in line with their abilities.

Unlike Anderius, Jonas thus has no problem extending reciprocal obligations of family networks into office environments. That is, as long as his relatives have the appropriate cultural capital so as not to embarrass him. Both Anderius’ and Jonas’ cases, therefore, exemplify a continuation of reciprocal obligations embedded in family networks into office environments. Both their relatives see no moral objections in trying to turn their social capital into employment. Whereas Anderius is aware of a difference between ‘office rationality’ (the right thing) and ‘family rationality’ (the ethical), Jonas seemingly happily continues family

---

75 Moral breakdown refers to those instances in which a person, due to whatever intrusion into his or her daily practices, is forced to consciously reflect on the appropriate ethical response to a particular situation. Such ethical moments need not constitute major dramatic moments but, rather, form regular occurrences in everyday life so that actors, after conscious reflection and some working on oneself, can get back to ‘normal’ (Zigon 2007: 11-12). This dilemma of choosing between office rules and family obligations proved such a moral breakdown for Anderius in which he had to consciously reflect on his actions in an ethical moment before being able to return to ‘normal’ and to continue his everyday activities. Anderius’ dilemma, however, is not faced by everyone: I have seen many others to whom similar occurrences posed no dilemmas and caused no ‘moral breakdowns’ of hesitations concerning appropriate ethical responses.
obligations in the office. However, when looking at this in terms of institutionalized ‘family-ism’, Jonas’ helping out of relatives is not just a very literal acting out of the ‘morally bound’ father who protects his ‘children’ by circumventing rules (Shiraishi 1997: 85). As we will see in the next section, Jonas is a strategic and politically motivated career civil servant whose strategies for political success hinge on the loyalty of his ‘children’. While admitting family-members into the office answering the reciprocal call of family obligations, he also builds a network of subordinates that hopefully reciprocate his kindness come election time.

I have thus far argued that the constant repetition of bureaucratic form–be it in documents or other types of office performances–has shifted the emphasis to an adherence to form over constative meaning. Because of this ‘performative shift’, the adherence to form has enabled new meanings, practices, and sociabilities that differ from original constative intentions. One new type of sociability that emerged from this performative shift is a particular familial one. In this section I have shown how this emergence of a familial sociability sits well with both a long Indonesian institutional tradition of framing office relations in terms of family analogies, and with a local Kupangese importance of family networks and reciprocal obligations. That a performative shift led to the unanticipated emergence of a familial sociability in Kupang’s civil service is therefore not entirely surprising. ‘Family-istic’ relations in offices, nevertheless, are of a specific unequal, hierarchical kind that can be employed for personal strategies instead of pure bureaucratic execution of policy, as will be discussed in more detail in the next section. What I, therefore, want to argue is that, first, a sliding apart of constative and performative dimensions of civil service discourse feeds into the family-istic clientelist relations Indonesia’s government offices are known for, and secondly, that the disciplinary techniques described in the last chapter actually facilitate the continuation of such clientelist networks.

**Bapakism: fathers & feuds**

Jonas’ hope of loyalty reciprocated by ‘children’ is not unfounded. One important conclusion Shiraishi (1997) draws from the ambivalent office-cum-family dynamics that characterize Indonesian bureaucratic organizations is that loyalty between ‘fathers’ and children (*bapak-anak*) at times overrides office rules and regulations. This particular ‘family-istic’ relationship, more commonly referred to as bapakism, is similarly addressed by Ruth McVey (1971). Even though McVey describes the institutionalization of bapakism in the Indonesian army instead of civil service, her analysis is nevertheless helpful in understanding some of the characteristics of this phenomenon. She, for instance, notes how during the revolution ensuring the execution of orders depended not on formal authority per se, but rather on the ability of officers to attract loyal soldiers (McVey 1971: 142). Initially, shared war experiences gave extra emotional gravity to these father-child (*bapak-anak buah*) bonds in
the army. With the passing of time, however, these relationships made way for more instrumental patron-client ties, and for the development of more complex and shifting alliances (Ibid.: 153). The position of bapaks, nevertheless, remained an interference with the official chain of commands as, ‘an officer whose men were strongly loyal to him was obviously in a much better position to act independently than one who had only the general claims of army discipline behind him’ (Ibid.: 154).

