

Nyèn kal Ngisidang Bangkéné? Shifting Relations of Neighborliness and Family in Bali¹

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Abstract

Balinese forms of social organization, collective labor and solidarity are gradually being transformed – and often displaced – by new social institutions and their attendant ideals, desires and pleasures. The rise of the nuclear family, as a new social ideal and institution, is one the more important developments in this connection. This essay examines rival conceptions of the family, and of household economy, that underpinned a debate that took place in a southerly Balinese ward over the provision of neighborly assistance during six-monthly odalan ceremonies. The analysis provides insight into how social and cultural transformation is understood and experienced at the level of day-to-day life.

Keywords: Bali; family; household economy; religion; solidarity

...over the last few decades, a new institution has been evolving that is as much a part of modern Indonesia as schools, jobs, consumer goods and the government activities with which it is associated. That institution [...] has been identified as the slogan for the official Indonesian family planning program: 'The small, healthy, prosperous family'.

T. Hull (1997: 94)

1. Introduction

It was some 25 years ago that Terrence Hull made these remarks on the rise of 'the small, healthy, prosperous family' in Indonesia. There has since been a substantial body of scholarship on the implementation of government

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programs for family planning, and on the ensuing shifts in demography and social practice—from courtship patterns and age at first marriage to the shape, size, and nature of the family and its relationship to other social institutions (see, e.g., Newland 2001, Jones, Leng & Mohamad 2009, Situmorang 2011, Hull 2012, Utomo et al. 2016, Smith-Hefner, 2019).

Some interesting work has been done on these issues in Bali. But, with a handful of notable exceptions (e.g., Warren 1993, Nakatani 1995, Jennaway 2002, Parker 2003), the literature tends to stand at arms-length from the ‘process’ of social transformation itself. Consequently, it can be difficult to discern how the changing shape of the family is related to other aspects of Balinese social life, to say nothing of how Balinese themselves may be engaging with these developments—as critically engaged commentators on their own lives.

Developing themes from an earlier piece I wrote for the *Journal* (Vol.7, No.1), this essay reflects on how the ideal of the family played out in a specific set of circumstances—examining its changing relationship to other aspects of day-to-day life on the island, and what some Balinese had to say about it.

2. Context

In 2010-11, I had the privilege of visiting Bali for 10 months as a Fulbright fellow. The purpose of the visit was to conduct research on contemporary religious practices, and more specifically on the small-scale domestic offerings that are made on a daily basis in almost every Hindu houseyard on the island. Despite the ubiquity of these offerings, I felt the scholarly literature offered comparatively little insight into how Balinese themselves understood this fundamental aspect of their day-to-day life (Fox 2015). And, by extension, this seemed to point to a broader deficiency in our understanding of local religious traditions and the transformation of their social import in relation to wider-reaching cultural, political and economic changes—both in Bali and more broadly.

The research for this project was conducted in a southern Balinese ward that I shall simply call Batan Nangka. It is one of seven wards that make up the ‘customary village’ (B. *désa pakraman*) of Pateluan, itself also a pseudonym. Demographic and related information was provided in the previous essay (2017: 220-21), so I will forego a detailed description here. Very broadly speaking, Batan Nangka is a semi-rural community with a mixed economy, in which – at least, at the time – most households generated their living from a combination of small-scale agriculture, informal labor and salaried work.

As in other parts of Bali, the preparation and dedication of domestic offerings in Batan Nangka was an important and time-consuming aspect of daily life (see, e.g., Nakatani 1995, Hunter 2010). This may at first appear to be a highly localized affair—with much of the work done individually (or in small groups)

in kitchens, houseyard pavilions and roadside coffee stalls. But, as in Indonesia more broadly, small-scale religious practices in Bali are inextricably tied up with the broader imperatives of national development, cultural preservation and religious reform, as inflected by the displacements wrought by mass tourism and commercialization (see Hobart 2011, Picard 1996, Vickers 1989).

The relationship between changes taking place at the local, national and transnational levels has most commonly been theorized under the aligned rubrics of globalization, modernization and mass-mediated communication. Yet, prominence in the scholarship notwithstanding, one of the weaknesses of this terminology is that it tends to privilege a birds'-eye view of 'process' over a more fine-grained engagement with the uncertainties, aspirations and arguments that figure so centrally in day-to-day life.²

It is with an eye to the latter that I would like to explore the relationship between small-scale religious rites and the rise of the nuclear family as a relatively novel form of social organization—using examples from Batan Nangka to reflect on some of the ways this institution has contributed to the transformation of older forms of solidarity and collective labor.