This bapakism is not just characteristic of the Indonesian army, it also often noted in context of civil service. Fagg (1958) mentions the paternalistic responsibility of bapak over his anak buah as a consistent feature of Indonesian bureaucratic system (Fagg 1958: 233-235). As he describes, career advancement in civil service is often dependent on closeness to important authority figures. Important to note, nevertheless, is that bapak authority has to be earned, which Fagg illustrates by describing the continuous efforts made by the wedono of Modjokuto’s to perform and maintain his paternalistic role (Ibid.: 239-241). Oostingh (1970) similarly discusses the importance of personal ties between bapaks and anak buah, which are not necessarily the same as formal institutional ties, in Indonesian bureaucracy (Oostingh 1970: 98-99). He also notes the semblance of these personal ties to family ties, characterizing the obligation networks of which the bapak forms the center as a, ‘recasting of the web of kinship’ (Ibid: 174). However, in these familial office networks a bapak’s status is not ascribed, as is the case with a natural father, and therefore obligations in these networks are feeble and open to constant re-evaluation by subordinates (Ibid.: 173-174).

Bapakism thus entails the creation of hierarchical networks consisting of a ‘father’ who protects and looks out for his ‘children’ who, in turn, are loyal to their ‘father’ even if this means circumventing office rules. This sheds a new light on the values of hierarchy so often stressed in the various disciplinary contexts described in the previous chapter. Instead of merely disposing civil servants with loyalty to their superiors in the formal chain of command, disciplinary techniques emphasizing hierarchy and subordination to commands of superiors also support subordination to ‘bapaks’ who are not formal superiors, and bolster the obeying of commands that are not directly related to policy or are given to obstruct policy. We have to keep in mind, nevertheless, that, as McVey, Conkling (1979) and Buehler (2011: 78) show, institutionalized bapakism is not based on unequivocal loyalty of clients to patrons, and that –in Migdalian fashion- alliances are multiple, complex, and shifting. The hierarchical bapak-anak buah ties, in other words, are shaky and uncertain.

To see how bapakism, shaky alliances and office feuding works out in Kupang, we return to Jonas Salean and his experiences in the first ever direct mayoral elections that took place in Kupang in 2007. Up until the 2007 elections mayor S.K. Lerik had been firmly in office for twenty-one years. When talking about Lerik civil servants deemed him positively, and characterized him as an exemplary leader with a tight grip on civil service. He was also known as a true bapak in the sense that he admitted lots of his anak buah in civil service.
Having managed to stay in office for such a lengthy period of time he must have been a skilled bapak, managing his alliances upwards well, while also keeping his subordinates under control. During Lerik’s last term as mayor he appointed Jonas Salean as his Regional secretary. Office gossip in hindsight suggests that even though others were more suitable for this position due to experience, skills and seniority, Jonas was picked because he and Lerik were ‘corruption friends’.

Jonas himself was no stranger to office politics. He entered civil service in 1985 under the New Order regime with a Bachelor’s Degree and worked his way up steadily till he reached his position as Regional Secretary. As we saw in a previous section, he displays no qualms with regards to helping close ones get a civil service position and has thus been establishing himself as a bapak as well. With the full support of long-time mayor Lerik, Jonas decided to run for mayor in 2007. The political party supporting Jonas was the powerhouse Golkar Party. Jonas, therefore, seemed to have all the political and financial support as well as the backing of influential ‘big men’ necessary to win the elections.\textsuperscript{76} In a final bapakist move, Jonas promised to open up no less than a thousand new temporary civil service positions if he would be elected. Even though national guidelines stipulated a nationwide halt on hiring new civil servants, a true bapak, as Shiraishi stated, at times circumvents rules in protection and care of his children. In turn, however, these children are supposed to show loyalty to their bapak, which in this case meant helping Jonas in office.

Jonas’ main competitor was Dan Adoe. Dan Adoe worked as the vice-mayor during Lerik’s last term in office. As Lerik and Jonas, Dan had a long history of Golkar-affiliation and at the time of elections was reportedly still close to the party, although, being a civil servant, not in any official capacity. Dan, however, was not on friendly terms with Lerik and Jonas, something confirmed by Jonas himself. Apparently, even though according to the formal chain of command Dan ought to be second in rank, mayor Lerik bypassed Dan on important decisions and constantly favored his Regional Secretary Jonas. With the approach of the 2007 elections Golkar Party also accepted Jonas over Dan as their candidate, only fuelling the, by then well-known, antagonism between Jonas and Dan. Dan consequently secured the support of a coalition party, consisting for a large part of Muslim parties, effectively diminishing Dan’s chances to win in Christian-dominated Kupang.

Much to -at least- Jonas’ surprise, nevertheless, Dan won the mayoral elections. Whenever I asked around why people voted for Dan -the apparently weaker candidate- one reason I heard repeatedly was that everybody felt so bad about the fact that Dan was bullied and marginalized by the former mayor and Jonas. Something else often stated as a motivation was that people were sick of the KKN of the old mayor and his allies, and wanted to give

\textsuperscript{76} During the New Order regime all civil servants were obliged to be a member of Golkar Party. Civil service has thus traditionally been a source of support for Golkar. Even though membership of Golkar Party –or any political party- was officially prohibited after Reformasi, this party remains to be popular among civil servants, even in East Nusa Tenggara province in which PDI-P enjoys much popularity.
someone who promised not to favor any anak buah a chance. Dan’s victory should therefore partly be seen as a vote of sympathy, but also as a vote against collusive practices associated with the former mayor and Jonas, blended with hopes for a more democratic reign under Dan.

I have so far claimed that the disciplinary techniques described in the last chapter disciplined civil servants into new civil servant networks that are characterized by hierarchy and an adherence to form over constative meaning. Unintentionally, however, this emphasis on hierarchy and adherence to form made possible a performative shift, which allowed the emergence of the kind of familial sociability, sense of loyalty, and subordination that supports the institutionalized, hierarchical bapakism of Indonesian government offices. Disciplinary techniques, in other words, not only prepare civil servants for formal hierarchical office relations, but also actually prepare them well for bapakism. The question arises now -especially in the light of newly implemented direct district head elections so favored by international agencies- whether Dan’s victory indicates a triumph of modern bureaucratic rationality, Good Governance ideology or ‘the right thing’ over bapakism, family-ism and ‘the ethical’, or if it signals a shift in alliances and the emergence of a more nuanced and subtle form of clientelism that similarly hinges on adherence to form and hierarchical loyalty? A look at what happened after the mayoral elections of 2007 helps answer this question.

**Balas jasa: returning favors**

After Jonas’ loss, he was rendered an ‘expert staff’ (staf ahli) position. On paper, an expert staff position is a respected advisory position for employees with specialized knowledge. In reality, however, an expert staff position is a professional dead-end from which no further career advancement can be made. Dan thus effectively sidelined Jonas. If we were to view bapakism as entailing relations of balanced reciprocity (Sahlins 1972), albeit within unequal hierarchical relations, in which subordinates offer loyalty (or in Kupang’s civil service: votes) in exchange for protection or a cut in bapak’s business dealings (or in Kupang: a promotion in civil service), Jonas’ demotion certainly exemplifies a cutting off of all social ties and inherent reciprocal obligations: not pledging loyalty or even openly opposing a candidate gets reciprocated by sidelining and exclusion from bapakist networks. This brings into question the extent to which clientelistic dynamics have actually been replaced by the Good Governance practices so favored by Dan during his campaigning period.