3. Helping the People in Your Neighborhood

As a way into the problem, I would like to consider an excerpt from an improvised dance drama that was performed at the post-cremation rites for a local businessman. The performance itself was an integral component of the ceremony. But, as often the case, the actor used the occasion to offer some advice to those who had assembled for the event. Briefly by way of context, there had been suspicions of sorcery in connection with the man's death. And one of his neighbors was the prime suspect. So, in a bid to avert open conflict in the community, the actor—who himself resided in the adjacent administrative village, and was a regular visitor to Batan Nangka—compared one's neighbors to the *kanda mpat*.

As readers of this journal will no doubt be aware, the *kanda mpat* are generally understood to be one's 'four siblings'—intangible beings that are born with us, and accompany us throughout our lives from birth to death (see, e.g., Hooykaas 1974, Lovric 1987). When treated with proper attention and respect, the *kanda mpat* can be a source of safety and protection. But, when they are ignored – or feel in some way maligned – it is said the *kanda mpat* are equally capable of causing us great harm. Speaking in the role of one of the so-called 'buffoon' characters,³ or *bondrès*, the actor explained (Figure 1).

² It is anything but self-evident that these large-scale models are in fact commensurate with an approach more finely-attuned to the practices they ostensibly address.

³ While the mask the actor wore is commonly associated with the figure of the *dukuh*, which Hooykaas described as a sort of priestly hermit (1973: 17-18), neither the actor nor the others with whom I spoke viewed this character as a *dukuh*.



Figure 1. Bondrés character from topéng pajegan (Photo: Richard Fox).

Mawinan idupé dadi manusa, de bena bakal tuara bisa manyama braya.

That's why as human beings ya can't let yourself fall out with yer friends and relations.

Mapan ada rawos "Kanda Mpat." Nyamaé ané papat...

Coz there's the term, "Kanda Mpat." The four siblings...

'Cén nyamaé ané papat di sekala né? Pisagaé daja, delod, dangin, dauh... 'to nyamaé ané papat. Nyamaé 'né madanginé, nyamaé 'né madelodné, nyamaé 'né madauhné, nyamaé 'né madajané—'to kanda paté di gumié, 'to.

Who are these four siblings in the tangible world? Our neighbors to the north, south, east and west... those are the four siblings.⁴ Our siblings in the east, our siblings in the south, our siblings in the west, and our siblings in the north—those are the Kanda Pat in this world.

'Apin ngelah bena nyama tugelan... ngoyong di Badung... yan mancan teked jumah nulungin ibaé, méh 'ba bangka endasé.

Even if you've got blood relatives... living in the city... by the time they've arrived to help, you'll already've kicked the bucket.

⁴ *Daja* and *delod* are more precisely translated as mountainward and seaward.

'Nu masih magunaanang pisagaé.

*"Aduuuhhh....", mara 'munto ragaé,
'ba dingeha 'kin pisagaé.*

*Mancan nyamaé 'né ling Badung, kanti
bangka aduh-aduh, sing teka ia. Tara
dingeha.*

*Mawinan, melah-melahang⁵ manyama
tugelan ngoyong joh, 'nu melahang
pisagaé.*

*Yan bisa ragaé mapisaga... liwat siapé
ka pisaga, selamat.*

*Yan sing bena bisa mapisaga... mara
makecos siapé duur témbok... 'ba
gorénga 'kin ia.*

*Mawinan jani buka rawos bapané
busan, kanda empaté pisaga kaja, kelod,
kangin, kauh.*

*De bena nampi satua kéné! De bena
nampi satua kéto! Apa ja 'naké
orahanga, 'pang nyak iraga mamusuh
'kin pisaga, de padingehanga 'to!*

*Mapan mani puan yan maaduhang,
'nak ia ningeh paling malu.
"Aduuuhhh....", mara kéto 'ba
dengokina 'kin ia.*

Yer neighbors'd be of more use.

(When ya cry out,) 'Oh
nooooooo....', your neighbors'll hear
ya right away.

By the time yer relatives get here
from the city, you will've croaked,
crying out—and they still won't
have come. Wouldn't even hear ya.