Daud, who was promoted to the position of head of the Department of Governance, has the following to say in response to that question,

Daud: This is the thing. District Heads need to have a loyal bureaucracy. All promises made during the campaign, have to be implemented by bureaucracy. If you don’t have a loyal bureaucracy, these things don’t get implemented. If there are enemies in bureaucracy (musuh di
dalam selimut), they will disturb (mengganggu) the implementation of governance. That is politicization of bureaucracy. That is the effect of direct elections.

Sylvia: Usually there are some civil servants that support this candidate, and some that support another. How does that work out when a certain candidate wins?

Daud: Well, the leader has to get rid of those that won’t support him, they have to leave (harus exit).

Daud does not doubt that having loyal subordinates is paramount to a district head’s position. Without them, district heads are unable to execute policy. Interestingly, Daud relates this clique-formation with internal loyalty to the recent implementation of direct district head elections. Even though the cliques that are formed may be new, the practice of clique-formation appears to be a continuation of past practices. If we compare this to McVey’s description of institutionalized bapakism in the Indonesian army of the late nineteen-sixties, or to Fagg’s and Oostinghs analyses of bapak-anak buah ties in Indonesian bureaucracy, for instance, not that much has changed: ties of loyalty between superiors and subordinates still override the official chain of command, since enemies and their allies in bureaucracy are still capable of interfering with the implementation of policy. Not surprisingly, therefore, known opponent Jonas was quickly disarmed.

Characteristics of continuing bapakism, albeit it in a somewhat modified form, surface most clearly in the promotion of political supporters and allies, euphemistically referred to as balas jasa, which roughly translates to ‘answering a service’ or ‘returning a favor’. By positioning those that have shown support during elections in strategic positions, a district head builds the needed following of loyal subordinates that facilitates a smooth execution of policy and forms a defense against opponents intent on obstruction. Just as the father-child ties of bapakism resonated comfortably with Ku pang’s family orientation, balas jasa similarly translates well in Kupang. If we compare the exchange of votes, loyalty and positions of balas jasa in civil service after elections to the exchange of money via books of donations in family networks, a comparable logic of reciprocal rationality emerges. In Chapter Two I argued that, in order to understand what makes Kupang ‘tick’, one has to take into account the reciprocal obligations implied in (family) networks. I now propose once more that it is not a big leap from family networks to office networks, or from familial reciprocal rationality to civil service reciprocal practices –be it bapakism or balas jasa. Obligations to close ones turn corrupt practices into gift-giving or politeness. No wonder then that Anderius’ relatives see no harm in asking him for help in getting a position in civil service: the reciprocal obligation stands, even after a relative has been absorbed into a modern, bureaucratic organization.

Further spurring the reciprocal similarities between family dealings and office politics, as I have argued, is the active framing of office relations in terms of family analogies, and
flowing from that the (unequal) ‘gift-giving’ dynamics implied in bapakism. The entrenchment of familial reciprocal rationality in Kupang’s civil service, therefore, resonates both with reciprocal practices that are embedded in the local social fabric, and with the framing of national civil service in familial terms. Since the analogy to the family is so ubiquitous –to the extent that even the familial terms of bapak and anak buah are used, why should the familial reciprocal rationality so characteristic of Kupang not work in its offices?

However, although a reciprocal undercurrent can be discerned in both family interactions as in the practice of balas jasa, they are not quite the same. One difference between balas jasa and the kind of gift-giving in family networks is that in existing networks of family, social ties are reasonably stable and fixed. A Maussian opening gift in order to create social ties is no longer necessary, since a logic of giving and receiving is already established. Furthermore, even though the size of a contribution given during a family gathering depends on the status, closeness and need for prestige of the giver -and therefore indicates hierarchical differences, frictions and points of contention in family relations-hierarchical differences and unequal power relations between superiors and subordinates in offices is far greater.

In office balas jasa therefore, reciprocal ties are more unequal, and less stable than family ties, as noted already by Fagg (1958) and Oostingh (1970). More importantly, after the implementation of direct district head elections, balas jasa ties have a clear temporal limitation. Every five years new elections take place and, therefore, new reciprocal alliances will appear. This means that reciprocal rationality in balas jasa is by no means infallible. Not everyone who ‘offers something’ will be aptly rewarded, as the disgruntled sub-department head at the Department of Public Works, quoted earlier in this chapter, found out. According to him, even though he ‘secured the Hindu vote’ for the current mayor during election time, he was blatantly passed over for the position of department head. In the unequal game of balas jasa some favors are thus returned, while others remain unanswered.

Additionally, although balas jasa promotions are motivated by personal ties of loyalty and support, loyalty or performed services alone do not guarantee a promotion. This social capital needs to be balanced with cultural capital in the form of experience, education and skills, as Alex, a ‘career civil servant’ in provincial government explained,

The distribution of upper-level position basically follows ‘tim sukses first’ thoughts.\(^{77}\) But there has to be a balance: some good civil servants are also necessary, so not all positions are given out through balas-jasa. And it has to be said that it is tried to put tim sukses positions in line with their education and experience.

\(^{77}\) A success team is a group of people that support a candidate couple in the running for district head positions. I will discuss elections and success teams in more detail in Chapter Seven.
Allies of mayor Dan who felt the harsh backlashes of unreciprocated favors granted during election time most were the members of the coalition party that supported his candidacy. During my fieldwork trips in 2008 and 2009—and even as I am writing this in 2011—one of the most important positions in city level civil service, namely that of Regional Secretary, was not yet filled. Instead of a steady Regional Secretary, Kupang has had an ‘acting’ one (*Plt. Sekda*). As mentioned, Dan Adoe won the 2007 mayoral elections with the backing of a mainly Muslim coalition party, somewhat surprising in Kupang with its Christian majority. An implicit assumption of this coalition—fitting with the practice of *balas jasa*—was that their support would be ‘answered’ by securing an important position for a Muslim coalition member. Since Dan Adoe is a Protestant and his vice-mayor Dan Hurek is a Catholic, it was presumed the position of Regional Secretary would go to a Muslim. Instead, after almost four years this position is still vacant.

The sensitivity surrounding the unfulfilled Regional Secretary post was explained to me hurriedly by civil servants in the mayor’s office looking on after a very public explosion of discontent by members of Muslim political party PPP which formed part of the mayor’s supporting coalition party during the 2007 election, and elaborated on in more detail afterwards by department heads—off the record. One late afternoon as I was just about to head home, starting the engine of my motorcycle outside the mayor’s office, loud noises of men screaming and what seemed to be furniture falling coming from inside the building caught my attention. Alarmed, I stopped my engine, ran back inside to see what was going on, and joined a growing crowd of civil servant onlookers that all stared up at the second floor balcony in the direction of the mayor’s private office. The screaming, shouting, and thumping of furniture continued as members of the civil service police (*Polisi Pamong Praja*) made their way into the building and trotted up the stairs. Shortly after this, two men—known figures of the local PPP chapter—stormed out of the office, jumped into a car that was waiting right outside, and drove off with screeching tires. Quickly catching up with the gossip around me, I learned that these two PPP men just openly accused the mayor of not sticking to the promise made to his former supporting coalition by not appointing a Muslim Regional Secretary—thus not reciprocating given support. Accusations or not, the mayor still did not ‘answer the favor’. Department head Daud, quoted previously, explained to me that district heads are dependent on the loyalty of subordinates to ensure smooth execution of policy. According to Daud, Dan feared he would lose a significant part of his supporters were he to appoint a Muslim Regional Secretary, making his position at the top of bureaucratic hierarchy increasingly feeble.