That's why, no matter how close you
are with relatives living far away,
good relations with yer neighbors
are more important.

If you can be neighborly... when yer
chicken hops over to the neighbors',
it'll be safe.

If ya *can't* be neighborly... as soon as
that chicken clears the fence... he's
gonna fry it up.

Because it's like I said before, the
Four Siblings are our neighbors to
the north, south, east and west.

Don't you go believing *this* story!
Don't you go believing *that* story!
Whatever they're saying to make us
into enemies with our neighbors,
don't you listen to it!

Coz down the road, when you're
crying out (in pain), it's yer neighbor
who'll be the first to hear ya. 'Oh
noooooo.....', just like that, and he'll
be the one to look in on you.

⁵ Phonetic variation between a final -n and -ng is recognized as fairly common in the Balinese spoken in Batan Nangka.

There is much that could be said about the actor's remarks. But I would like to begin by reflecting on the domestic situation he described. The scene is pointedly contemporary—with one's relatives having moved to the city, perhaps to attend school or to find work.⁶ Yet, at the same time, certain aspects of life-at-home are unmistakably those of a rural, agricultural setting—with one's chickens hopping over to the neighbor's house. This situation would have been readily recognizable to those attending the event in Batan Nangka. Indeed, it described well the household and wider community in which the ceremony was being performed.

Aiming to quell dispute over suspicions of sorcery, the actor invoked the ideal of neighborliness, or 'being a (good) neighbor'—what is often called *mapisaga*. "Don't you go believing this story! Don't you go believing that story! Whatever they're saying to make us into enemies with our neighbors, don't you listen to it!" As the actor noted, should anything go wrong, it is your neighbors who will be the first to know. For, as in many other parts of Bali, neighboring houseyards in Batan Nangka are often separated by little more than a low wall, making it difficult to avoid seeing and hearing what is happening next door. So, if your blood relatives are living in the city, it will be your neighbors who will be the first to hear you cry out—and come to give you a hand.

Here it must be stressed that, in making reference to neighborliness, the actor was not merely invoking an abstract ideal. Rather, to *mapisaga* is to engage in a set of instituted practices. And perhaps the most readily visible of these practices would be that of neighborly assistance—what is often called *ngoopin* ('to help'), which commonly consists in assisting one's neighbors to prepare offerings for the *odalan* ceremonies that take place every six months in most Hindu houseyard temples on the island.⁷ Although local ward regulations do not specify which of one's neighbors are obligated to assist, in practice neighborly assistance very closely parallels the actor's remarks in the excerpt from the masked dance drama. That is to say, it is one's neighbors to the north, south, east and west who are expected to help in the preparation of offerings for one's houseyard temple every six months (Figure 2).

⁶ They have gone to "Badung," which here would be taken as a reference to Denpasar.

⁷ There are exceptions. In Batan Nangka, for instance, there is one houseyard that performs its family temple's *odalan* only once each year, in keeping with the central family temple – elsewhere on the island – with ties to the Pura Samuan Tiga and its ceremonial calendar.