I ended the previous section asking if Dan’s victory signaled a triumph of modern bureaucratic rationality, Good Governance ideology or ‘the right thing’ over bapakism, family-ism and ‘the ethical’, or if it hinted at a shift in alliances and the return of a more nuanced and subtle form of clientelism. By now I hope to have shown that—if anything—there
is no ‘either/or’ answer to this question. The family-ism as described by other scholars of modern, national, bureaucratic institutions in Indonesia is recognizable in Kupang’s civil service due to, on the one hand, a nation-wide institutionalized form of bapakism in which subordinates show loyalty to protective fathers, and, on the other, a more local Kupang context in which reciprocal obligations are a distinctive feature of family-networks. The hierarchical office reciprocity of balas jasa -the answering of favors by a bapak/patron to his children/clients- is unmistakably a part of civil service in Kupang. These balas jasa ties, nevertheless, are unreliable, unequal, and uncertain. ‘Bapaks’ cannot count on uncontested loyalty from subordinates, and ‘children’ cannot count on their shown loyalty to lead to rewards. Therefore, to some extent, the unequal and unstable reciprocal relationship of balas jasa is not a radical change from bapakism. However, direct district head elections have set temporal limitations on alliance-seeking and clientelism that add significantly to the instability of hierarchical bapakist ties. In this sense balas jasa does constitute a break with bapakism. Nevertheless, since balas jasa still hinges on similar principles of intra-network loyalty, hierarchy and adherence to form so well disciplined in civil servants, it is still questionable whether direct district head elections ensure the ‘Good Governance’ some would like it to bring. Jonas Salean doubts this,

Bureaucracy will function just fine when it is not mixed with politics, and as long as everything can go in line with regulations. But now these direct district head elections damage civil servants’ careers. This is because those that are close to the winner, even though they don’t fulfill the requirements of that position, will surely be accepted for that position. From such balas jasa you can see that the city is not yet ready to accept [direct district head elections].

Balas jasa is thus not radically different from bapakism. The disciplining of civil servants, which emphasizes an adherence to form and hierarchy, therefore support the practice of balas jasa, just as it supports bapakism. This is why viewing disciplinary strategies that replicate bureaucratic form in terms of enabling performative shift is such an interesting and useful idea. The disciplined adherence to form and hierarchy is suitable for both formal office relations and informal office networks. This is the performative shift: the repetition of form has enabled loyalty to superiors in hierarchical networks, not only to the formal bureaucratic chain of command, but also to bapakist or balas jasa networks. Direct district head elections have not ended reciprocal obligations in hierarchical office networks, they have merely added temporal limitations. An unintended consequence of ‘good governance’ is thus a continuation –albeit slightly altered- of informal clientelist office networks that civil servants are disciplined into.
New times, new network opportunities

Bapakism and *balas jasa* are mostly local features of clientelist office networks that continue despite, or, indeed, due to, the implementation of direct district head elections. Before giving up on Good Governance ideals entirely, in this last section I want to return to the career civil servants that graduated from STPDN. Whereas most civil servants endure the rather superficial civil service crash course of *diklat* in which, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the disciplining of adherence to form over constative meaning is executed *par excellence*, STPDN students are immersed in a civil service disciplinary institution for four years. Students are not only subjected to the repeated stressing of adherence to form, importance of hierarchy and intra-network loyalty, they are extensively trained to become skilled and educated civil servants, enroll in governmental majors, and leave with a Bachelor’s Degree in Governance. Besides that, the kind of governance the students are supposed to execute, after taking up positions in local civil service, is ‘good’ governance’.78 Is there hope for an infusion of Good Governance into local civil servants in which *balas jasa* seems imperative from these career civil servants? For this, we return to Budi and Valentino, who we have met before. Both Budi and Valentino have put some thought into how to be successful in their civil service careers. Both are also very well aware of the importance of alliances with promising potential district heads and the detrimental effects that supporting the wrong candidate can have on their careers. They each have different strategies of planning a career in existing power configurations and reciprocal requirements.

The upcoming mayoral elections in 2012 are a source of worry for Budi. He fully recognizes that the advancement of his career partly depends on the whims of the new mayor: if the new mayor is favorable to him or if he supports the right candidate he might get a promotion. If he supports the wrong candidate on the other hand, he might have to wait five more years to get a promotion. During the last elections he noticed how his department head tried to convince his subordinates to vote for one of the candidates. In Budi’s opinion, this is slightly ridiculous nowadays. As he says, ‘these are not the old days in which subordinates would actually listen to orders from above. People can now decide for themselves who they want to vote for.’ Budi thus signals a chance in the way voters can be attracted, and notices a break with the past in more ways. Using himself as an example, he contrasted his position with *lurah* with that presumed to be traditionally more common.

In former days people would be *lurah* (sub-district head) in their own area. This meant they were born there, had family there, knew their neighbors and neighborhood. I am born in Flores. I do not live in this neighborhood. Before it was easier for the *lurah* to influence people’s voting behavior, since he was well-known and perhaps even related. I have to do different things.

He sees the subtle strategic actions of the current vice mayor as a good example of winning votes in present-day Kupang. Budi claims that the vice mayor instructed every lurah to inform him of weddings and funerals that occur in that neighborhood. On such occasions, Budi sends a small contribution to the celebration -such as some sugar, candy, a pig or a cow- with the message that this was a gift from the vice mayor. People will remember these deeds for a long time and tell their family and friends about it. The current vice mayor will join the upcoming elections and hopes these contributions will leave the impression of him as a good man, and will be returned to him through votes. Budi sees this unobtrusive way of campaigning as more successful nowadays than counting on subordinates to be obedient. He still fears the ‘answering of favors’ after elections though. At the time of the last elections he had a fairly insignificant position and managed to avoid being dragged into political games. Now that he is a lurah, however, he fears he might be used as a pawn in some superior’s political strategies with all possible damaging consequences.

Valentino finds himself in a similar position. He is set on making a career in civil service, but is aware of the traps of aligning himself too closely with one important figure. He has clear ideas on how to avoid these traps, however. As we have seen briefly, Valentino thoroughly enjoyed all the advantages of his aide position. Besides business trips to other parts of Indonesia he enjoyed all sorts of benefits from working so close with the mayor. He received regular sums of extra money on the side, was invited to luxurious resorts on Bali by businessmen hoping to get permits from the mayor and managed to get promotions that would take others two or three times as long. In spite of this, he decided to give up his enviable position and asked for a transfer to a far less exciting position at a lurah’s (sub-district head) office.

Valentino explained that with his decision to transfer positions he is not just thinking about the present, but more importantly about his future. In his two years as the mayor’s aide he had managed to get promotions that would have taken others two or three times as long, simply because he used the opportunities available to him by working in such close proximity to the mayor. As a secretary of a lurah he had even managed to get an upper echelon (jabatan) position. At the age of twenty-three! Valentino hopes to continue his speedily advancement in local civil service and reach a position of Department head ‘while he is still young’. After that he hopes to be able to transfer to even higher level, such as province or even Jakarta. This bright future might be jeopardized, however, had he kept his aide’s position. As mentioned, in 2012 the second direct mayoral elections will take place. The mayor himself will not participate since he wishes to retire. To Valentino’s knowledge, there are three serious contestants for the position of mayor. If one of them, the current vice-mayor, would win, Valentino has no reason to fear for his career. If one of the others would win, however, things might work out differently for him.
Valentino witnessed the aftermath of the previous mayoral elections up close, and saw what happened to a former aide: he got relegated to a regular staff position. Whereas before the aide was the ‘arms and legs’ of the mayor, he was now the one being ordered to fetch cigarettes or lunch, and perform other humiliating tasks in the department. This is not a future Valentino likes to picture himself in. Instead, he transferred to the position of lurah’s secretary, grabbing an extra promotion in the meantime, in order to create enough space between himself and the mayor before things start to heat up politically. In addition, he has asked the current mayor’s permission to take some time off to pursue a Master’s degree, paid for by local government. Valentino wants to get a degree in Political Sciences at the prestigious Gadjah Mada University. He plans to set off for university in the year of the elections. If he succeeds, he not only avoids getting dragged into the political minefields surrounding the mayoral elections, but he will also obtain a Master’s degree, paid for by the government. After his return to Kupang, Valentino hopes political unrest will have settled and the new mayor will allocate this experienced and educated civil servant with an appropriate position.