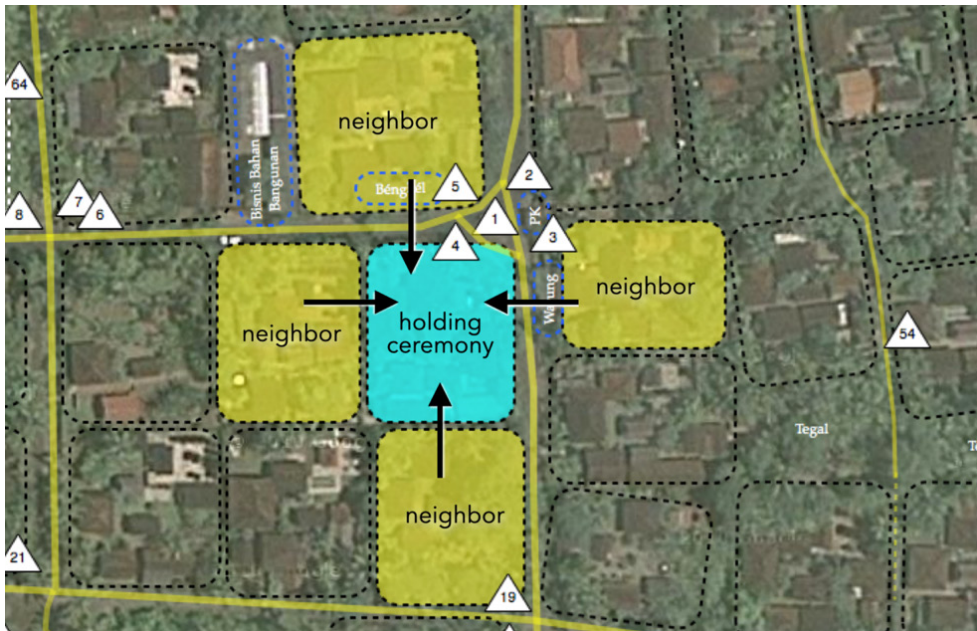


Figure 2: The four neighboring houseyards obligated to assist (Doc: Richard Fox).

Following the ward regulations for Batan Nangka, this usually means sending a man and a woman from one's own houseyard over to the neighbor's house for a few hours on one or more days preceding the ceremony.⁸ And this, then, establishes—or, more precisely, *carries on*—a reciprocal obligation to each of one's neighbors, which is honored in turn at their own six-monthly ceremonies.

To be sure, there are any number of reasons one's neighbors might *not* adhere to this tradition—ranging from inconvenience to conflict. For instance, on one occasion a dispute over the proceeds from the sale of a commonly-held rice field resulted in neighboring branches of an extended family refusing even to acknowledge one another's existence (B. *puik*). And yet, on other occasions, the obligation to assist may be recognized even *in extremis*—as, for example, when the owner of a local coffee stall was obligated to assist in a nearby household into which his fiancée had been forcibly 'married by capture' (B. *malegandang*) several decades earlier. These exceptions and extremes notwithstanding, the *ideal* of neighborly assistance had remained a point of reference available for gauging one's own obligations and for evaluating the behavior of others—as exemplified by the actor's remarks.

⁸ The level of assistance required is determined by the size and nature of the event, as specified in the ward regulations (see below).

The practices that make up this form of neighborly assistance are generally organized according to a gendered division of labor—with women working long hours to prepare offerings and refreshments for those in attendance, while men butcher, build temporary structures, and work with meat—for attendees both tangible and otherwise.⁹ This is usually a social, and even festive event. It is an opportunity to get together and to talk, but also to eat. For it is the host's responsibility to provide the neighbors not only with coffee, cigarettes and snacks, but also with a meal.¹⁰ And, moreover, on the day preceding the ceremony, a representative from each neighboring houseyard will take home a package containing cooked rice, vegetables and a portion of the pig that was slaughtered for the occasion—or, alternatively, the meat that was purchased at market in its place.

4. Reducing Neighborly Assistance

Depending on the size of the ceremony, this was often a quite costly affair. And, at a meeting of the Batan Nangka ward assembly, the expense entailed in feeding the neighbors became a matter of some contention. When the headman called for questions and suggestions, the first to speak up was a middle-aged farmer, who was known locally as a skilled orator and conscientious contributor to community life. Following the self-deprecating introduction expected of anyone making a suggestion in the ward assembly, he said the following:

*Usulan titiyang ring banjar deriki...
banjar deriki... wusan ngarereh ajak-
ajakan kénten.*

*Yan upakara, tetep mamargi kénten.
Indik katebéne punika... mangda
micutetin—ritatkala nganem bulané
'manten kénten.*

My suggestion to the ward... our
ward here... is that we stop looking
(to our neighbors) for help.¹¹

Let the ceremonial preparations
carry on. But as for the outlay in
food and refreshments... this ought
to be reduced—on the occasion of
six-monthly ceremonies.

⁹ Much else is done besides, with the gendered breakdown figuring as a 'rule' that is often broken by exigent need—with, for instance, men (who know how) joining women to 'sew' offerings when additional help is needed.

¹⁰ Just prior to this period of fieldwork, a new Bali-wide regulation had been issued forbidding the distribution of cigarettes during communal work; this provision was duly incorporated into the ward regulations. In practice, cigarettes were still provided.

¹¹ My gloss on these remarks includes contextualization based on the wider discussion at the meeting. Key terms have been indicated in their original languages. The mixed character of discussion in the ward assembly is evident in such phrases as *tan berpungsi*, which brings together not only Balinese and Indonesian linguistic registers, but also—as I wish to argue below—a set of accompanying sensibilities.

Ritakala sampun wénten sané agengan... sané nénten dados ban ngelidin... titiyang tan ja maboyin, nyutetin, masameton, magusti, mabraya...

Tan wénten tan manah asapunika.

*'Nika tan berpungsi asané nika. [...]
Akéh masih biaya-biaya 'nika. Yan sakadi titiyang néwék, kénten. Nganem bulané 'nika, kénten.*

Asané, yan rerehang bandingané 'nika, Galungan asané akéhang ngaryanang banten, ulam banten. Masrampitan sajaan Galungan!

Dadi prasida antuk néwék ring pakuren 'manten? Yan odal-odalan 'nika 'nak 'kidik.

In the case of larger events... for which it cannot be avoided... I certainly don't wish to obstruct, or in any way to limit one's relations of kinship (*masameton*), fealty (*magusti*) and fellowship (*mabraya*)...

No, that's not at all what I have in mind.

But the way we're doing things at the moment doesn't seem to be working (*tan berpungsi*). [...] And it's just too costly, at least in my opinion. Doing it every six months, like that.

Were we to look for a comparison, there are more offerings to be made for Galungan... more meat offerings. Galungan is a busy time!

So, how is it that a household (*pakuren*) can prepare for Galungan on its own, but can't manage a little six-monthly temple ceremony?

In other words, if one's household (B. *pakuren*)¹² is able to prepare for the sumptuous feast of Galungan without any help, why do they need the neighbors' assistance for a regular, six-monthly *odalan*—which requires fewer and less-complex offerings? From the farmer's perspective, if they are capable of the one, they ought also to be capable of the other. In response to the farmer's remarks there were nods of recognition and agreement. But, not everyone in the assembly was convinced by his argument. And this led to some discussion among members of the ward. But, in the end his suggestion carried the day. And the headman proposed, and then passed with general support, a reduction in neighborly assistance for a trial period of six months.¹³

During those six months, the trial reduction was a topic of frequent conversation in the kitchens and coffee stalls of Batan Nangka. Those in favor of

¹² See note 21, below.

¹³ It is not unlikely that the headman had discussed the matter with the farmer prior to the ward assembly meeting, a point raised by some members of the community in the days that followed.

the reduction generally decried the inefficiency of neighborly assistance. It ‘just doesn’t work’, as one man said, noting that much of the assistance itself goes into preparing food for the very neighbors who have come to help. As far as he was concerned, neighborly assistance simply wasn’t ‘rational’ (*sing rasional ‘to*). It was an institution that existed for its own sake, and so it did not serve a purpose. It did not have, as he put it, a ‘function’ (*‘ing ada fungsi*). When I asked the manager of a local business why he supported the reduction, he replied as follows:¹⁴

So, all I was thinking was that the load would feel a bit lighter, that’s all. [...] Why would I feel it’s lighter? I’m on my own as the father of the household (I. *bapak rumah tangga*). [RF: In other words, this is a single-family houseyard, without extended family members resident.] So, the process of celebrating a six-monthly ceremony... in our home (I. *di rumah*)... it falls to me alone. On the day before the ceremony, when I get back from work [...] my neighbors (I. *tetangga-tetangga*) and relatives (I. *saudara-saudara*) have already arrived at the house. I’ve got to have everything ready... the chopping boards, places for people to sit, and the spices too... **the ginger**, the turmeric root... and it’s all gotta be washed. Then, when all the ingredients are ready... in come the people, and they’re given coffee. Dug-adug-adug-adug-adug-adug-a [RF: the sound of men chopping meat, vegetables and spices], making the *caru* offerings. Cerét-cerét-cerét-cerét [RF: the sound of spinning saté sticks between one’s fingers]. And then it’s done. So, I send ‘em home.

The next day they’re back at 4am to make the *lawar*. I go myself to get **the leaves from the banyan tree**, and to get the **lime leaves**, and to get the **coconut shells** for grilling the *saté*, and **a fan**... I do all of this so that later, come 4am – that’s right, 4 in the morning! – I won’t have to run around trying to find everything. But then I often still have to go off and find those of my neighbors who’ve not shown up at the house. I will’ve told ‘em, ‘**Hey, Bli... tomorrow at 4am it’ll be time to help out (B. *ngoopin*), so be sure to come tomorrow**’. Like old Ketut over there [RF: pointing to his neighbor’s house]. Didn’t get here in time to help with the spices. So, **at 7am** I had to tell him again. I **told him**... and by 3am **the pig was bound**. Check! **Bound**, then **slaughtered**... I did all this with a **sore back**... **slaughtered**, *serét* [RF: the sound of a knife cutting the pig’s throat]! But that’s not all. There’s still blood all over the meat when I get it home. So, I’ve gotta wash it. And those making the *lawar*... we cook... we make the **sausages**, prepare the **cooked meat on the bones**, and we fry up all the other bits.