Budi and Valentino show a great awareness of the existing patrimonial and reciprocal character of office networks, but at the same time use their skills, knowledge and networks to avoid being disadvantaged by them. Budi believes that in a decentralized post-Reformasi Indonesia, the expectation from upper-level civil servants that given orders regarding votes will be followed is an outdated political strategy. His proposed strategy, however, is both a break and a continuation of old ways. Giving sweets, pigs or cows to citizens on the occasion of family celebrations one the one hand fulfills Good Governance ideals of bringing government closer to the people, but Budi’s motivation for doing so are nevertheless close to the ‘gift principle’ of opening up new relations of reciprocal obligations by giving something. Budi thus gives somewhat of a Good Governance swing to reciprocal rationality by thinking of more nuanced and inconspicuous approach to gift-giving. Valentino likewise uses existing networks and reciprocal rationalities in the office to make the most of his STPDN ‘capital’. At the same time, however, he wants to make sure to distance himself from these networks at election time, and therefore shows the ability to strategically balance and merge the local reciprocal rationality of local office balas jasa with the advantages of being part of a highly skilled national network.

It thus seems as if the Good Governance hopes par excellence –the skilled STPDN career civil servants- are not the magic bullet to counter unequal reciprocal relations in hierarchical office networks.⁷⁹ The examples given from Budi and Valentino show that they

⁷⁹ In a way this question of whether the educated younger generation will constitute a break with the ‘traditional’ older generation echoes Oostingh’s expectation (1970: 12-15) that the younger generations in Indonesia’s bureaucracy would adhere more to Weberian rational-legal bureaucratic standards than the older generation who seemed more influenced by obligations to family. Perhaps not that much has changed: the younger generation does not constitute that much of a break with older ones, but hope of change spurred by younger generations remains among scholars.
are still caught up in existing clientelist dynamics of bapakism and balas jasa. What distinguishes them, however, is that they have larger networks to fall back on and use. They thus have a wider access to social capital due to their STPDN cultural capital. The performative shift, enabled by the repeated emphasis on hierarchy and adherence to form, thus supports the practices of bapakism and balas jasa on a local scale, but also facilitates similar practices on a national scale for STPDN alumni.

Concluding
When wondering how different bapakism is from balas jasa, I would claim that they are not all that dissimilar. Even though I tie balas jasa to the implementation of direct district head elections and claim this has put certain temporal limitations on, and therefore added more instability and uncertainty to, clientelist intra-office networks, I still think in many ways it is a continuation of the bapakism that has so long characterized Indonesian bureaucracy. It thus seems as if not that much has changed with the implementation of Good Governance policies, as others have noted as well (Schulte Nordholt 2004). Although to some extent this is certainly true, this does not recognize the centrality of the performative shift in this continuation, which I argue allows for this continuation. Despite the various disciplinary strategies I addressed in the previous chapter, in which proper civil servants are attempted to be made by emphasizing adherence to form and importance of hierarchy, these practices of bapakism and balas jasa continue.

The interesting thing about the performative shift idea in relation to disciplinary techniques of the last chapter is that a performative shift leaves the constative meaning of an authoritative discourse unanchored and uncertain. This, ambivalently, opens up the possibility of adhering to the original constative meaning of discourse—in the civil service context loyalty to the formal chain of command—as well as the possibility of the emergence of new meaning making and practices. Disciplining thus trains hierarchy and adherence to form, which fit with both a formal execution of governance, as with the informal reciprocal dynamics of bapakism or balas jasa. These informal, hierarchical, unequally reciprocal, clientelist office networks are thus, ironically, enabled because of the disciplinary strategies employed to train proper civil servants. Because their emphasis on adherence to form Yurchak's performative shift is made possible. Adhering to form—particularly hierarchical relations—rather than specific meaningful content of what that form entails, facilitates other hierarchical relations. ‘Failure’ of Good Governance is not simply because of the power of a bapakist tradition, but more specifically because of the possibilities enabled by the performative shift, which is made possible by the repetition of form over actual enactment of that form.