¹⁴ Balinese terms and phrases are in **boldface**; see appendix for a transcript of these remarks.

Then, since there's so much meat, I usually eat uncontrollably, as I did this morning. Then, I've totally pigged out. It's often not till 10 at night that I get a chance for a cool shower, totally fatigued. And, I'm already thinking about everyone showing up again at 4am. My goodness, they come, and I'm like this [RF: stretching out his arms, making an exhausted facial expression]... we're there making the saté, and I'm fatigued, fatigued, fatigued. And then there's the expense!

In short, preparing for a ceremony is a lot of work. And, at least sometimes, 'help' from the neighbors is not especially helpful. For a father of three with a salaried job and daily work schedule – and a wife who was also out at work for part of the day – these periods of preparation were exceedingly stressful and expensive. He emphasized that the burden of feeding his neighbors was taking a toll on his health, and that the reduction would bring much-needed respite. The new arrangement would reduce waste, increase efficiency and more generally 'lighten the load' for his family.¹⁵

Meanwhile, those who were more skeptical of the reduction in neighborly assistance made other sorts of arguments. Some were wary of changing an existing tradition, for fear of upsetting 'the way things are done' – perhaps an elliptical reference to angering intangible beings and forces. Some pointed out that smaller families would have difficulty managing the preparations themselves.¹⁶ While still others feared the consequences for the community as such, with each houseyard becoming increasingly cut-off from its neighbors, and thereby from the ward more generally.

In reflecting on the discussion, what I found to be most interesting was not simply the reduction in neighborly assistance – as a changing social institution – but rather the terms in which the debate itself was carried out. The arguments leveled *against* reducing neighborly assistance tended to presuppose the importance of ongoing and reciprocal obligation. When someone fails to recognize their responsibility to family and friends, a common rebuke is 'So, who do ya think is gonna lug yer carcass (to the graveyard)?' – *Nyén kal ngisidang bangkéné?* – the implication being that you've just snubbed precisely those responsible for performing your last rites, and thereby securing your well-being in the hereafter. Traditionally in Bali, from birth to death – and beyond – one is always already beholden to numerous, overlapping communities of but

¹⁵ Variations on this argument were not uncommon, particularly among those with family members working salaried jobs with regular hours – as opposed, e.g., to less-rigidly scheduled agricultural work and more casual labor.

¹⁶ In this connection, there were also a few pointed remarks directed at the farmer who initially proposed the reduction at the ward assembly, and who had a large extended family living within a single houseyard – obviating the need for help from the neighbors.

loosely calculated giving and receiving—from the ward, to various temple congregations, irrigation societies and decent groups, to say nothing of the myriad voluntary associations formed by Balinese men and women for purposes as diverse as saving money, threshing rice and going fishing.

If ward members who were *against* the reduction spoke in terms of community, tradition and obligation, those who were in *favor* of the reduction generally spoke the language of efficiency and of social function. They also tended to represent themselves as defending the interests of the community by defending the interests of its constituent families or households. Although the terms they employed in discussion were often Balinese, the model of the family that usually underpinned their argument was distinctly Indonesian, and more specifically state-bureaucratic. That is to say, the argument in favor of reducing neighborly assistance was generally premised on a conception of household economy that derived not from the sedimented practices of a localized or ‘traditional’ community, but rather from the programs of national development to which Balinese have been subject since the late 1960s—the early years of former President Suharto’s ‘New Order’ regime. Recalling Hull’s remarks cited at the outset, this is the household of the ‘small, happy, prosperous family’—the *keluarga kecil, bahagia, sejahtera* (Figure 3).



Figure 3. *Keluarga Berencana. Dua anak cukup... laki perempuan sama saja!*
Family Planning. Two kids are enough... a boy or a girl, it’s all the same!

As Newland noted in her essay on ‘the deployment of the prosperous family’ in West Java, this small-family ideal was:

...much more than merely an effort to limit reproduction, as it [was] an attempt to not only change attitudes about the number of children people should have but also to normalize reproductive practices with

a distinctive style of disciplinary power. A complete set of ethics is articulated within the campaign which covers marriage age, when it is appropriate to have children, how many children to have, what the wife's role is in the family, what the standard of the house should be, how many people should live in the house, when people should be immunized, and so on. (Newland 2001: 23)

This is the family of schoolbooks, state television and five-year development plans. It is the 'nuclear family', consisting of a father, mother and two children—ideally a boy and a girl. As individuals, their obligations are to one another, to the nation, and to a series of abstract principles including cleanliness, obedience, progress, personal industry and belief in God the Almighty, *Tuhan yang Maha Èsa*. In an appendix to my previous essay for the *Journal* (2017), I extrapolated from Newland's 'complete set of ethics' to outline a series of principles associated with this comparatively novel conception of the family. In light of the foregoing analysis, I would amend these slightly to include the following assemblage of individualizing imperatives:

- Isolation of the nuclear family as the primary social and administrative unit, (ac)countable under the rubric of KK (I. *kepala keluarga*), or 'heads of household';¹⁷
- A prescribed limit on the size of the family, with two parents and two children;
- A model of childhood development as gender-neutral, graduated (*bayi, balita, anak-anak, remaja*) and keyed to healthcare and educational needs (see Figure 4);
- A gendered division of familial labor, with the father working and providing 'guidance'; the mother as 'housewife' and primary socializer of children; and children attending school;
- A new model for intimacy between parents as members of a monogamous social unit and source of domestic authority;
- A reconfigured relationship between parents and children, centered on: parents 'investing' in children's education; children 'helping at home', but, in contrast to common agrarian practice, not contributing materially to the household economy;
- A reorganization of domestic space, including a marital/parental bedroom separated from children's bedroom(s);¹⁸

¹⁷ This resume of imperatives is adapted from Fox 2017: 245-46.

¹⁸ Ideally, the home ought also to include an 'indoor' hygienic kitchen.

- A new model of political solidarity, in which an abstract fealty to the nation replaces particularist and more locally-embodied relations of alliance and patronage;
- The displacement of ongoing relations of loosely-calculated giving and receiving sustained through time (e.g., *ngoopin*, *mapisaga*) by transactional exchanges completed without prior obligation or subsequent remainder (e.g., purchasing offerings);
- An individualizing cluster of virtues including obedience, hygiene, industriousness, commitment to progress, age- and gender-specific normalcy, self-sacrifice, patriotism and monotheism;
- And a new religious ideal within which the individual is responsible for its own well-being in this world and beyond, anchored in a socio-soteriological theory of God, morality, the soul, rebirth and salvation.¹⁹

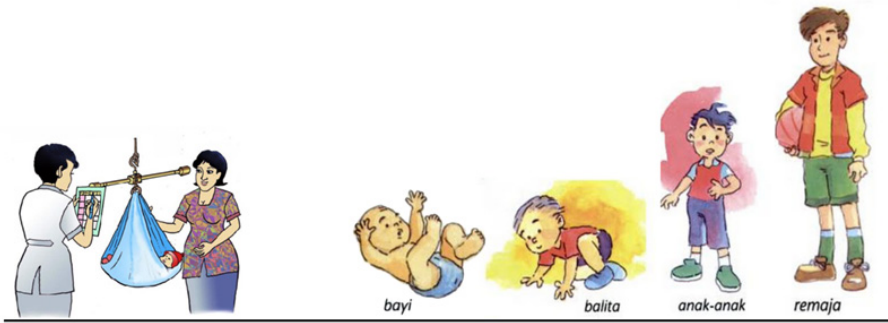


Figure 4. Image of graduated stages of childhood
(Source: Indonesian Ministry of Health website)

5. Conclusion

This working list represents, very broadly, the transformation of personal responsibility and household economy that prefigured the argument for reducing neighborly assistance. However, to present these points schematically, as I have done here, is misleading on at least three counts.

First, though listed as a series of concepts and sensibilities, these points do not figure primarily as abstract ideals. Recalling the discussion of ‘neighborliness’ (B. *mapisaga*), they too are embodied in a complexly interrelated set of instituted practices—from childhood inoculation and nutrition programs to education, family planning and village beautification competitions (I. *lomba désa*).

¹⁹ With minor adjustments, this last point is easily translatable into a Christian or Islamic idiom. Here it must also be emphasized that this individualized model of religiosity displaces – or, at the very least, sits in tension with – an older, more collective set of practices directed to stabilizing (inherently unstable) relations and secure safety and sustenance.

Second, although I have emphasized the state-bureaucratic deployment of these ideals, they are distributed much more broadly—perhaps most importantly through advertisements and commercialization. It is here that the state is most intimately articulated with commerce. When you travel down the road to Denpasar, the billboards call out to members of ‘families’, not Balinese houseyards. They call on drivers to recognize themselves and to consume—as fathers, mothers and teenagers.²⁰ Crucially, these are categories and ways of orienting oneself in the world that would be unthinkable without the history of national development and the rise of the nuclear family.

Finally, to assume that one set of ethical imperatives has simply displaced another is to overstate the case.²¹ As I have tried elsewhere to show with specific reference to local iterations of *agama* (2018: 158-65), the argument over neighborly assistance is marked by tension between rival conceptions of human flourishing and collective life. And, here, the inertia of sedimented practice ought not to be underestimated. For, although the ward assembly’s trial reduction of neighborly assistance was subsequently approved as a permanent statute, the practice carried on unabated in the majority of houseyards in Batan Nangka. That seems a fitting place to end.

Appendix

My gloss on these remarks includes contextualization based both on the wider conversation, as well as subsequent discussion with the speaker and several of acquaintances. The (mostly) Indonesian transcript reads as follows, with Balinese terms and phrases in **boldface**:

Yang ada di otak saya, saya merasa lebih ringan, ‘gitu. Itu ‘aja. [...] Saya merasa lebih ringannya apa? Saya sendiri bapak rumah tangga. Prosés marainan... saya sendiri ngodalin dirumah. Sehari sebelum marainan, habis barong, tetangga-tetangga, saudara-saudara... sudah datang. Saya harus siap.... talenan, tempat, kemudian **basa** yang... **jaé**, **kunyit** yang sudah dicuci. ‘Tas bahan sudah lengkap... datang orang, dikasih kopi... dug-adug-adug-adug-adug-a. Bikin caru. Cerét-cerét-cerét-cerét. Selesai. Saya suruh pulang.

²⁰ Arguably, even the adverts celebrating ‘individuality’ and ‘freedom’ depend for their coherence on an implicit opposition to the constraints of life in a small nuclear family.

²¹ Pertinently, there was often a degree of slippage between uses of Balinese (*pakuren*) and Indonesian (*keluarga*) terms for the domestic units I have glossed as ‘household’ and ‘family’ respectively. (See Hobart 1979 on (*pa*)*kuren*; see Shiraishi 1979 on *keluarga*.) Pressed for detail, all of those with whom I spoke were able to distinguish clearly between what they considered the proper uses of these terms. In actual conversation, this differentiation was not always entirely clear.

Besok jam 'pat pagi datang. Nglawar. Saya sendiri mencari **don brimbing**, mencari **don lemo**, mencari **kau** untuk saté, mencari **ilih**... supaya nanti jam empat, jam pat pagi, nggak mencari-cari gini-gini. Kemudian... saya masih mencari tetangga siapa yang belum datang. Saya perlu kasi-tahu. Saudara... '**O, bli... binmani ngoopin jam empat, nak teka binmani**'. Nah, seperti **Ketut'a** di sini. Belum sempat bikin **basa. Jam pitu**, saya kasi-tahu lagi. **Ngorahina**... jam tiga sudah **ngejuk céléng**. Cek! **Ngejuk céléng**... kemudian, **nampah**... dengan **bangkiang** sakit... **nampah**, serét. Ini belum... masih ada darah sampai dirumah... Dug! Saya cuci dagingnya... saya... yang bikin lawar... kita rebus... kita bikin **urutan**... bikin **balung**... goréng semua. [...]

Jadi karena ada daging banyak, saya sering makan tidak terkontrol, seperti tadi. Kemudian... 'udah lalah sekali... jam sepuluh malam baru saya mandi dingin, payah. Sudah saya berpikir besok jam empat orang-orang sudah datang. Aduh, datang orangnya, saya 'gini... bikin saté... makan, makan, makan... lagi makan. Makan, tak terkontrol. Selesai. [...] payah, payah, payah. Dan biaya!

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